



Massachusetts Probation Service and Reentry

Community safety,
treatment and accountability,
less prison and jail.



Outline of Topics

- Post-Release Supervision
- Community Justice Support Centers
- Manager/Conduit for Shared Resources



Consistent Themes

- Fulfilling Legislative Intent or Instruction
- Evidence Based Approach
- Accountability



Post Release Supervision Responsibilities



- The Massachusetts Probation Service is the largest post-release supervision agency due to the “from and after” sentencing practice, with 3,219 people as of April 2025 subject to a from and after sentence and 2,508 being actively supervised and eligible for compliance credits
- The bulk of these “from and after” cases are supervised by the superior court probation department (66%)

Strong Supervision Practice



- Pew Trusts Issue Brief September 25, 2018 cites MA Probation as a significantly lower contributor to prison population due to revocation compared to other states. Link:
<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2018/09/probation-and-parole-systems-marked-by-high-stakes-missed-opportunities>
- Council on State Governments Justice Center Brief *Confined and Costly* June 2019 ranked MA last nationally for supervision violations leading to state prison admissions. Link:
<https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/confined-costly/>
- [This study looked at both Probation and Parole](#)

Community Justice Support Centers



- First developed as an alternative to incarceration in 1996 to support Massachusetts Sentencing Commission sentencing guidelines for intermediate sanctions (alternative to incarceration)
- Statutory authority allows for use by the Correctional system as a step down or day programming for inmates, and for use by the parole board for programming support for parolees.

Community Justice Approach

Defined

- *Community justice is a strategic method of crime reduction and prevention, which builds or enhances **partnerships** within communities. Community justice policies confront crime and delinquency through proactive, problem-solving practices aimed at prevention, control, reduction and reparation of the harm crime has caused (American Probation and Parole Association).*
 - Build Partnerships
 - Move from institutions to community
 - Focus on problem solving

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice



SENTENCING & CORRECTIONS

ISSUES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

SEPTEMBER 1999

PAPERS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SESSIONS ON SENTENCING AND CORRECTIONS
No. 3

Incorporating Restorative and Community Justice Into American Sentencing and Corrections

by Lorenz Kurki

Programs based on restorative and community justice principles have proliferated in the United States over the past decade simultaneously with tough-on-crime initiatives like three-strikes, truth-in-sentencing, and mandatory minimum laws. Restorative justice and community justice represent new ways of thinking about crime. The theories underlying restorative justice suggest that government should surrender its monopoly over responses to crime to those most directly affected—the victim, the offender, and the community. Community justice redefines the roles and goals of criminal justice agencies to include a broader mission—to prevent crime, address local social problems and conflicts, and involve neighborhood residents in planning and decisionmaking. Both restorative and community justice are based on the premise that communities will be strengthened if local citizens participate in responding to crime, and both envision responses tailored to the preferences and needs of victims, communities, and offenders.

In contrast to this bottom-up approach, recent changes in sentencing law are premised on retributive ideas about punishing wrongdoers and on the desirability of controlling risk, increasing public safety, and reducing sentencing disparities. Restorative and community justice goals of achieving appropriate, individualized dispositions often conflict with the retributive goal of imposing certain, consistent, proportionate sentences.

There are many ways to resolve this normative conflict. Restorative and community justice initiatives could continue to confine their efforts to juvenile offenders and people who commit minor crimes. This seems unlikely, as these approaches are expanding rapidly and winning many new supporters who want to extend their application. Alternatively, retributive sentencing laws could be revised or narrowed. But this too seems unlikely in the near term. How precisely the two divergent trends will be reconciled remains to be seen. Nevertheless, it seems



DIRECTORS' MESSAGE

It is by now a commonplace that the number of people under criminal justice supervision in this country has reached a record high. As a result, the sentencing policies driving that number, and the field of corrections, where the consequences are felt, have acquired an unprecedented salience. It is a salience defined more by issues of magnitude, complexity, and expense than by any consensus about future directions.

