

PENNSYLVANIA  
ADULT PROBATION  
AND PAROLE

CCAPPOAP

EVIDENCE-  
BASED  
PRACTICES

# Strategic Plan

2016–2018



# Acknowledgments

This document represents the collaborative efforts of individuals from the County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, Pennsylvania Office of Victim Advocate, Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing, and other key stakeholders.

The County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania (CCAPPOAP), herein referred to as the Association, gives thanks to these individuals on the strategic planning committee for their extraordinary assistance in providing valuable input throughout the strategic planning process:

- Sally Barry, Director of Lebanon County Probation Services and Past President of the County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania
- Mark Bergstrom, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing
- Ed Burke, Board Member of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole
- Mike Gordon, Chief of Montgomery County Adult Probation and Parole
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- John Wetzel, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
- Robert Williams, Chief of Berks County Probation Services
- Mark Wilson, Chief of Lancaster County Adult Probation and Parole and President of the County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania

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We are pleased to release the County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania's strategic plan for advancing Pennsylvania's adult probation and parole system. The goal of the strategic plan is to enhance public safety, reduce recidivism, and provide for a more effective use of public funds through the implementation of evidence-based practices in the county adult probation and parole system. Our proposed strategic plan is the result of a dynamic partnership between the County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania and many key stakeholders in Pennsylvania's criminal justice system.

With over 86% of the total community-based offender population under the supervision of county adult probation and parole departments, and the costs of managing offenders on the rise—with well over 50% of the funding of county offender supervision borne by the county—the restructuring and enhancement of county probation and parole is at a critical juncture. The implementation of effective, research-based supervision practices provides a roadmap to improve supervision strategies, which will lead to improved public safety.

During the strategic plan development stages, we were able to identify many challenges that could potentially pose roadblocks to the forward movement of this initiative. We prefer, however, to look at these challenges as stepping stones that will lead us to a more enhanced system.

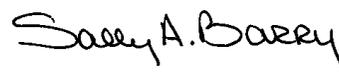
The strategic plan is the beginning of a multi-year effort to achieve better outcomes in community-based offender recidivism rates. We believe the strength of our strategic plan lies in the support and collaboration of county adult probation and parole partners and key state stakeholders.

We would like to thank our partners for their dedication to the improvement of county probation and parole services. We are excited with the direction in which the Association has chosen to proceed and look forward to continuing our work and efforts to put our plan into action.

Sincerely,



Mark Wilson  
President



Sally Barry  
Immediate Past President

## CCAPPOAP MISSION

It is the mission of the Association to:

- advance probation, parole, and community corrections practices;
- promote appropriate legislation;
- promote communication and exchange of ideas;
- stimulate high standards of training and professionalization of personnel and agencies;
- promote the provision of quality information to criminal justice decision makers;
- encourage the development of innovative services, research designs, and program evaluation; and
- increase public awareness and acceptance of probation, parole, and community corrections as meaningful sanctions in the prevention, reduction, and deterrence of criminal behavior.

## The Need for a Strategic Plan in Pennsylvania Adult Probation and Parole

Jurisdictions across the United States have been systematically implementing evidence-based practices (EBP) in justice systems since risk reduction research gained national and international attention in the 1990s. Some of these practices include utilization of a third- or fourth-generation risk/need actuarial assessment; differential supervision based on offender risk; cognitive behavioral approaches to supervision; skill practice; linkage of assessment results with case plans; installation of behavioral management systems; and restructuring of policy and practice to align with the best known research evidence and continuous quality improvement processes. However, probation and parole departments have discovered that reforming departmental practice to be consistent with research evidence can be a daunting task and one that should be carefully planned out if they want the reform to be successful. Changes adopted too slowly can discourage those who are motivated to adopt practices deemed to be effective at risk reduction and can impede momentum. Change that occurs too quickly can cause resistance as staff become overwhelmed with too much to learn and do and too little time in which to absorb new knowledge and gain proficiency around different skills and job expectations. In addition, probation and parole departments have different levels of resources, stakeholder support, and readiness. Some departments have implemented EBP on some level while others have hardly begun (see Appendix A for a summary of Pennsylvania county adult probation and parole departmental surveys). Strategies to help departments advance their work around EBP must be tailored to their individual circumstances. As a result, the strategic plan must take into account the different conditions under which counties are operating. And, working with key stakeholders is critically important to ensure system alignment.

Local probation and parole departments are especially challenged in adopting evidence-based practices because of infrastructure deficiencies and funding constraints. Neither of these challenges is new. House Resolution No. 251 of 1999 called upon the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a cost and services study of Pennsylvania's county adult probation system, with particular emphasis on the state's grant-in-aid program for the improvement of adult probation services. Their findings were similar to those generated in the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee's report entitled *Funding of County Adult Probation Services* conducted pursuant to House Resolution 2014-69. They found:

- 86% of all probation and parole cases were under county jurisdiction;
- average probation and parole caseloads were high (113 per probation officer in 2013);
- many new responsibilities had been placed on county probation and parole offices in the previous 10 years with little or no additional funding;
- the number of felons in the county probation and parole system had increased (35% in the 11 years from 2002 to 2013);
- state grant-in-aid funding had declined markedly in the previous 10 years, both in real dollars and as a percentage of eligible salaries; and
- the percentage of county funds used to support county probation and parole offices had increased and varied widely across the state.

The authors of the report recommended that the grant-in-aid programs be redefined and repurposed to better reflect current needs and realities—perhaps through an evidence-based practices workload analysis plan.

