

CR-Sent
2-2-87



MSA

103196

103196

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by
Michigan Sheriff's Association

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.

THE OTSEGO COUNTY CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

ALPINE CENTER PROGRAM

OTSEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Prepared by

JAIL/LOCKUP RESOURCE CENTER

OCTOBER 1986

NCJRS

NOV 10 1986

ACQUISITIONS

OTSEGO COUNTY CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

ALPINE CENTER PROGRAM

OTSEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

124 SOUTH COURT

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN 49735

(517) 732-6484

SHERIFF NICHOLAS J. WESTRA

PREFACE

This White Paper, one in a series commissioned by the Michigan Sheriffs' Association's Jail/Lockup Resource Center, examines the Otsego County Corrections Department Alpine Center Program, a minimum security correctional facility for Otsego County offenders. The program replaced the jail-based work release program, which freed jail beds for use by other offenders.

At the outset, it must be said that the name of the program, The Otsego County Corrections Department, is something of a misnomer. Generally, such a name would describe an organizational unit housing all correctional functions of a county. In this case, however, it is the name of a single non-jail program. In part, the name is a reflection of the unusual political history which surrounds the program. The originator of the program was a Michigan Department of Corrections Probation Agent who, largely because of credibility developed through his work with the program, was recently appointed Sheriff of Otsego County. The paper will examine that history, as well as the operation of the program itself.

Sheriffs, county board members, judges, and other local officials with a stake in public protection and fiscal responsibility will find this white paper helpful in raising the issues they must confront in considering such a program in their own jurisdictions. It will be of special interest to those who wonder about the political viability of community corrections programs. In Otsego County, community corrections has been an unqualified political winner.

BACKGROUND

On May 6, 1986, Nicholas J. Westra was appointed Sheriff of Otsego County by a three-member panel consisting of the Probate Judge, Prosecutor, and Clerk of the county. The panel, created according to state law, was acting to fill a vacancy caused by the death of the former Sheriff Robert Dowker. At the time of his appointment, Westra was a Probation Officer for Otsego County. Despite protests from his State of Michigan employers, the de facto Executive Director of the Alpine Center Program for Minimum Security Offenders, Westra was appointed to the vacancy.

With help and support from colleagues and key political figures, Westra designed, packaged, sold, and implemented the program in a period of just eleven months. His program, since it began operation in early 1984, has helped to eliminate both jail crowding and a large deficit in the county general fund.

The success he has enjoyed, both in terms of the program and his career, demonstrates two points relevant to community corrections: an aggressive advocate can make an enormous difference, and successful community corrections is a political asset rather than a liability.

THE ALPINE CENTER PROGRAM FOR MINIMUM SECURITY OFFENDERS

Program Development

A decade as a probation officer led Nick Westra to become frustrated with what he perceived as a warehousing approach to local corrections. This was the principal motivation behind his efforts to create a new approach in Otsego County. As a probation officer, it was his sense that little was being done to reduce the chances that an offender would, upon release into the community, continue criminal activities. Recidivism among the jail population was, in his judgement, very high. Westra had followed efforts in the State Legislature to enact community corrections legislation and had become convinced that it was an idea whose time had come.

The county government and Sheriff Robert Dowker had additional motivations for separating the program. A \$90,000 county deficit meant that layoffs appeared certain. A traditional jail-based work release program had led to problems of contraband and poor discipline among inmates. The jail, which was designed for 24 inmates, was being operated at 150% of capacity, and cell space was being rented from other counties at a cost of about \$70,000 per year. Additional costs were incurred through the use of road patrol to transport prisoners back and forth to the facilities.

Clearly, the problems relating to the overcrowded jail had created an atmosphere in which change was possible. Even with these conditions, however, a catalyst was required - an individual who could spark the reaction. Westra played such a role, and as a first step, set out to recruit a support network for the new program.

Westra first presented the program idea to then Sheriff Dowker. When Dowker agreed to the concept, he assigned his chief deputy to work with Westra on its development. Together they wrote an Operations Philosophy and Comprehensive Plan for the program. This document called for the creation of "a therapeutic alternative to prison commitment...with a specific focus on the individual needs of the criminal justice clients." The openness of the sheriff to the new idea was due to the need not only to resolve the serious overcrowding and budget problems, but also to the relationship which had developed among himself, Westra and the Michigan Sheriffs' Association, who supports community corrections programs. Without the strong base of support from the sheriff, Westra would have had a much more difficult time "selling" the idea to others.

