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PROGRAM BRIEF

106663

U.S. Department of Justice

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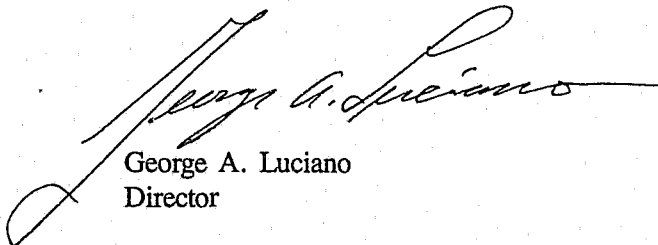
Washington, D.C. 20531

I am pleased to present this Program Brief on Intensive Supervision as part of our ongoing effort to identify programs that show success in improving criminal justice operations. The Intensive Supervision concepts presented have already been implemented in a number of jurisdictions throughout the country and have been found to be effective.

As probation and parole caseloads escalated over the past two decades the quality of supervision often deteriorated, leaving a residue of skepticism about the roles of probation and parole as crime control measures.

Intensive Supervision is one way of reestablishing that confidence. States such as Georgia, New Jersey, and Wisconsin have established supervision programs for felony offenders, and found the programs both safe and cost effective.

We encourage state and local agencies to consider use of block grant funds from both the Justice Assistance and Narcotics Control Acts to establish new Intensive Supervision units. The benefits to the public, the offender, and the corrections field can be substantial.



George A. Luciano
Director

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Intensive Supervision Probation and Parole Programs (ISP)

Introduction

Intensive supervision probation and parole programs represent a response to pressures created by a demand for incarceration that exceeds prison capacity. Since the early 1980's, state and local jurisdictions have developed community supervision programs which emphasize reduced caseloads, a high level of surveillance, and specialized interventions. The continuing growth of prison populations, and the cost of capacity expansion indicate that intensive supervision programs will

continue to offer one cost effective option, satisfying demands for punishment, public safety, and treatment objectives.

These programs, which differ significantly in design and resources, collectively have been referred to as "intensive supervision" programs. The purpose of this brief is to provide guidelines which may be followed by programs seeking funding under the Act for the development of Intensive Supervision Programs (ISP).

Goal and Objectives

Goal

The goal of an Intensive Supervision Program is to provide a cost-effective sentencing/placement option that satisfies punishment, public safety and treatment objectives.

Objectives

The objectives of the program are:

- Provide a cost-effective community option for offenders who would otherwise be incarcerated.
- Administer sanctions appropriate to the seriousness of the offense.
- Promote public safety by providing surveillance and risk control strategies indicated by the risk and needs of the offender.
- Increase the availability of treatment resources to meet offender needs.
- Promote a crime-free lifestyle by requiring ISP offenders to be employed, perform community service, make restitution, and remain substance free.

Problem and Answer

Problem

Two conflicting trends have led to the current popularity of ISP. Disillusionment with rehabilitation and increased public demand for punishment led to more reliance on incarceration as the primary response to crime. An equally strong trend of limited fiscal growth appeared, and restricted the expansion of prison capacity. The result is a demand for incarceration that exceeds current capacity.

Answer

One solution to the problem is an intermediate sanction that satisfies both punishment and public safety objectives. It includes a classification component to ensure selection of the targeted population, and supervision and treatment components to administer sanctions and to control offender behavior.

Critical Elements

■ Needs Assessment

A needs assessment should be conducted to identify the availability of a pool of offenders with a suitable profile for placement in an Intensive Supervision Program.

■ Political, Organizational, and Community Support

Both internal and external support is essential for the successful implementation of ISP. The implementing agency must be open to change and innovation; the network of interacting agencies must accept and work with ISP; and the community and political leaders must support the program.

■ Program Design Statement

A clear written program statement is crucial to any ISP. It should include program objectives, the population to be served, caseload size including a mandatory cap, program duration, staffing patterns, funding sources, and an evaluation strategy. Endorsements should be included from supporting officials such as judges, criminal justice decisionmakers, legislators, government officials, probation and parole administrators, and parole board members.