The Association and PCCD partnered to initiate a strategic planning process to address these challenges and to propel the Pennsylvania probation and parole field into a robust evidence-based practices implementation phase. This partnership consisted of funding an evidence-based practices coordinator position and securing the consultation services of The Carey Group in the development of a strategic plan. The first step was to gather key stakeholders to form a strategic planning committee, which occurred in late 2015. The purpose of the initiative is to develop a multi-phased strategic plan through which Pennsylvania’s adult probation and parole departments can acquire the necessary knowledge, tools, guidance, and support to align their practices, policies, and programs with research evidence. The plan is also to address the barriers preventing departments from evidence-based practices alignment and to develop an infrastructure to support the multitude of activities, training, and technical assistance needs anticipated.

Three planning meetings were held between December 2015 and March 2016, resulting in a draft plan. This plan was shared with stakeholder groups and probation and parole departments, culminating in a final plan in June 2016. This plan constitutes a roadmap that will guide subcommittees as they develop detailed plans of action over the next three years.

## Overview of the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives in the strategic plan seek to enhance, over a three-year period, Pennsylvania’s capacity to achieve its vision of public safety, reduced recidivism, and effective use of public funds for departments responsible for supervising offenders in the community. The following goals and objectives have been established:

# Goal One

## Establish the routine and effective use of actuarial assessments for purposes of pretrial and post-conviction placement and supervision, and programming

### OBJECTIVES

1. Create a brief user manual identifying and evaluating the best supported risk/needs assessments, including but not limited to proxy, pretrial, and risk/needs assessments and tools for specialized populations such as domestic violence, sex, driving while impaired, veteran, and female offenders; this manual would, at a minimum, include pros and cons of various assessments, costs, training requirements, and inter-rater reliability procedures
2. Establish a mechanism by which Pennsylvania will endorse and support three specific third- or fourth-generation risk/needs assessments through technical assistance, training, and funding

3. Validate and norm the selected assessments on statewide and local populations
4. Work with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing, and Supreme Court Rules Committee to create a model pre-sentence investigation template that includes risk/needs assessment information
5. Implement a court-supported mechanism whereby probation departments are given authority to impose risk reduction with reasonably related non-punitive programming informed by the risk/needs assessment

## Goal **Two** Develop an EBP Implementation Plan

### OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an EBP blueprint/roadmap that describes the fundamental EBP activities to be encouraged in all counties (e.g., organizational readiness, motivational interviewing, risk/needs assessment, core correctional practices, skill practice, cognitive behavioral interventions, service matrices, case plans, identification of drivers, dosage targets, effective use of rewards and sanctions, continuous quality improvement plans, etc.)
2. Establish EBP symposiums or forums for stakeholders to orient them to probation and parole departments' endorsement of EBP statewide
3. Establish a phased-in training plan rollout that supports models of EBP that can be endorsed consistently throughout the state; consider collaborating with state parole and other correctional organizations, including utilizing shared certified instructors
4. Develop a set of implementation strategies specific to rural counties
5. Determine if a case plan template can be adopted for statewide use that would follow the justice-involved individual from pretrial to sentencing to local supervision to prison to reentry/parole

## Goal **Three** Establish, with AOPC, CCAP, PCCD, DOC, and PBPP, a policy and organizational infrastructure and technical assistance resources to support the successful implementation of EBP at the local and state levels

### OBJECTIVES

1. Assemble technical assistance resources to sustain the EBP implementation plan
2. Establish statewide workload/caseload standards as a guideline for counties to effectively adopt EBP

## Goal **Four** Develop a funding plan to support and encourage the development, implementation, and ongoing confidence in the efficacy of evidence-based practices

### OBJECTIVES

1. Conduct a cost–benefit analysis of the EBP implementation plan using a phased-in approach, whereby counties implement the EBPs that they are in a position to support on an ongoing basis and build from each phase
2. Define dashboard and performance measures to track EBP outcomes
3. Develop a long-term information systems plan to conduct cross-system data mining

## Goal **Five** Develop a plan to ensure victims of crime are empowered, informed, notified, and made whole to the degree possible

### OBJECTIVES

1. Create a process that provides information to crime victims in a timely manner
2. Engage restorative justice programming, including partnerships with local and state victims service agencies
3. Create a mechanism to inform and assist victims with opportunities to provide input and be notified of violations, release dates, etc.
4. Create a victim wraparound policy and procedure, and a domestic violence protocol

## Goal **Six** Develop a comprehensive and diverse communication strategy

### OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the various stakeholder groups and contact persons related to the EBP implementation plan and determine if they need to be informed about, or give ongoing input to, the EBP initiative
2. Devise a communications plan by customizing the message and format of communication for each stakeholder group; consider potential partnerships with communications experts

## Goal **One** Establish the routine and effective use of actuarial assessments for purposes of pretrial and post-conviction placement and supervision, and programming

The foundation of an effective correctional intervention is the application of actuarial risk/needs assessment instruments. At many different stages in the criminal justice process (from entry to exit), the results of these assessments help judges, supervision officers, and parole boards determine which individuals should receive more intense services (the risk principle), what services should be provided (the need principle), and who can be safely supervised in the community. Decades of research tell us that individuals who are assessed as medium to high risk to reoffend are more likely to benefit from a correctional intervention than those assessed as low risk to reoffend. Targeting the most intensive supervision, programming, and treatment to the people most likely to benefit helps agencies allocate resources more efficiently and produce better outcomes. Professional judgment is enhanced when informed by actuarial risk/needs assessment results and, as such, the application of these assessments is the first step in implementing evidence-based practices and achieving recidivism reduction.

