THE PHILADELPHIA ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT’S INTERMEDIATE PUNISHMENT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM: IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

PROJECT CLOSE-OUT REPORT

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INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

Since their introduction in California, Britain, and Canada in the mid-1960's, community service programs have become one of the most widely used and accepted additions to the range of intermediate punishments in criminal justice. In addition to extensive local and state-wide use, particularly in jurisdictions such as California, New Jersey and North Carolina, recent years have also witnessed the formation of both state and national membership organizations dedicated to the improvement and marketing of community service programming.

Despite such extensive use and professional and popular acceptance, however, remarkably little rigorous evaluation research has been conducted on such programs. As a result, with the exception of studies of very specialized programs such as McDonald’s 1986 study of New York’s Vera project, the almost 30 years of experience in this country has left us very little better informed about a variety of crucial operational and impact issues, and even about important differences in specific treatment interventions and supervision and surveillance techniques that are undoubtedly masked under the generic label of a “community service program”.

The absence of sound evaluative information about community service programming has been offset by an abundance of anecdotal and impressionistic claims of beneficial results on a broad spectrum of measures, ranging from cost-effectiveness to diversionary and recidivism impacts. Scientifically credible research literature to support claims that such programs have served as alternatives to incarceration, reduced overcrowding, or reduced recidivism, however, is virtually non-existent. Likewise, without the foregoing types of information, and in the face of widespread opposite fears and conclusions about net-widening, related claims of cost-effectiveness for community service programs as a whole are obviously premature and meaningless in most instances on the basis of simple short-term program cost figures and [often exaggerated] estimates of the monetary value of the labor provided.

As important as the lack of such impact data for the development and refinement of policy and programs in this field, is a comparable dearth of studies that have focused
upon the implementation details of community service programs. Without the results of such preliminary process evaluations and evaluability assessments, however, we will continue to lack essential baseline information about exactly how community service programs function, how faithfully they adhere to design expectations, and which processes and program elements might be reasonably thought to be responsible for whatever outcomes are eventually measured and reported.

In their article “Evaluating Program Implementation”, Leithwood and Montgomery (1980) stress the importance of implementation studies for building a sound information base for subsequent assessment of program outcomes, by first assuring a thorough specification and description of the processes that might promote or hinder the production of those outcomes. As they note, evaluation of the nature and degree of implementation can serve a variety of accountability and management functions, including determining:

- Whether and to what extent the program has been put into practice according to design and action plans.
- The feasibility of implementing such programs, and identifying conditions under which implementation is likely to succeed, including the capabilities required of the implementers.
- Whether policy/program changes are warranted in light of unintended effects.
- Whether and when the program has been sufficiently well implemented to support a more extensive outcome assessment of its effects on key dimensions such as recidivism and cost-effectiveness.

As an extension of the utility of implementation studies from a management and an accountability perspective, one of the principal additional benefits is a comprehensive and systematic mapping and documentation of the program under study, and production of a corresponding policies and procedures manual detailing what might be thought of as the “five W’s” of program definition - Who does What, Where, When, and Why? Generation and refinement of such a manual serves a number of essential purposes. It focuses attention on gaps in the ongoing planning and adaptation needs for the program; it provides an empirically derived descriptive baseline of goals and process information
against which to monitor and evaluate program outcomes as well as subsequent reforms and refinements; it serves as a vital training and orientation tool for new staff and clients, respectively, and as a vehicle for communicating the intent and nature of the program to the courts, service agencies, and other interested stakeholders; finally, it may serve as a model for other community service programs across the State that may interested in shifting from the typically oral tradition of program information to the more formal, written approach that such a manual represents.

COMMUNITY SERVICE IN THE PHILADELPHIA PROBATION DEPARTMENT

EARLY IPCS PROGRAM HISTORY

Grant moneys to support the program on which the current project is focused -- the Philadelphia Probation Department’s Intermediate Punishment Community Service [IPCS] program -- were awarded by the PCCD in mid-1993. Prior to that time, however, community service had been a part of the Probation Department’s operations in a variety of different contexts. A brief overview of this background history is important to understanding how the current action-research project operated and the results that are reported in the remainder of this report.

General community service activities in the Probation Department.

For many years prior to the IPCS program, the criminal courts, acting largely at their own discretion, had imposed community service sentences as a condition of probation. To handle these cases, the Department had developed over the years an array of placement sites, together with informal policies and procedures for assignment and supervision of probationers sentenced to perform community service. In recent years, although supervision of these kinds of sentences continues to be part of the routine duties of non-specialized probation officers, responsibility for developing and maintaining
placement opportunities, probationer assignments, and monitoring of community service performance has devolved to the Department’s Community Resources unit.

The earlier use of community service by the sentencing courts in Philadelphia, and the Probation Department’s efforts to accommodate that practice, had mixed implications for the more systematic, Probation-initiated program development approach taken by the current project with the IPCS program funded by PCCD. On the one hand, the placement sites and experience with community service already available within the Community Resources unit were an obviously valuable resource to be tapped. On the other hand, the largely unstructured, discretionary imposition of community service requirements by sentencing judges had undoubtedly established an informal position for the community service order in the overall tariff of criminal sanctions. To the extent that the earlier practice fixed that position as an add-on to routine probation, more so than as an alternative to incarceration, which has been the case in the vast majority of other jurisdictions in which community service has been introduced in this way, the task faced when seeking to introduce the latter, diversionary type of program obviously becomes more difficult from the outset.

The Pennsylvania Prison Society Program

A second important part of the community service background to the present project occurred in April, 1993. At that time the Probation Department inherited responsibility for the supervision of offenders participating in a community service program being operated until then under contract from the City to the Pennsylvania Prison Society, a non-profit prisoner-assistance organization located in Philadelphia. When funding for the Prison Society program was discontinued, the Probation Department absorbed it by initiating its own Community Service Program [CSP], transferring a supervisor and two probation officers from other units. The new program soon added a third officer as it assumed responsibility for all of the cases who had been under the active supervision of Prison Society staff, as well as offenders who had outstanding community service obligations in the Pennsylvania Prison Society program, but who were being supervised by one or another unit of the Probation Department.
As with the experience accommodating the imposition of community service by individual sentencing judges, association with the Pennsylvania Prison Society program also had mixed implications for the development of the IPCS program. On the one hand, the Prison Society had designed and operated its community service program as a means of obtaining early parole release for inmates already serving time in the Philadelphia Prison. As such, its caseload created an instant critical mass of clients for the Probation Department’s new CSP, as well as a set of operating procedures and relationships with other involved court officials, upon which the CSP, and very shortly thereafter, the IPCS staff, could build. On the other hand, the circumstances surrounding the take-over of the Pennsylvania Prison Society program, which included rumors and allegations of mismanagement and lack of program integrity, together with the Society’s more general image in the City as a liberal, offender-oriented reform group, may have contributed to a greater-than-usual degree of skepticism and transferred hostility by judges and other key officials towards the very concept of community service, and towards the CSP’s early efforts to tighten things up and expand.

The IPCS Program [prior to the present project]

Within a couple of months of taking over the Pennsylvania Prison Society program’s caseload, the Probation Department secured funding from PCCD to refine and expand the CSP approach to community service. In July, 1993 a first-year funding period began for the IPCS program. Some changes had been made prior to this time, including, most notably, a more proactive approach to acquiring cases. Under the new system, program staff arranged for prison officials to forward daily commitment forms directly to the program, so that they could identify and initiate action towards program admission on their own, rather than relying exclusively on referrals from the Public Defender’s office, as had been the practice under the old Prison Society approach.

