

**Interim Judiciary Committee  
Progress Report:  
*SB 267 (ORS 182.525)***

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**Oregon Department of Corrections**

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# SB 267 Report

## OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

### Purpose of the Agency

The mission of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) is to promote public safety by holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior. DOC operates two distinct areas: Prisons and community corrections.

- DOC operates 14 correctional facilities across the state in a manner that keeps them safe, civil, and productive. Adults in custody attend programs, participate in work assignments, and engage in treatment and other activities specified in their corrections plans.
- DOC partners with counties to provide supervision, sanctions, and correctional interventions for felony offenders on probation, parole, or post-prison supervision in the community.

### Programs that Must Comply with SB 267

The definition of prison-based programs that must comply with Senate Bill 267 is as follows: A program is an organized activity in an institution, facilitated by an employee or contractor, designed to either create internal or external change in an inmate or to teach a behavioral or thinking skill, or both. A workgroup representing DOC programs, institutions, and community corrections reviewed all of the activities provided within the prison system to determine which should be considered programs, and thus which should be evaluated for consistency with evidence-based practices.

The prison programs that must comply with SB 267 are:

- Alcohol and drug treatment
- Cognitive change programs
- Parenting skills training

Community-based programs that must comply with SB 267 were identified by the Community Corrections Commission. The Commission is a broad-based advisory group to DOC on policies relating to community corrections. Membership includes representatives from county community corrections agencies, county commissioners, sheriffs, the Board of Parole, the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC), and a crime victim advocate. The group reviewed all of the activities identified in each county's community corrections plan and identified those programs that had a primary purpose in the reduction of recidivism. The programs identified will be reviewed to determine if they are evidence-based.

The community-based programs that must comply with SB 267 are:

- Alcohol and drug treatment
- Cognitive change programs
- Parenting skills training
- Mental health care
- Sex offender treatment
- Domestic violence intervention programs
- Employment programs
- Anger management
- Life skills

## **Progress to Date**

### ***Correctional Program Checklist***

Correctional agencies first used the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI), and later the Correctional Program Checklist (CPC), to evaluate program effectiveness. The CPC uses 78 questions to assess the effectiveness of a program. The CPC instrument measures a program's adherence to the "Principles of Effective Correctional Intervention" – those program characteristics that research shows are highly correlated with a reduction in recidivism. The CPC is grounded in risk, need, and treatment principles.

As part of statewide mid-management reductions in 2012, DOC eliminated two positions that evaluated program compliance with SB 267. That left the department with one staff member tasked with evaluating prison programs across the department, with limited capacity to evaluate community corrections programs. As a result, efforts to evaluate DOC programs for compliance have slowed.

Given that, since the last reporting period, DOC has evaluated five prison programs and one community corrections program. The results are as follows:

- Coffee Creek Correctional Facility Living in Freedom Today (LIFT) - Needs Improvement
- Coffee Creek Correctional Facility Turning Point - Very Satisfactory
- Oregon State Correctional Institution Freedom Program - Very Satisfactory
- Deer Ridge Correctional Institution Phoenix Program - Needs Improvement
- DOC Pathfinders - Needs Improvement
- Columbia River Correctional Institution Westcare Program - Needs Improvement
- Marion County Bridgeways Program - Needs Improvement

As of July 2014, community corrections directors throughout the state supported funding a CPC evaluator using M57 funds allocated through DOC. Going forward, DOC will have two evaluators and will prioritize community-based M57 programs for evaluation.

### ***New Program Evaluation Tools***

As DOC continues to mature in its ability to provide systematic modeling of its programs to provide objective information to program staff, agency administrators, and the legislature regarding

program delivery, the agency has been working to develop and implement several new tools to assist in evaluating program effectiveness as part of a program evaluation continuum. Two models have been built that will quantify program effectiveness - these are the Program Evaluation Model and Service Matching Tool.

## 1. Program Evaluation Model

DOC's Research Unit has developed a system of automated matching that estimates program effectiveness. This newly designed model provides real time data that is generated by a data warehouse. This automation enables continual matching and will allow for the most current assessments of a program's effectiveness. This component is frequently updated and must be coupled with service matching methodology (described below).