A key to the early acceptance of the program was Westra and Dowker's strategic decision to invest its governance in a local Corrections Commission. This was to be a body comprised of criminal justice "stakeholders," a term Westra uses to describe those who have an interest in or influence upon criminal justice policy in Otsego County. The commission would include representation from the judiciary, the prosecutor's office, the law enforcement community, the probation department, and the Board of County Commissioners. Collectively, the members would

be those with the power to make the program succeed or fail.

Each prospective member was approached individually, prior to the convening of a first meeting. Westra argued that, since their interests and perspectives vary widely, they needed to be approached differently. For example, while a judge might be most interested in the prospect of the program as a new sentencing alternative, the members of the County Board of Commissioners might be more concerned about costs. Ultimately, each commission member needed to become fully aware of all aspects of the program, even though at the outset, each had a different reason for choosing to participate. Carrying out this kind of strategy requires, of course, that the architect understand fully the various interests and perspectives of all persons involved.

As one might expect, reactions to Westra's presentation varied. Many were enthusiastic from the start, but others responded cautiously. They expressed concerns ranging from the time commitment which participation might require, to possible costs to the county, to the philosophy upon which the program was to be based. By addressing these concerns prior to an initial meeting, Westra set the stage for a first meeting to be a gathering of allies. He created common ground upon which the program could be built.

At its first meeting, the local corrections commission agreed to proceed with the plan and to present it to the County Board of Commissioners. Initially, they decided to ask that the Board do three things:

- Create a new Otsego Department of Corrections.
- Validate the local corrections commission as the head of the new department, as a means of transforming the commission from an ad hoc to an official status within county government.
- Support the concept of a minimum security corrections center.

Intentionally absent was any request for funding. Approval of the requests would create a structure without substance. But that structure would form the basis for further action. The requests, then, were in one sense modest and in another, ambitious.

The local commission has evolved into far more than a figurehead body. It was intimately involved with the process of hiring all program staff. In an organizational chart, the local corrections commission is above the Sheriff, but in fact, the body is advisory. The Sheriff simply chose to accept the advice rendered by the group on a wide range of policy matters.

By participating and helping to design the program, the members agreed to share political responsibility for it. All have remained supportive since its inception. Had any key players been left out, they could have acted as critical bystanders, possibly sniping at the program.

About thirty days after the program was conceived, the proposals of the local corrections commission were presented to the Otsego County Board of Commissioners. The sheriff was present, but Westra made the presentation.

The reception from the Board of Commissioners was favorable. Since the Chair of the Finance Committee, Jail Committee, and the Board of Commissioners themselves were all active members of the local corrections commission, this reaction was almost inevitable.

The presentation was well-planned. It included charts which described the program and its cost-saving potential. It showed that the program gave the county a way of avoiding what had appeared to be inevitable layoffs. It created excitement among the commissioners who, until that evening, had been facing very grim prospects for resolving the county budget problems.

At the county level, corrections functions are normally housed in the Sheriff's Department; but, in acting to approve the proposals of the Corrections Commission, the Board of Commissioners created an entirely new local Department of Corrections independent of the Sheriff's Department.

The Media

A key to the shaping of public opinion about a new program is its treatment by the media. Westra had only passing contacts with reporters prior to the meeting of the Board of Commissioners. He contacted editors of the local papers in advance, but did not thoroughly brief the press until after the Board meeting. In this session he stressed that the offenders in the program would, for the most part, be local. In other words, the program would represent an attempt by the community to deal with its own offenders at home.

Unfortunately, the groundwork in this area was insufficient. Newspaper headlines suggested that the county would be housing offenders in a certain neighborhood area and, as might be expected, the residents of that neighborhood organized to oppose the idea.

The Public

The group that opposed the program had organized for another reason well before the Alpine Center program was proposed. They had been confronted with a state proposal to install an adult foster care home for mentally retarded individuals in their neighborhood. The group was still angry about the treatment they received from the Michigan Department of Mental Health, and appeared to transfer skepticism based on that experience to the Alpine Center.

Recognizing that he had underestimated the negative public reaction to the program, Westra began a determined effort to win over the neighborhood group. He met with the group three times to discuss their concerns and to map out a strategy for responding to them. In these discussions, he emphasized the distinction between the state and county level of government. He argued that when dealing with the state bureaucracy, citizens are hard pressed to find an accountable official and when they do, often do not receive action. At the county level, by contrast, accountability would be much more direct. Rather than grappling with a large, distant government body, citizens would have direct access to members of the Board of Commissioners and the

local corrections commission. He also stressed his personal accountability. He promised to respond quickly and effectively to any problems which might arise.