### OBJECTIVES

**1. Create a brief user manual identifying and evaluating the best supported risk/needs assessments, including but not limited to proxy, pretrial, and risk/needs assessments and tools for specialized populations such as domestic violence, sex, driving while impaired, veteran, and female offenders; this manual would, at a minimum, include pros and cons of various assessments, costs, training requirements, and inter-rater reliability procedures**

While multiple tools are in use in Pennsylvania's adult probation departments, many jurisdictions are using second-generation tools and are in need of updating to third- or fourth-generation tools. Selecting a new tool can be daunting. There are dozens of risk/needs assessment tools in use across the country and multiple features to consider when selecting. A user manual is needed to assist localities in selecting an appropriate tool for their use in the specified area.

In its evaluation of different assessment tools, the user manual will address a variety of issues, including:

- **Third- or fourth-generation tools.** The manual will include only third- or fourth-generation assessment tools, meaning the identified tool must, at a minimum, include both static and dynamic risk factors (third generation) and, even better, integrate the assessment into a case management plan (fourth generation). The manual will also identify other tools that serve a distinct purpose such as proxy tools that use administrative data to identify risk without the need for an interview.
- **Racial and income neutrality.** The examination of assessment tools will include a review of explicit or derivative factors that disadvantage individuals due to race or income.

- **Training.** Each assessment tool comes with different training requirements, and the training that is available varies in terms of cost, quality, and accessibility.
- **Cost.** Many assessment tools are proprietary and charge various fees, including up-front costs, per assessment/use fees, data integration fees (if migrating from another tool), and, as mentioned above, training costs. Other tools are in the public domain and available at no cost but can be used only with specific training classes or require customization.
- **Format.** Although many assessment tools are electronic, some (especially those in the public domain) are available only in paper-based form. A significant cost is associated with transforming a paper-based system into an electronic one.
- **Inter-rater reliability.** Critical to the successful use of an assessment tool is the reliability of the scores across different raters. Assessment proprietors have various inter-rater reliability procedures, some more extensive than others.
- **Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing tool.** The user manual will take into account the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing’s screening tool, which is used to determine which individuals should receive a full assessment or pre-sentence investigation report.
- **Contact information.** To help localities evaluate and select an assessment tool, the user manual will include contact information of jurisdictions that use the tool and can provide valuable advice.
- **Comprehensiveness.** Some assessment tools are designed for use at one distinct point or for one distinct purpose in the criminal justice system process, for instance, pretrial release. Other tools are part of a suite of tools that may follow an individual through the system, allowing for the transfer of data and information from one stage to the next, from one agency to another. The user manual will promote tools of the latter type, when appropriate, in order to promote efficiency and avoid redundancy.

**2. Establish a mechanism by which Pennsylvania will endorse and support three specific third- or fourth-generation risk/needs assessment tools through technical assistance, training, and funding**

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There is a benefit to having as much uniformity as possible in the selection of specific assessment tools used across the state and at different stages in the justice system. When the same tool is used across localities and at the state corrections level, data can be shared more easily, assessments (which can take up to two hours) need not be repeated as often, and volume discounts can more likely be negotiated.

The authors of the strategic plan support the concept of the state endorsing and supporting three assessment tools. This support would include technical assistance and funding. In this manner, if a locality chooses to implement one of the supported tools, it is our hope that the state would make available:

- funding to purchase the tool;
- training on the correct use of the tool;

- technical assistance related to implementation practices, including how to interpret the results and align them with case plans;
- assistance in the coordination, and support, of periodic reassessments of all individuals trained on the scoring of the assessment and inter-rater reliability processes;
- a centralized data repository for assessment-related data and informational reports; and
- leadership in validating and norming the assessment for the statewide offender population.

### 3. Validate and norm the selected assessments on statewide and local populations

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A validation study measures the predictive accuracy of an assessment tool. Such a study conducted on both the state and local populations is valuable primarily to ensure that the selected tool is in fact predictive of the recidivism measure of interest and is not just based on existing validation research of similar settings and populations in non-Pennsylvania localities.

It is possible that the offender profile and other conditions will be different enough in an urban setting when compared to a rural area, for instance, that different factor weighting or risk level cutoff scores would result. If differences are determined to be significant, changes can be made to improve the tool's predictability. Such a study is also used to norm the tool—that is, to establish the appropriate cutoff values for categorizing offenders into low, medium, or high risk levels.

Finally, a validation study and norming process on both the state and local populations is useful to increase or establish stakeholder confidence in the assessment results. This confidence is imperative when the assessment results are used to inform stakeholder practices such as pretrial release, pleas, diversion placements, and sentencing.

### 4. Work with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing, and Supreme Court Rules Committee to create a model pre-sentence investigation template that includes risk/needs assessment information.

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Significant improvement can be made in pre-sentence investigation (PSI) content and processing. When a structured PSI report is prepared, it can aid in critical decisions such as effectively holding the offender accountable, identifying programming and supervision aimed at reducing recidivism, and ensuring that prison beds are reserved for the most serious offenders. Incorporating the results of a risk/needs assessment into the PSI provides valuable information to help a judge decide whether the offender can be safely supervised in the community and which sentencing conditions would be beneficial to achieve public safety—whether the individual is placed in prison or on community supervision.

PSIs are not completed on all cases; in many jurisdictions, the guilty pleas and sentencing are held on the same day. Some probation directors have estimated that they are ordered in roughly 25% of felony cases. The

Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing is developing a 7–8 question screening assessment to help the courts determine whether to order a PSI.

