



# Reentry

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# The Reentry Process

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) uses rehabilitation practices that have the best scientific support and show the greatest promise of being effective. The first component of the rehabilitation process is thorough assessment of the inmate's criminal risk and needs factors. At intake, the PADOC conducts a rigorous assessment of each inmate's risk of reoffending, need for substance abuse treatment, educational level, criminal attitudes and hostile thinking. Other specialized assessments may also be done, for example on sex offenders. This assessment information informs the development of individual case plans. Effective treatment cannot be done without such assessment. The PADOC has one of the most progressive inmate assessment systems in the country. For example, a recent federal survey found that fewer than half of prison facilities across the country do any type of systematic assessment of drug treatment needs, and fewer than one-quarter do any sort of meaningful risk assessment.

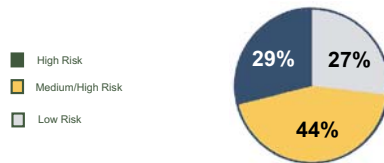
The following charts provide a brief overview of the treatment needs presented by our inmates in 2009.

## OFFENDER ASSESSMENT

We begin with a comprehensive assessment of the *criminogenic risk* and *needs* of all newly committed inmates.

### Criminogenic risk

an estimate of the likelihood that an offender will commit more crimes in the future. The chart below shows the breakdown of assessed risk of the 10,778 inmates admitted into the custody of the DOC in 2009



### Criminogenic needs

factors that predispose offenders to commit more crimes, and it is these factors that should be targeted by treatment programs. The charts below show the results of applying well-validated tools to inmates assessed in 2009

- Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) abuse



- Criminal Thinking Errors.



- Anger/hostility.



- Grade completed



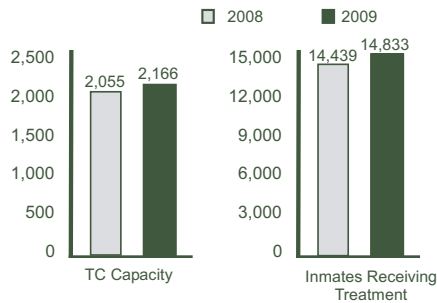
## Preparing for Inmate Reentry

Inmates are prepared for reentry back into the community.....

Each inmate has an individual DOC/PBPP approved correctional plan that outlines a course of treatment based upon the aforementioned assessment results. This plan directs inmates into any number of evidence based programs designed to address key factors driving criminal behavior, include substance abuse, hostility and aggression, criminal attitudes and decision making skills, sex offending and educational/vocational deficits. As with assessment practices, the PADOc's treatment programs are among the most progressive and comprehensive in the country. For example, a recent federal study found that nearly half of prisons nationwide have no full time drug treatment staff; we have such staff in each of our prisons. Nearly a third of prisons nationwide offered no drug treatment; we offer such treatment in every prison. Fewer than 10% of the prisoners in the national study were receiving the drug treatment that they needed; most inmates released from the PADOc have received at least some drug treatment. Finally, only 10% of prisons nationwide had a Therapeutic Community for the treatment of serious addiction; every prison within the PADOc operates a TC.

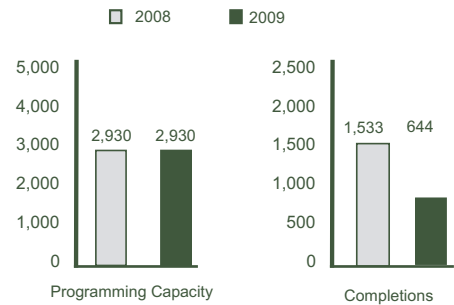
The following tables provide a snapshot of programs delivered in the PADOc during the past 2 years.

### Programs Targeting Serious Substance Use



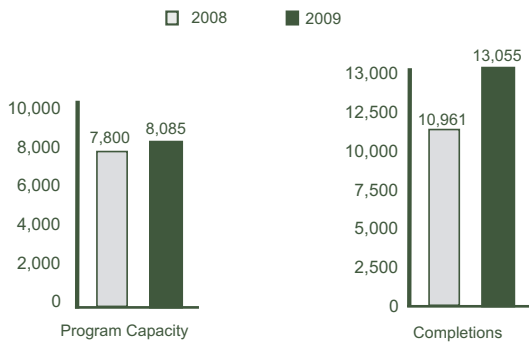
- A therapeutic community (TC) is an intensive inpatient alcohol and other drug treatment program serving highly addicted offenders.
- At any given time, 17% of the inmate population assessed with serious AOD needs are being treated in a TC.
- Research on DOC TC's finds that they reduce recidivism by about 15% at a minimum 5 years post-release.
- National research supports effectiveness of prison TC.