The neighborhood group received virtually the same presentation as had the Board of Commissioners. He discussed cost savings, eligibility for admission to the program, and available alternatives. In spite of their lingering doubt about the program, the group agreed to reserve judgment and give it a try. The one condition upon which the group insisted, and to which Westra readily agreed, was that there must be open communications between the program management and the group. There have been no problems and no complaints since.

The Michigan Department of Corrections

Felony probation is a state function in Michigan. All circuit court probation officers are employees of the Michigan Department of Corrections (DOC). Despite this organization, however, the officers work very closely with circuit court judges. They prepare pre-sentence investigation reports, which include sentencing recommendations and supervision of offenders sentenced to probation. It was from such a position that Westra went about the process of initiating the program.

Westra's employer, the DOC, was not supportive of his efforts. His de facto supervisor, Circuit Judge William A. Porter, was supportive. In fact, the Judge asked DOC for their support. When DOC ordered Westra not to work on the program on "company time," he continued to work on his own time without a title or salary.

Program Operation

The Alpine Center program is housed in a building which was once the nurses' quarters at a tuberculosis sanitarium. It had been vacant for several years, and more recently, had been a county office building. It consists of two floors and a basement, all of which are in use by the program. Westra estimates that construction of the building today would cost in excess of six million dollars.

The facility has a capacity of 23. In mid-June, the population was 17. Fifteen of those inmates (90%) were circuit court felons, with the balance coming from the district court. The average length of stay in the program had been approximately 160 days, but recently has risen to about 240. This change is mainly due to the development of a prison diversion project. Prison diversion cases, which are identified through an offender profile, are reported separately to the Michigan Department of Corrections, which funds the project.

The staff of the program consists of 10 employees of the Otsego County Corrections Department (OCCD), and one employee of Community, Family and Children's Services (CFCS), a local private nonprofit service agency. The ten OCCD employees include a director, three shift supervisors and six House Supervisors/Corrections Technicians. Other outside resources utilized by the OCCD include Community Mental Health, Michigan Department of Social Services, Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the Otsego County Intermediate School District. While none provide staff at the Alpine Center, all provide services which would otherwise need to be funded by the program. Since meals are catered by the jail kitchen, there is no kitchen staff on site.

The program has eight regular worksites at which offenders perform community service work. They include the county facilities such as the animal shelter, airport, and motor pool, as well as private, nonprofit agencies. In addition, other county agencies and townships use labor from the program on an occasional basis.

Residents begin work at the animal shelter because it has the closest supervision. Gradually, they are transferred to less supervised sites. Some work for a time at the Alpine Center itself. All residents eventually work at off-site placements.

A factor which contributes to the general community acceptance of the program is the security which it imposes on "residents." Program staff and employers cooperate to assure that residents arrive at their worksites on time and stay all day. Staff visit the worksites regularly and employers call to report any problems. When returning to the center, residents are required to sign in and can be subject to shakedowns for cause. In addition to the initial urinalysis performed during the quarantine period, breathalyzer and urinalysis may be required at any time. These tests are performed in-house at minimal cost.

A "level system" of incentives for good behavior is used to encourage compliance with program rules. The system provides increasing privileges to residents who, by performing well, move

to higher levels in the system. Violations of rules can result in downward movement through the levels and a resulting loss of privileges. This gives program staff a flexible set of tools for managing resident behavior. Instead of facing the choice of returning an offender to jail or ignoring a relatively minor violation, the level system allows for sanctions which are carefully crafted to fit the offense. In the first six months of 1986, only one offender needed to be returned to the jail.

Those who reach Level II in the incentive system (described below), are eligible for paid employment. This requires good performance in community service work, completion of a "life skills" course including a standard job application, writing of a resume and cover letter, and practice in job interview role-playing.

The jobs are all paid at minimum wage and are reserved as employment slots for the program. In other words, residents who complete the program are not permitted to keep the jobs. The program deliberately recruits jobs that could be considered unpleasant. The director says that they do not wish to compete with nonoffenders for better jobs. The employment slots are developed for the program by a private, nonprofit agency called Community Family and Neighborhood Services. Employers like using the program as a supply of labor for low-skill positions, since the offenders, under the watchful eye of the program staff, are dependable. Since their successful completion of the program depends on doing well, they have more at stake than outsiders who might fill similar positions. A few residents have their own jobs when they enter the program. If so, they are permitted to keep them.