With the foregoing major exception, the CSP/ICPS program functioned essentially as a relocated version of the Prison Society’s early parole release community service program until May of 1994, when a new supervisor and two additional probation officers were formally re-assigned to the program, to bring staffing up to the level set out in the
PCCD funding request. At about the same time, a series of preliminary informal meetings occurred between program staff, departmental officials, and criminal justice faculty at Temple University. As a result, it was decided to seek a small grant that would allow Temple to work with the IPCS staff and other officials to strengthen the Department’s internal capacity for program development and evaluation, with respect to the IPCS program specifically, but with an eye towards others in the future.

Funding for the current implementation/evaluability assessment project was awarded in September of 1994. After a short delay for the City to set up necessary subcontractual arrangements, work on the project officially began in November, 1994.

**FOCUS OF THE CURRENT PROJECT**

As indicated above, when the action-research project on which the current report began, grant monies to support an Intermediate Punishment Community Service [IPCS] program within the Philadelphia Probation Department had already been awarded by the PCCD. Due to the delays in staff reassignment and grant start-up, however, the IPCS program was still very much a work-in-progress, having only recently been funded, and even more recently fully launched by the Probation Department. Consequently, the ancillary proposal to conduct the present implementation and evaluability assessment was intentionally modest in scope and limited in focus. With an eye towards an eventually extended inquiry into more long-term comparative outcomes, a logically prior critical need at this early stage, during what was viewed as an early program development, adaptation and stabilization period, was thought to be an action-research based project, in which program staff, departmental management, and external researchers would collaborate in the development, implementation, and evaluability assessment of the IPCS program. The present report describes the activities and lessons of that one-year project.

Structured around a series of regular monthly meetings of the project team of IPCS staff, researchers, and departmental supervisory staff, and more frequent meetings among staff and between them and a part-time on-site research assistant, the current project had several aims. Overall, they involved assisting program staff in the definition, refinement, and documentation of the mission and corresponding policies and procedures of the
program, mapping the flow of cases and information, and designing, testing, and adapting data recording instruments for the various stages of eligibility screening, intake and program participation, and termination.

Via a process of individual and group initiatives by the IPCS staff, prompted by and/or debated in project team discussions, and by subsequent implementation trials, the objective was to arrive at point a at which the team felt that the program had reached a sufficient level of development and stability that it could fairly and meaningfully be subjected to outcome evaluation. As of the end of December, 1995, this point had not yet been reached, for a variety of reasons having mainly to do with caseflow problems, but including also a need for further refinement of data collection protocols during the program participation and termination phases of an offender’s involvement with the IPCS program; deciding whether and how the program should handle direct-sentence cases or otherwise be expanded to bring case-load sizes up to more sustainable levels; and the related issue of determining final staffing levels for the IPCS program. These issues are discussed in more detail later in the report.

**DATA SOURCES**

The major sources of data for the present report included all formal and informal documents generated during the planning and implementation phases of the program. These were reviewed in order to establish a baseline of intended goals and practices, as well as changes introduced at different stages of the program’s stabilization period. Written materials were clarified and supplemented by regular and specially scheduled group meetings and interviews with all agency and program staff involved in the different stages of the early planning and design phases of the program’s development.

Data to describe the actual operation of the program were drawn from the individual case processing and management files maintained by program probation officers and supervisors, and from the aggregate MIS information compiled for program monitoring and grant reporting purposes by the Department’s Planning and Evaluation Unit. Record data were supplemented and validated through direct observations [e.g., in
case review and program staff meetings], group discussions and regular individual interviews with program and management staff.

**IPCS MISSION STATEMENT**

One of the earliest topics of discussion for the project team was the formulation of a general mission statement that captured the most important aims of the program staff and departmental overseers. Four essential themes emerged. Given the City’s long history and continuing problem of jail overcrowding, the program’s first priority is to serve as an alternative to incarceration in the Philadelphia Prison complex. This diversionary goal, however, is qualified by concerns that it should be pursued in ways that do not result in unacceptable costs to the system, or in higher levels or more serious types of recidivism in the community, or in a substitute sanction that fails to hold offenders sufficiently accountable for their offenses. Combining these different elements, the following general statement was adopted:

The mission of the IPCS program of the Philadelphia Adult Probation and Parole Department is to provide the City’s courts and correctional system with a program of sanctions, supervision, and service that:

- Serves as a cost-efficient and safe alternative to incarceration in the Philadelphia Prison system
- Holds criminal defendants accountable for their offenses by requiring them to provide something of value to the community in the form of unpaid labor
- Protects society by controlling recidivism of participating offenders
IPCS PROGRAM -- POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

TARGET POPULATIONS

Within the framework of the foregoing general mission statement, another priority for the project team was to address the questions of appropriate target populations, program eligibility criteria, and corresponding screening and selection procedures. Although preliminary indications were available from earlier grant proposals and observation of ongoing practice, the newly constituted IPCS management and staff team had not yet firmly put their own particular stamp on the IPCS program by developing a systematic and formal set of policies and procedures to cover issues such as these.

We have talked so far about the IPCS program as if it were a unitary entity. However, the bulk of the developmental work of the project team and program staff, and the exclusive focus of the evaluability assessment, concentrated upon two clearly separable components of the program, each with its own distinguishable target population. The first of these was the Early Parole [EP] component, in which participation in the IPCS program was offered as a means of obtaining early parole release for inmates already serving time in the Philadelphia Prison. This part of the program was based upon the program taken over from the Pennsylvania Prison Society. A second [VOP] component, however, initiated in June, 1994, expanded the program's focus to include probationers/parolees facing charges of violating conditions of their supervision, for whom participation in the IPCS program was offered as a means of avoiding being committed to the Prison as a result of the court's disposition of the violation proceedings.\(^1\) Although the overall goals and many of the elements of the program are the same for the EP and VOP components, for reasons that will become obvious, it is necessary in describing and evaluating other aspects of the IPCS

\(^1\) A third target population that was of interest to the program staff from the outset consisted of offenders facing a likely prison sentence, not for a technical probation or parole violation, but for conviction for a criminal offense. Program staff were initially discouraged from developing plans in this "direct-sentence" [DS] area by senior officials in the Department, so that they could focus attention on the thorough development and implementation of the EP and VOP components. Interest by program staff in the DS population became stronger towards the very end of the project team period, as it became increasingly certain that the caseload from the other two components would not be sufficient to continue to support the existing complement of staff. This issue will be discussed at more length later in the report.
program, such as screening procedures and measuring its diversionary impact, to consider them separately.

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND CASE SCREENING**

Admission to either component of the IPCS program occurs only after the case has satisfied a lengthy list of eligibility criteria, applied by program staff members in a multi-stage screening process. The major steps and decision criteria in that process vary somewhat from the EP to the VOP components. For both groups, however, the extended project team and staff discussions in which different options and approaches were ironed out were guided by a relatively consistent set of shared concerns. Chief among them were the exclusion of violent and heavily drug-involved offenders, as well as mental health and other problems for which a more intensive and/or treatment-oriented program might be more appropriate. A second important set of exclusionary conditions included whether there were active detainers, open cases, or other procedural factors that would unduly complicate or otherwise counter-indicate acceptance.