Are sentencing policies, as implemented through correctional programs and practices, achieving their intended purposes? Is expressed in the movement to eliminate indeterminate sentencing and limit judicial discretion, on the one hand, and to radically restructure our retributive system of justice, on the other, the purposes seem contradictory, rooted in conflicting values. The lack of consensus on where sentencing and corrections should be headed is thus no surprise.

Because sentencing and corrections policies have such major consequences—for the allocation of government resources and, more fundamentally and profoundly, for the quality of justice in this country and the safety of its citizens—the National Institute of Justice and the Corrections Program Office (CPO) of the Office of Justice Programs felt it opportune to explore them in depth. Through a series of Executive Sessions on Sentencing and Corrections, begun

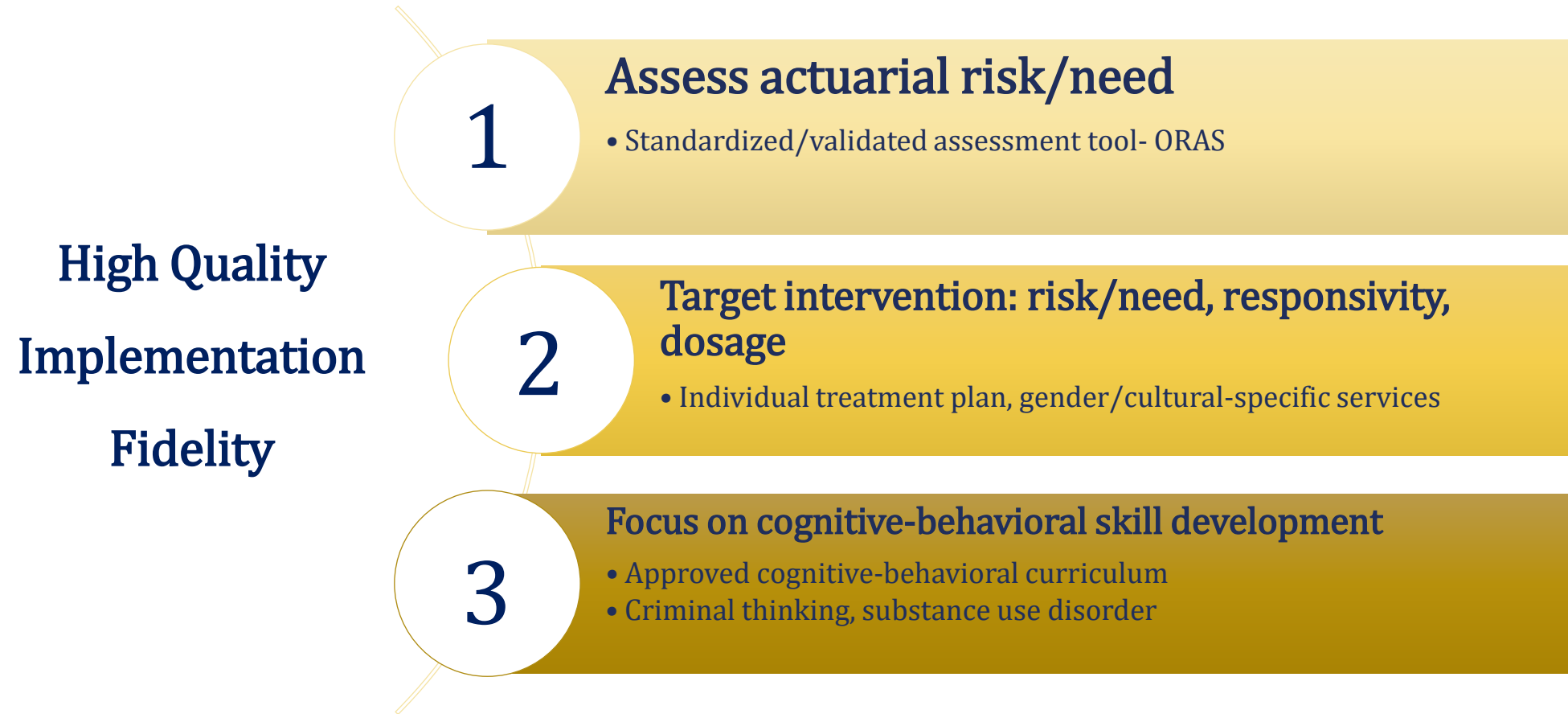
CONTINUED ...

