

INTENSIVE PAROLE SUPERVISION

(Department of Correction)

A Preliminary Project Evaluation

Submitted
to the
Corrections Committee
of the
Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice

by
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Monitoring/Evaluation Unit
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18585

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ABSTRACT

The Intensive Parole Supervision Unit was funded in July 1977 by the Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice in order to provide the Department of Correction with a specialized parole unit to supervise high risk parolees being released from the institution in response to the Federal Court order to maintain the population of the Delaware Correctional Center at or below 475. The unit was designed to have small (a maximum of 30) caseloads so that necessary supervision would be provided to first, ensure the community adequate protection from these offenders and secondly, so that the efforts in assisting these offenders in becoming productive members of the community would be more intense than those provided through the traditional probation and parole units.

This report is the first phase of a two phase evaluation of the project. Primarily this portion of the evaluation examined process indicators, i.e., the report sought to determine the degree to which certain goals and objectives were attained. Phase two of the report, to be completed after a suitable follow-up period, will examine the impact which the project had, both on the individual clients served and on the criminal justice system.

In accordance with being a process evaluation, this report contained the following findings:

- ° The project experienced a slow start-up period.
- ° Although the projected caseload (60 clients) was attained

within three months of acceptance of the first client, 37 of the 61 clients were not appropriate referrals in that they were transferred from active parole caseloads rather than coming directly from an institution.

- ° In 41 percent of the clients served the objective of having four face-to-face contacts per month was attained. In another 43 percent, at least four contacts per month were made but not all were face-to-face.
- ° In relation to the objective of having a minimum of 50 percent of the clients referred to other agencies, 37 clients (60 percent) were referred to one or more of at least 12 agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Crittendon Rehabilitation Center.
- ° Since reaching the desired caseload, the unit no longer accepts transfers from active caseloads.
- ° As of 6-15-78, 17 clients had been terminated from the unit, four had reached their maximum expiration date and were released from supervision; six were transferred back to traditional caseloads (all had originally been transferred from the active caseload); three were declared delinquent (although not returned to prison, these cases were not considered active for various reasons such as the person being in Delaware State Hospital); and four were returned to prison for conviction of parole violation (two of these were convicted of additional charges while in the unit).

Although the project experienced a slow start-up and did not appear to be operating exactly as proposed during the initial stages, as of this writing the project does appear to be operating as it was designed to. However, the report contained the following recommendations:

1. The project should continue to only accept clients coming directly from the institutions.
2. The project application clearly defined what factors were to be used in determining a client's eligibility for acceptance into the unit, and at least three of five factors defined had to be met. However, with initial recordkeeping procedures, it was difficult to determine which of the five factors were applicable to each client. It was recommended that a

recordkeeping system be developed and implemented which will facilitate obtaining this information.

3. In order to facilitate future evaluation of the impact of the project on the clients served, it is recommended that a prior employment and rearrest record for each offender be included in the client file on data collection forms which will make this information readily retrievable. Data such as length of previous employment, and length of time between arrests and reconvictions and offenses should be maintained. Further, documentation should also be maintained for similar data for the time the client is in the project.
4. As the unit increases its credibility, it is receiving more referrals. It is recommended that the project director maintain records concerning the number, source, appropriateness and disposition (if not accepted, why, and what happened to person) of all referrals received.
5. The project director should consider including a project objective of having at least 70 percent of the clients employed.
6. The Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice will conduct a follow-up study of this project. At a minimum, this report should examine the following items: 1) update data contained in this report; 2) compare criminal histories, employment records, success rates, and client profiles of clients in this unit with clients in traditional probation and parole caseloads, and with pre-grant inmate denied parole; 3) impact of the project on clients served and on criminal justice system; 4) the referral mechanisms for getting clients into the project.

