

# OVERVIEW OF CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE U.S.A.

*Edward J. Latessa, Ph.D.\**



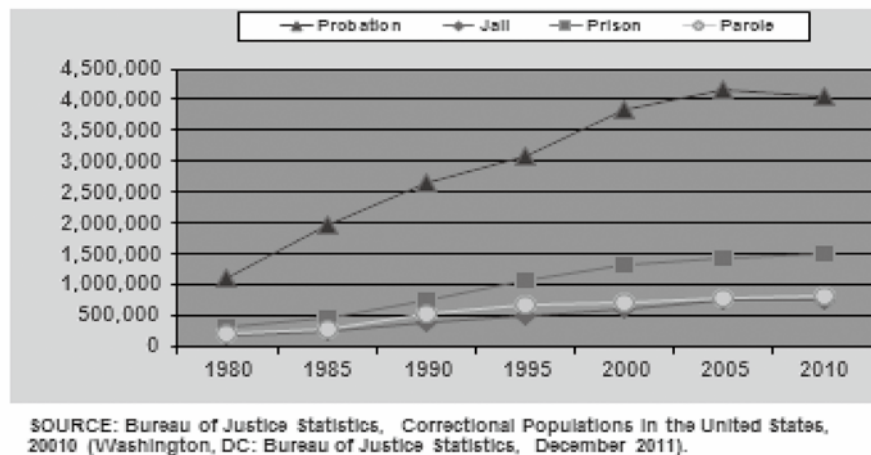
## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper will provide an overview of some of the more common correctional programs in the United States, ranging from diversion to re-entry from prison. While some of the programs described are specific to the correctional setting, others can be found across the range of correctional options, be they community-based or in prison.

## II. SIZE AND COMPLEXITY

The correctional system in the United States is very large and complex. Currently there are over 7 million adults under correctional control, with the largest number on probation. Figure 1 shows the growth of correctional populations in the USA since 1980. Only recently has the correctional population declined slightly.

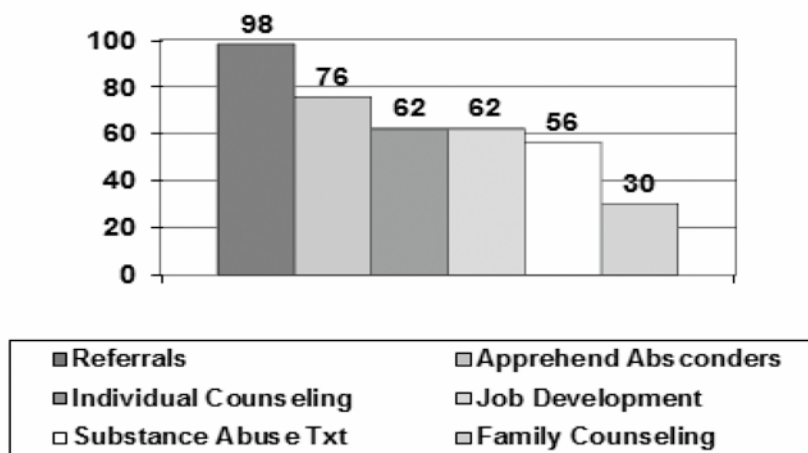
**Figure 1. Adult Correctional Populations**



Some of the complexity of the correctional system is due to our system of government. Correctional programs and facilities can be found at the federal, state, and local levels of government. For example, the Federal Bureau of Prisons — part of the U.S. Justice Department — operates prisons at the federal level. Federal probation is operated by the federal courts. Every state operates a prison system; however, several large cities, such as New York and Philadelphia also run prison systems. Correctional programs within and outside of prisons can be managed by the public sector or private providers. For example, in many prisons and jails some programs are provided by government staff, while others may operate through contracts with private providers. The same is true in community corrections. It is not uncommon for some probation or parole agencies to provide some services internally, while others are contracted or paid for by the offender. There are even some misdemeanor probation agencies that are operated by private providers. Figure 2 shows the percentage of probation and parole agencies that provide service by type of service.

\* Professor and Director of the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati.

**Figure 2. Percentage of Probation and Parole Agencies Providing Services by Type**



Source: Camp, C. and G. Camp (2003). *The Corrections Yearbook: Adult Corrections 2002*. Middletown, CT. Criminal Justice Institute, Inc., p. 226.