RESEARCH IN BRIEF





HOW? Support Centers Incorporate EBPs



Source: Crime and Justice Institute and National Institute of Corrections,
Principle of Effective Intervention, 2004, 2009.



How? Rigorous EBP Implementation

Table 4. Number of OCC Programs in Inventory

| | 2018 | | 2023 | |
|--|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| Highest Rated (scientifically supported) | 31 | 35.6% | 26 | 37.1% |
| Second-Highest Rated (promising) | 25 | 28.7% | 34 | 48.6% |
| Not Rated | 27 | 31.0% | 10 | 14.3% |
| Insufficient Evidence | 4 | 4.6% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 87 | 100.0% | 70 | 100.0% |

Results First Program Inventory

Used Technical Assistance from Public Safety Performance Project at the Pew-MacArthur Trusts to match programs with available research about those programs

Legislative Intent



- Fiscal Year 2012 Outside Section 189
- *The commission shall investigate the feasibility of developing an application for technical assistance from nationally recognized criminal justice reform programs with a data driven approach in order to develop bipartisan legislation that would reduce corrections spending and utilize the savings to reduce crime, strengthen public safety and fund other budget priorities; provided, however, that the commission shall give priority in applying for technical assistance to that which comes at no cost to the commonwealth.*

Legislative Intent-Continued

- 0339-1003

For the office of community corrections and performance-based contracts for the operation of community corrections centers provided further, that the executive director of the office of community corrections may make funds available from this item for rehabilitative pilot programs that incorporate evidence-based corrections practices . . .



How? Rigorous EBP Implementation



PhD Level Researchers lead teams of **Implementation Support** Specialists in activities focused on improving Risk, Need, Responsivity

- Inter Rater Reliability of Assessment
- Treatment Matching
- Cognitive Behavioral Treatment Delivery

Metrics

- 12 sites engaged
- 87 staff completed RNR training
- 288 cases reviewed
- 82 groups monitored
- 19 interventions made

How? Rigorous EBP Implementation



Supports/ Interventions-The examples include:

- Risk-Needs Assessment Checklist that requires staff to pay attention to key RNA administration points pre-administration, during administration and post administration. This checklist forces staff to stop and review these key points to make sure they were paying attention and also making sound decisions.
- Treatment Planning Checklist that requires staff to pay attention to key treatment planning practices, like matching needs, addressing responsivity and using person-centered language in treatment plans.
- Risk-Needs Assessment Scoring Reminder that reminds staff of key scoring information on the RNA.

Support Center Community Advisory Board (CAB): comprised of 8 people with (past) lived experience with the MA criminal legal system – experience includes probation, incarceration, wrongful conviction & exoneration.... and some folks have had both state and federal involvement. The CAB has (among other things):