A number of in-house treatment programs are provided by the program. Problem solving and stress management courses are offered and a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous is available.

Referrals to the program come from two sources, the court and the jail. The two circuit judges for the area are supportive and include assignment to the program in their probation orders. When referrals come from the jail, the sentencing judge is asked to sign a transfer paper. The judges are not consulted because of any legal requirement, but rather because they are considered part of the team which makes the program work.

Eligibility is determined by a team process. In addition to the judge, the prosecutor, defense attorney, probation officer, and defendant are involved. The offender must score medium or lower on the DOC risk assessment, have a sentencing guideline minimum of less than one year, and be convicted for a non-assaultive offense. Most who are admitted to the program committed offenses such as driving under the influence of liquor, substance abuse other than sale, breaking and entering. It is the actual offense, rather than the charge to which an offender may plea, which governs eligibility.

Typically, offenders spend some time in the county jail before entering the program. Upon leaving the program, they usually remain on probation.

Offenders are delivered to the program by a sheriff's deputy or a circuit court bailiff. Offenders from the district court surrender at the center without escort. The admissions process

is fairly extensive. New residents are housed on the first floor in limited isolation for two weeks. (Offenders housed at the jail are "inmates"; those at the Alpine Center are "residents.") During this period, an admissions process is completed, a personality profile is developed, urinalysis conducted, and a treatment plan prepared. Also, the offenders are evaluated as to their motivation to remain in the program.

The treatment plan, which must be signed by the resident, may include participation in a GED program, Alcoholics Anonymous, and other programs at the center.

The Michigan Department of Corrections provided a probation enhancement grant of \$69,600, which supported the program for the one-year period ending in July 1986. This funding was targeted to a demonstration of the program's ability to divert repeat property offenders from incarceration. In addition, the DOC contracts with the program for housing of 11 circuit court felons at \$25.92 per diem.

Offenders who have paid jobs are charged the equivalent of two hours of their net pay per day for participation in the program. All resident fees go into the general fund of the County. In 1985, this amounted to about \$35,000. Those who are in community service placements are not required to contribute further to their support.

The \$170,000 budget for 1985 had revenues of \$111,000 from the DOC and \$59,000 from the county. The county contribution must be understood in context: the program has reduced the jail population enough to obviate the expenditure of \$60,000 in rentals of cell space from other counties and, in fact, to permit rental of some cells to other counties. In 1985, these rentals generated \$70,000 for the county general fund. Nevertheless, it is Westra's goal to increase funding from the state, offender contributions, and other sources to a level sufficient to permit elimination of all county general fund support.

At \$35.21 per inmate-day, the program is not inexpensive. Jail, by contrast, costs more and is not supported by outside funding.

Conclusions and Observations

The Alpine Center program is a fact of life in the Otsego County criminal justice community. Its use has become routine for those responsible for imposing sanctions on offenders. Several observations about the program may be helpful to those who operate it and to others who might consider replicating it in other jurisdictions.

Program design and marketing must be confronted while developing a new program. The sale of the program to government officials, the media and the public must be done by someone who is trusted by the target audience. Approaching the key players on a one-to-one basis is essential. Not only does this allow their individual interests to be emphasized in the presentations, it also makes each feel that he or she is important.

Every successful program must be built upon an operational philosophy. While the particular philosophy upon which the Otsego Program is built is not essential, a philosophy of some kind is. The purpose, function, goals, objectives, and program design were all sketched out in the Operations Philosophy and Comprehensive Plan which was written by Westra as the first step in promoting the program. In addition to setting the rehabilitative tone for the program, the document even included an organizational chart. It made the program appear tangible; it gave it substance.

Laying the groundwork is essential for success. Establishing the program philosophy is only one example of what is necessary. Another example is the way in which the important county officials were brought into the process of developing the program. If the key members of the County Board of Commissioners had not been intimately involved with the program before its formal presentation to the Board, their reactions would certainly have been different.

The input and continued good will of the circuit judges is an essential ingredient in the success of the program. Their willingness to utilize the program depends on their perception that it is a legitimate sentencing option. Any attempt to replicate the program in another jurisdiction without the involvement of judges would have slim chances for success.

Over the long run, the program will need to document the experience of its residents after they leave the program.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the story of the Alpine Center program is the fact that, from the moment of its conception to the date of actual operation, only eleven months passed. This achievement may make the process appear simpler than it really is. Others who consider creating a similar program should bear in mind the need for extensive groundwork. In some areas, the relationships with the various key actors upon whom Westra was able to draw simply do not exist. Developing them may require considerable time.