PROJECT INFORMATION

General:

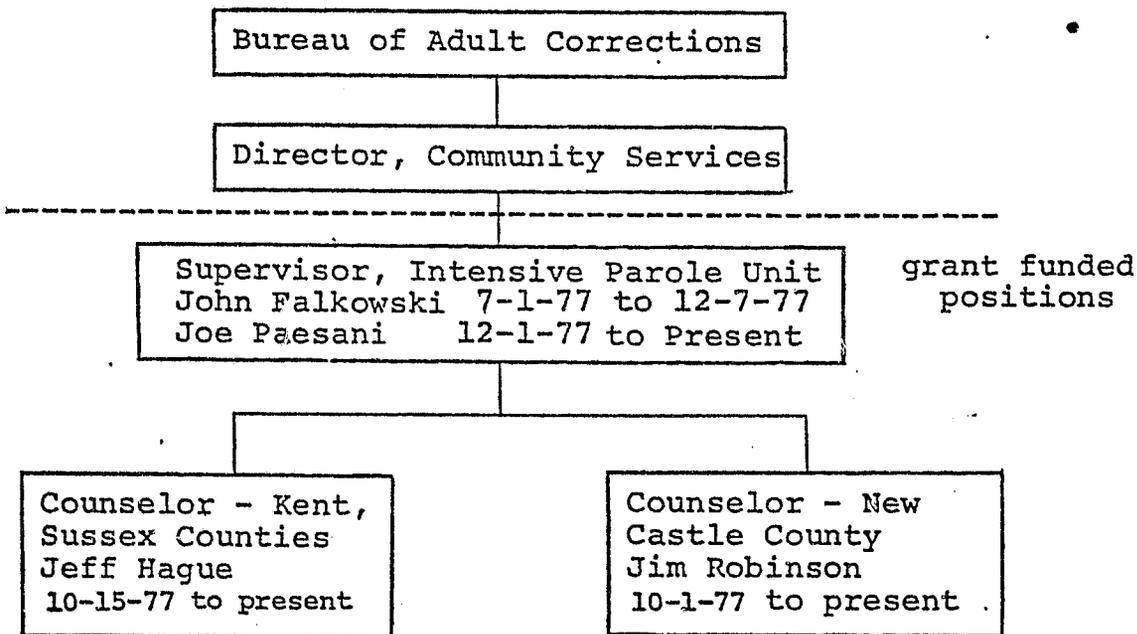
Grant Number: 77-066
 Grant Title: Intensive Parole Supervision
 Implementing Agency: Department of Correction
 Project Director: Joseph Paesani
 Grant Period: 7-1-77 to 10-1-78

Budget:

	<u>Allocations</u>	<u>Expenditures</u> (as of 3/31/78)
Personnel	\$31,493	\$15,295
Consultants	3,056	1,000
Travel	500	79
Supplies	135	
Other	372	
Total	\$35,556	\$16,374

Federal: \$32,000
 Match: 3,556

Organization:



I. Introduction

In response to the Federal Court's order to maintain the population of the Delaware Correctional Center at or below 475, there was concern that the Department of Correction would be forced to release an increasing number of high risk offenders on parole. The purpose of the Intensive Parole Unit was to provide the Department with a special unit to deal with these offenders. The unit would maintain small caseloads so that necessary supervision would be provided to ensure the community adequate protection from the offenders and so that the efforts in assisting these offenders in becoming productive members of the community would be more intense than those provided through the traditional probation and parole units. An application for \$32,000 (federal funds) was submitted to and approved by the Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice in May 1977 to support a counselor supervisor and counselor for this unit.

The purpose of this report is to examine the performance of the project through March 31, 1978. The report constitutes phase one of a two phase evaluation, and is primarily a process evaluation. Phase two, to be conducted after an appropriate follow-up period, will update the information in the report as well as examine the impact of the project both on the clients served and on the criminal justice system.

II. Project Background and Description

A. Background

The original application approved by GCCJ indicated that in

addition to the two positions funded by GCCJ, the unit would consist of four counselor trainees transferred from state positions, two social service specialists hired with CETA funds, and one secretary, also hired with CETA funds. This unit was to handle a caseload of 150 high risk parolees (30 clients for each counselor) coming from the institution, and was to utilize a "team approach" to parole supervision.