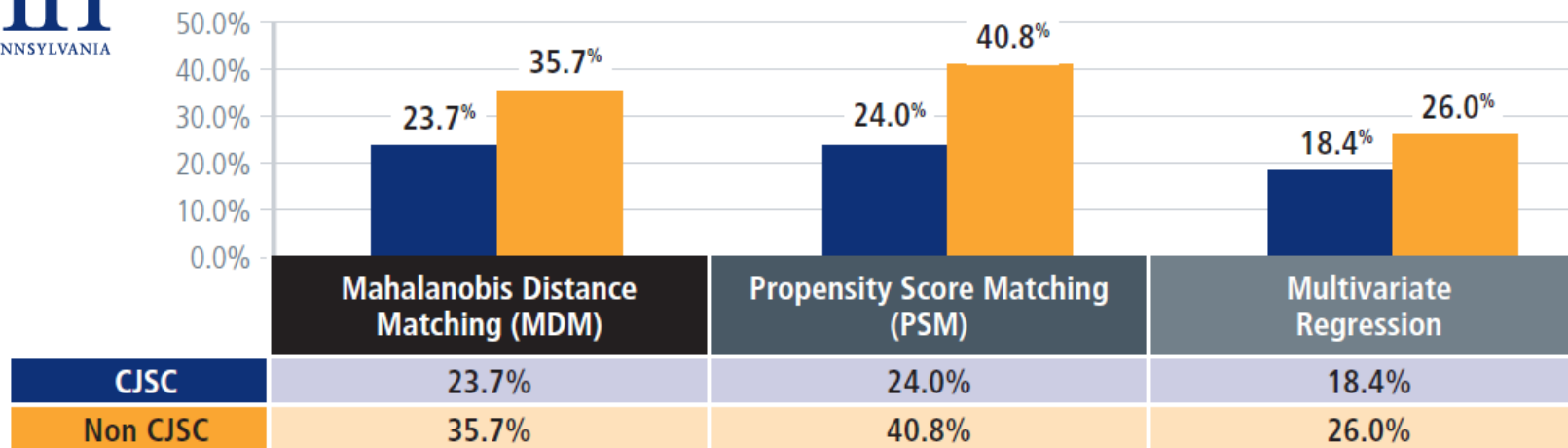
- reviewed CBT curriculum and made recommendations for changes to exercises
- reviewed center handbooks and gave recommendations on modifying language, restructuring formatting, ways to enhance engagement,
- reviewed de-identified treatment plans and gave feedback on ways to improve language
- reviewed orientation processes & recognition ceremonies and gave recommendations on ways to enhance engagement with and recognition of participants in these processes

How? Rigorous EBP Implementation



2018 cohort saw 26-36% lower recidivism rates than 2013.

Estimated Recidivism Rate Among 2018 CJSC Treatment Groups & Non CJSC Comparison Groups



Conclusion

This analysis provides compelling evidence that CJSCs are reducing recidivism for the justice-involved individuals they serve. The research team did not find this effect for the less EBP oriented 2013 program. **This finding was consistent with the overall research hypothesis and supports the principle that program monitoring and implementation with fidelity to EBP produces better outcomes for participants.** The earlier findings also serve as further evidence that the results reflect the program's effect and are not due to a limitation of the analysis techniques used.



University of Pennsylvania
**Crime and Justice
Policy Lab**

WHAT? Community Justice Support Centers provide SUPPORT



- Clients at high risk for recidivism require more structure than low-risk
- Actuarial Risk Need Assessment determines appropriate CBT dosage
- Very High Risk = 250+ hours
High Risk = 100-150 hours
Low Risk = minimal intervention

CBT to address decision making and substance use disorder

Education

Employment counseling

Referral to community resources

Random drug and alcohol screening

Community service

Sources: Crime and Justice Institute: *Implementing Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Community Corrections*, Second Edition, 2009.

Dosage Probation: *Rethinking the Structure of Probation Sentences*, 2014.

Treatment Dosage and the Risk Principle: *A Refinement and Extension*, Makarios, Sperber, Latessa, 2014.