A further area of concern in the development of IPCS policies and procedures was the design of data processing protocols and instruments that would simultaneously, and as economically as possible, serve the needs of individual case management as well as program monitoring and evaluation. Because of its importance to the eventual evaluability and accountability of the program, this aspect of the overall program-development enterprise consumed significant staff time and was revisited perhaps more than any other issue during numerous project team meetings. Although instrument design and data processing issues are vitally important at every stage of the IPCS program, attention was focused during this project most extensively on the screening and eligibility review stages, and in particular, for the EP component of the program. This selective emphasis was dictated by a number of factors. First, as a practical matter, it made sense to focus initially on the earliest parts of the IPCS process, to make sure as soon as possible that the program was identifying and selecting all of the types of cases it intended to include. Second, because low numbers were a concern of program and agency staff from the outset, as they so often are in the early stages of program development in criminal justice,
it facilitated monitoring of the impact of different exclusion criteria and procedures on case attrition at different stages of the screening process. Third, and perhaps most importantly for the purposes of the present action-research project, it served as a model by which research staff could assist program personnel to develop the necessary skills and capacity to extend the task on their own into other parts of the program’s operations.

**SCREENING FOR THE EARLY PAROLE COMPONENT**

After numerous modifications over the life of the present project, the screening criteria and processing steps for the EP component are summarized in the EP Flowchart appended to the present report. The case-management/data collection instrument on which details of this process are captured is reproduced immediately below.

[INSERT EP SCREENING FORM ABOUT HERE]

In narrative form, the process is as follows:

**STEP #1: Review Prison Commitment**

Prison Commitments are mailed from the Parole unit to the IPCS unit twice each week. An IPCS officer retrieves the commitments from the mail and sorts them in order to match possible duplicate photo numbers, which is an indication of more than one case per candidate. Then, the officer organizes the commitments numerically in order to make a computer search for corresponding court histories at a later time, and assigns a numerically coded Early Parole screening form to each commitment.

The officer reviews all commitments received and applies IPCS Program eligibility criteria to each case. If one or more of the criteria is found applicable, a candidate is declared ineligible. The appropriate decision and reasons for ineligibility are recorded on the screening form. Commitments for eligible candidates and all screening forms are retained by the officer, and commitments for ineligible candidates are discarded.

The prison commitment review step is completed in one day, once each week for all commitments received that week.
IPCS EARLY PAROLE SCREENING PROCESS

Client's name ____________________________

PP # ____________________________

Case # ____________________________

STEP I. Commitment Review (check all that apply)
☐ Serving consecutive sentences
☐ Early time/good time too close
☐ Serving state or aggregate sentence
☐ Has drug condition of parole
☐ Has psychiatric condition of parole
☐ Current conviction =
  ☐ murder ☐ rape ☐ arson ☐ robbery ☐ kidnap
  ☐ IDST ☐ sex offenses ☐ agg. assault ☐ stalking
☐ Weekend sentence

Step I Eligibility Decision
☐ ELIGIBLE ☐ INELIGIBLE

Decision date _______ / _______ / _______  P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

STEP II. Criminal History Check (check all that apply)
☐ Open bills ☐ Active detainers
☐ Upcoming VOP hearing ☐ Serving state sentence
☐ 3 or more drug convictions w/in last 3 years
☐ Pattern of violent crime
Prior: ☐ murder ☐ rape ☐ arson ☐ kidnap
  ☐ IDST ☐ Other sex offense ☐ stalking

Step II Eligibility Decision
☐ ELIGIBLE ☐ INELIGIBLE

Decision date _______ / _______ / _______  P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

STEP III. Prison Interview (check all that apply)
☐ Receiving psychotropic drugs
☐ History of mental health problems
☐ Awaiting release to inpatient program
☐ Not interested in IPCS program
☐ Has major drug use history
☐ Failed to appear for interview twice
☐ Physically or verbally abusive during interview
☐ Non-responsive
☐ No longer in custody of Phila. prison system
☐ Has no address
☐ Awaiting release to other program
☐ No phone

Step III Eligibility Decision
☐ ELIGIBLE ☐ INELIGIBLE

Decision date _______ / _______ / _______  P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

Step IV. Home Visit (check all that apply)
☐ Address does not exist
☐ Occupant does not know client
☐ Occupant will not allow client to live at residence
☐ No phone at residence

Step IV Eligibility Decision
☐ ELIGIBLE ☐ INELIGIBLE

Decision date _______ / _______ / _______  P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

STEP V. Group Assessment (check all that apply)

Step V Eligibility Decision
☐ INELIGIBLE

Override reason(s): _______________________________________

___________________________________________________________

☐ ELIGIBLE

Date sent to PD.: _______ / _______ / _______

mm dd yy

STEP VI. Court Outcomes (check all that apply)

☐ Case Rejected
  ☐ By PD - existing petition approved
  ☐ By DA
    (Reasons: ____________________________)

  ☐ By Judge
    (Reasons: ____________________________)

☐ Case Accepted

Ct. decision date: _______ / _______ / _______

mm dd yy

Min release date: _______ / _______ / _______

mm dd yy

Set release date: _______ / _______ / _______

mm dd yy
STEP #2: Review Court History

The reviewing officer accesses the computerized court histories of eligible candidates and applies eligibility criteria to each one. If one or more of the criteria is found applicable, a candidate is declared ineligible. The appropriate decisions and reasons for ineligibility are recorded on the screening form retained by the officer. All other forms for ineligible candidates are discarded. The officer generates print-outs of court histories for eligible candidates, attaches them to the corresponding commitments and screening forms, and arranges them by photo number.

Next, the officer checks the computer to obtain the location of each eligible candidate and records the institution name and number on the corresponding commitments. The officer logs the names and photo numbers of the eligible candidates in the Prison Interview Logbook.

All forms for ineligible candidates are stored in a central file located within the IPCS unit.

The court history review step is completed within 48 hours after the completion of the review of prison commitments.

STEP #3: Prison Interview

IPCS officers randomly select files of eligible candidates from the central file to prepare to interview those candidates at their prison locations. Upon approval from the IPCS supervisor, IPCS officers conduct prison interviews using the following forms [copies of which are appended to this report].

1. Prison Commit
2. Court History
3. Release of Information
4. Participant Contract
5. Initial Interview
6. Field Request (obtains supervisor’s authorization to conduct the interview)
7. Early Parole screening form
Preceding the actual interview, the interviewing officer instructs the candidate to sign a Release of Information form. Next, IPCS eligibility criteria are applied to each candidate interview and if one or more of the criteria is applicable a candidate is declared ineligible. The appropriate decision and reasons for ineligibility are recorded on the screening form. All forms for ineligible candidates except the screening forms are discarded. Candidates who are eligible at this step sign a Participant Contract.

The interviewing officer records the interview date and the names of the ineligible candidates, with the specific reasons for their ineligibility, in the IPCS Prison Interview Logbook by the next workday. The officer retains all screening forms and forms for approved candidates.

Prison interviews are conducted within, approximately, one week after completion of the review of court histories.

**STEP #4: Home Visit**

The IPCS officer who conducts the prison interview has the option of immediately proceeding to conduct the home visit if it is convenient to the prison route. Otherwise, the IPCS supervisor assigns an officer to this task. On the workday immediately following the prison interview, the assigned officer makes phone contact in preparation for the home visit. After completing a Field Request form, the officer conducts the home visit applying IPCS Program eligibility criteria. If one or more of the criteria is applicable the candidate is declared ineligible. The appropriate decision and reasons for ineligibility are recorded on the screening form, and all forms for the ineligible candidate except the screening form are discarded. If the candidate is eligible, the officer submits the prison commit to the IPCS supervisor and submits the remaining forms to the officer who conducted the prison interview. That officer retains the forms for the IPCS group assessment meeting where the final review and screening decision is made.

