

Cumberland County

Adult Probation Newsletter

Welcome!

The past 3 months have been extremely busy for the Adult Probation Department. As mitigation efforts have been eased, our officers have been actively out in the community seeing our offenders. Additionally, Probation has been expanding our efforts to become an Evidenced Based Organization through continued training in Motivational Interviewing and preparing to implement Case Plans for more effective supervision. Our office is also actively involved with the new Cumberland County Re-Entry Coalition. The “kickoff” of the Coalition was June 2, 2021. With all of this, there have also been PO re-assignments, a retirement and new hires. So, join Adult Probation as we share what has been happening in our department.



The Role of a Probation Officer

Individuals may wonder what the duties of a Probation/Parole Officer are. While the majority of the public considers probation/parole officers as merely supervisors of offenders who have been released from prison, their role is significantly broader, sometimes challenging and often rewarding. A probation officer can rarely count on their day going as planned. On any given day, a PO could have a list of items to complete only to arrive at the office to find their day has been completely changed by things like a phone call from a family member that an offender has been using, an individual is getting discharged from inpatient treatment unsuccessfully, or receiving positive drug tests from the Restorative Sanctions Office. Not only do these events involve the assigned PO, but these events will require multiple PO's for transports and arrests. Probation Officers spend a small amount of their day in the office checking on new arrests, checking urine results from the Restorative Sanctions Office, answering phone calls and monitoring offender's compliance with court requirements. PO's are required to spend the majority of their time in the community seeing individuals on their caseloads. People often view PO's as part of law enforcement, however, when PO's are in the community supervising, they can run into offenders who are on the verge of homelessness or without food or other basic needs.



These matters need to be addressed immediately. It is not unusual for a Probation Officer to secure food and clothing for an offender. It is also not uncommon for our officers to direct individuals to locations where they can receive medical care and medication. Obtaining housing is a frequent challenge faced by our offenders. PO's frequently work with local shelters, recovery houses and other community organizations to get our clients affordable and decent housing. Even removing an individual from an unhealthy environment, like an abusive relationship, may require relocation. Having relationships with these community resources is essential to the success of our clients.

Obviously our officers encounter drug use and other criminal behavior while out supervising offenders. Finding offenders under the influence of drugs or alcohol during a routine field visit is not uncommon. Our officers have found drugs, drug paraphernalia, guns and child pornography while out supervising and frequently, individuals who have a suspended license have been seen driving by a member of Adult Probation.

Typical field experiences involve PO's helping offenders resolve problems, skill building and monitoring compliance with court conditions. Through these contacts, PO's establish good relationships with their clients and their families. Due to these relationships, the PO is often the first person called if there is a problem. The PO is often the

person called when an individual is no longer under supervision. This has led to many issues being resolved before any future arrests, harm or violations occur. PO's often get offenders into inpatient treatment and other types of counseling identified during supervision.

With all these various duties, PO's are able to build strong relationships with their offenders. During the course of supervision, PO's are able to work with clients on behavior change and decrease the likelihood of recidivism, which keep our communities safe. Our office believes we have a positive impact on those individuals we serve. As an office, we continue to learn and improve to be more effective to our clients.

Office Updates

First, farewell and best wishes to Greg Miller who officially retired from Adult Probation on June 4, 2021. Greg was hired in Cumberland County Adult Probation on September 15, 1986. Greg became a Supervisor in Adult Probation in 2009.

Congratulations to Nicole Warren who was promoted to the supervisory position left open with Greg's retirement!

There have been numerous PO re-assignments since our last newsletter. Here are the latest changes:

- Angie-Chiara Williams is no longer the Treatment Court Probation Officer. After 12 years as the Treatment Court PO, Angie has decided to switch to the DUI-Administrative Caseload. Angie will be greatly missed by the Treatment Court Team as well as the Treatment Court participants.
- Stevi Miller will now take the place of Angie in Treatment Court. Stevi was previously assigned to the Transfer Caseload.
- Tiffany Ryan has moved from the DUI-Administrative Caseload, to the Report Writer position.
- Alma Kostjerevac has been promoted to a Probation Officer. Alma previously was part of our clerical staff and is now assigned to the Transfer Caseload previously held by Stevi Miller.
- Jenna Kurtz has been hired for a temporary position in the DUI/IP/Electronic Monitoring position that will be open while Whitney Monn is out on maternity leave. Jenna is a 2021 graduate of Shippensburg University with a degree in Criminal Justice.
- Briana Stouffer has been hired to fill the clerical position vacated by Alma Kostjerevac. Briana also graduated from Shippensburg University in 2021 with a degree in Criminal Justice.

Staff Accomplishments:

- PO Caleb Bartlett completed the Firearms Education and Training Commission's Basic Firearms Academy on June 18, 2021. Caleb scored a perfect 300 on the Qualification Course.
- Supervisor Ryan Donlevy and PO Mike Smith both completed training on May 14, 2021 to become "train the trainers" on the ORAS Risk/Need Assessment used by Adult Probation. This will help with the ongoing quality assurance APO does on our assessments.
- PO/Firearms Instructor Will Gilfus became a member of the National Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors Association on June 7, 2021 after completing the organization's semi-automatic pistol course in Allison Park, PA.



Thank you!

Thanks again to our Support Staff who keep our office running efficiently. Many different and unusual situations have occurred during COVID and you have handled them all patiently and effortlessly!! As we have learned during COVID, we all rely on each other to get things done. Thank you to everyone who has worked

with our office over the last year to meet the challenges brought on by COVID to meet the needs of our offenders and the community.

EBP Initiative

Pennsylvania's push for the use of evidence based practices in all sixty seven counties.