Statutory Pathways to Support Center



Supervision- Court Order Required

Pretrial Services

Pretrial Treatment with consent

Intensive Supervision

Probation Officer Referral

Voluntary- Walk-in or referral (Ralph Gants Project)

Reentry

Probation



The
**RALPH
GANTS**
Project

If you have been formerly incarcerated and need some help, you can meet with a Re-entry Services Coordinator to get:



A backpack
with a re-entry
care package



Access to
transportation
resources



Assistance
with
MassHealth,
SNAP, or other
public benefits



Help with a
state ID



Assistance
with
transitional
housing or
accessing
other housing
resources



The
**RALPH
GANTS**
Project

Re-entry Services Coordinators



Barnstable

•Allyssa Donahue



Woburn

•Colin Reardon



Taunton

•Edna Issac



Lowell

•Eric Velazquez



Framingham

•Alia Brown



Pittsfield

•Jana Easterwood



Brockton

•JC Anderson



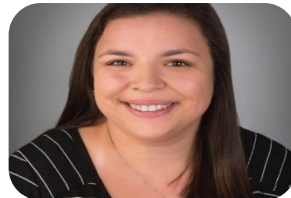
Northampton

•Katelyn Owen



Quincy

•Keishawn Binion



Boston

•Kristina Dias



Fitchburg

•Kyra Celata



Springfield

•Nancy Herrera



Worcester

•Sarah Erlich



Haverhill

•Wesley Smith

In FY25, Community Justice Support Centers helped



580
(60.4%)

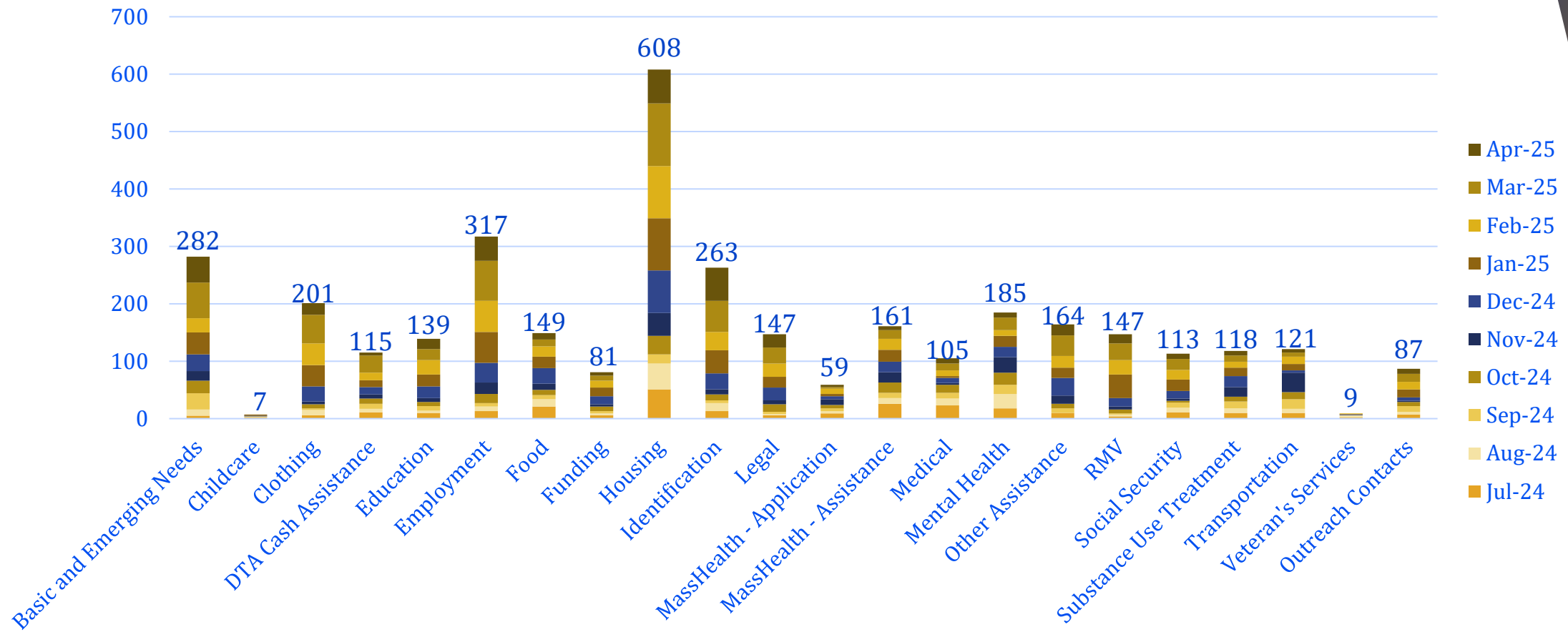
IST, Pretrial Treatment,
and Pretrial Services
participants discharged
as of April 2025 **avoid a
period of incarceration**