After funding was approved, the project changed somewhat. The CETA employees were not hired, and only one counselor trainee was transferred. The "team approach" was abolished, and the following goals were adopted:

1. To provide the Department of Correction with a specialized parole officer unit that will handle high risk parolees coming from the institution;
2. To provide intensive supervision for certain high risk parolees who would not ordinarily receive such supervision under present working conditions within the office of probation and parole;
3. To increase the number and quality of contacts between an individual parolee and his parole officer;
4. To reduce the time lapse between the point an inmate is released on parole and the point he is seen by the parole officer, thereby minimizing any possible adjustment problems; and
5. To enhance inter-departmental communications between prison staff, Board of Parole, and Probation and Parole.

B. Description

In order to accomplish these goals, one counselor was based in the Georgetown office and one counselor and the project supervisor were housed in the Wilmington office. Each counselor would maintain a maximum caseload of 30 clients.

The project was originally designed to work in the following manner: A social worker within an institution would refer an inmate whom he felt eligible for the unit who was eligible for parole to the unit. The appropriate counselor would begin working with the inmate while he was incarcerated. If parole was granted, the counselor was to have a minimum of four face-to-face contacts with the client per month.¹ Also, due to comparatively small caseloads, the counselors would be able to refer their clients to appropriate outside agencies to provide additional needed services. The project supervisor also was to develop a job pool in order to aid the counselors in assisting the clients in securing employment. Although criteria for admittance into the unit required the offender be on parole for at least one year, the client did not have to remain in the unit that long. Hopefully, if the client was progressing well and appeared to be successfully adjusting to his/her life in the community, he/she would be transferred to the appropriate traditional probation and parole unit.

¹This compares to the following recommended client contacts for the other probation and parole units: Clients classified as intensive were to have a minimum of two personal contacts per month, at least one of which was to be face-to-face; clients classified as moderate were to have at least two personal contacts every two months, one of which should be face-to-face; and clients classified as reduced were to have contact only when initiated by the client.

III. Project Operation

The project experienced a slow start-up. Although the project award was made in July 1977, staff was not hired until October 1977 due to difficulties with the state merit system, and desired caseloads were not obtained until February 1978. However, it should be noted that many projects experience such problems. Also, during this implementation period, the project director changed.

During the initial stage of project operation the unit did not operate exactly as had been proposed. It had been proposed that all referrals would come from institutional social workers. However, an insufficient number of referrals were received. In response to pressure to reach the desired caseloads, the project did two things. First, it accepted transfers from active caseloads (37 of the first 61 clients were in this category). Secondly, the project counselors began to review parole eligibility lists obtained from the parole board rather than waiting to have potential clients referred to them.

The project is currently operating in accordance with the application. As the credibility of the unit increased, it received more referrals from the institutional social workers. As the project operates now, the unit accepts only referrals from the institution (or the Plummer Center). The counselors interview potential clients and submit reports to the parole board. If the client is accepted into the unit and is granted parole, it is a special condition that he/she be supervised by this unit.

IV. Accomplishment of Project Objectives

The measurable objectives of the project and activity related to their accomplishment will be discussed:

Objective 1: Two counselors will have a maximum of 60 clients (30 each).

This objective has been achieved. As of 3-31-78, a total of 61 clients have been served. However, as indicated above, 37 of these were inappropriate referrals in that they were transferred from active caseloads rather than coming directly from institutions.

The application indicated that clients served would be "high risk" clients. It should be emphasized that this did not necessarily imply the offender served would represent a group convicted of more serious offenses and therefore possibly representing a more serious threat to the community. Rather, the clients would be offenders who had a low probability of successfully completing their parole.

An individual was judged to have a low probability of success in the community based on the following five indicators (an individual had to have low indicators in at least three of the five to be eligible for supervision in the unit):

1. Lack of roots in the community
2. Drug/alcohol abuse
3. Seriousness of present offense and prior criminal record
4. Length of institutionalization
5. Special Problems

The appendix, page 13, provides further detail concerning

these indicators. It was difficult to determine, with existing records, which criteria were applicable to each client. However, it was the opinion of the evaluator, after reviewing case files and speaking with project staff that the vast majority, if not all, the clients served met the criteria.