The developers of the PSI template should consider the following activities and components:

- **Other jurisdictions.** Review examples from other jurisdictions to examine how they incorporate the risk/needs assessment information in the PSI.
- **Victim input.** Ensure there is an opportunity for victim input, but examine what kind of information is most useful and relevant for a PSI and try to make the process one that is satisfying for both the victim and the officer completing the PSI.
- **PSI information.** Ensure that the PSI is parsimonious and only contains the information that is important to the stakeholders. PSI reports can often be long and contain so much information that the reader only scans certain sections. Streamlining and aligning the PSI to the most relevant information—especially risk, need, and victim input—can improve the report’s utility and readability while also saving on resources.
- **Other questions.** In creating the PSI template, other questions to be answered include whether to create a short- and long-form PSI to be completed based on an offender’s risk level, whether to include programming dosage information (i.e., the range of programming time to maximize risk reduction and limit length of supervision), and whether to include strength-based components to ensure that sentencing conditions are responsive to an offender’s strengths and abilities.

#### **5. Implement a court-supported mechanism whereby probation departments are given authority to impose risk reduction with reasonably related non-punitive programming informed by the risk/needs assessment**

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Oftentimes, a sentencing hearing cannot capture the nuances or complexity of an offender’s situation or address the dynamic nature of risk. Risk can increase or decrease in a short amount of time and may require a corresponding action by the supervision officer. Even with the benefit of a PSI, and even if risk and needs information is incorporated into the PSI, the court order mandating probation or prison may not take into account the current or changing needs of the offender which, if not addressed, contribute to rearrest.

The Pennsylvania Superior Court has held that only the common pleas court has the authority, pursuant to 42 Pa. C.S.A. §9754 (b), to impose conditions of probation upon an offender (see *Commonwealth vs. Vilsaint*). Therefore, for example, if the court order does not include drug counseling, the probation officer cannot require the offender to attend such counseling, even if new information is discovered about the individual’s drug or alcohol abuse after sentencing. The probation officer would need to seek a modified court order.

One way to address this is for the court to give the probation officer authority to impose risk reduction programming as a result of the assessment without a specific court order or condition. The extent of that authority must be determined, and appropriate restrictions or limitations must be put in place (for example, limiting the authority to non-residential and non-incarcerative programming).

## Goal **Two** Develop an EBP Implementation Plan

The National Institute of Corrections has identified eight principles of effective interventions leading toward risk reduction: assess actuarial risk/needs, enhance intrinsic motivation, target interventions (according to risk, need, responsivity, dosage, and treatment research findings), skill train with directed practice, increase positive reinforcement, engage ongoing support in natural communities, measure relevant processes/practices, and provide measurement feedback. Research clearly indicates that organizations that adhere to these principles can reduce future rearrests of offenders during and after supervision. However, poor or partial implementation diminishes the effectiveness and return on investment of evidence-based programs and practices. Knowing what works is critically important, but evidence-based practices have to be implemented in a certain way and in a certain sequence to be effective. Implementation success is greatly enhanced when executed in a planned manner that adheres to lessons learned in implementation science.

A comprehensive EBP implementation plan will identify the key activities to be undertaken by the counties, plan for educational and training opportunities, assist with overall stakeholder engagement, account for the unique challenges faced by rural counties, and provide tools such as a case plan template to encourage consistency and best practices.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an EBP blueprint/roadmap that describes the fundamental EBP activities to be encouraged in all counties (e.g., organizational readiness, motivational interviewing, risk/needs assessment, core correctional practices, skill practice, cognitive behavioral interventions, service matrices, case plans, identification of drivers, dosage targets, effective use of rewards and sanctions, continuous quality improvement plans, etc.)

Implementing evidence-based practices can be overwhelming to departments and localities. The list of key EBP activities is long, and the reality is that no department can implement all of the components overnight. An EBP blueprint will be developed that provides departments with guidance and advice about priorities while also allowing some level of flexibility so that localities can implement changes that are appropriate to their needs, strengths, and limitations.

The EBP blueprint will be developed with the following in mind:

- Many counties around the country have previously gone through comprehensive evidence-based practices planning processes and developed excellent roadmaps. These roadmaps should be examined, and a determination should be made as to which parts of their recommendations would be most appropriate and relevant for Pennsylvania.

- The roadmap should be streamlined so as to avoid the creation of a complicated, dense document. The blueprint would be user-friendly, in a simple, visual, and easy-to-implement format.
- Implementing EBP is not an all or nothing process. Each element is important in its own right, and counties can succeed by implementing some but not all elements.
- The roadmap should be customizable to allow each county to account for where it is in the change process. For example, if the county has already achieved stakeholder engagement, the blueprint will allow the county to skip to the next step.
- Each county has its challenges in terms of availability and quality of local resources and service providers. The roadmap will be flexible to allow for a range of implementation strategies to help local counties overcome their challenges and limitations.

## **2. Establish EBP symposiums or forums for stakeholders to orient them to probation and parole departments' endorsement of EBP statewide**

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Moving to a system based on EBP can embody a significant change in a county or state, and its success depends on the support and engagement of all stakeholders working in the justice system, including but not limited to judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victim service agencies, community service providers, and probation and parole staff. Evidence-based practices symposiums and forums, during which a consistent and uniform message about EBP is communicated, can help educate and familiarize stakeholders with EBP and identify ways they can be supportive. The following issues should be considered when developing symposiums or forums:

- Identify key stakeholder groups and create customized information-sharing resources that are specific to each group in order to address relevant issues and concerns.
- Identify judges and attorney conferences and seek to present at such conferences; ask key stakeholders and champions to help gain access to identified conferences.
- Devise a systematic way to reach local criminal justice advisory boards.
- Organize presentations or discussion groups at statewide conferences.
- Consider funding strategies that can be used to support these communication activities, including travel expenses and speaker fees for symposiums and the production of new printed or online materials.

