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AN EVALUATION OF THE PRE- AND POST-  
INCARCERATION SERVICES  
OF VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ACTION  
ReENTRY SYSTEM, INC.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pre- and Post-Incarceration Services (PAPIS) program was initiated by the General Assembly in 1982, and has been continued during this biennium as provided for in the 1984-86 Appropriations Act. The present evaluation of PAPIS-Virginia CARES was completed by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), which first reported on this program through House Document Number 7 of the 1984 legislative session.

The Virginia CARES program concept was originally developed by Total Action Against Poverty (TAP), a Community Action Agency (CAA) serving the Roanoke area. Involved with low income people, TAP often came into contact with individuals and families who needed assistance in dealing with problems created by arrest, imprisonment and return to the community following incarceration. Through a series of program models originating in 1973, and with the support of a wide variety of funding sources, Virginia CARES was developed. In 1979, the Virginia Community Action ReEntry System (Virginia CARES) was incorporated as a private non-profit agency, organized for the purpose of developing a statewide reentry program for offenders. Since July of 1982, Virginia CARES' primary source of support has been PAPIS funds.

The PAPIS funds are intended to assist offenders in their transition between incarceration and return to society with a goal of reducing recidivism of program participants. The Appropriations Act stipulates that DCJS is to provide for these services through contracts with public or private non-profit agencies.

This evaluation contains two major components. The first provides descriptive information on the pre- and post-release programs including history,

program design, number and types of clients, and the nature of services provided. The second major component focuses on Virginia CARES' impact on recidivism, measured as recommitment to a Department of Corrections (DOC) institution.

This present evaluation utilized information provided by Virginia CARES in its regular reports to DCJS, information provided by Virginia CARES in response to specific requests, review of Probation and Parole records, recommitment data collected by the Department of Corrections (DOC), and information gathered through interviews conducted with Virginia CARES' staff, DOC institutional personnel, and Probation and Parole personnel.

The following table summarizes PAPIS funding provided Virginia CARES during the past four years, based on their service contract with DCJS:

VIRGINIA CARES - PAPIS FUNDING HISTORY

FY 1982-1984		APPROPRIATIONS ACT	
	DCJS (Item 532)	DOC (Item 575.5)	TOTAL
1982-83	\$175,000	\$ 75,000	\$250,000
1983-84	\$164,000*	\$150,000	\$314,000
FY 1984-1986		APPROPRIATIONS ACT	
	DCJS (Item 505)	DOC (Item 550)	TOTAL
1984-85	\$275,000	\$285,000	\$560,000
1985-86	\$275,000	\$285,000	\$560,000

\*Reflects 6% Administrative Reduction

Increases in PAPIS funding have allowed much growth and expansion of the program. In FY 1982-83 pre-release training was provided to 287 inmates at 12 prisons; by FY 1984-85, the numbers for pre-release increased to 1,194 inmates at 29 prisons. During FY 1982-83 post-release services were also provided to 515 ex-offenders at four post-release sites. In FY 1984-85, 634 offenders were served at eight locations.

### Pre-Release

DCJS has deemed Virginia CARES to be in substantial compliance with its contractual requirements during each of the past three years. Nevertheless, a variety of problems has been encountered by the program throughout this period. It has proven difficult, for example, to target offenders for pre-release training who are likely to be released soon thereafter; this problem is further compounded by the large numbers of prisoners who receive pre-release services but are paroled to localities without a post-release program. The percentage of inmates actually paroled soon after their participation in CARES' pre-release workshops decreased from approximately 48 percent in FY 1983-84 to only 28 percent in FY 1984-85. The percentage of parolees released to localities with CARES' services also decreased during this period.

Scheduling of pre-release workshops at DOC institutions has also continued to affect program implementation. Competing priorities within the prisons for such activities as work programs or road quotas often pose significant obstacles to making time available for the intended 40-hour pre-release program. Disturbingly, the average length of Virginia CARES pre-release workshops dropped from almost 39 hours in FY 1983-84 to just under 32 hours this past year; this decline may most likely be ascribed to the combination of factors affecting the DOC prisons during the past year rather than any failing

on the part of Virginia CARES. Nevertheless client targeting, workshop scheduling, and communication and cooperation between DOC and Virginia CARES continue to require improvement.