The oversight and operation of correctional facilities and programs can also vary tremendously from state to state, and even within a state. For example, in some states probation is a state function operated and overseen by the executive branch of government, while in others it is a local function overseen by the judiciary.

### III. DIVERSION PROGRAMS

#### A. Community-Based Diversion Programs

Diversion is seen as the first threshold of the community corrections system, designed to remove as many offenders as possible from the process before their conviction and labelling as a criminal. Although programs that aim toward a total or partial alternative to incarceration are improvements, they do not always eliminate the stigma of a criminal record. Diversion programs are tied to treatment and services in the community; however, both avoid the problems of incarceration and remove the criminal label. These programs are seen not as a substitute for probation services, but as a method of filling the gap between offenders eligible for probation and cases in which the charges can be dropped. Diversion is usually through an agreement with the prosecutor and accompanied by a formalized agreement with offenders as to what they are to do in return for the elimination of their arrest records. An example would be a victim-mediation program, where the victim and offender sit down and resolve a dispute with the guidance of a mediator.

#### B. Court-Based Diversion Programs

The courts are involved with diversion in several ways. One method is to use civil commitment for individuals who presumably can be treated more efficiently in a hospital situation. A more common use of diversion by the courts is found in pre-trial intervention programs. With these programs the offender is diverted from jail and sometime even court.

Diversion is usually seen as appropriate for public drunks, low-level-misdemeanant offenders, and the first-time drug abuser. One common alternative to incarceration for public drunks is to send them to a detoxification center. Another example of a diversion program is found in Ohio and is called treatment in lieu of conviction; it is designed for first-time substance abusers. Successful completion of treatment and no new charges can result in a clean record for these offenders.

### IV. COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

#### A. Probation

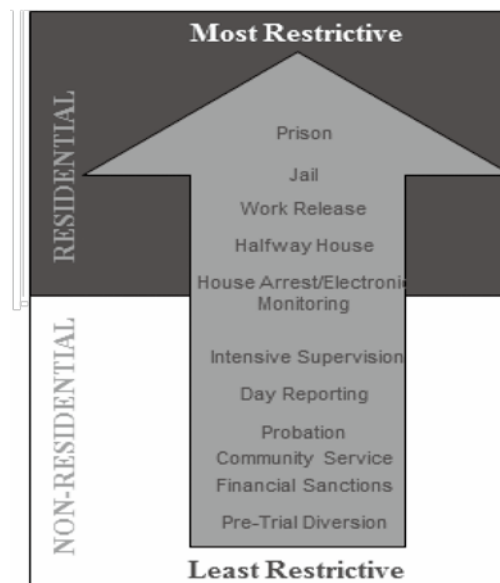
Probation is the most widely used correctional sanction in the U.S. and can range from non-reporting status to intensive supervision. Many offenders who are required to report to a probation officer must also participate in some programs. The nature and type of program will vary greatly depending on the risk and needs of the offender and the resources of the probation department or local community. For example, in some rural communities an offender with a substance abuse problem may be required to attend Alcoholics

Anonymous, in part because no other programs are available, while in an urban setting residential and outpatient programs may be required.

### B. Intermediate Sanctions

The USA has developed a wide range of sanctions and programs that fall between regular probation and incarceration. These are often called intermediate sanctions and usually are coupled with probation. Intermediate sanctions provide mid-range dispositions that better reflect the severity of the offense than do probation or imprisonment. While many offenders can best be served by probation, some are thought to be too serious to be released to traditional probation supervision with infrequent face-to-face contacts. Thus, a continuum of alternatives has been developed: restitution, fines, community service, intensive supervised probation, house arrest, electronic monitoring, and shock incarceration programs, such as boot camps. Figure 3 depicts the range of sentencing options by their perceived severity.

Figure 3



Restitution, for example, is seen as less punitive than community service; house arrest is a lower level of punishment than jail incarceration. Judges can and frequently do impose several sanctions simultaneously and retain authority to modify the sentence. Intermediate sanctions are attractive for the following reasons:

- i. Channelling offenders into community-based corrections is believed to be able to reduce or delay prison overcrowding.
- ii. Intermediate punishments are designed for offenders believed to pose too much risk for probation services, but not enough risk to be sent to prison.
- iii. They are generally less expensive than incarceration in either jail or prison.
- iv. They are believed to offer more rehabilitation and reintegration potential than does incarceration.