The home visit is completed, approximately, three to five days after the prison interview (unless the interviewing officer completes it the same day).
STEP #5: Group Assessment

An IPCS group assessment meeting is scheduled each week. The meeting serves as a safety mechanism which provides a collective final review and approval or disapproval decision for candidates that are approved after home visits. Disapproval of a candidate at this step results from a strong consensus that the candidate is not suited for the Program. All forms for ineligible candidates except the screening forms are discarded. Forms for eligible candidates, except prison commits which are held by the IPCS supervisor, are retained on file by the officers who introduced them at the meeting. The IPCS supervisor records the names and photo numbers for the eligible candidates in the Public Defender Request Book, and immediately hand delivers the prison commitments to the Office of the Public Defender for the packaging of Parole Petitions.

Except in the case where there is already a parole petition for a candidate, the Public Defender will process the IPCS parole petitions and send copies to the District Attorney’s Office and to the Parole Unit. The Parole Unit sends copies to the appropriate case judges. The District Attorney’s Office reviews the petitions and makes recommendations which are subsequently forwarded to the appropriate judges. The judges review the petitions and approve or reject candidates for IPCS. Candidates who are approved are required to report to IPCS for orientation and intake within 72 hours after their release from prison.

SCREENING FOR THE VOP COMPONENT

STEP #1: Review of V.O.P. Summaries

and

STEP #2: Criminal History Check

(Steps 1 and 2, although conceptually separable, are combined and completed as a practical matter in a single step)

VOP summaries are mailed daily from the Violations unit to the IPCS unit. The IPCS supervisor designates one officer to routinely perform the summary review and criminal history check. In reviewing the summaries, the officer applies IPCS Program
eligibility criteria to each case. [A recently completed V.O.P. screening form that captures the different screening stages and criteria is reproduced immediately below.]

[VOP SCREENING FORM ABOUT HERE]

If one or more of the criteria is found applicable, the candidate is ineligible. In completing the criminal history check, the officer accesses the candidate’s criminal history from the computer file and applies IPCS eligibility criteria once again. If one or more of the criteria is found applicable the candidate is ineligible. The officer records all decisions and reasons for ineligibility on the V.O.P. screening form.

The reviewing officer completes summary reviews and criminal history checks each day. The officer retains summaries for ineligible candidates, and forwards summaries and screening forms for eligible candidates to the IPCS supervisor within 24 hours. The supervisor’s review serves as a second clinical assessment of the likelihood that the candidate faces imprisonment.

**STEP #3: Group Assessment**

The IPCS unit meets each week to assess the eligibility of candidates who are approved through Steps 1 and 2 of the screening process. The V.O.P. summaries are subjected to a group review as a safety measure before advancing the candidate to the next step in the screening process. Disapproval of a candidate at this step is generally the result of one or more of the following determinations:

a.) The case is too far past expiration of the candidate’s probation period and/or imprisonment is improbable.

b.) The candidate will probably receive a state sentence.

c.) The candidate has drug problems that should be treated in an inpatient program.

The IPCS supervisor hand delivers approved V.O.P. summaries to the V.O.P. officers for further review within 48 hours after the group assessment. V.O.P. summaries for ineligible candidates are discarded.
IPCS V.O.P. SCREENING PROCESS

Client's name

PP#

Case#

STEP I. Review of V.O.P. Summaries (check all that apply)

STEP II. Criminal History

☐ Has open bill(s)
☐ P.O. is recommending new probation
☐ P.O. is recommending continuation of probation

Has prior or current conviction:

☐ murder
☐ agg. assault
☐ arson/related offenses
☐ assault by a life prisoner
☐ voluntary manslaughter
☐ assault by a prisoner
☐ rape
☐ IDSI
☐ statutory rape
☐ indecent assault
☐ theft by extortion
☐ robbery
☐ burglary F-1
☐ stalking
☐ kidnapping
☐ escape

☐ Has three or more drug related convictions within the last three years
☐ Is incarcerated serving sentence(s)

Steps I & II Eligibility Decision

☐ ELIGIBLE
☐ INELIGIBLE

Decision date ___/___/____ P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

STEP III. Group Assessment (check all that apply)

Step III Eligibility Decision

☐ INELIGIBLE

Override reason(s):____________________

☐ ELIGIBLE

Decision date ___/___/____ P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

STEP IV. Review with Probation Officer (check all that apply)

☐ No phone
☐ Is on psychotropic drugs
☐ Client is homeless
☐ P.O. wants client to be revoked and incarcerated for the following reason:

☐ Prevent New Offense
☐ Retribution
☐ Satisfy Judges Wishes
☐ Promote Compliance
☐ P.O. in fact wants client to receive a new probation

Step IV Eligibility Decision

☐ ELIGIBLE
☐ INELIGIBLE

Decision date ___/___/____ P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

STEP V. Candidate Interview (check all that apply)

☐ No phone
☐ Is on psychotropic drugs
☐ Physically or verbally abusive during interview
☐ Non responsive
☐ Not interested in IPCS program
☐ Client is homeless
☐ FTA for interview twice
☐ Major drug history

Step V Eligibility Decision

☐ ELIGIBLE
☐ INELIGIBLE

Decision date ___/___/____ P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

STEP VI. Home Contact (check all that apply)

☐ No phone
☐ Is on psychotropic drugs
☐ Occupant will not allow client to live at residence
☐ Incorrect address
☐ Nonverifiable address

Step VI Eligibility Decision

☐ ELIGIBLE
☐ INELIGIBLE

Decision date ___/___/____ P.O. ☐ ☐

mm dd yy

STEP VII. Court Outcomes (check all that apply)

☐ Case Rejected By Judge

Reasons:________________________

☐ Case Accepted By Judge

Ct. decision date: ___/___/____

Min. release date: ___/___/____

Set release date: ___/___/____

mm dd yy

mm dd yy

mm dd yy
**STEP #4: Review with Probation Officer**

The IPCS supervisor and the V.O.P. officer discuss the candidate’s eligibility applying IPCS eligibility criteria. If one or more of the criteria apply, the candidate is ineligible. If the candidate is eligible at this step and is in jail, the IPCS supervisor assigns the candidate interview to the IPCS officer who is scheduled to conduct the next Early Parole prison interview. If an eligible candidate is on the street, the supervisor assigns an IPCS officer to interview the candidate on the next scheduled office visit with the V.O.P. officer. V.O.P. summaries for ineligible candidates are discarded.

**STEP #5: Candidate Interview**

The IPCS officer conducts the interview applying IPCS eligibility criteria. The officer completes the Initial Interview form to ensure that there is sufficient information recorded on the candidate. If one or more of the criteria apply, the candidate is ineligible. All forms for ineligible candidates except the screening form are discarded.

If a candidate is eligible, the officer has the option of proceeding to make the home contact by the next workday. Otherwise, the officer submits the summary and Initial Interview form to the supervisor the next workday and completes the home contact within the next week, or the supervisor may assign another officer to the task.

**STEP #6: Home Contact**

Home contact can be made in person or by phone. The IPCS officer makes the home contact applying eligibility criteria. If one or more of the criteria apply, the candidate is ineligible and continues in prison or on the street. Information obtained from the home contact is recorded on a Field Request form and later recorded on the VOP screening form.

After completing the home contact, the officer submits the forms to the supervisor. The supervisor attaches the forms to the summaries for each eligible candidate and retains them on file until each of their V.O.P. hearings take place.
The IPCS officer attends the V.O.P. hearing with the V.O.P. officer and the candidate, and explains the IPCS Program to the judge. If the judge approves the candidate for the Program, the supervisor introduces the candidate to his/her IPCS supervising officer the same day, or schedules an appointment to do so at a later date. The V.O.P. summary becomes a part of the new client’s IPCS file. If the judge does not approve the candidate, the summary and all other forms on the candidate excepting the screening form are discarded.