### 3. Establish a phased-in training plan rollout that supports models of EBP that can be endorsed consistently throughout the state; consider collaborating with state parole and other correctional organizations, including utilizing shared certified instructors

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A successful transition to EBP generally requires comprehensive training in methods, theories, and behavior designed to achieve public safety objectives. For example, research demonstrates that clients supervised by officers who receive risk–need–responsivity training succeed at greater rates than other clients. There is a range of training available from a variety of providers on all aspects of EBP.

Some of the issues to be addressed when creating the training plan include the following:

- What training is already available and what training needs to be added?
- Should some trainings be given priority over others?
- Which trainings should be offered statewide and when (i.e., in what order)?
- Which of the selected trainings should be added to new officer orientation (i.e., basic training)?
- How will funding for the trainings be determined?
- How can Pennsylvania establish a trainers' network?
- Can a train-the-trainer arrangement result in a more efficient use of resources?
- After initial trainings are given, what booster trainings should be offered?
- How can we ensure and measure the fidelity of the training?
- Who will coordinate and administer the delivery of the training plan?

### 4. Develop a set of implementation strategies specific to rural counties

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There are many challenges to implementing evidence-based practices regardless of the geographic setting. However, rural counties face some unique limitations, especially when it comes to the availability of treatment providers, the potentially long distances between where an offender lives and the supervision office/service provider, the absence of public transportation options, and the rare existence of specialized expertise or services.

Given these unique challenges, special attention is warranted to highlight effective strategies that are or could be employed in rural counties. These strategies might include developing a rural-specific resource manual or convening a summit of rural counties to provide attendees with an opportunity to exchange ideas and brainstorm solutions. In addition, EBP planning efforts should include representation from rural counties and implementation strategies that are specific to rural settings.

The following are some issues to consider:

- ways to regionalize and consolidate resources;
- ideas to capitalize on and benefit from surrounding counties that have larger populations and more resources;
- ways to leverage the court regional administrative units;
- ways to leverage existing state/regional/county infrastructure, such as Department of Human Services mobile units, telecommunications, etc.;
- the use of technology, such as teleconferences, video conferencing, and webinars; and
- ways for rural counties to collaborate with key stakeholders as well as with groups and individuals not traditionally associated with the justice system.

#### **5. Determine if a case plan template can be adopted for statewide use that would follow the justice-involved individual from pretrial to sentencing to local supervision to prison to reentry/parole**

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Case plans are written documents, developed collaboratively by supervision professionals and clients, that serve as a roadmap to the behavioral change process. When properly developed, case plans are clear, specific, and measurable; case plan goals and activities are linked directly to the results of an individual's risk/needs assessment; case plans specifically address the "driver" (the criminogenic need that drives the others); activities are focused on addressing skill deficits by teaching prosocial skills (e.g., anger management, problem solving, coping skills); case plans address individuals' responsivity factors (e.g., mental health, learning disability) and stabilization needs (e.g., housing, medication); and they match intervention dosage hours and intensity to the individual's level of risk.

The following questions should be explored when developing the case plan template:

- Should the case plan be similar across counties as well as throughout the system (i.e., from probation/parole to prison to reentry)?
- What core areas should be included in all case plans?
- If a county selects a risk/needs assessment that comes with its own case plan template, how does the county address the differences between the assessment-derived case plan and the statewide plan?
- Can the template build in some flexibility so that counties can develop similar but not identical case plans?
- What are the strategies to communicate case plan goals to local service providers in order to effectively partner with them, with the goal of improving client outcomes?
- Should the case plans be accompanied by service matrices that match the most effective services to each criminogenic need?

## Goal **Three** Establish, with AOPC, CCAP, PCCD, DOC, and PBPP, a policy and organizational infrastructure and technical assistance resources to support the successful implementation of EBP at the local and state levels

Coordinating the implementation of EBP across Pennsylvania's 67 counties is an enormous task. Experiences from other states suggest that successful implementation is more likely achieved when it is supported by statewide policies, dedicated personnel, an effective infrastructure, and assistance from expert consultants. For these reasons, a full-time employee will be assigned to the role of EBP Coordinator and operate under a three-year contract. The EBP Coordinator will work with the planning committee(s) and oversee the EBP implementation plan; the EBP Coordinator will execute many of the implementation tasks, including identifying needed policy modifications, overseeing the delivery of technical assistance from external consultants, and producing online and/or written tools to support localities around the state.

### OBJECTIVES

#### 1. Assemble technical assistance resources to sustain the EBP implementation plan

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Establishing and funding the fulltime EBP Coordinator position is essential to success but certainly not sufficient. An effective organizational infrastructure is needed whereby the needs of probation and parole departments are sufficiently advocated for and supported at the state level. It is critical to harness the experience and knowledge of Pennsylvania's more than 2,000 probation/parole officers and managers as well as to coordinate the cultural change and training of this large body of employees. An initial first step, then, is to conduct a needs analysis, which would include identifying and prioritizing what actions need to be taken, by whom, and at what cost. This analysis will provide the basis for the development of recommendations on an effective organizational infrastructure and a long-term funding plan, as identified in Goal Four. It will be recommended that these initial needs be included in the state's request for Justice Reinvestment Initiative funding and assistance.

More immediately, a mechanism to deliver the evidence-based activities must be developed, including the creation of a committee structure, a training delivery system, and the strategic and efficient use of external consultants. In addition, the core skill areas that support EBP and that would be integrated into a statewide training plan, as discussed in Goal Two, must be identified.