This model is designed, and will allow the department, to continuously quantify a reduction in recidivism attributable to programming. Program participants will be matched with their "identical twin." The matching variables used to identify the identical twin are the same variables used to predict the outcome (i.e., recidivism). DOC uses the Automated Criminal Risk Score (ACRS) to identify an individual's risk of recidivating. The same ACRS variables are used to find the "identical twin" for each program participant. In addition to the ACRS variables, individuals are matched using time in the community. The comparisons of recidivism rates between the groups are reviewed and provide an indication of success.

As this model is fairly new, only two programs have been reviewed to date using this tool.

- One long-standing program was shown to be ineffective. The department is currently determining next steps.
- The second and newer program is showing success, yet funding of this program has become uncertain. It is possible that cancellation of the ineffective program may be able to fund this program.

## 2. Service Matching Tool

The service matching tool identifies the best program for individual inmates and quantifies the likelihood of success for each individual. This tool was built for the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA), and DOC has been reviewing variables in the methodology to make it an effective tool for the adult population and DOC programs.

Service matching also recognizes increased recidivism being attributable to not having a bed available in the best programming site. The model relies on equations developed for each provider. Each provider equation considers all previous participants; some of these participants had a good outcome (did not recidivate) and others recidivated. The demographic and criminal history profile of the successful participants usually differs from the profile of those who recidivated. The equation for any provider will allow researchers to estimate the likelihood of success for each new client. When implemented, the demographic and criminal

history of every new client will be known and the likelihood of success for every provider will also be known.

The service matching tool also relies on thousands of offenders who have previously been served at DOC. The department will, again, analyze “identical twins” and determine which program is best suited for each individual. The tool essentially looks at successful candidates from all providers and compares those profiles to the new client. The tool allows for professional discretion, which will be built into the automation. The service matching tool will allow DOC to review its current programs for effectiveness, populations that are poorly served by existing programs, and potential service gaps in its program delivery.

To date, the tool has been developed and tested by the DOC Research Unit. The department’s next steps include working with DOC’s Information Technology Unit to develop automation and reports, in order to make the tool relevant for program placement. DOC plans on implementing this tool for its alcohol and drug programs initially, and hopes to expand it to its cognitive programs, education programs, and work-based education programs.

## **Next Steps**

### ***Treatment Progress***

A goal of an effective program evaluation continuum is to provide meaningful feedback to program leadership regarding participant progress. This regular feedback allows program leadership to identify facets of the program where offenders are progressing and to identify program areas where limited or no progress is being realized. To assess treatment progress, a pre / post-test assessment is used to recognize knowledge attainment, skills acquisition, and behavior change.

For this SB 267 reporting period, the DOC Research Unit worked with the department’s largest cognitive program provider and received over 1,600 samples from program participants. DOC has analyzed this data and will provide the analysis and subsequent program actions in the next reporting period.

### ***Cost Effectiveness***

The tools described in this report that DOC is implementing and automating, as well as the treatment progress information, will allow the department to partner with CJC to review cost effectiveness of DOC programs. DOC and CJC are working together to use Results First Tool, which was developed by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the MacArthur Foundation, to evaluate cost-effectiveness of in-prison and community-based programs. The Results First Tool is an innovative cost-benefit analysis approach that helps states invest in policies and programs that are proven to work. This collaborative and systematic approach to evaluating cost effectiveness will increase the department's efforts in using evidenced-based tools to measure program effectiveness and will continue for the next reporting period.

## **Summary**

As the department builds a program evaluation continuum, decisions should ensure correctional programming systems are effective, efficient, proactive, cost-effective, and continually improving. It is imperative that the corrections system can adapt to changing client populations and changing funding levels in order to improve outcomes for offenders. OYA is in the beginning stages of implementing its Youth Reformation System, which aligns all of the elements of its system. DOC will be watching and learning from OYA's implementation and will be able to adopt best practices and customize tools that are shown to be effective in the youth system for the adult system.