■ Client Selection Criteria

Selection criteria must be specified for the population to be served. Guidelines may take the form of a grid with offenses ranked as to seriousness on the vertical axis and a criminal history or risk scale on the horizontal axis. Also, supervision instruments, such as risk/need scales may be used. The selection process

may include client application, or officer referrals to a community board, judicial, probation department or parole board review body.

■ Program Duration

Existing program duration ranges from six months to two years. Generally, the offender must pass through several phases with each phase becoming less punitive and restrictive as the offender meets established program objectives and requirements.

■ Criteria for Program Completion

Requirements for successful program completion should be based on measurable progress towards clearly specified goals and objectives. This usually involves program participation of six months to two years, meeting employment and/or community service requirements, satisfactorily meeting contact standards and treatment conditions. Guidelines for program completion should specify the conditions under which an offender who does not successfully complete the program within the specified period should be continued with new conditions, revoked to a jail or community corrections sentence or revoked to prison.

■ Revocation Policy

An array of sanctions and guidelines for their use should be available to handle violations with speed and certainty. The ISP officer usually has internal sanctions available — such as increasing community service hours or imposing an earlier curfew — for dealing with minor infractions. Electronic monitoring, regression to a more intense level of supervision, jail time, or time in a half-way house may be ordered for

more serious infractions. When offenders on ISP commit new criminal offenses, policies should favor revocation and resentencing to a form of incarceration.

■ Job Classification and Personnel Policies

The job classification of the ISP staff is very important to program success. A special title, such as "Community Control Officer" or ISP Officer, is useful to distinguish the ISP officer from the traditional probation or parole officer.

Written position descriptions should be developed to specify required education, experience and skills. Salary differentials or other incentives may be warranted to compensate for special skills or increased responsibilities.

■ Training

Adequate staff preservice and ongoing training are critical to running an effective ISP. The most effective training programs use many available resources including law enforcement training academies, universities, hired consultants and in-house training staff.

■ Method of Offender Supervision

ISP requires a level of supervision more intense than the highest level of regular probation. Face-to-face contacts are required and are supplemented by home visits, collateral contacts, employment visits, verifications of treatment program participation, and random personal or automated phone calls.

Other conditions and restrictions that may be placed on offenders should be consistent with program objectives including curfews and house confinements, registration with local law enforcement agencies, no out-of-state travel or interstate compact transfers. Electronic monitoring and/or automatic phone call-ins may be used. Antabuse treatment may be required, and drug and alcohol screening are standard. Conditions commonly include a minimum number of community service hours and payment of supervision fees.

■ Program Monitoring

Procedures must be specified for monitoring the implementation of program design features. First line supervisors should be actively involved with ISP officers and frequently do qualitative as well as quantitative case audits. Performance data should be collected for the evaluation.

■ Evaluation Design

The evaluation of ISP is extremely important in order to determine what type of offender can be supervised in the community using what method, with what results, and at what cost. Objectives must be specific and quantified. The evaluation design should specify program objectives and methods for measuring:

1. Target population
2. Supervision standards
3. Offender performance
4. Program cost and benefits

Implementation Steps/ Issues

For successful implementation of an ISP program, it is critical that the need for the program as well as the support of all the affected actors be established. This includes both internal and external support. A plan must be in place for integrating the new program into the operations of the implementing agency, for gaining acceptance by community leaders, other criminal justice agencies, and political leaders. The critical elements are included to deal with the following implementation steps and issues:

- Identification of a target population that is appropriate and adequate for an ISP program. Implementation issues concerning the population include widening the net, or, the other side of the coin, diverting an unacceptably high-risk population that cannot be safely managed in the community.
- Adequate staffing levels. Officer burn-out results from frequent night and weekend work in addition to the usual daytime administrative and supervision requirements. Special considerations should be given to rotation of schedules, and the balancing of both professional and personal interests.
- Recruitment and training of the ISP officers. ISP is a specialized type of supervision that requires dedicated, innovative officers who are open to a nontraditional method of supervision and a high level of accountability. Strategies for dealing with officer burn-out should be developed.
- Public relations. Proactive strategies are particularly important for gaining public acceptance for placement of ISP offenders in the community. One strategy is to form an advisory group including representatives of community interest groups and the media.
- Officer safety. Curfew visits may require officers to travel in unsafe neighborhoods at night. Special equipment or training in self-defense or firearms may be needed, and/or a teamwork approach may be used.
- Revocation policy. An unclear revocation policy is a threat to program objectives. An uneven response to minor infractions will give the wrong message to ISP participants, and may negatively affect the public safety objective. A precipitous and very severe response to a minor infraction may negatively impact cost and treatment objectives. Revocation guidelines which provide an array of sanctions for the various types of violations is one method of providing appropriate responses.
- Networking with community resource providers. ISP clients usually have high needs for services such as employment, living skills, drug and alcohol treatment, or mental health counseling.

■ Integration of the program into the existing organizational structure. An ISP program may create additional work for the regular staff, and perception of ISP officers as an “elite” corp may create resentment. Also, staff may fall back into routine ways of operating. Thus, strategies are required for building agency ownership of ISP.

■ Monitoring and evaluation. Secure funding and institutionalization of ISP requires a program for monitoring and evaluation with results routinely shared with those who influence or make funding decisions. Building support for a new and somewhat controversial program requires ongoing communication to create perception of the program as a routine alternative.

Program Experience

Since the early 1980's, state and local jurisdictions have operated community supervision programs which emphasize reduced caseloads and increased levels of client supervision. As early as 1950, California began to experiment with smaller caseloads, and, in 1978, 46 ISP programs were identified. Earlier versions of ISP were based on the assumption that increased contact would get better results in efforts to rehabilitate offenders on probation and parole. Research showed, however, that this objective was not realized.

Although the concept of ISP is not new, the shortage of prison capacity gave it a new objective. Beginning in the early 80's, ISP was redesigned as an alternative to prison which delivered serious sanctions and provided for community safety.

The Georgia experience. Many new ISP programs are modeled after the Georgia program implemented in 1982. Because of this, and because more comprehensive information is available concerning that program, this section will focus on Georgia's Intensive Probation Supervision (IPS) program, as reported by Erwin and Bennett, 1987.

In Georgia, the target group for IPS was defined as the non-violent yet serious offender who — without the ISP option — would be sentenced to prison in the sentencing jurisdiction. This last qualification for selecting the target group is very important, for sentencing practices vary widely between jurisdictions, thus IPS offender profiles also vary between districts.

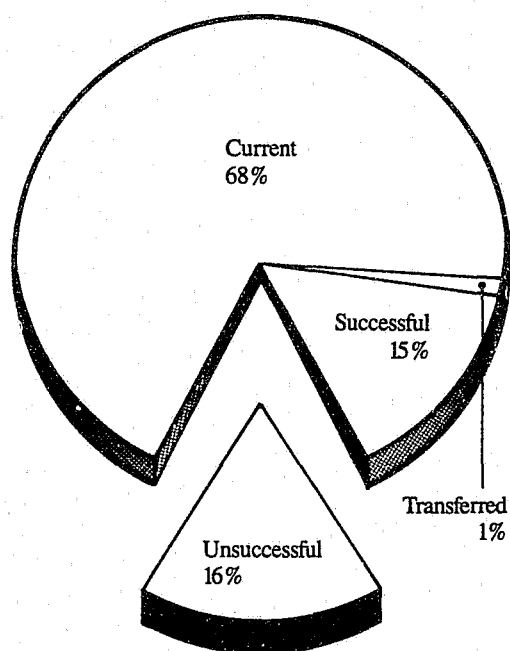
Georgia's program is tough relative to regular probation as well as other ISP programs. It keeps the offender

under curfew, employed, drug and alcohol free, and performing community services, while under close surveillance. Contact standards call for five face-to-face contacts per week in Phase I, mandatory curfew, mandatory employment, weekly check of local arrest records, statewide notification of arrests via State Crime Information Networks, and routine drug and alcohol screens.