Other items that must be considered and resolved include the specific role of the EBP Coordinator, the role of CCAPPOAP and its members, and the needs that can be filled by external consultants.

## 2. Establish statewide workload/caseload standards as a guideline for counties to effectively adopt EBP

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Research on the risk principle calls for increasing the intensity and duration of programming and supervision as offender risk increases. Furthermore, it supports the concept of individual supervision appointments when the interaction is of sufficient duration and consists of specific behavioral change processes. Community corrections organizations across the country have increasingly operationalized these research findings through the implementation of specialized caseloads based on risk levels and/or specific offender needs. The sizes and standards of the caseloads necessarily vary: a probation officer overseeing an administrative caseload of low-risk offenders may effectively supervise hundreds of individuals; a high-risk intensive supervision caseload may need to be limited to just 25 individuals. As described by the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), many departments are now using the weighted “workload” model, which is based on differentiation among cases. This method takes into consideration that each case is not equal in terms of how much it accounts for an officer’s time and attention. Thus, caseloads would be differentiated based on the type of cases the officer is assigned. Although exact standards will need to be set by each county based on their offender population and available resources, Pennsylvania can establish workload/caseload guidelines that are consistent with EBP and geared towards achieving recidivism reduction.

In developing statewide guidelines, models from other states will be examined, and it will be determined whether an external consultant is needed and/or if APPA’s guidelines might serve as a helpful resource. The goal will be to develop a single method of workload measurement. The guidelines will strive to provide counties with flexibility, offering them opportunities to customize contact standards, drive times, and so on based on geography, populations, and resources. Finally, the possibility of financially incentivizing counties that adopt standards consistent with the guidelines will be considered.

## Goal **Four** Develop a funding plan to support and encourage the development, implementation, and ongoing confidence in the efficacy of evidence-based practices

Aligning probation and parole departments around the state with evidence-based practices requires an investment of time, resources, and funding. Based on the results being achieved around the country, the investment produces a significant payoff—reduced recidivism and safer communities—which results in lower corrections costs at both the local and state levels. Many aspects of the EBP implementation plan will require additional funding: the risk/needs assessment tool, training on EBP skills and practices, support materials, stakeholder convenings, and forums. A funding plan will be developed that not only identifies potential sources of funding but also quantifies the expected cost savings, identifies performance measures, and details the need for a long-term information systems plan.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Conduct a cost–benefit analysis of the EBP implementation plan using a phased-in approach, whereby counties implement the EBPs that they are in a position to support on an ongoing basis and build from each phase

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Each component in the EBP implementation plan is based on and supported by research evidence and is designed to reduce recidivism and improve offender outcomes. Studies also demonstrate that most of these components produce cost savings in the long term—savings that can be redirected toward much-needed supervision services. To start, however, a funding plan is needed to initiate the EBP implementation plan and ensure that it is properly supported.

A two-part funding plan will be developed that includes: (1) grant-in-aid funding for all counties for basic supervision services, which will be added to the existing baseline; and (2) EBP funding to support items related to the EBP implementation plan. The EBP funding will be allocated to counties in a phased approach, first targeting the counties that demonstrate a commitment and initial readiness to adopt evidence-based practices. A process to select these motivated counties will be created and made known to all supervision departments.

The expected savings that will accrue to the state as a result of implementing EBP should be communicated to the public as well as to key stakeholders across the justice system. The cost–benefit analysis that will be conducted will quantify the cost savings/avoidance, and the results will be conveyed in an effective manner.

## 2. Define dashboard and performance measures to track EBP outcomes

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Successful organizations understand the importance of measuring and paying close attention to key performance indicators. Many of Pennsylvania's data gathering and analysis systems are designed to assess the degree to which the respective agencies are achieving their mission-critical tasks. Performance measures are also used to hold all levels of management accountable.

Pennsylvania's state agencies, such as the Department of Corrections and Board of Probation and Parole, already have performance measures and track a number of indicators. The PCCD also has dashboard measures that are used to track the outcomes of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative. For this strategic plan, the measures most relevant to the EBP implementation plan and ones that demonstrate probation and parole departments' contribution to public safety and state interests will be identified. These measures will focus on outcomes, not just on counting activity. The existing reporting systems (e.g., UCM, PCCD CJAB Dashboard, PAJCIS, etc.) will be examined to ensure that the measures rely on data that are already available.

## 3. Develop a long-term information systems plan to conduct cross-system data mining

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The Pennsylvania Justice Network (JNET)<sup>1</sup> is the Commonwealth's primary public safety and criminal justice information network. JNET's secure justice site provides users, including more than 33,000 practitioners located throughout the state, with a common online environment to access public safety and justice system information. This critical information comes from various contributing municipal, county, state, and federal agencies. JNET provides users with the ability to conduct secure investigations, research, and inquiry in a Web- and message-based environment.

An important step in JNET's development is to capture and share data from all (not just some) counties. This will reduce duplication of data entry and facilitate comprehensive analysis by cross-referencing. In partnership with JNET, a long-term information systems plan will be developed to accomplish cross-system data mining.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.niem.gov/documentsdb/Documents/Case%20Studies/Pennsylvania.pdf>.