His strong network of relationships throughout the criminal justice community insulated Westra, to some extent, from his oversights in educating the media and public about the program. Others might not be so fortunate. When not adequately informed, the media tends to be suspicious and even hostile. Those

reactions are easily transferred to the public. The investment of time and energy necessary to overcome media or public resistance is far greater than that required to bring them along at the outset.

Corrections policy is generally acknowledged to be in a punitive era. The Operations Policy and Comprehensive Plan does not speak in terms of punishment or incapacitation. Rather, it sets a therapeutic and rehabilitative tone. In other counties, this approach might not be acceptable. In Otsego, it has proven to be right for the community. This diversity of opinion is good evidence that any statewide community corrections system should be flexible enough to accommodate such variations.

OTSEGO COUNTY CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

OPERATIONS PHILOSOPHY

and

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this Department shall be to establish, operate, and maintain minimum security residential treatment program primarily for, but not restricted to probationers from Otsego County. The services offered by the department are to be used as a therapeutic alternative to prison commitment. The program as developed, shall be a cooperative venture between the local judiciary, law enforcement, county commissioners and local service providers with a specific focus on the individual needs of the criminal justice clients referred for services. The department shall operate an in-house therapeutic community in which residents will receive appropriate assistance with a variety of personal skills leading to their constructive re-introduction to the free community. Services provided shall be tailored to individual client needs, including, but not limited to vocational, educational, substance abuse, medical, social and psychological. These support services will be offered as part of the entire care provided through professional staff who are located on site.

B. Function:

The organization shall function as a structured minimum security residential program operated in concert with the Otsego County Jail as the third step in the treatment of Circuit and District Court probationers as well as other Court referrals. It shall be operated under all applicable local ordinances concerning zoning, public health, safety and welfare and it shall conform to legislative standards for probation residential centers.

II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

A. Goals:

The primary goal of this project is to provide individual intensive assistance to criminal justice clients referred for services and assess and pinpoint weaknesses in his or her skill base which may have contributed to their criminal behavior. The program goal will be to address these weaknesses through the use of on-site service providers specializing in the areas described.

B. Major Objectives:

During FY 84, the major departmental objectives will be:

1. To unify the major components of the local criminal justice system including the Court, custody providers, local corrections, and county governmental units.
2. To organize the program in accordance with the legislative intent for probation residential centers as described in the Michigan Department of Corrections Policy Directive PD BFS 70.01 (July 1, 1982).
3. To offer a vehicle to local service providers for consolidation of efforts leading to the targeting of criminal justice clients' needs.
 - a. To operate a risk/needs screening process to facilitate a more accurate treatment response.
 - b. To provide satellite office space for service providers to encourage unity and closer cooperation between themselves, the Courts and the clients referred, to more efficiently accomplish the strategy of the department.
 - c. To provide in-house educational services relating to preparation for GED testing, Alcohol Highway Safety, drug and alcohol education and developing job skills.
 - d. To provide a vehicle to implement an organized community service program for probationers who are ordered, as part of their probation, to donate a specific amount of time to community service.
 - e. To institute a Board of Review to conduct administrative hearings in response to client grievances, misconduct or risk classification appeals.
 - f. To provide a suitable location for Alcohol/Highway Safety classes and the implementation of the new DUIL laws.
 - g. To provide a location for AA and AlAnon tables

- for clients referred through the Court.
- h. To establish a meaningful needs and/or treatment model based upon behavior modification principles in an attempt to engineer progressive rehabilitation.
 - i. To establish a community re-entry program for criminal justice clients operated in concert with the supervising probation agent.
4. To reduce the Circuit Court prison commitment rate by five percent in the calendar year 1984.

III. DESIGN

A. Services to be provided:

1. Recruitment - program participation will be restricted to Circuit and District Court probationers, adjudicated Delay of Sentence cases, and Holmes Youthful Trainee Act clients. Under no circumstances shall individuals be considered prior to criminal conviction.
2. Project staff will begin enrolling offenders upon recommendation of the screening committee, followed by an Order from the Court, in the form of an Amended Probation Order.

D. Assessment:

1. Upon initial referral, project staff will screen, assess and evaluate the salient aspects of the referral's background in keeping with departmental policy. Then in concert with the probationer, staff will design a goal-directed treatment contract that outlines the specific steps to be taken by the client in the restructuring of his attitude, decision-making base and behavior which would prove more socially acceptable.