Apr 2025 Ralph Gants Voluntary Participation



100 voluntary participants
engaged in programming

176 voluntary participants
engaged in case management
only



LIFE AFTER THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

One Berkshire County man was behind bars 'crawling' through life. Now, he says, he walks proudly thanks to the Pittsfield Community Justice Support Center

By Matt Martinez, The Berkshire Eagle Jan 23, 2023



Rene Choquette has been attending the Pittsfield Community Justice Support Center for over two years and is very proud of his accomplishments.
BEN GARVER — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Rene Choquette didn't always feel like he could stand on his own two feet.



Fully back open for business in new space, Springfield's Community Justice Support Center to provide new leases on life

Published: Oct. 26, 2022, 5:56 p.m.



Joe Johnson
Support Center



By [Stephanie Barry](#) | sbarry@repub.com



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Management of Shared Resources



- Community Justice Support Centers are intended to be a shared resource
- Criminal Justice Reform act of 2018 included supports for housing for those involved in the criminal legal system and increased access to behavioral health services, recommendations also found in the Justice Reinvestment Initiative conducted by the Council of State Governments at the request of the three branches in 2016 and 2017.

Behavioral Health Initiative for the Justice Involved (BH-JI)



Behavioral Health Initiative for the Justice Involved (BH-JI)

- The legislature has funded investments in expanding access to behavioral healthcare through a Trial Court partnership with MassHealth called the Behavioral Health Initiative for Justice Involved BH-JI . Justice Involved includes people leaving jail or prison within six months ; people who have recently left jail or prison within a year; people on parole; people on probation), This initiative connects people with behavioral health services and social supports in the community.
- As of January 31, 2025, 10,917 referrals have been made, and 7,574 participants enrolled to date. It is a voluntary program, so people can decline. MassHealth states the engagement rate of 69% (percent referred vs percent enrolled) is very high for this population.
- Bi-Monthly meetings with all the providers, stakeholders, referral sources, MassHealth, ForHealth consulting, DPH, DMH, CPCS, etc.

Housing Support



- Through short term supports for sober housing (3 months) and longer term (6+ months) of transitional housing through a contract the Trial Court has with Community Resources for Justice (now 5 locations across the state), for the last quarter of FY 2023 the Trial Court funded housing for a monthly average between 500-600 people. Approximately 160 Mass Alliance of Sober Housing (MASH) certified sober houses across the state participate. In August of 2024, the Commissioner extended the length of stay to 3 months for the state appropriation (it was previously two months), to compensate for the exhaustion of the Project North housing support (there is sufficient federal grant funding to continue the Project North navigators effort, but the housing money was utilized in 2 years) .
- So far for Calendar year 2025, we are supporting between an average of 500-600 people a month (**for April 2025 we supported 568 people across both pathways**) While the funding comes to the trial court and is administered by Probation, it is available for all justice involved persons- on supervision, releasing from prison without supervision, pre-trial, sentenced to probation, on parole, etc. All our criminal justice partners have access to this housing support. Steering committee meetings occur every other week, usually on Wednesdays.

Accountability



- Community Justice Support Centers provides an annual report to the committees on ways and means regarding utilization and outcomes
- UMASS Chan fidelity monitoring/implementation support
- Budget Accountability
- Performance Based contracting (CJSC model led to partnership with ROCA for Pay for Success federal grant)
- Improved coordination of reentry through shared resources
- Implementing statutory and budgetary language with fidelity