We begin our more detailed examination of these programs with restitution.

### C. Restitution Programs

A common condition for probation is the requirement that victims be compensated for their losses or injury as a form of restitution. The emphasis given to the study of victimology in the last few years has resulted in some state compensation of crime victims by payment of medical costs and other financial reimbursement, such as loss of work. Through the system of probation, however, the offender often repays the victim. It is important that authorities link the amount of payment to the offender's ability to pay. Paying through installments is usually the most realistic approach. In some cases a partial restitution may be all that is reasonably possible (for example, in the case of an arsonist who burns down a multimillion-dollar building).

Many reasons are offered to support restitution programs. Obviously, restitution offsets the victim's loss when property is stolen; restitution can even be ordered for the deductible amount an insurance company might require an insured victim to pay before the insurance coverage would become effective. Time lost from work while being a witness in court and being hospitalized is also subject to offender restitution. It appears that restitution may be ordered for any injury caused by the offense for which the offender was convicted. Other rationales are that restitution forces the offender to accept personal responsibility for the crime; restitution can lead to reconciliation of offender and victim; and, finally, it provides one way the victim can overcome the otherwise impersonal processing of victims within the justice system. It is estimated that in the USA more than 30% of all adults on probation and 12% of offenders on felony probation are ordered to make restitution. In some jurisdictions, offenders may also be required to reside in a residential restitution center and pay part of their wages to victims. Other jurisdictions require victim-offender conferences to establish the amount of financial compensation due to the victim.

#### **D. Intensive Supervised Probation**

Another alternative sanction program is intensive supervised probation (ISP), which is designed to provide increased surveillance of offenders deemed to be too serious for "routine" probation. The program is a management strategy for probation services that need to increase the level of surveillance for individuals who do not adjust to regular probation requirements.

The State of Georgia is believed to have been the first jurisdiction to impose a state-wide system of ISP (starting in 1974) and, by 1990, every state had at least one jurisdiction — city, county, or state — with the program. There is no generic ISP. It is a form of release that emphasizes close monitoring of convicted offenders and requires rigorous conditions on that release. Most ISP programs call for the following:

- Some combination of multiple weekly contacts with a supervising officer;
- Random and unannounced drug testing;
- Stringent enforcement of probation or parole conditions;
- Required participation in relevant treatment programs, employment, and perhaps community service.

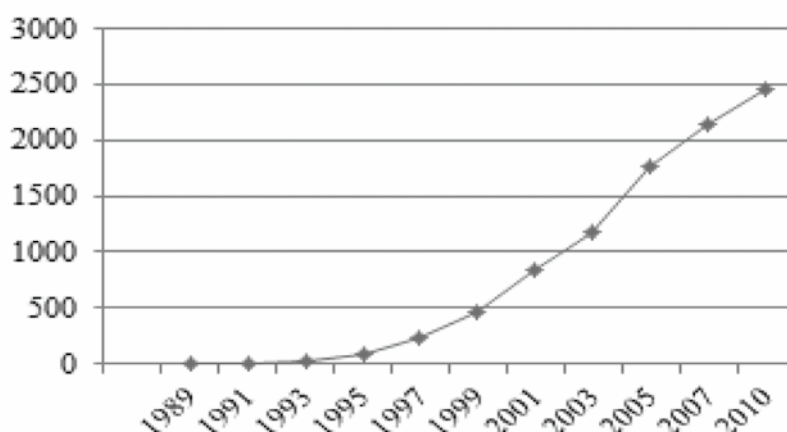
Current issues largely revolve around the effectiveness of intensive supervision. Yet, measures of success vary depending on the stated goals and objectives each program sets out to address. For instance, the goals of a treatment-oriented program differ from the goals of a program that places emphasis on offender punishment and control. However, it is possible to isolate two overriding themes of recent intensive supervision programs that raise several issues. First, intensive probation supervision is expected to divert offenders from incarceration in order to alleviate prison overcrowding, avoid the exorbitant costs of building and sustaining prisons, and prevent the stultifying and stigmatizing effects of imprisonment. Second, ISP is expected to promote public safety through surveillance strategies, while promoting a sense of responsibility and accountability through probation fees, restitution, and community service activities. The research on ISPs can be summarized as follows:

- ISPs have failed to alleviate prison crowding;
- Most ISP studies have found no significant differences between recidivism rates of ISP offenders and offenders of comparison groups;
- There appears to be a relationship between greater participation in treatment and employment programs and lower recidivism rates;
- Most studies have not found a relationship between caseload size or number of contacts and effectiveness;
- ISP can often lead to increased technical violations;
- ISP does provide an intermediate punishment;
- Although ISPs are less expensive than prison, they are more expensive than regular supervision.