### Post-Release

During the past three years Virginia CARES has provided post-release services to more than 1700 offenders and ex-offenders. The services were offered from post-release sites in Richmond, Norfolk, Arlington, and Roanoke during the last biennium. With funding increases in FY 1984-85, CARES added post-release sites in Alexandria and Hampton/Newport News, as well as limited post-release services from new sites in Halifax and Wytheville. The majority of clients through this period was black, male, on parole, and referred by Probation and Parole offices.

The post-release services offered are best considered in three categories--basic human needs (food, clothing, shelter); less immediate needs (transportation, counseling, referrals); and employment. With few exceptions, the total number of services offered in each category has increased each year of the PAPIS program. The most noteworthy increase in services has been in the area of employment placements, an area given additional emphasis in the FY 1984-86 contracts. Virginia CARES' records reflect placement in jobs, training, or schools of approximately 24 percent of its clients in FY 1982-83, more than 36 percent in 1983-84, and more than 49 percent in 1984-85. These positive statistics may be a reflection of CARES' efforts alone, improvement in the general economy, or a combination of factors. To better assess CARES' impact on employment in the future, more accurate and detailed data collection and better client follow-up will be necessary.

Interviews of the Probation and Parole staffs resulted in widely divergent but generally favorable opinions of the CARES program. The interviews

indicated that employment placement needs were the most frequent cause for referral to CARES, and that the employment services were seen as the most valuable of Virginia CARES' services. Virginia CARES' emergency services were also valued by these personnel, though they were considered less important than in the past, given the recently developed access to emergency purchase of service funds in the parole districts.

### Recidivism

The analysis of CARES' impact on recidivism was completed by comparing the recommitment rates for CARES' clients and a sample of all other parolees who were released during the same time periods. Two time periods were selected for analysis. This first time period covered July 1, 1981 through December 31, 1982; the second time period covered July 1, 1983 through June 30, 1984 (FY 1983-84). The earlier time period was chosen in order to examine recidivism over a longer follow-up period of those offenders who were included in the 1984 DCJS evaluation. CARES did not receive PAPIS funds during most of that time period; however, the program design was basically the same as at present. The second offender group studied was served by Virginia CARES during the period of PAPIS funding (FY 1983-84).

The first client and non-client group study included 184 clients and 184 non-client parolees chosen from a total list of the 2,028 inmates paroled to Richmond, Fairfax, Roanoke and Norfolk areas during an eighteen-month period (July 1, 1981 - December 31, 1982). The majority of both the client and non-client groups was black and male; however, the Virginia CARES client group contained a larger percentage of blacks (72.3 percent compared to 58.7 percent). The median age for both was approximately the same, with the client group median age being 28 and the non-client group being 27. The educational level of the two groups was very similar with approximately one-third of each group having eight years or less of education. The majority of both groups was unmarried.

Further analysis showed that there was no significant difference in the median length of time that the client and non-client groups had spent in the DOC institution prior to parole, although a higher percentage of the non-client group had been released on mandatory parole (36.4 percent non-client, 27.7 percent client); however, this difference is not statistically significant. The most significant differences among the two groups was found in the types of crimes for which they had been imprisoned. The CARES group had a higher percentage of participants who were committed for "crimes against persons" (homicide, sexual assault, assault and robbery), and the non-client group had a higher percentage of "other crimes" such as drug offenses.