These standards are enforced by a team consisting of a Probation Officer and a Surveillance Officer assigned to a caseload of 25 clients. An alternative team consists of one probation officer and two surveillance officers supervising 40 clients. The design places the Probation Officer in charge of case management, treatment and counseling services, and court-related activities. Surveillance Officers, usually from law enforcement or correctional officer backgrounds, are given primary responsibility for home visits at frequent and unannounced intervals, checking curfews, performing drug and alcohol screens using portable equipment and weekly checks of arrest records. In actual practice the Surveillance Officer gets to know the family, and becomes keenly aware of the home situations. Both officer types report a great deal of overlap in their roles. An interesting discovery is the fact that it is almost impossible to separate the treatment and surveillance functions.

Probation officers selected for the Georgia program were experienced, highly qualified candidates, and the Surveillance Officers were hired specifically for the new program. Careful recruitment and training helped form a "true team" of the IPS officers.

Georgia Admissions and Outcomes, 1985



An intensive public information/training effort targeting judges, legislators, prosecutors, key law enforcement personnel and other interested citizen groups was coordinated through Georgia State University, and a broad base of public and interest group support developed.

Georgia's IPS began as a pilot in 13 of 45 judicial sentencing circuits, and expanded to 33 by the end of 1985, having served 2,322 offenders. Of these, 68 percent are still under supervision, 15 percent have been successfully terminated, one percent was transferred out and 16 percent were terminated from the program for technical violations or new crimes.

Evaluation analysis focused on the sentencing of felony offenders on an annual basis from 1982 through 1985. During the base year of 1982, 63 percent of the felons sentenced received probation. After three years of IPS operation, statistics show that 73 percent of Georgia's felons were sentenced to probation. The 10 percent reduction in the percentage of felons incarcerated represents major progress in the effort to solve problems in prison crowding. During this period, there were many factors which may have influenced judges to consider alternative sentences which would reduce the prison population.

However, each jurisdiction with an IPS program showed an increase in the percentage probated and their combined statistics showed an increase that exceeded statewide averages. An additional statistical analysis indicated that about 60 percent of the IPS clients had profiles more similar to prison inmates than to probationers.

Program Experience *(continued)*

To evaluate outcomes, both the intensive cohort and the regular probation cohort were tracked from the date of assignment to community supervision. Offenders in the incarcerated cohort were tracked from the date they were released from prison.

In assessing IPS, it is important to look at the failure rate as well as the seriousness of the failure event. The results showed that the prison cohort had the highest failure rate, ISP clients had the next highest, and regular probationers the lowest failure rate. Considering only percentage of failures, there is little evidence that more strict punishment or supervision improves the performance of offenders. However, when the new crime of conviction is considered it appears that ISP provides an effective means of controlling serious offender and reducing the risk to the community. Minor repeat offenses, primarily marijuana possession, were numerous, but serious offenses were rare.

Tracking of the three comparison samples showed that a lower percentage of the ISP group were convicted of serious new crimes against persons than either of the other two groups.

Drug offenders did better under IPS than under regular probation supervision, suggesting that the frequent contacts during evening and weekends and the urinalysis monitoring may be particularly effective in supervising this type of offender. Females succeeded at a slightly higher rate than males, as they did under regular supervision, and there was not a significant difference in outcome by race.

New York. Although few rigorous evaluations have been performed on ISP programs, similar outcome results have been obtained in several jurisdictions. The New York program of 2,435 regular probation cases compared 2,166 ISP cases with a random sample and found significant improvement in several recidivism indicators for specific offender groups.

Of 640 ISP clients transferred to regular probation, 92 percent successfully completed probation doing much better than even the very low risk regular probationers.

Texas. Texas ISP is administered by the Adult Probation Commission (TAPC). The Commission sets standards, allocates state funds to participating counties, and assists and monitors county operations. The goal of Texas ISP is to divert, from prison, all offenders who can be safely placed in the community. Cases are selected from three sources: probation revocations, direct sentences, and shock probation. Selection criteria include the presence of one or more of the following:

1. One or more prior commitments to prison or jail.
2. One or more convictions.
3. Documentable chronic unemployment problem.
4. Documentable alcohol dependency problem.
5. Documentable drug dependency problem.
6. Documentable limited mental capacity problem.
7. Seriousness of the current offense.