#### **E. Drug and Other Problem-Solving Courts**

In recent years, many judges have become disillusioned with the revolving door of jail and prison for offenders who suffer from addictions and mental disorders. As a result, there has been an explosion of so-called therapeutic courts, ranging from mental health to domestic violence. Figure 4 shows the number of drug problem-solving courts throughout the United States.

**Figure 4. Operational Drug Courts in USA**



Drug courts divert drug-abusing offenders to intensively monitored treatment instead of incarceration. The main purpose of drug-court programs is to use the authority of the court to reduce crime by changing defendants' drug-using behavior. Under this concept, in exchange for the possibility of dismissed charges or reduced sentences, defendants are diverted to drug-court programs in various ways and at various stages of the judicial process, depending on the circumstances. Judges preside over drug-court proceedings; monitor the progress of defendants through frequent status hearings; and prescribe sanctions and rewards as appropriate in collaboration with prosecutors, defense attorneys, treatment providers, and others. Basic elements of a drug court include the following:

- A single drug-court judge and staff who provide both focus and leadership;
- Expedited adjudication through early identification and referral of appropriate program participants, initiating treatment as soon as possible after arrest;
- Both intensive treatment and aftercare for drug-abusing defendants;
- Comprehensive, in-depth, and coordinated supervision of drug defendants in regular (sometimes daily) status hearings that monitor both treatment progress and offender compliance;
- Enhanced and increasing defendant accountability under a graduated series of rewards and punishments appropriate to conforming behavior;
- Mandatory and frequent drug (and alcohol) testing;
- Supervised and individual case monitoring.

Drug-court programs are highly diverse in approach, characteristics, and completion and retention rates. Some programs report that they defer prosecuting offenders who would enter the program; others allowed offenders to enter the program after their cases had been adjudicated; and still others allowed offenders to enter their programs on a trial basis after entering a plea. Yet all programs have a treatment component as part of their overall approach, although there is wide variation in the type and extent of treatment provided to offenders. The growth in drug-court programs has been nothing short of phenomenal. Starting with one program in Miami, Florida in 1989, there were 2,459 programs in operation in the beginning of 2010, with over 70,000 clients processed or in treatment at any given time. The largest state-wide study on drug courts to date was recently conducted in New York. The study found that, on average, the reconviction rate was 29% lower for drug-court participants than for nonparticipants. In addition to reducing recidivism, drug courts have been found to be cost effective. The success of drug courts has led to the development of other problem-solving courts, including re-entry (designed to assist those released from prison), drunk drivers, mentally ill, veterans and gambling courts.

#### **F. Community Service Programs**

Community service or work-order programs represent court-ordered, unpaid work for a specific number of hours that offenders must perform, usually in the form of free labor to some charitable organization or in public service such as serving as a volunteer hospital orderly, doing street cleaning, performing maintenance or repair of public housing, or providing service to indigent groups. Some examples of the latter would be

sentencing a dentist to perform 100 hours of free dental services for the poor or a physician to provide 50 hours of free medical attention to jail inmates.