In 2016, the County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania (CCAPPOAP), which is comprised of county probation professionals from across the state, advanced the use of evidence based practices in county probation departments by developing an EBP strategic plan. The objective of the plan was to enhance adult probation's capacity to improve public safety, reduce recidivism, and effectively use public funds through practices proven by research to improve outcomes. The six part strategic plan included the implementation of risk/needs assessments in all counties, the development of a statewide EBP implementation plan, establishing partnerships with state agencies to promote the use of EBP, developing a funding source to assure an effective statewide EBP implementation and sustainability, promoting victim engagement, and developing a comprehensive communication strategy to grow EBP within the state. With the goals of the strategic plan nearly complete, the chiefs association, with backing from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts, is expanding the EBP footprint in Pennsylvania. The new initiative, known as the Pennsylvania Partnership for Criminal Justice Improvement, has contracted with the Carey Group, nationally known experts in the implementation of evidence based practices, to roll out the use of EBP in all sixty seven counties. Regional stakeholder forums designed to educate judges, district attorneys, and defense counsel about the effective use of researched backed processes to improve outcomes will be offered this fall. Followed by regional training workshops for probation officers and others working directly with offenders to ensure that interactions with offenders are effective at reducing recidivism. The Partnership for Criminal Justice Improvement trusts that the justice system is uniquely positioned to improve offender's lives, their families and community when practices supported by research are followed. When these practices are applied with fidelity, jurisdictions across the state can achieve as much as a 30% reduction in recidivism as demonstrated by early EBP pioneers in other jurisdictions across the nation. Even more impactful, if all justice systems in the United States applied research informed practices, communities would experience a minimum of one million fewer victims of crime each year. The research shows that these benchmarks are achievable by using individualized interventions focused on behavior that drives illegal conduct. Using programs that work, between 40-60% of programs commonly used by the criminal justice system are ineffective at reducing recidivism. By using programs that target the offender's criminogenic needs outcomes improve dramatically. Procedural changes such as matching the intensity of supervision to the offenders risk and needs not to the criminal offense, focusing on a small number of priority probation conditions instead of a long list of unachievable expectations, shortening the length of supervision or basing the length of supervision on dosage instead of long consecutive or stacked sentences, and using reward such as early discharge to incentivize good behavior or the accomplishment of certain goals can also reduce recidivism. The Cumberland County Adult Probation Department embraces these ideas and has already implemented many of these concepts. We look forward to being part of the movement to reform probation and parole in an effort to improve public safety through reductions in recidivism.



Reentry Coalition

The kickoff meeting of the Cumberland County Reentry Strategic Planning process on June 2, 2021 was joined by over 70 community stakeholders to begin the conversations that will lay the groundwork for a collaborative approach to reentry. Reentry refers to the transition of offenders from prisons or jails back into the community. This process is neither easy nor linear for many returning home – the U.S. Department of Justice; National Institute of Corrections reports that 67% of people released from prison or jail is reincarcerated within 3 years. Returning citizens have numerous and often complex needs and face a variety of barriers and collateral consequences due to their criminal activity and no single agency or organization can address it all. The Coalition believes a collaborative approach is the key to successfully

improving reentry in order to promote a greater likelihood of offender success following release...which translates into a reduction of recidivism and enhanced public safety as a result of fewer crimes, fewer victims, and more offenders living productive lives in our community!

The Cumberland County Reentry Coalition meets the first Wednesday of each month, 1:30pm - 3:30pm via Zoom. If you are interested in getting involved with this great initiative, please contact Ashley Rohm, Reentry Coordinator, at arohm@ccpa.net for questions, comments or to request a Coalition zoom link invite.

In preparation for our second meeting on July 7, 2021, attendees willing and able to serve on a subcommittee were asked to volunteer for one of the following:

1. Vision/Mission subcommittee, responsible for drafting vision & mission statements for the reentry coalition, using input from meeting attendees; soliciting feedback, revising as needed at subsequent coalition meetings; final V/M statements will be approved thru Consensus Decision Making process at a full coalition meeting
2. Data subcommittee, responsible for gathering data needed for Strategic Plan document from jail, probation, courts and other entities
3. Strategic Plan “assembling” subcommittee, responsible for assembling all documents, data and input created during strategic planning/coalition meetings into strategic plan document
4. Community Education subcommittee, responsible for identifying needs & potential approaches to raise awareness and inform/”educate” various community groups/stakeholders about reentry, including employers, CJ system stakeholders, civic groups, churches, others (possible avenues may include speakers bureau, published articles or written materials, media, educational events such as film screenings, reentry simulations, speakers panels, etc.)
5. Community Resources subcommittee, responsible for identifying existing community resources/service providers to assist RC’s, working with PA 211 to ensure updated info in 211 database; gathering input from RC’s about needs, gaps; inviting service providers to present info on programs/services at upcoming coalition meetings

Department Statistics (April 1 – June 23, 2021)

- 133 ORAS/CST Assessments Completed
- 171 Pre-Sentence Investigations Completed
- 1,037 Successful Field Visits Made
- 235 Additional Attempted Field Visits
- 61 Pre-Parole Investigations

Our Vision

The Cumberland County Adult Probation Office is committed to rebuilding the lives of the people we serve to provide for healthier and safer communities.

Our Mission

To increase the quality of life of offenders by focusing and building on their strengths and working towards reducing their thinking errors and harmful behavior patterns. Our office is focused on meeting the individual needs of our offenders through the use of Evidenced-Based practices by utilizing opportunities for offender rehabilitation and treatment. By doing this, we will be able to reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

Guiding Principles

- Engages collaboratively with our stakeholders and the community
- Honors the belief that people can change
- We value impartiality, accountability, professionalism and a strong work ethic
- Promotes honest, respectful and forthright communication
- Integrity and ethical conduct is essential at all times