Recommitment to a DOC institution was used as a measure of recidivism. This measure was chosen because it best reflects the purpose of PAPIS funding and the potential cost savings to the state. Approximately 28 percent (28.3) of the Virginia CARES clients were found to be recidivists, while approximately 35 percent (34.8) of the non-client group was recommitted. In addition, five of the client group and three of the non-client group were recorded as fugitives from parole. Although there is a seven percentage point difference in the two groups, the difference, based on established statistical measures, is not a statistically significant one. Adjusting for the differences in race and offense type in the two groups also did not produce any conclusive evidence of differential impact on recidivism. The following table summarizes these figures:

RECIDIVISM - GROUP I				
	<u>SUCCESS</u>	<u>RECOMMITTED</u>	<u>FUGITIVE</u>	
CLIENT GROUP I	69 %	28.3%	2.7%	-100% (184)
COMPARISON GROUP I	63.6%	35.3%	1.1%	100% (184)

The second recidivism comparison was made utilizing records of parolees released during fiscal year 1983-84. A list containing 1,444 inmates paroled to Fairfax, Roanoke, Richmond and Norfolk, was obtained from DOC. From the list, 240 CARES clients were identified, and an equivalent sample of the remaining parolees was randomly chosen for comparison.

The majority of both client and non-client groups was black and male. The median age for the client and non-client group was similar (29.5 years client, 28 years non-client). The majority of both groups was single; however, the percentage of clients who were single is somewhat higher than the non-client group (84.2 percent compared to 67.6 percent). The educational level of the two groups also differed. The client group had a somewhat lower educational level than the non-client group. The two groups also differed in the length of incarceration, with the client group having been incarcerated for a longer time. The non-client group had a larger number of members who were released on mandatory parole (35.3 percent compared to 25.4 percent for the client group). The two groups also differed in the types of crimes for which they were serving time prior to release. As in the first sample, a slightly higher percentage of Virginia CARES' clients had been serving time for "offenses against persons." In summary, the two groups in the second sample were substantially similar, noting however that the Virginia CARES client group included slightly more unmarried and less educated individuals who had spent slightly more time incarcerated than did the non-client group.

In the second recidivism sample, 30 percent of Virginia CARES' clients were found to have been recommitted to a DOC institution, while 23.7 percent of the non-client group had been recommitted. In addition, 13 of the client group were listed as fugitives from parole, while six of the comparison

group were listed as fugitives. As with the first sample, this study revealed a difference in recidivism among the two groups, with the non-client group in this case having a lower recidivism rate than the Virginia CARES clients group. Again, however, the difference in the two groups is not statistically significant. The following table summarizes recidivism statistics for Group II:

RECIDIVISM - GROUP II				
	<u>SUCCESS</u>	<u>RECOMMITTED</u>	<u>FUGITIVE</u>	
CLIENT GROUP II	64.6%	30.0%	5.4%	100% (240)
COMPARISON GROUP II	73.9%	23.7%	2.5%	100% (241)

In summary, the recidivism component of this evaluation examined two groups of Virginia CARES' clients during two different time periods. This examination revealed no meaningful difference in the rates of recidivism among the client and non-client groups studied.

### Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that Virginia CARES continues to provide an array of institutional and community services to offenders which would likely be difficult to duplicate at comparable cost. The organization's networking among community action agencies provides a number of cost benefits through such factors as shared office space and supervision as well as established contacts with community service organizations. Virginia CARES provides a substantial program of pre-release training within a majority of the state's prisons, and this component of its program is generally well received by the staff of those institutions. The CARES post-release services provide support to offenders in a centralized fashion, and these services are often sought by

Probation and Parole offices. The organization's job development and employment placement is considered among the most valuable of activities. In both pre- and post-release activities Virginia CARES has extended its services during the past three years reasonably commensurate with increased levels of funding.

This evaluation considered three major component measures--the quantity, quality, and impact--of the Virginia CARES program. The recidivism component of this evaluation was selected, consistent with previous studies and in consultation with Virginia CARES, as one tangible measure upon which program impact might be demonstrated.