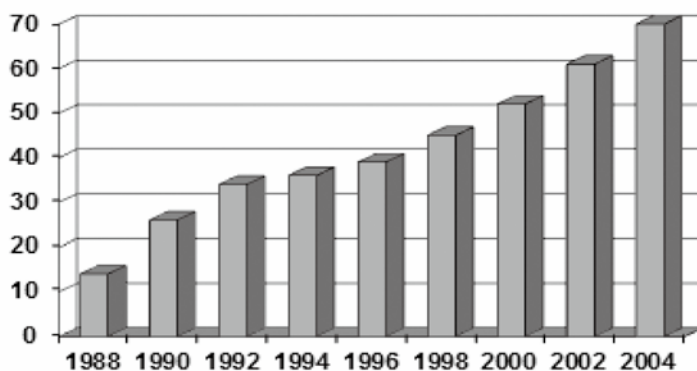
**G. Home Detention**

Home detention is the confining of offenders to their households for the duration of their sentences. The sentence is usually imposed in conjunction with probation but may be imposed by the court as a separate punishment. Participants may be required to make victim compensation, perform community work service, pay probation fees, undergo drug and alcohol testing, and, in some instances, wear electronic monitoring equipment to verify their presence in the residence. House arrest allows the offender to leave his or her residence only for specific purposes and hours approved by the court or supervising officer. Being absent without leave is a technical violation of conditions that may result in resentencing to jail or prison.

**H. Electronic Monitoring**

Home detention has a long history as a criminal penalty, but its new popularity with correctional authorities is due to the advent of electronic monitoring, a technological link that is thought to make the sanction both practical and affordable. By 2004, it was estimated that there were 1,500 electronic programs and nearly 140,000 monitoring units in use. See Figure 5.

**Figure 5. Parole Jurisdictions Using Electronic Monitoring Devices: 1988-2004**



Sources: C. Camp and G. Camp (2003). *The Corrections Yearbook 2002*. South Salem, NY: Criminal Justice Institute Inc.; Data for 2004 are extrapolated.

Most electronic monitoring systems use a transmitter attached to the offender’s wrist or ankle that sends signals to the supervising office during the hours the offender is required to be at home. The goals and objectives of electronic monitoring include:

- Provide a cost-effective community supervision tool for offenders selected according to specific program criteria;
- Administer sanctions appropriate to the seriousness of the offense;
- Promote public safety by providing surveillance and risk-control strategies indicated by the risk and needs of the offenders.

The latest trend in electronic monitoring is global positioning systems (GPS) that are increasingly being used with high-risk sex offenders. A number of states have passed legislation that requires selected offenders to wear a device that tracks their whereabouts twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. A recent evaluation in Florida of offenders placed on electronic monitoring or GPS found significantly reduced likelihood of technical violations, reoffending, and absconding. Other studies have shown mixed results. While the technology no doubt will be improved and expanded in the coming decade, many unanswered questions remain about the effectiveness of electronic monitoring.

**I. Halfway Houses**

Halfway houses are a valuable adjunct to community control and treatment services, and their use in the USA dates back to the early 1800s. Originally designed as residences for men and women “halfway”

out of prison, they are now used for a wide range of offenders including those on probation and parole. Halfway houses are often seen as the possible nuclei of community-based correctional networks of residential centers, drug-free and alcohol-free living spaces, pre-release guidance centers, and private-sector involvement with multiple-problem offenders in need of intensive services. They also serve as non-institutional residence facilities for a number of different types of offenders, most of whom are high-need offenders and pose a medium to high risk to reoffend. For example, some are specifically designed to serve special populations of offenders, such as sex offenders, substance abusers, and the mentally ill. There is also at least one halfway house that serves only mentally retarded offenders. Although the exact number of such programs is unknown, they can range in size from 8-10 to several hundred beds. Traditionally these facilities were local programs operated by non-profit agencies; however, today there are a number of large for-profit companies that operate residential facilities in multiple states. Smaller facilities are often described as more supportive, providing a roof, meals and minimal services. Larger more complex facilities are often interventive — providing a wide range of programs and services, ranging from employment assistance to cognitive behavioral treatment.

### **J. Community-Based Correctional Facilities**

In one of the more unique attempts to provide residential treatment programs, Ohio and Texas have developed correctional alternatives called Community Based Correctional Facilities or CBCFs (known as Community Correctional Facilities in Texas). Currently there are 18 in operation in Ohio and over 40 in Texas. In Ohio the size of the facilities ranges from 55 to 200 beds and several serve both males and females. In 2011 the CBCFs in Ohio served 6,650 felony offenders during an average stay of 124 days. Funding for these facilities is provided by the state; however, the operation and management of the facilities is left to local correctional officials. In some instances the local courts operate the facilities, and in other cases, private providers are retained by the courts. The CBCFs are secure facilities for felony offenders sentenced directly by judges for a period between 4 and 6 months. While in these facilities offenders receive a wide range of programs and treatment including education, vocational, cognitive behavioral treatment, substance abuse, anger management and other programming. Almost all offenders are placed on probation following release from the facility.