## Goal **Five** Develop a plan to ensure victims of crime are empowered, informed, notified, and made whole to the degree possible

Victims of crime are too often overlooked in the criminal justice process, especially after the arrest, trial, and sentencing are complete. However, a victim has many needs if and when the defendant or offender is placed on community supervision. Many of these needs revolve around access to information, resources, and support. For instance, victims are entitled to receive information on the status of the case, the location of the defendant/offender, and the conditions of supervision, and to have an understanding of the probation and parole process.<sup>2</sup> Many victims seek referrals to an array of resources, for instance, services related to security, advocacy, and treatment. Sometimes, the most critical need of a victim is simply to be heard and acknowledged.

Probation and parole departments can and should play a critical role in meeting these needs. A resource manual will be developed and technical assistance identified that provides a process for conveying information to victims, encourages the development of restorative justice programming, suggests ways to give victims opportunities to provide input, and establishes a protocol to ensure the safety of domestic violence and other victims.

### OBJECTIVES

#### 1. Create a process that provides information to crime victims in a timely manner

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Crime victims are entitled to receive, and often seek, information about the status of the case and location of the defendant/offender, their rights as victims, and the services that are available to help them. Many victims also want to know about their right to participate in various court hearings such as pretrial, sentencing, parole, and revocation.

There is no single, correct way to provide victims with information. Each jurisdiction must establish a process that best fits its resources and circumstances. In some localities, the prosecutor's office is the main conduit for providing victims with information. In others, the probation or parole office may assign a single officer or unit to this task. Many states and counties offer the VINE (Victim Information Notification Everyday) service, which provides victims with electronic access (phone, website, etc.) to information about an offender's status. The resource manual and technical assistance will identify a number of different processes from which a locality may choose.

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<sup>2</sup> This goal and its objectives are consistent with, and draw upon, the practices endorsed by the American Probation and Parole Association in its fact sheet "Promising Victim Related Practices in Probation and Parole," available at <https://www.appa-net.org/eWeb/docs/APPA/pubs/PVRPPP-FACTSHEET-1.pdf>.

## **2. Engage restorative justice programming, including partnerships with local and state victims service agencies**

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Restorative justice is an approach that focuses on the needs of the victims, the interests of the community, and the rehabilitation of offenders. It often includes facilitated meetings between victims, offenders, and others during which all parties agree on the actions to be taken to repair the harm and to hold offenders accountable. Restorative justice can reduce recidivism, provide victims with greater satisfaction, and contribute to a more efficient use of resources.<sup>3</sup>

Under restorative justice, victims have the opportunity to participate in the justice process, speak to the offender, and understand why the incident occurred. Examples of actions that often result from the group conferences involving the victim, offender, and interested community members include the offender issuing an apology statement, payment of restitution, and the identification of community service that is tailored to the crime (which is decided with input from the victim). Victims have reported an increased satisfaction with the criminal justice process and an increased likelihood of financial and emotional restoration when participating in these restorative initiatives.

The resource manual and technical assistance will endorse restorative justice programming and suggest ways in which localities may partner with local and state victim services agencies to develop and implement such programming around the state.

## **3. Create a mechanism to inform and assist victims with opportunities to provide input and be notified of violations, release dates, etc.**

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Not only do many victims seek information about the status of the case and defendant/offender but they also want to understand the offender's conditions of supervision and the consequences if the offender violates those conditions. Victims generally are unfamiliar with the criminal justice process and need to be educated about what happens when a person is on probation and parole; they also need to be provided with information such as the name of the probation officer assigned to the case (or someone who serves as a point of contact). In addition, all victims need to be given the opportunity and provided with assistance to submit input into any further court proceedings or decisions related to the case (such as through victim impact statements). Importantly, victims also need to be provided with referrals to address any personal safety concerns and treatment needs.

The mechanism to meet all these needs will differ from locality to locality and will depend on the available resources, needs of the local victim community, and existence of local victim advocates or organizations. The plan will include mechanisms that other jurisdictions use and allow local agencies to decide what works best for their community.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information about restorative justice, see the report "Restorative Justice: The Evidence," available at [http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/RJ\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/RJ_full_report.pdf).

#### 4. Create a victim wraparound policy and procedure, and a domestic violence protocol

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Ensuring the safety of victims, particularly in domestic violence, stalking, and sexual abuse cases, is a high priority for Pennsylvania. Probation and parole officers can help the victim directly by assisting her or him develop a safety plan for when the offender is released back into the community following a period of incarceration. The EBP implementation plan will include recommended policies and procedures to guide probation and parole departments with this task to ensure that victims receive help in planning for their safety.

Domestic violence is a unique crime that requires a special approach and sensitivity as the case progresses through the system. Many jurisdictions have benefited from creating a domestic violence protocol—essentially, a set of policies or principles that help guide law enforcement and other justice system professionals to ensure they are positioned to act in ways that protect victims from ongoing abuse and that hold offenders accountable.

Minnesota, for example, developed an interagency response to domestic violence crimes called the *Blueprint for Safety*.<sup>4</sup> While this comprehensive planning and policy document acknowledges that each locality must adapt the policies to its own circumstances, it lays out six essential characteristics that serve as a guide:

1. Adhere to an interagency approach and collective intervention goals.
2. Build attention to the context and severity of abuse into each intervention.
3. Recognize that most domestic violence is a patterned crime requiring continued engagement with victims and offenders.
4. Ensure sure and swift consequences for continued abuse.
5. Use the power of the justice system to send messages of help and accountability.
6. Act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders.

In Pennsylvania's development of a domestic violence protocol, the planning group will review various protocols from other jurisdictions, including the *Blueprint*, and adopt a set of principles or a model that can be used or adapted by each jurisdiction in the state.

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<sup>4</sup> More information about the *Blueprint* is available from Praxis International at [http://praxisinternational.org/bp\\_materials.aspx](http://praxisinternational.org/bp_materials.aspx).