Though this study has found no basis upon which to conclude that the Virginia CARES program produces a demonstrable impact on the rates of recidivism of clients, such an objective may be considered unrealistic when viewed in the context of the type of individuals served by the organization and, equally, the impact more traditional service programs such as Probation and Parole might demonstrate if subjected to similar scrutiny. It seems clear that recidivism alone should not be the only criterion upon which to judge the success of Virginia CARES. For these reasons continuation of state support of Virginia CARES' services is recommended; further review of the program's effectiveness and the development of additional measures to evaluate success should be considered in the future. Throughout the remainder of this report may be found detailed analysis and recommendations for improved operations of the program.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Purpose and Scope of This Evaluation

The 1984 Virginia General Assembly appropriated \$635,000 for each year of the 1984-86 biennium to continue a program that provides pre- and post-incarceration services (PAPIS) for inmates of state and local adult correctional facilities. The funds are targeted for private non-profit organizations in the Commonwealth which have demonstrated capabilities in providing reentry and after care services. The goal of the program, administered by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), is to increase the opportunity for and likelihood of successful reentry and reintegration into the community by adult offenders.

In 1984, the DCJS issued a request for proposals and subsequently awarded contracts to two organizations beginning July 1, 1984: Virginia Community Action Re-Entry System, Inc. (Virginia CARES) and Offender Aid and Restoration of Richmond, Inc. (OAR). Virginia CARES was chosen to provide pre-release and post-release services to felons in selected Department of Corrections facilities across the state and upon release, and OAR was chosen to provide pre-release and post-release services to jail prisoners in the metropolitan Richmond area. Both programs had previously received funding from DCJS in the 1982-84 biennium when the PAPIS program was initiated.

DCJS requires periodic evaluation of programs funded by the agency. Because it has a broader geographic base and receives the greatest share of PAPIS funding, Virginia CARES was selected for evaluation at this time. The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

1. To assess the program design and the current level of service provided by Virginia CARES to determine: a) whether the types of pre-release and post-release services, their target populations, program objectives, and staffing patterns are appropriate; and b) whether the services duplicate those provided by other community service agencies or institutional programs;
2. To assess the impact of Virginia CARES' programs on the clients' employment to determine: a) number of clients requesting and entering employment/training programs; b) types of positions clients enter into and the wages received; c) length of time between release and employment/training; and d) length of time employed or in training;
3. To assess the impact of Virginia CARES' programs on recidivism rates and the criminal justice system to determine: a) the differences between current service recipients and those from an earlier period; b) differences between those clients receiving Virginia CARES' services and a similar group of parolees who did not receive such services; and c) the level of satisfaction by criminal justice personnel with Virginia CARES' services.

The study objectives were addressed through interviews with Virginia CARES' staff and Department of Corrections (DOC) officials; analysis of contract-required program reports compiled by Virginia CARES; analysis of data compiled by DOC; and a review of processes and procedures utilized within the Virginia CARES program.

The present evaluation of PAPIS-Virginia CARES is the second completed by DCJS. The first, mandated by the General Assembly, was completed in 1983 after the initial year of state funding. The report issued in 1984 as House Document No. 7 had two (2) major components. The first component described the PAPIS-funded programs including both Virginia CARES and Offender Aid and Restoration of Richmond (OAR) and provided descriptive information on service delivery. The second major component included a study of Virginia CARES' impact on recidivism rates. The findings from the earlier report and the continued programmatic interest in reducing recidivism led to a similar evaluation structure.

However, unlike the initial evaluation that measured recidivism as an arrest and/or a new conviction, the present study measures recidivism as a recommitment to a Department of Corrections (DOC) institution. This measure was chosen to assist in determining the program's impact on the correctional system through potential cost savings.

The previous evaluation identified areas for further investigation. These included the relationship between the DOC and Virginia CARES, the need to develop specialized Virginia CARES services and the need for a longer follow-up period in measuring recidivism. Two (2) of these issues are addressed in the process component of the present evaluation through the inclusion of DOC staff and Probation and Parole officer interview data and the analysis of the Virginia CARES employment services funded during this period. The third issue, the longer follow-up of Virginia CARES' clients to determine recidivism rates is addressed in the impact component of the present study.