INTAKE PROCESSES AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Orientation

The process of intake and program participation begins with a preliminary orientation of the client to the IPCS Program. Although prospective clients receive a brief description of the Program and client responsibilities during the interview screening stage, complete program orientation occurs on the client’s first office visit as the initial step in the intake process.

During orientation, the supervising officer follows a standard procedure which provides the client with specific information, instructions, and materials. The first requirement is the signing of the Rules of Probation and Parole form. Contained in the form are APPD’s basic rules of probation and parole as defined by the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, and with which all probationers and parolees are ordered to comply. The client reads and signs the form, and the supervising officer signs as a witness. The officer gives the client a copy, sends one copy (per each case) to the Master file, and files one copy in the client’s case file.

Next, the client is informed of the exact number of community service hours he/she is required to perform, based on a formula of 40 hours per month of jail time avoided, and of his/her upcoming community service placement interview.²

² The subject of setting policy for the number of hours of community service for different components of the program and for different offenders was discussed extensively during the earliest meetings of the IPCS project team. For an appreciation of the complexity of the issues involved, see the January 1995 memorandum from Alan Harland to the Group, appended to this report, which formed the basis for discussions from which the eventual IPCS policy on this question was decided.
The client is informed about curfew requirements, and urine screen requirements. At the discretion of the supervising officer, the client may be required to submit a urine sample as part of the orientation procedure.

Additionally, the client is given an Appointment Card which shows the date of his/her next office visit. The client is required to bring the card to each office visit so that the supervising officer may record in it the next scheduled office visit.

The client’s Street Sheet, Payment Balance Sheet, and a Community Service Inventory Sheet are initiated and filed in the IPCS Street Book.

**Intake**

The intake process extends over the first ninety days of the client’s supervision. The timeline for completing each intake item varies with each client in accordance with individual needs priorities.

The process begins with the updating of the client’s Initial Interview form which is filed in the client’s case file. Next, the supervising officer completes the client’s Risk/Needs Assessment form. The form contains categories for recording the number of convictions and revocations, and for rating the seriousness of alcohol and drug problems and other criteria that serve to classify risk. The form also lists a range of criteria that help to describe the areas and rate the degree of personal needs. Because all new IPCS clients are automatically placed under intensive supervision, the Scoring and Override section of the form is checked, and all other information required in the form is transferred from the Initial Interview form. Once completed, the form is submitted to the IPCS supervisor for signature, one copy is sent to the APPD Coding section, and one copy is filed in the client’s case file. Any conditions of the client’s probation not covered during orientation are discussed at this time.

The next and most significant step in the intake process is the client’s community service placement interview. Completion of the community service stipulation is the central aspect of the IPCS Program and, therefore, is initiated as early in the Program as possible. The client is scheduled for an interview with the Supervisor of Community Resources during which a suitable community service placement is determined and
assigned. After signing a community service contract and receiving instructions, the client is prepared to begin community service. The supervising officer completes a Community Service Inventory form on the client and files it in the Street Book.

Depending upon the individual client's needs, and as they arise, the supervising officer informs the client of the various IPCS service components and makes the appropriate referrals. Also, at the request of the client, the officer drafts a letter or completes the appropriate form to assist the client in applying to the Department of Public Assistance for services.

**Routine Supervision/Client Participation**

The standard regimen of activities and interactions between the client and supervising officer begins with establishing the frequency of office visits. Initially all clients are placed under intensive supervision and, therefore, are scheduled for weekly office visits. Each visit is recorded on the client's Street Sheet.

Urine screens, which can begin as early as the orientation session, are required of every client twice each month, initially. This frequency is reduced to once each month whenever a client submits six consecutive urine specimens that test negative for specific controlled substances. Procedurally, a Toxology Test form is attached to the specimen and forwarded for testing by the supervising officer. The officer records the date the specimen was taken, and a Toxology Test form containing the results of each urine test is filed in the officer's street book.

All clients are placed on a daily 7 p.m. curfew except when employed and the job schedule conflicts with the curfew. In this case the supervising officer adjusts the curfew to allow the client time to complete work and return to his/her residence. Officers monitor curfews by making random phone calls to the client's residence. A minimum of eight curfew checks a month per client is required until the offender has completed the community service obligation. All curfew checks are recorded on the client's Street Sheet and Community Service Inventory form.

Community service evaluation and placement for each client occurs within the first thirty days of a client's supervision. Normally this is accomplished during the second office
visit. A client is assigned either an individual placement or the Saturday workcrew placement. The type of placement assigned depends upon the suitability of a job to a client’s job skills, the appropriateness of the worksite in consideration of risk factors associated with the client, and the client’s disposition toward either type of placement. All clients sign a community service contract at the conclusion of the placement interview, and are given time sheets, instructions, and report for work as directed. The supervising officer monitors a client’s community service performance by periodic telephone contact with the job site supervisor, and by reviewing the client’s time sheets.

IPCS Program officers rely upon an extensive list of service components and agencies to refer client’s in need of professional support services. Internal service components include: education, drug/alcohol, psychiatric, and employment. External component agencies include: family services, drug/alcohol, psychiatric therapy, housing, financial (DPA), employment, vocational, educational, health, and domestic violence. All client referrals are initiated on an as needed/requested basis with the exception of referrals made to the internal employment component which are mandatory. All referrals are made by telephone, except referrals to DPA which are made by a standard form or letter.

All clients are required to pay fines, costs and fees imposed by the court at sentencing. IPCS Program officers monitor these payments to ensure that they are paid with regularity. The officers record individual payments on the client’s Payment Card and record the remaining balances on the client’s Payment Balance Sheet.

After a client completes six months of supervision a Risk/Needs Reassessment form is completed on the client. This action will change the client’s level of supervision or classification, which is determined by the reason for the reassessment. The levels of supervision enforced in the IPCS Program include: minimum (A), which requires reporting less than once per month; moderate (B), which requires one office visit per month, and intensive (C), which requires one office visit per week.
Community Service Placement Procedure

STEP #1

The IPCS supervising officer contacts the APPD Supervisor of Community Resources (SCR) to schedule an appointment for the client in order to secure a community service placement. The appointment, usually, is scheduled within one to two weeks after the client’s initial office visit.

STEP #2

The client, supervising officer, and SCR participate in the community service placement interview which takes place inside the SCR’s office. The SCR reviews the client’s face sheet checking for the following information:

a. The amount of community services hours imposed.
b. Whether or not the client is employed. If the client is employed, community service hours are scheduled around the client’s job schedule.
c. Special circumstances (e.g. medical problem, in school, etc.).

This information, together with other pertinent information in the client’s file, determines the client’s placement.

STEP #3

The SCR assigns the client an individual or Saturday workcrew placement. When assigning an individual placement the SCR considers the proximity of the client’s residence to the job site; the suitability of the job to the client’s personality and attitude; the client’s personal circumstances; and the client’s work preferences. The decision to assign Saturday workcrew placements is based upon the client’s current employment status and the need for Saturday workers.

STEP #4

The SCR selects an appropriate placement site, informs the client of the location and the work schedule, and enters that information on a community service contract. Then, the client is instructed to read and sign the contract. The SCR also signs the
Then, the client is instructed to read and sign the contract. The SCR also signs the contract and the supervising officer signs as a witness. The SCR gives the client and the supervising officer a copy of the contract and files the original.