### Programs Targeting Sex Offenders



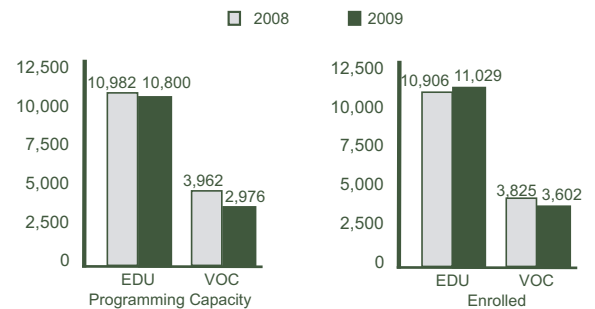
- The 2009 completion number is lower than 2008 because sex offender programs are 27 months long and many of the participants entered the program in late 2008 and had not completed the program by the end of 2009.
- We are currently treating approximately 60% of the inmate population classified as sex offenders.

### Programs Targeting Criminal Thinking and Violent Offending



- Thinking for a Change is a program that targets general criminal thinking and criminal behavior.
- We are currently treating 16% of the inmate population assessed as having significant crime producing needs or assessed as needing intervention for violent behavior, including domestic violence.
- National research shows that programs like these reduce recidivism by 20 to 30%.

### Programs for Academic/Vocational Education



- 68% of inmates who tested for the GED passed.
- Education and vocational capacity decreased due to teacher vacancies.
- The most recent DOC research on education and vocational programs finds that the five-year recidivism rate is reduced by about 5% as a result of these programs.
- 95% of DOC vocational programs provide industry recognized certification.
- DOC vocational programs are designed to meet the job needs of the Workforce Investment Areas.

## **Research Driven, Evidence-Based Treatment, & Recidivism Reduction**

Programming addresses the identified needs of the inmates.....

The DOC actively evaluates its inmate treatment programs in partnership with external research experts, supported by grants from third party funders. This allows us to leverage research expertise and funding in support of evidence-based rehabilitation practices. During 2009, several important, long term projects yielded significant insight into the performance of our programs.

### **Therapeutic Community (TC) Outcome Evaluation with Temple University**

TC's are our most intensive form of alcohol and other drug treatment. We began to evaluate these programs in 1998 with researchers from Temple University and have tracked outcomes for a large group of inmates for up to 7 years post-release. This is one of the longest TC evaluations ever conducted. Our research shows that TC's work to significantly reduce recidivism.

- TC reduces recidivism by about 15%, compared to inmates receiving less intensive forms of treatment.
- TC inmates who did return to prison also took longer to fail than inmates receiving less intensive treatment (i.e. the TC inmates lasted longer on the street), thus saving prison beds days.
- The DOC now offers more systematic aftercare for such inmates, which is shown in national studies to reduce recidivism rates even more.
- A similar long term TC study recently completed in California showed a smaller reduction in recidivism and much higher overall recidivism rates than in Pennsylvania.
- Thus, our drug treatment programs are doing very well compared to such programs in other states.

### **Education/Vocational Program Outcome Evaluation with International Association on Reentry**

DOC education and vocational programs prepare inmates for jobs and provide them with the basic skills needed to participate in other programs. We began to evaluate these programs in 2000 with an outside researcher, tracking post-release outcomes for a large group of inmates for up to 5 years.

- Education/vocational programs reduce recidivism by about 5% so far in the analysis.
- Education/vocational participants also were more likely to have worked more than 4 quarters after release than comparison group inmates.
- Inmates who participated in multiple Education/vocational programs had better outcomes than those who participated in only one such program.

### **Institutional Program Integrity Assessment with University of Cincinnati**

Treatment programs work best when they are designed with best practices in mind, and are implemented as designed. Researchers with the University of Cincinnati recently completed a comprehensive evaluation of the DOC's core treatment programs at most of our prisons, using a structured program assessment tool. All totaled, 95 programs were assessed.

- The average score for all of our programs was 55%, which places them into the "effective" range on this tool. Only 25% of programs that the University of Cincinnati has assessed nationally are found to be effective. Thus, the DOC's programs compare very well to national norms.
- Particular strengths of our programs included risk and needs assessment, program leadership and staffing.
- Areas needing improvement include clinical mentoring and some additional staff training on evidence-based practices.

# Research Driven, Evidence-Based Treatment, & Recidivism Reduction

## Community Corrections Process and Outcome Evaluation

Researchers with the University of Cincinnati recently completed a comprehensive process and outcome evaluation of the entire DOC community corrections system. Every Community Corrections Center and Facility (CCC/F) was included, and thousands of inmates were tracked for at least 18 months following their release from a center/facility, or their release to parole (comparison group inmates). This replicates a study they conducted on the Ohio community corrections system several years earlier, with very similar results.