## Goal **Six** Develop a comprehensive and diverse communication strategy

A successful move to EBP requires a commitment from probation and parole departments and the support and collaboration of their many partners in the justice system, including the courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victim advocates, community members, and service providers. To achieve this, communication channels must be open and messages must be delivered clearly and effectively. A communication strategy designed to reach multiple and diverse audiences will be developed. The strategy will take into account the different ways that people receive and absorb information, and it will be designed to reach as many stakeholders as possible.

### OBJECTIVES

#### 1. Identify the various stakeholder groups and contact persons related to the EBP implementation plan and determine if they need to be informed about, or give ongoing input to, the EBP initiative

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An effective communications strategy must first specify the groups and individuals who should understand and stay informed about the EBP implementation plan. A multitude of stakeholders are impacted by the work conducted by probation and parole departments, including judges, attorneys, jail officials, law enforcement officers, victims, behavioral health counselors, treatment providers, addiction services, community groups, housing organizations, health agencies, employers, and educators.

A second consideration is whether conveying information is sufficient or if a group or person needs to provide ongoing input to the overall initiative. An effective communications plan requires a thoughtful and thorough assessment of the key stakeholders' needs, a clearly defined objective(s) of any communication, and a strategy to impart information or acquire input. The planning committee will examine the landscape of potential stakeholder groups and organize a responsive strategy.

#### 2. Devise a communications plan by customizing the message and format of communication for each stakeholder group; consider potential partnerships with communications experts

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Each identified stakeholder group will have different needs and priorities. For instance, treatment providers are primarily concerned with their ability to respond effectively to the needs of the population and the offender's well-being; jail officials are concerned with the capacity of the justice system and their ability to oversee the offender population; and so on. As such, messages may need to be customized in order to clarify the importance of the message to the selected audience. In addition, different stakeholders have different protocols on

how to communicate based on their relative time availability, familiarity with media, and access to technology. The communications plan must therefore take into account a diverse selection of modalities, including written media, video, websites, social media, etc.

The planning committee will need to consider the many instances when communications to various stakeholders regarding evidence-based practices will be useful. One critical requirement is to develop an effective crisis response to any harmful actions caused by individuals who are under supervision. Such communication can help sustain good programs and people.

Given the importance of the communications plan and the expertise needed to draft it, this task may require the assistance of a communications specialist. This expert can help the committee brand and stay true to the core message, and provide advice on how to get and keep others' attention given the bombardment of competing communication means such as social media, newspapers, radio, television, Internet, and others.

## Appendix A

### Pennsylvania County Adult Probation and Parole Departmental Surveys

Surveys of Pennsylvania county adult probation and parole departments were conducted in 2013 and 2015. These surveys provided the strategic planning team with important information in order to ensure that the strategic plan “meets the departments where they are at.” The following themes from the survey were used to help inform the strategic planning team of the current status of EBP in Pennsylvania county adult probation and parole departments:

#### 2013 SURVEY THEMES:

- The greatest barriers to EBP are resources (85%), lack of EBP knowledge (61%), lack of staff support (59%), lack of staff training (56%), and lack of technology or personnel to implement EBP (50%).
- Approximately 60% of those using a risk/needs assessment do not use the results for case planning.
- Approximately 60% of respondents indicate that staff use motivational interviewing (MI) skills (62.5%).
- Some departments (14) use booster trainings and some (13) conduct coaching sessions.
- Eighty percent of departments develop case plans for offenders.
- Most departments collect data on program completion and violations data but not on changes in risk score or recidivism.

#### 2015 SURVEY THEMES:

- About one quarter of departments have not attempted EBP at this time; of those that have started, most of their effort has been on the use of a risk/needs assessment and MI training.
- While 67% of respondents are using a risk instrument, half (50%) are using a second-generation tool (the Wisconsin Risk Assessment). In fact, 34% of respondents indicate that they would like to implement a risk/needs instrument.
- While most respondents indicate that they are using a risk instrument, it is not clear how often that instrument is being used (e.g., 100% of cases) or how the instrument is being used to guide policy.
- Only 20% of those who are using a risk tool have validated the instrument; this is the same percent as the needs tool.
- Seventy-nine percent say they are using a needs instrument, but 43% of these respondents are using the Wisconsin Risk Assessment (which is not a third- or fourth-generation needs assessment).
- Thirty-six percent of respondents have implemented cognitive behavioral interventions (CBI), which was likewise reported in the 2013 survey, but over half (54%) of respondents indicate that they would like to implement CBI.
- Forty percent of the officers supervise between 50 and 100 offenders; 35% supervise between 101 and 150. Most (82%) vary supervision requirements by risk level; 70% do not think the officer workload is balanced.

# Appendices

Caution should be exercised when interpreting this information. Most often, surveys were completed by administrators, without direct input from line staff; they were not administered by all levels of the departments; and they did not elicit information about the frequency or quality of the activities they measured. For example, a department may have indicated that it was using a risk assessment tool, but the surveys did not clarify the percent of offenders supervised within the department who were actually assessed. Furthermore, no attempt was made to determine the quality of the service or activity. For example, a large percent of departments report that their staff received MI training; however, it is unclear if the training was a two-hour introduction to MI or if it was a three-day skill-based training followed up with booster trainings and coaching. Finally, a significant number of evidence-based practices were not included in the surveys, such as the identification of drivers, the use of responsivity factors, the presence of service matching matrices, the effective use of rewards and sanctions, etc. For these and other reasons, the surveys should be viewed as a beginning point in understanding the extent to which departments have aligned their practices with research evidence.

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