As of June 1, 1978, 17 clients had been terminated from the unit in the following manner: four reached their maximum expiration date and were released from supervision; six were transferred back to the regular probation and parole unit (all had originally been referred from active caseloads); three were declared delinquent (that is they had not been closed, but were not considered active); and four had been returned to prison for conviction of parole violation (two of these were for convictions of new offenses, shoplifting and criminal trespass, while under supervision of the Unit).

Exhibit 1 provides client data for those offenders supervised by the unit. In addition to those clients served, the unit investigated and worked with six inmates whose parole was denied.

Objective 2: All clients within this unit will be under "intensive supervision". The Department of Correction defines intensive supervision as two personal contacts per month, one of which should be face to face. This project proposed to have at least four personal contacts per month, all of which should be face to face.

In 41 percent of the clients served, the objective of having four face to face contacts per month was attained. In an additional 43 percent there were at least four contacts per

EXHIBIT 1

Client Data for Selected Characteristics
of Parolees Supervised in Intensive Parole
Unit from 12-1-77 to 3-31-78

1. Age

18-25	22
26-35	25
36-45	3
46-60	3
Above 60	0
NA	8
Total	<u>61</u>

2. Sex

Female	2
Male	59
Total	<u>61</u>

3. Most Serious Offense

Manslaughter	3
Rape	1
Robbery	14
Burglary	14
Theft	5
Assault	5
Escape	1
Drugs	4
Motor Vehicle	1
Reckless Burning	1
Terroristic	
Threatening	1
Shoplifting	1
Capias	1
NA	9
Total	<u>61</u>

4. Prior Criminal History

Prior Felonies

0-1	25
2-4	19
4-5	2
More than 6	0
NA	<u>15</u>
Total	<u>61</u>

Average number of prior felonies
(based on a sample of 46) - 1.72

Average number of prior misdemeanors 5.04

5. Length of Parole Sentence (in years)

0-1	7
1-2	11
2-4	16
4-6	6
6-10	4
10-25	0
Above 25	1
NA	<u>16</u>
Total	<u>61</u>

month but not all were face to face.

It appears that at this writing the project is meeting this objective with all the clients served. During the initial stages of the grant, the counselors experienced some difficulty finding some clients who had been transferred from existing active caseloads. Hence, the objective was not attained.

Objective 3: To develop a job pool to aid clients in obtaining employment.

According to the project director, this objective will be deleted from the application because the Department of Correction has reached an agreement with the National Alliance of Businessmen that NAB will develop and provide a job pool for the entire department. However the project director may wish to revise the objective to reflect a certain percentage of clients in the project will be employed. Prior to this arrangement, the project was responsible for finding jobs for eight clients (40 of the clients were employed as of 3-31-78).

Objective 4: To refer 50 percent of the clients to other agencies for appropriate services.

As of 3-31-78, 37 clients had been referred to the following agencies for additional services: Alcoholics anonymous; GED programs; Mental Hygiene Clinics; Crittendon Rehabilitation Center; Wilmington Counseling Center; Kent-Sussex Industries; Department of Labor; Alcoholism Services; CETA; VIC; Vocational Rehabilitation; Elwyn Rehabilitation Center.

V. Project Concerns and Recommendations

Despite a difficult initial phase in which the project did not operate exactly as had been proposed, the unit now appears to be operating in accordance with the application approved by GCCJ. However, the evaluator would like to discuss the following concerns and related recommendations.

1. As indicated, more than half the initial clients served were transfers from existing caseloads. This was contradictory to the goal of the project which was to have the counselor be involved with the client while he/she was still in prison and to aid in the transition from prison to parole. It is recommended that in the future, the project only accept clients being released from the institutions or Plummer Center.

2. With existing recordkeeping procedures, it was difficult to determine which of the five factors used to categorize an offender as high risk were applicable to each client. It is recommended that a recordkeeping system be developed and implemented which will facilitate obtaining this information.