### **K. Day Reporting Centers**

The day reporting center is an intermediate option usually associated with probation but that also can accept parolees, parole violators, furloughees from prison, and persons on pre-trial release or early release from jail. These centers usually provide a variety of treatment and referral programs, along with extensive supervision and surveillance. Most centers operate in the late afternoon and evening hours and are staffed by probation officers, treatment specialists, vocational counselors, and volunteers; the primary focus is often treatment. Participants are usually required to attend every day the center is open, to schedule their next day's activities, and to abide by the schedule. Not only do participants have to call the center regularly, the center may call them at their appointed rounds on a frequent basis to verify their whereabouts and activities. While there are significant differences across centers, certain characteristics appear to be typical of most:

- Centers accept those on probation, those ordered to attend as a special condition of probation, or those who have violated probation; drug- and alcohol-abusing offenders; and some clients who pose low risk to their communities of residence;
- Participants return to their residences at night because day centers are nonresidential.
- The primary focus is on treatment and reduction of institution crowding;
- Most are open five days a week and frequently 50 or more hours within the week;
- Centers maintain a strict regimen of surveillance and demand more contact with offenders than would be available even through intensive supervised probation;
- Centers direct offenders through several phases of control, tapering off in the latter phase
- Centers test offenders for drug use at least once a week during the initial and most intensive phases;
- Centers offer several services on-site that can address offenders' unemployment, counseling, education, and life-skill needs, while also referring offenders to off-site drug-abuse treatment, attendance at which is often required;
- Centers usually require that offenders fulfill community service orders;
- Centers usually collect program fees from offenders.



### **L. Boot Camp Programs**

Boot camps first appeared in the States of Georgia (1983) and Oklahoma (1984). The concept spread quickly, and at one point virtually every state operated a boot camp. It was estimated that in 2001, over 16,150 offenders were placed in adult boot camps. Although there is no generic boot camp because individual programs vary in form and objectives, the typical boot camp is targeted at young, nonviolent offenders. Once in the camp, the participant is subjected to a regimen of the following:

- Military drills and discipline;
- Physical exercise;
- Hard physical labor;
- Specialized education and training;
- Counseling and treatment for substance abuse and addiction.

Most boot camp programs require the inmates to enter as volunteers, offering as an incentive an incarceration period of a few months, compared to the much longer periods they would have spent in prison or on probation. Generally, a state boot camp graduate is released to parole, intensive supervision, home confinement, or some type of community corrections.

Although boot camps were popular with judges, the public, and politicians, results from studies of the effectiveness of boot camp programs in reducing recidivism have not been positive. Findings from boot camp evaluations make the following conclusions:

- Low- or moderate-risk offenders who are subjected to a high level of supervision (boot camps) actually do worse than those left on traditional probation;
- Some evidence shows that the rate of recidivism declined in boot camp programs for adults where offenders spent three hours or more per day in therapeutic activity and had some type of aftercare;
- In general, studies have found similar recidivism rates for those who completed boot camps and comparable offenders who spent long periods of time in prison.

As a result of the research, some boot camp programs have abandoned the military-style training and incorporated education, cognitive behavioral treatment, substance abuse treatment, aftercare, job corps, and industrial components.

### **M. Weekend Confinement**

To lessen the negative impacts of short-term incarceration and allow offenders to retain current employment, some jurisdictions permit sentences to be served during non-working weekends. Many refer to it as “doing time on the installment plan.” Such weekend confinement generally requires a guilty misdemeanor to check into the jail on Friday after work and leave Sunday. A “weekender” serving his or her sentence over a number of months would generally be credited with three days of confinement per weekend.

## **V. TREATMENT IN PRISON**

### **A. Educational Programs**

In most state correctional systems, education of incarcerated inmates is a legislative mandate. Today, most inmates are able to achieve at least a high school education (or the GED, the high school equivalency certificate or general equivalency diploma) through institutional programs, and the more progressive institutions are offering courses at the two-year and four-year college level. Most recognize that lack of education is a serious handicap when inmates return to the free world. For that reason, education has long been regarded as a primary rehabilitative tool in the correctional field. The classes held in some institutions are conventional and relatively old fashioned, in contrast with those that use the new learning technologies and innovations available to students at all levels on the outside. Today more and more prison education programs are using computer technology and computer assisted instruction that allows education to be more individualized.