- Overall, inmates released from the CCC/F's have worse outcomes than those released directly to parole on the street.
- Programs offered within the CCC/F's often are not operated according to evidence-based principles, which likely contributes to the poor outcomes for the CCC/F's.
- The DOC is presently developing action plans to address the program deficiencies identified by this study.

## Criminal Justice Drug Abuse Treatment Study (CJDATS)

In 2009, the DOC partnered with Temple University to participate in CJDATS, which is a major national initiative by the National Institute on Drug Abuse to study best practices for the implementation of drug treatment programs. We are one of nine research centers across the country participating in this project. Among other projects, we will use CJDATS to systematically follow-up on some key recommendations of the previously mentioned CCC/F evaluation concerning inmate assessment and transitional case planning.

## Violence Prevention Booster (VPB) Program

VPB is a six week treatment program that helps participants develop better problem solving and decision making skills, identify cognitive patterns and distortions related to criminal beliefs, attitudes, and values, and apply cognitive restructuring concepts and critical social skills to real life scenarios. The 12 session program was piloted at five Community Corrections Centers/Facilities (CCC/F's) and four State Correctional Institutions in 2009. An evaluation of VPB began in February 2009, and a sample of approximately 495 CCC/F residents and 88 inmates who completed the program was examined.

- Comparisons of pre and post assessment scores on a program evaluation survey showed improvement on over half of the knowledge-based questions, including the benefit of various techniques to handle conflict.
- Interviews with program facilitators and participants revealed a need for some improvement in several program modules, including the Stages of Change and Cognitive Behavioral Chain.

## Community Orientation Reintegration (COR)

COR was a four week program developed out of the need to combat habitual re-offending, overcrowding, and stagnant resources; and to address problems identified in the previous COR curriculum. The purpose of the program was to assist inmates' development of life skills that could be applied in the community after release from prison. These included skills related to job interviews, work performance issues, job searches, community services, paying bills, opening bank accounts, and expectations after release from DOC.

COR had originally been evaluated by a DOC research partner several years ago. This evaluation found little impact from COR. As a result, COR was refined and the revised model was pilot tested at six sites in the Spring 2009. Overall, findings from the program evaluation showed inmates acquired only limited skills related to re-entry issues. Improvement was detected for some areas, such as some aspects of money management. No improvements were detected in areas related to: writing cover letters requesting job interviews, researching an employer before interviews, unemployment compensation, or transferable job skills. Given the lukewarm results for COR, the DOC decided to suspend the program and redirect resources into more promising programs.

**Thinking for a Change (T4C)**

T4C is a 22 week cognitive-behavioral treatment program that helps participants develop problem solving and social skills. The program incorporates a systematic approach to identifying attitudes and thinking errors that are associated with criminal behaviors. Data has been collected from approximately 270 inmates. Recidivism rates have been tracked since 2007.

Comparisons of pre and post assessment scores using a test of antisocial thinking showed that inmates' scores dropped, indicating fewer criminal thinking errors and attitudes after completing T4C.

Overall, T4C completers showed more improvement in attitudes and less recidivism than inmates completing other cognitive-behavioral programs including the Criminal Attitudes Program and Changing Offender Behavior.

Thus, T4C appears to be a promising avenue for addressing criminal thinking and behavior.

**DOC RECIDIVISM**

The PA Department of Corrections has published an Annual Recidivism Report since 2000. The methodology for calculating recidivism for this report can be found in the report at the following link:  
<http://www.cor.state.pa.us/stats/>.

Below are the most recent recidivism rates using this methodology.

Year of Release	Inmates Released	Percent of inmates returning		
		6 months	1 year	3 years
2003	13,814	13.7%	25.8%	47.5%
2004	14,708	14.0%	25.9%	47.9%
2005	14,553	14.5%	26.1%	47.8%
2006	14,518	12.3%	23.1%	43.5%
2007	15,297	11.6%	21.8%	N/A
2008	14,851	10.9%	21.5%	N/A

**ASCA RECIDIVISM**

The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) developed a national standard for states with counting and reporting rules for recidivism which will permit valid comparisons between states to measure progress in reducing recidivism. PA is participating in the project with the most recent rates shown below.

Differences between the PA DOC Recidivism methodology and ASCA are that ASCA:

Includes only first release in a given year and first return for an at-risk period.

Excludes inmates who are not true returns by not counting parole violators pending their adjudication hearing.

Total	PA ASCA Recidivism Rates			
	Releases	1 Yr	2 Yr	3 Yr
2003	12,726	12.1%	23.7%	30.4%
2004	12,919	11.7%	24.8%	31.8%
2005	12,662	11.2%	24.0%	32.3%
2006	12,162	10.6%	22.1%	28.3%
2007	13,077	9.9%	19.7%	N/A
2008	12,727	11.0%	N/A	N/A