3. In order to facilitate future evaluation of the impact of the project on clients served, it is recommended that a prior employment and rearrest record for each offender be included in the client file on data collection forms which will make this information readily retrievable. Data such as length of previous employment, wages and length of time between previous rearrests and convictions and offenses should be maintained. Further, documentation should also be maintained for similar data for the

time the client is in the project. The evaluator will design necessary forms, if requested.

4. As the unit is increasing its credibility, it is receiving more referrals. It is recommended that the project director maintain records concerning the number, source, appropriateness and disposition (if not accepted, why not, and what then happened to individual) for all referrals received.

5. The project director should consider including a project objective of having at least 70 percent of the clients employed.

6. The Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice will conduct a follow-up study of this project. At a minimum, this report should examine the following items: 1) update data contained in this report; 2) compare criminal histories, employment records, success rates, and client profiles of clients in this unit with clients in traditional probation and parole caseloads, and with pre-grant inmate denied parole; 3) impact of the project on clients served and on criminal justice system; 4) the referral mechanisms for getting clients into the project.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Definition of High Risk and Parolee

For the purpose of this project, high risk was defined as follows:

Individuals whose profiles indicate a low probability for success on parole supervision. Profiles would be determined by any combination of three of the five following indicators:

1. Roots in the community

- A. Does the parolee have any?
- B. If he has roots, how supporting are they?
- C. What kind of situation will the parolees be entering upon release?

2. Drug and/or alcohol abuse

Abuse will be limited to recent usage and recent usage will be considered as use within the past two years or nine months prior to any lengthy period of incarceration.

3. Seriousness of present offense and prior criminal record.

4. Length of institutionalization

- A. This includes institutionalization for the present offense as well as for any prior offenses.
- B. Included as well would be adjustments made or not made while incarcerated.

5. Special problems - i.e. history of mental illness, physical and vocational limitations, etc.

For the purpose of this project, parolee was defined as follows:

Anyone serving a sentence of one year or longer, who having reached a parole eligibility date and appearing before the Board of Parole, is actually released on supervision to a parole officer.

This implies that no one serving less than a year's sentence will be eligible for this unit. In addition, as a further rule of thumb, no one with less than six months of parole supervision will be eligible. However, exceptions can be made to this rule on a case by case basis after review by the supervisor of the unit.



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
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July 20, 1978

Ms. Pat Robinson
Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice
Wilmington State Office Building
820 N. French Street, 4th Floor
Wilmington, DE 19801

Dear Pat:

Thank you for allowing me to review the Preliminary Project Evaluation for the Intensive Parole Supervision Unit. The report was well written, presented a balanced picture of the accomplishments and problems of this unit, and made recommendations which could only be given after much time, energy and research had been committed to this document.

As with most evaluations, I feel compelled to make appropriate comments. The first comment deals with the acceptance of clients already under parole supervision while the second one concerns the job pool for ex-offenders. During January 1978, verbal communication was sent from the office of the Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice to the Commissioner and Bureau Chief inquiring as to the delay in getting this unit operational.

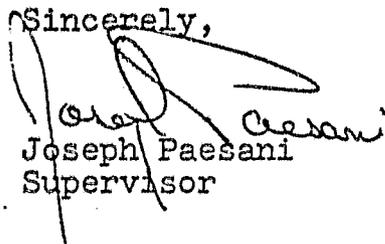
On January 18, 1978, a progress report was submitted indicating the causes for this slow start and the necessary changes to insure maximum caseloads within the shortest period of time (acceptance of Conditional Release client, an aggressive recruiting of cases by the ISPU staff and the transferring of cases already under parole supervision). Although clients were selected by this unit who were not received directly from an institution, these individuals at that time presented a high risk to the community and were in need of assistance in becoming productive members of this community.

The second area I would like to focus on is the establishment of a job pool for ex-offenders. This section was deleted because the goal was accomplished. The National Alliance of Businessmen in conjunction with the Department of Correction currently has a functioning job pool for ex-offenders. This service is being utilized by the entire department.

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Once again, I appreciate the thoroughness of this report and the recommendations as to the improvements of this unit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Paesani', is written over the typed name. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Joseph Paesani
Supervisor

JP/omk