A direct sentence to ISP requires a signed statement by the sentencing judge indicating that the offender would have been sentenced to prison if ISP were not available.

Research shows that 54 percent of Texas ISP intakes are by court order, 12 percent from shock probation, and 34 percent from revocation hearings. Since 1981, over 18,000 offenders have been placed on ISP in 45 probation departments.

A recent (March 1987) inhouse evaluation of the diversionary effect of Texas ISP found no significant difference between the persons currently in ISP and Texas probation-eligible prison inmates. They found further that the ISP group had higher needs scores than the probation-eligible prison group. The study concludes that true diversion is therefore occurring, and that ISP could effectively serve many of the people now being sent to Texas prisons.

New Jersey. New Jersey's ISP has very stringent selection criteria. Candidates for ISP must apply within 30 to 60 days after admission to prison, and must develop their own program plan, including employment and housing plans, and naming a community sponsor. A comprehensive file is assembled for review by an ISP Screening Board. If the panel accepts the candidate for ISP, a recommendation for amended sentence is sent to the original sentencing judge. If the judge concurs and amends the sentence, the candidate is placed into ISP. This process was designed to insure diversion of ISP offenders, but a side effect was a very slow rate of admissions into the program, requiring almost a year to reach full caseloads. (Baird, 1984; Clear, 1986)

New Jersey's ISP program, like Georgia's, calls for a high level of contact with program participants. The ISP

officer contacts the offender on the average of 27 times per month for the first 14 months of an 18 month program duration. In the first six months, 12 of these must be face-to-face, and four must be curfew checks. If the offender successfully completes the first six months, the intensity of supervision is gradually decreased through three other stages.

The ISP program began in June of 1983, and by June of 1986 about 600 offenders had been diverted from prison, and the caseload was 350. At that time, 111 had successfully completed ISP, and 124 (about 20 percent) had been revoked to prison, mostly for program rule violations. Only 22 participants have been convicted of new indictable offenses after release to the program (Pearson and Bibel, 1986). A recent evaluation of the New Jersey programs noted that ISP had achieved an employment rate in excess of 96 percent, cost \$6-7,000 less per annum than for an offender who was kept in prison and then paroled (even including ISP prison costs), saved over 62,000 offender-days of prison time and achieved a significantly lower recidivism rate when an ISP population was compared with a matched prison-parole population over a 24-month period.

Given the relatively recent beginnings of the new type of ISP programs, the evaluation results currently available are far from conclusive.

However, outcomes to date indicate that selected offenders who would otherwise be sentenced to prison can be sanctioned at a lower cost in ISP programs without increasing risk to the public.

Performance Indicators

■ Target Population Indicators

Profiles of convicted offenders including type of sentence, criminal history, type of conviction offense, social and demographic items, needs and risk scores.

■ Program Performance Indicators

Case/contact supervision measures including number of offenders on caseload, number and type of contacts such as phone, walk-ins, curfew checks, employment verification, collateral checks, record checks, urine and drug screens.

Offender program participation measures such as sessions of individual counseling, group counseling, job readiness, mental health treatment, educational programs, vocational training, drug/alcohol counseling.

Case actions measures such as successful completion of phase, regression to more restrictive phase, transfer to regular probation, absconded, reassessment score.

■ Outcome Measures

Technical violation measures such as date and type of violation, number of violations of convicted offenders.

New criminal offense measures such as date and type of offense.

■ Cost Measures

Cost of incarceration and costs of ISP including construction costs, operating costs, costs of services, court processing, legal representation, jail time, and social costs of crimes committed by ISP participants.

Sources for Further Information and Assistance

State Agencies

Georgia Department of Corrections Probation Division
2 Martin Luther King Drive, Suite 954 East
Atlanta, GA 30334
Phone: 404-656-4696
Contact: Vince Fallen, Deputy Commissioner
Larry Andersen, Diversion Program
Coordinator

New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts
Probation Division
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Trenton, NJ 08625
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Texas Adult Probation Commission
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Wisconsin Bureau of Community Corrections
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