### **B. Vocational Programs**

Virtually all prison systems in the USA offer vocational training and apprenticeship programs. For example, Table 1 shows some of the vocational and apprenticeship programs offered in Ohio prisons



**Table 1**

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Alteration Tailor
Animal Trainer
Auto Mechanic
Baker
Bindery Worker
Boiler Operator
Bricklayer
Butcher
Carpenter
Cook
Electric Appliance Repairer
Electrician
Farm Worker
Furniture Finisher/Upholsterer
Heating and Air Condition Tech
Horticulturist
Janitor
Landscape Management
Laundry Machine Mechanic
Machine Operator
Maintenance Repairer
Offset Operator
Construction Technology
Cosmetology
Drafting
Food Management
Graphic Operations
Interactive Graphic Media and Web Design
Multimedia Communications
Masonry
Plastering
Plumbing
Resilient Flooring
Welding

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Several states have begun offering inmates who complete certain vocation or work programs "Certificates of Achievement and Employability," which are used to tell a potential employer that the offender has done exceptionally well while in prison. The goal is to enhance the ability of the offender to get a job once released. Eligibility varies from state to state, but in Ohio applicants must have completed an accredited in-prison vocational program, an accredited behavioral modification program, and community service hours. Employers who hire certificate holders are protected from negligent hiring liability.

### **C. Work-Release Programs**

One of the earliest programs for releasing prisoners before their full sentences expired was the result of the first work-release legislation. The work-release philosophy, which permits inmates to work on their own in the free community, dates back to a 1913 Wisconsin statute that allowed misdemeanants to continue to work at their jobs while serving short sentences in jail.

Institutional work release is not intended to be a substitute for parole, but it can be a valuable tool for the correctional administrator and the parole officer who must eventually supervise an individual who has participated in work release. The work-release program is not really an alternative to incarceration. Rather,

it is a chance for offenders to develop and test their work skills, job discipline, and personal control over their behavior in the community — and it allows them to spend the major part of the day away from the institution. Work release has other benefits besides allowing inmates to be outside the walls for a period of time each day. The income derived from the work can be used in a number of ways: If the inmates have families, the earnings can be used to keep them off welfare rolls or to augment the assistance they might be receiving; inmates can reimburse victims for their loss, if the judge has required it; or they may be able to build a nest egg for the time when they will be released. In many cases, the inmates can contribute toward their cost of housing and sustenance as well.

#### **D. Furlough Programs**

Another form of partial incarceration is the furlough. Both work release and furlough extend the limits of confinement to include unsupervised absences from the institution. As states have passed legislation making furloughs a legal correctional tool, furloughs have been used for a number of purposes, including a home visit during holidays or just before release (“meritorious furlough”), so the return to the free world is a graduated process and includes reintegration. One benefit of home furloughs, obviously, is decreased sexual tension in institutions. A major roadblock to progress in such programs has been a few highly publicized and sensational failures. Those failures, combined with the generally increasing numbers of violent and dangerous inmates coming out of the prisons, have made it difficult for states to expand or promote furlough programs.

#### **E. Therapeutic Community**

Another popular interventional program usually found in prisons is the therapeutic community (TCs). Several years ago due to the influx of Federal support, many states created in-prison substance abuse programs, many in the form of TCs. Although first developed after World War I to treat “shell shocked” soldiers, the concept was expanded to address other behavioral problems, including addiction and criminal behavior. The primary focus is on helping the offender change those thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and actions that create the potential for and actual criminal behavior. There are two types of TCs: traditional and modified. Traditional TCs are the purest form of the TC model. This type of TC is very process-oriented and confrontational in nature. Modified TCs, on the other hand, can include components from Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Aftercare, and 12-step models, and often use curriculums. Modified TCs typically do not rely as heavily on the shaming techniques that are used by traditional TCs. For example, TCs use a “positive peer culture” approach, relying largely on inmates to monitor one another and hold each other accountable. Residents, known as the “family”, are also involved in treatment delivery, and are elected by peers into leadership or hierarchy positions. Interventions such as “encounter groups” are used to make participants aware of their problematic behavior, and correct such behavior. In traditional TCs, groups are usually highly confrontational, but in many of the modified TCs, aggressive interactions are limited. Traditional TCs have also been criticized for use of shaming techniques as punishers for program violations; again, many modified TCs have discontinued such practices.