C. Counseling:

The counselling component will be comprised of community service providers contracted by outside agencies including but not limited to:

1. Circuit and District Court probation officers.
2. Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime program which perform screening and assessment of substance abusers (CFCS)
3. Corrections Employment service - which provides employment education for ex-offenders. (CFCS)
4. Alcohol and Drug Services (CFCS).
 - a. Out-patient substance abuse counselling
 - b. Highway safety and education
 - c. Drug and alcohol education and prevention

5. Family Services Counselling (CFCS)
 - a. Individual Counselling
 - b. Family Counselling
 - c. Pregnancy Counselling
 - d. Marriage Counselling
 - e. Divorce Counselling
6. CETA
7. Cheboygan, Otsego, Presque Isle Intermediate School District
8. Northeast Michigan Mental Health Services
9. Trained professional security staff.

D. Follow-up:

After discharge from the facility, follow-up shall be the singular responsibility of the supervising probation agent who may at his/her discretion, continue to coordinate with the service providers an ongoing, uninterrupted, treatment program to be carried on at a different location, when possible.

OTSEGO COUNTY CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

OPERATIONS PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose:

A purpose of the Otsego County Community Service Program is to provide the court system with expanded options in sentencing criminal defendants. At the discretion of the court, Community Service may be used as an alternative to costs for indigent offenders or as a condition of probation to emphasize responsibility and accountability to the individual under sentence. The Otsego County Community Service Program will also give unemployed residents of the Otsego County Corrections Department the opportunity to provide the County of Otsego with required community service hours as reimbursement for their room and board at the correctional facility.

B. Function:

The Otsego County Community Service Program will function as an office of the Otsego County Corrections Department in concert with the offices of the 87th District Court and the 46th Circuit Court. The office will provide manpower to governmental units and eligible nonprofit organizations.

II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

A. Primary Goals:

1. Program Awareness and Utilization:

The Community Service Program shall foster a general awareness of its services to all eligible agencies of Otsego County. The administrator will stress efficient use of the manpower it refers and will encourage liberal utilization by interested agencies.

2. Community Projects:

A primary goal of the Community Service Program is to provide groups within the county an opportunity to undertake necessary projects which would not have been considered otherwise, due to the agencies' personnel budgets.

3. Public Acceptance:

The Community Service Program shall make every effort to continually provide a program that the courts are comfortable using, is useful to the community, and is acceptable to the

general public of Otsego County.

4. Coordinating Skills and Needs:

The Community Service Program shall work toward the ability to provide the supervising agencies with personnel who have sufficient skill and experience in the project area.

B. Long Term Goals:

It is the expectation of the Community Service Program that in time, the work experience gained while probationers are involved in the program will be recognized by the private sector, and will enable the probationers to become productive contributing members of the community.

III. DESIGN

A. Providing Service:

The service provided by the Community Service Program is one of providing volunteer manpower. Community service workers will include residents of the Corrections Department and referrals from District and Circuit Courts. Service will be provided to all offices of government and nonprofit organizations in Otsego County.

B. Assessment:

The Community Service Program will screen the occupational background of all workers participating in the program in an effort to utilize their skills in the most efficient way possible.

C. Supervision:

Supervision of community service workers will generally be provided by the agency utilizing their service. In cases where this is not possible, supervision may be obtained through arrangements made with the Community Service Program. Workers will be issued worksheets to be completed by the supervisor on a daily basis. Because accountability of the worker's performance is very important, the Community Service Program encourages continuous feedback from the supervisor.

D. Transportation:

Transportation will generally be provided by the agency utilizing the community service worker. Arrangements for transportation may be made through the county bus system with reimbursement from the agency.

E. Meals:

Community service workers will carry lunches to work which will be consumed only during time allotted by the supervisor.

F. Safety Equipment:

Any safety equipment (hard hats, gloves, steel-toed shoes, safety glasses, etc.) needed for the workers while they are on the work site shall be provided by the agency utilizing the community service workers.

G. Inappropriate Behavior:

Any inappropriate behavior by a worker while he is involved in a Community Service Project will result in the worker's loss of placement at the project and an administrative hearing to determine the individual's status in the Community Service Program. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, horseplay, lack of adequate work output, and failure to follow supervisor's requests.

H. Liability:

All individuals accepted for the Community Service program shall be contracted through the Diocese of Gaylord for insurance purposes.

IV. CONCLUSION

In summation, the primary aim of the Community Service Program is to provide the court system with options in sentencing; as a secondary benefit, our goal is to provide occupational experience to unemployed probationers, and to extend a service to the community.