The community service placement assignment usually occurs during the community service interview session.

**Community Service Termination Procedures**

*Community Service Contract Violations / Reasons for Termination*
- Flagrant violation of probation rules pertaining to community service.
- Bad/negative attitude.
- Illegal behavior.
- Disruptive behavior

**Termination of Individual Placements**

The procedure for terminating individual community service placements is as follows:

1. The supervising officer terminates the client’s individual placement and informs the client, the site supervisor, and the IPCS supervisor of the termination.
2. The supervising officer reassigns the client to the Saturday workcrew.
3. The supervising officer completes a new community service contract to reflect the reassignment and informs the client, and the IPCS supervisor of the changes made.
4. Should the client’s conduct warrant termination from the Saturday work crew, the supervising officer will do so informing the client and the IPCS supervisor of this decision.
5. The supervising officer provides the client with a written warning before initiating VOP procedures.
Termination of Saturday Workcrew Placements

The procedure for terminating Saturday workcrew community service placements is as follows:

1. The supervising officer terminates the client’s weekend placement and informs the IPCS supervisor of the termination.
2. The client is assigned an individual placement.
3. Should the client’s conduct warrant termination of the individual placement the supervising officer will do so informing the client and the IPCS supervisor of this decision.
4. The supervising officer provides the client with a written warning before initiating VOP procedures.

Successful Completions of Community Service

The procedure for recording successful completions of community service placements is as follows:

1. The supervising officer obtains the client’s final time sheet.
2. The supervising officer writes “community service successfully completed” on the time sheet, the client’s face sheet, and the client’s community service contract.

Monitoring Of Community Service Placements

Supervising officers make random phone calls and visits to clients’ placement sites in order to maintain updated individual performance evaluations. Worksite managers also inform supervising officers of any disruptive or negative behavior by clients. Clients with Saturday workcrew placements work under the direct supervision of APPD officers.

The routine monitoring of clients is also accomplished through the review of community service time sheets. Clients with individual placements submit their time sheets to their supervising officers once a month. The time sheets must be validated by the signatures of the site supervisors. Community service hours completed by Saturday
workcrew placements are recorded on group time sheets by the site supervisor who distributes copies every Monday to the supervising officers of the clients. Time sheets are filed in the clients’ files.

**VIOLATIONS AND RESPONSES**

**New Arrests**

Responses to the new arrest of a client are determined by the prior classification of the client as either compliant or noncompliant, and the classification of the offense.

Clients who have been compliant with the rules and regulations of probation/parole and the IPCS program, are monitored closely until a court disposition on the case has been obtained. Clients who are found not guilty remain under supervision. A violation of probation/parole (VOP) is written for clients who are found guilty. If convicted the client serves the sentences ordered by the court in the offense trial and the VOP hearing.

Responses to noncompliant clients are determined by the category of arrests which include: serious arrest and minor arrest. When the arrest charge is serious, involving one of the “Big Five” offenses of murder, rape, arson, robbery, or involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, a detainer automatically is lodged against the client. Clients who are found not guilty may remain under supervision. Clients who are found guilty usually either remain in, or are sentenced to, prison after trial. In the case of a minor arrest, the client is monitored until the court disposition after trial. If the client is found guilty, a VOP is pursued and the client serves out the resultant sentences.

Noncompliant clients arrested for one of the “Big Five” offenses (i.e. murder, rape, arson, robbery, and involuntary deviate sexual intercourse) are held for hearing in municipal court. If the case is advanced, a detainer is lodged automatically and a VOP hearing will be scheduled. VOP hearings are usually set off until the new charge is disposed of. If the Common Pleas court hearing results in the case is being discharged, it must go to a VOP hearing before the detainer can be lifted. If the defendant is found guilty the case proceeds to the VOP hearing, where the defendant may be violated and ordered to be incarcerated for the violation conduct.
Missed Office Visits

A client is given a verbal warning after three consecutive missed office visits. If contact is then reestablished, the supervising officer may do one or more of the following: (1) schedule a conference between the IPCS supervisor and the client accompanied by a written warning notice, (2) notify a judge to place a detainer on the client or schedule a VOP hearing, or (3) increase the numbers of urine screens, curfew checks, and office visits. If contact is not reestablished at this point the supervising officer will attempt to contact the client by phone or written notification, or by visiting the client’s residence.

In the event of failure to make contact after the above responses, the supervising officer will issue a Wanted Card for the client’s arrest.

Absconding/Wanted Card Cases

Determining absconding is based upon the client’s level of supervision - intensive or moderate. For clients under intensive supervision and required to report each week, failure to report for more than one month constitutes absconding. Clients under moderate supervision report on a monthly basis, and more than three consecutive months of missed office visits determines absconding. For both classifications of clients, after the second missed office visit the supervising officer attempts to contact the client by phone or written notification, and then by home visit.

Once absconding has been determined, Wanted Cards are issued ordering the client’s arrest. If the client is arrested, the supervising officer writes a Detainer Summary and forwards it to the Department’s violations unit, which schedules a hearing at which a trial commissioner will either lift the detainer or order that it remain in force. In either case the client will be required to appear at a VOP hearing that will result in one of three outcomes: (1) the client will be terminated from supervision if the term of probation or parole has expired, (2) the client’s probation or parole will be revoked, (3) the client’s probation or parole will be continued. Depending upon the outcome, the client will either be given a new probation, re-paroled, or sentenced to prison.
Positive Urine Screens

The results of a client’s routine urinalysis for illegal drug use are labeled positive when one or more drugs from a pre-specified list are found in the client’s urine specimen. When this occurs, the client is given a verbal warning by the supervising officer. The same action will be taken after each of three consecutive positive urine screens. If the client has a fourth positive urinalysis, the supervising officer will schedule a conference with the IPCS supervisor wherein the client is given a final verbal warning before more stringent measures or penalties are applied.

Should the client be cited for a fifth consecutive positive urine screen, the supervising officer will take action in the form of one or more of the following responses:

1. Increase the client’s number of routine office visits.
2. Increase the client’s number of curfew checks.
3. Refer the client to a treatment program.
4. Increase the client’s number of routine urine screens.
5. Schedule another conference with the IPCS supervisor and submit a written warning to the client.
6. Notify a judge to (a) authorize the client’s arrest or detention, (b) initiate the scheduling of a VOP hearing, or (c) obtain direction in taking the appropriate action.

Missed Curfews

Supervising officers routinely monitor their clients’ curfew requirements by making telephone checks at each client’s residence. For a client’s first three consecutive missed curfews, the supervising officer will respond each time with a verbal warning. A fourth consecutive missed curfew will require a conference between the client and the IPCS supervisor. A fifth consecutive missed curfew invokes one or more of the following responses by the supervising officer:

1. Increase the client’s number of routine curfew checks.
2. Increase the client’s number of routine office visits.
3. Increase the client’s number of routine urine screens.
4. Schedule another conference with the IPCS supervisor and submit a written warning to the client.

5. Attempt to make telephone contact with the client before proceeding to make a home visit.

Nonpayment of Fines and Costs

The supervising officer’s first level response to a client’s failure to pay court imposed fines and costs is to issue the client verbal warnings, the number of which is left to the discretion of the officer. The next response level requires the supervising officer to complete a Fines and Costs Notification form and send it to the supervising case judge who will decide, within thirty days, to do one of the following:

1. Terminate probation on the natural expiration date but not rescind fines and costs.

2. Schedule a VOP hearing for the client.

Nonpayment of Restitution

The supervising officer exercises discretion in determining the appropriate number of verbal reminders to issue to a client’s who fails to make court ordered restitution payments. In cases where verbal reminders are ineffective, the officer will either write a VOP summary on the client, or write to the supervising case judge requesting that the restitution order be rescinded. Depending upon the judge’s discretion, a VOP hearing in this instance will have one of the following outcomes:

1. The client will be jailed ( in cases where a client has the ability to pay but did not).

2. The case will be terminated with the possible rescission of restitution ( in cases where the client has no ability to pay).