### **VI. RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS**

With nearly 700,000 offenders exiting prisons each year in the USA, the re-entry issue has garnered national attention. The Congress recently passed what is called the “Second Chance Act,” legislation that provides funding for local jurisdictions to develop what are known as re-entry programs. These programs are designed to:

- Reduce the barriers that offenders often face when returning to the community. These might include obtaining a driver’s licence, housing, child care and custody, legal issues, etc.
- Provide programs and support to address the offender’s needs such as mental health services, employment and job readiness, anger management programs, cognitive behavioral treatment, educational and vocational services, family reunification, etc.

Re-entry programs can take several forms ranging from a coalition of service providers to one agency providing the programs and services. They can also include re-entry courts.

#### **A. Re-entry Courts**

Following the popularity of drug courts, a new movement has taken root in which local courts have

become more involved in the re-entry of offenders back into the community. Re-entry courts are specialized courts that are designed to reduce recidivism and improve public safety through the use of judicial oversight. The responsibilities generally assigned to re-entry courts include:

- i. review offenders' re-entry progress and problems;
- ii. order offenders to participate in various treatment and reintegration programs;
- iii. use drug and alcohol testing and other checks to monitor compliance;
- iv. apply graduated sanctions to offenders who do not comply with treatment requirements;
- v. provide modest incentive rewards for sustained clean drug tests and other positive behaviors.

The emergence of re-entry courts is a major departure from traditional practice, where the responsibility of the court to an offender ended when the offender was sentenced by a judge. Judges typically have no role in the broad array of activities that carry out the terms of the sentence, the preparation of the offender for release, or the transition of the offender back into the community. The failure of traditional "solo" approaches, in which an agency or system operated independently, and the realization that offenders leaving prison are returning to the community, have led to the development of this new approach to offender re-entry. While research has just begun to examine the effectiveness of this strategy, hopes are high that the approach will produce positive results.

## **VII. COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT PROGRAMS**

Although more of a treatment model than an actual "program", many correctional programs now rely on cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT) as the primary approach to targeting offender needs. CBT programs can be found in all types of correctional settings including probation, jails, prisons, halfway houses, day reporting centers, and anywhere offenders are provided services. CBT is an approach that focuses on the ways in which offenders think. Thinking includes a wide array of skills and processes, such as problem-solving skills, the ability to empathize with others and victims, the ability to formulate and then achieve plans for the future, and the ability to foresee the consequences of one's own behavior. The word "cognitive" also refers to the beliefs, values, attitudes, and stability we impose on our conception of the world around us. Flowing from this approach are techniques that attempt to influence and change the cognitions of offenders. This is done through role-playing, appropriate reinforcement, modeling, and changing of irrational beliefs.

Today, CBT is often used to target such diverse areas as substance abuse, sexual behavior, anger, peer associations, and family and work. One example of a CBT application is anger management. Anger management focuses on preventing the negative behavior that arises from impulsive hostile aggression by teaching self-awareness, self-control, and alternate thinking and behavior. The facilitator may attempt to reduce aggressive behavior through teaching self-control and management skills. The key is to teach the inmate how to lower arousal levels, increase self-control, change thinking, communicate feelings, recognize anger, and use coping mechanisms.

## **VIII. CONCLUSIONS**

This paper has provided an overview of the types of correctional programs found in the United States. There is a wide range of correctional programs operating in the USA. Some are specifically designed to help keep offenders out of prison or jail, others to assist offenders who have been incarcerated, and still others to assist offenders re-entering society. While correctional programs often have multiple purposes, the primary purpose of most programs is to reduce recidivism. Fortunately, there is a large body of research that clearly demonstrates that well-implemented correctional programs that target the right offenders, target criminogenic needs, and teach offenders new skills and behaviors can have an appreciable effect on recidivism. The next paper will focus on examining evidence-based practices and the principles and attributes of effective correctional programs.