3. The client will be given a new probation on the violation ( in cases where the client has paid a portion of the total amount stipulated, and the new probation is intended to serve as a time extension allowing the client to complete payment of the restitution).
In each case of a technical violation the supervising officer is guided by a number of considerations in choosing the appropriate response, including:

1. The effect of the client's work schedule on his/her ability to make scheduled office visits and submit to routine urine screens.
2. The state of the client's domestic affairs (i.e. whether or not complaints about the client have been made by the client's relatives).
3. Where applicable, the type of drugs discovered in the client's urine specimen (some drugs, e.g. marijuana, elicit a less stringent response to the violation).
4. Whether the client has had a new arrest during the probationary period.
5. Whether the client is in school.
6. Whether the client is in a treatment program.
7. Whether the client has been keeping his/her curfew requirement.
8. Whether the client is completing his/her community service stipulation.
9. Whether the client has been regularly keeping office visits.
10. Whether the client has been paying required fees and restitution.
11. The general attitude of the client regarding compliance with rules and regulations of supervision and participation.

CASE TERMINATION PROCESSES

Routine Supervision
The expiration of a case generally indicates that the client's term of probation/parole has naturally concluded. When a case expires naturally the supervising officer will proceed as follows:

1. Notify the client of the case expiration.
2. Complete a Client Reassessment form.
3. Complete a Probation/Parole Report which indicates the client's level of supervision, special conditions, treatment programs, and other information that reflects the client's current status and actions and assessments made by the supervising officer.
4. Complete a Computer File Maintenance Request form which documents the natural expiration, the client’s Risks/Needs Reassessment scores, and the supervisor’s and the officer’s signatures.

The supervising officer may petition the supervising case judge to expire a client’s case early (before the conclusion of the client’s term of probation/parole) due to client’s exemplary status. If the judge approves, the officer will check the category F. “Expired early by judge” on the form, and submit a copy of the judge’s documentation to the Supervisor for sign-off and submission to the record room.

The above procedures are followed also, with regard to forms completion and notifications, in cases that are brought to termination before their natural expiration due to a revocation of probation or parole as a result of a direct or technical violation of probation/parole. The supervising officer will check the appropriate category on the Computer File Maintenance Request form that indicates the type and reason for the termination.

Community Service

Once a client successfully completes his/her community service stipulation, the supervising officer will follow the procedures outlined above for those clients whose term of probation/parole has naturally expired as well. However, when a client’s term of probation/parole has not expired the officer, after first completing standard community service termination procedures will do the following:

1. Complete a Client Reassessment form.
2. Change the level of supervision of the client to (A) Minimal, (B) Moderate, (D) Non Reporting, (J) Administrative and indicate level change on the Client Reassessment form.
3. Refer the client to the internal employment counselor (if not done previously).
4. Transfer the client to general supervision, or maintain under IPCS supervision (the decision is left to the discretion of the IPCS unit).
EARLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The IPCS experience has proven worthwhile from the standpoint of building the program development skills and capacity of the project team, and the hard work that has gone into the development and documentation of the program has produced tangible benefits in terms of aspects of program quality, especially in the thoroughness of the targeting and case-screening mechanisms now in use in the EP and VOP components. The stringent acceptance process is designed to assure the integrity of the program population, in terms of maintaining its fit with the IPCS goals of functioning as an intermediate punishment alternative to jail for offenders who are not more appropriately served by any of jurisdiction's other more intensive treatment and/or surveillance options.

Precisely because Philadelphia is a site large enough to offer a number of competing alternative programs, however, and because such a high proportion of its jail population is a high-needs group, especially with respect to drug and alcohol treatment, it is not entirely surprising that the IPCS caseflow to this point has proven to be disappointingly low. Although the number of cases screened overall for program eligibility has been high, with the EP component alone reviewing between 150-200 prison commitments per month, attrition at different stages of the screening process has been severe, resulting in a very small number of eventual admissions to the IPCS program. Throughout the 12 months of 1995, only 46 EP offenders and 14 VOP offenders were accepted into the program, for an average monthly intake of 3.8 and 1.2 offenders, respectively.

During 1995, the cumulative IPCS client population consisted of an average of 50 cases per month who were still performing community service, and an average of 41 offenders who had finished their community service requirements but were still on the active caseloads of IPCS officers. A total of 3,498 hours of community service, or approximately 292 hours per month, were completed during the course of the year. Only 4 offenders were classified as failures due to non-compliance with their community service stipulation; 12 for other technical violations; and 8 for direct violations. Wanted cards were issued on 21 cases, or 1.75 per month, during the year; and 41 offenders, or approximately 3.4 each month, were reported to have been rearrested.
Obviously, the numbers being generated at the moment are insufficient to support a rigorous outcome evaluation of the program, and the resulting inflation of the staff-to-client ratio even throws into question the implications of any early output findings for eventual program expectations if caseflow is increased to more sustainable levels. Continuation of the current staffing levels clearly cannot be justified, however, unless immediate steps are taken to explore further options for caseload expansion. The concluding section of this report, therefore, turns to this and to a number of other issues to which the IPCS program staff and the Department’s leadership must now turn their attention.

**NEXT STEPS**

Short of totally redefining the mission and targeting philosophy of the IPCS program, which would be inadvisable given that they seem to be its strongest features at this point, the main possibilities for elevating the level of IPCS program admissions can be grouped into 5 general areas:

- 1. Increase caseflow into the EP Component
- 2. Increase caseflow into the VOP Component
- 3. Develop a Direct Sentencing Component for Municipal Court Offenders
- 4. Develop a Direct Sentencing Component for Level 2 Common Pleas Offenders
- 5. Develop a Direct Sentencing Component for Level 3 Common Pleas Offenders, integrating IPCS as a RS step-down component of the Department’s larger RIP Sentencing Program

**Early-Parole Component**

By examining the hundreds of EP screening forms completed by program staff over the 1-year project period, it is possible to explore ways of expanding intake by pinpointing the most common reasons for the low number of cases being admitted to this

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3 Ironically, taking eligible offenders away for purposes of establishing a randomly assigned control group would reduce the caseflow to an even more unacceptably low level for program purposes, while the numbers as a whole are too low to allow much faith in the results of a quasi-experimental or other methodological alternative.
component of the IPCS program. From the 150 - 200 commitments reviewed each month, the overwhelming majority of cases do not make it past the rigorous screening standards applied by the IPCS staff. The virtually 100 percent attrition rate that occurs following receipt of the commitment and before admission to the program is almost entirely due to exclusions imposed on the program staff by Sentencing Commission requirements. Referring back to the EP screening form reproduced earlier in the report, 99 percent of ineligibility determinations are made in the first 3 stages of the screening process; approximately 60 percent are rejected based on a review of the commitment; about 30 percent during the ensuing criminal history check; and an additional 9 percent as a result of the prison interview.

Looking first at the cases declared ineligible at Step 1, the Commitment Review, slightly more than a third [35 percent] were excluded on the basis of the current conviction charge. Robbery alone accounted for 23 percent of the cases rejected at this stage. A further 16 percent were ruled out because they had a drug-related condition of parole; and 12 percent were serving state or aggregate sentences. None of these reasons for exclusion are likely areas in which the IPCS program staff sees much room for changes that would allow more offenders into the program, unless some relaxation of the drug condition of parole criterion is possible if the offender's drug problem is not pronounced. One group of cases that may hold more promise, however, involves the 40 percent of cases in which the reason for rejection was because the date of their earned time/good time was considered to be too close. This was the single largest exclusion category, and, as such, merits close scrutiny by program staff to see, for example whether processing times can be shortened or other methods devised to reduce the need to reject so many at this earliest stage of the screening process.

For the cases that make it to Step II of the screening process -- the Criminal History Check -- almost 25 percent were deemed ineligible because they had open bills only, an additional 22 percent were rejected because of a pattern of violent crime only,4

4 In most cases in which the reason for rejection was a pattern of violent crime, the exact priors on which this assessment was based were not coded by the IPCS screening staff. Consequently, it is not possible to say how valid the "pattern" determination was at all, or what specific priors offenses led to the rejection.
and almost 11 percent were ineligible exclusively because they had 3 or more drug convictions within the last 3 years. With the exception of these three single-exclusion categories, however, almost all other cases at this stage were rejected for a combination of reasons. Approximately 20 percent were ruled out, for example, because their records indicated both an open bill and a pattern of violent crime.

Finally, for the approximately 18 EP cases per month on average that resulted in a prison interview, almost three-quarters were lost to other programs; 72 percent fell out at this step because they were already awaiting release to another program. An additional 11 percent were simply not interested in participating, and the remainder were rejected for a variety of infrequently cited reasons, ranging from mental health problems to open cases in other jurisdictions.

**Violation-of-Probation Component**

The dearth of new admissions to this part of the IPCS program is in at least one respect more disappointing than the in the EP component. This is so because, until a case reaches the judge for final admission decision, control over referral and acceptance in the preceding stages of screening rests exclusively with the program staff and with their peer probation officers in other units who initiate the VOP proceedings that trigger the IPCS review. Consequently, action should now be taken on two fronts. First, on a weekly basis staff should review entries on the newly developed VOP screening form, reproduced earlier in this report, to determine in detail at what stages of the process and for what reasons cases are falling out. As in the EP component, results of this type of review can pinpoint factors in the screening process to which staff may wish to consider modifications in order to boost caseflow. Alternatively, at a minimum, it can confirm that the program has reached its intake capacity in this component and, importantly, identify the major criteria and/or individual decisionmakers accounting for the bulk of case-attrition. If part of the problem, for example, appears to be less than-full-cooperation or support for the program from other POs, a second option for the program staff and the Department’s leadership would be to institute formal information sharing and discussion sessions about
the mission and goals of IPCS to involve them more systematically as stakeholders in the program's further implementation and success.

**Direct Sentencing**

During the course of the current project, IPCS staff focused their energies on the EP and VOP components of the program. The direct sentencing [DS] option, although of interest to staff from the outset, was put on the back-burner as a matter of practical priorities and because alternatives to incarceration at the DS stage were being explored more generally as part of a much larger Departmental RIP program. Now that the focus of the larger RIP initiative has become clearer, it appears that there may be a number of ways in which IPCS can expand its activities into the DS realm:

**Municipal Court**

Because the RIP target population consists exclusively of level-3 sentencing guidelines score offenders in Common Pleas Court, the whole area of Municipal Court sentencing is open for IPCS consideration. This arena is a sort of good-news/bad-news proposition for IPCS purposes. The good news is that the generally less-serious, lower needs offenders being sentenced at the MC level are perhaps the most likely to fit the IPCS program's dominant RS/retributive philosophy and corresponding targeting focus. The bad news is that because of the markedly lower overall incarceration rates in MC, the task of identifying [predicting] and securing a predominantly jail-bound program population becomes much more difficult. However, this challenge is now no longer a new one to the IPCS team, and can be tackled by them in much the same way as was done for the VOP component -- by a combination of retrospective analysis of sentencing data for MC, to estimate the frequency and circumstances under which jail sentences seem most likely to occur, and a variety of prospective case-screening mechanisms, such as group reviews, to provide as much confidence and as many cross-check sources as possible that the cases being recommended for IPCS sentencing have a high probability of otherwise being incarcerated.

An additional way of trying to maintain the diversionary integrity of the IPCS program population would be to expand slowly and systematically on a pilot basis with a
limited number of MC judges who are most likely to be cooperative in designing and adhering to workable case-identification and acceptance procedures. However, it should be anticipated that some judges will be tempted to use IPCS as a repository for offenders whom the program does not consider jail-bound. Although politically it might be inadvisable simply to refuse to handle such cases, the program's IP integrity could be maintained by notifying the Court as a matter of policy that such cases will be referred to non-IPCS community service and general supervision handling.

Common Pleas Court—Level 2 Cases

Expansion into the DS area for level-2 cases in Common Pleas carries with it similar positive and negative implications to those just discussed for MC. On the plus side, it can complement the diversionary efforts of the larger RIP program, by focusing on the level-2 jail-bound cases not targeted by that initiative. On the downside, the same screening/prediction problems and false-positive threats to the diversionary goals of the IPCS program exist. It should be possible, however, to capitalize on the experience and practices of the RIP program to facilitate some parts of the IPCS screening task.

Common Pleas Court—Level 3 Cases

IPCS as a RS step-down component of the Department's larger RIP Sentencing Program: Still a further scenario under which the IPCS caseflow might be increased in a way consistent with its overall mission involves its possible integration with the Department's larger RIP program for level-3 offenders. Given the Sentencing Commission's recent expansion of level-3 eligibility for IP alternatives, and its support of graduated or phased sentencing, an option worth exploring might be to follow the more intensive treatment/surveillance portions of RIP program with a period of IPCS participation, to satisfy a more complete array of sentencing goals, as a RS step-down to release or routine supervision. By merging the treatment and incapacitative emphasis of the RIP program with the reparative and retributive ingredients of IPCS, the combined approach may help alleviate caseflow problems being experienced in both programs by
strengthening the appeal to the DA and others who may be otherwise less inclined to support admission to each program functioning independently.

**Miscellaneous Other Issues/Recommendations**

The EP screening form still contains a few relatively subjective items that were discussed at team meetings and left deliberately ambiguous because staff wished to be able to apply their own interpretations on a case by case basis. At Step II, the offending item is “pattern of violent crime”; similar vagueness persists at Step III in items such as “history of mental health problems”, and “major drug use history”. Every effort should be made in subsequent staff discussion to eliminate these ambiguities, in order to increase the utility of the instrument as a device for assuring consistency in application by different members of the existing program staff, and as a means of easily educating new staff members in the event of future turnovers. Experience in the design, modification, and implementation of the EP and VOP screening forms, moreover, could be put to use in creating similar forms to capture key items needed for case-management and/or program monitoring/aggregate reporting purposes at every other part of the offender’s progress through the program. Data are currently captured on a variety of regular departmental forms, but they do not lend themselves to the information needs of the IPCS program as well as would data instruments designed by program staff to meet their own specific needs.

At the same time that efforts are being made to expand the number of cases admitted in the future, the performance of current program participants should continue to be monitored closely. In addition to community service performance, other crucial data items include wanted cards, recidivism, and compliance with probation/parole conditions, such as fines, restitution, and treatment, reported separately for each of the three major supervision periods that IPCS offenders might experience -- IPCS during community service, IPCS following completion of community service, and regular supervision following transfer from IPCS supervision.