The study was conducted by an interagency team comprised of staff from the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Department of Corrections. Overall direction of the study was the responsibility of the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

#### History of Virginia Community Action ReEntry Services

The Virginia CARES program concept was originally developed by Total Action Against Poverty (TAP), a Community Action Agency (CAA) serving the Roanoke area. TAP often came in contact with individuals and families needing assistance in dealing with the problems created by arrest, imprisonment, and return to the community following incarceration. Because some of the TAP staff were ex-offenders, the organization's sensitivity to the needs of inmates and ex-prisoners increased. Table 1 summarizes the organization and funding of the program between 1973-1982.

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Program Funding History

Year(s)	Program	Site(s)	Source/Funding Amount
1976-77	STOP-GAP	Roanoke	Roanoke Manpower Consortium \$64,340
1977-78	STOP-GAP	Roanoke	Roanoke Manpower Consortium \$73,995
1978-79	STOP-GAP	Roanoke	Roanoke Manpower Consortium \$89,008
	PRE-RELEASE	Roanoke (6 mo. demonstration)	Governor's Manpower Service Council \$29,822
	PRE-RELEASE	Roanoke, Richmond, Tidewater	Governor's Manpower Service Council \$149,666
1979-80	VIRGINIA CARES PLANNING GRANT	Roanoke, Richmond, Norfolk, Fairfax	Community Services Administration \$106,423
	STOP-GAP	Roanoke	Roanoke Manpower Consortium \$132,140
	PRE-RELEASE	Roanoke, Richmond, Norfolk, Fairfax	Governor's Employment Training Council \$209,204
	MARKETING GRANT	Roanoke, Richmond, Fairfax, Norfolk	Community Services Administration \$64,447
1980-81	STOP-GAP	Roanoke	5th District Employment & Training Consortium \$174,016
	PRE-RELEASE	Roanoke, Richmond, Fairfax, Norfolk	CETA Balance of State \$276,494
	POST-RELEASE	20 sites at Community Action Agencies	Community Services Administration & Department of Labor \$550,000
1982	POST-RELEASE (EXTENSION)	20 sites at Community Action Agencies	Ford Foundation \$50,000

\*Source: Virginia CARES, Inc. Evaluation Report, Part I, by DCJS 07/28/82

TAP/STOP-GAP: In 1973, the first program, a self-awareness group, was conducted at Botetourt Correctional Unit No. 25 at Troutville, Virginia. Following this, TAP began to provide training sessions for inmates incarcerated in local jails and state facilities in the region, as well as clients of area residential drug treatment programs. In 1976, TAP developed the STOP-GAP program to provide structured follow-up services for inmates upon their return to the community.

The STOP-GAP program was supported through 1976-1977 with funds from the Roanoke Manpower Consortium. STOP-GAP's services, which were provided by a coordinator, counselor and job developer included self-awareness training, life skills training, job motivation, counseling, job development and placement, general support services and a structured three-month work experience paying minimum wage. The services of STOP-GAP were continued in 1978-79 at a slightly increased level utilizing additional funding from the Roanoke Manpower Consortium.

Early in 1978, TAP had also submitted a proposal to the Governor's Employment and Training Council for a pre-release program. As a result of the proposal, the Council awarded TAP and the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) in Roanoke a grant to establish an Inmate Job Readiness Program, a pilot pre-release program for the Roanoke area. During this time, pre-release programs were conducted at five Department of Corrections facilities.

Also during this time period, the needs of inmates and ex-prisoners were being discussed among other Community Action Agencies (CAA). As a result, the Virginia Association of Community Action Agencies (VACAA) developed a larger proposal for pre-release services. Late in 1978, the Governor's Manpower Services Council awarded funds to expand pre-release services. These funds were used for pre-release programs in Roanoke, Richmond, and Tidewater. In addition, the federal Community Services Administration (CSA) awarded TAP a planning grant to study the feasibility of a statewide re-entry program for prisoners. The grant provided funds for four regional planning coordinators located in Community Action Agencies in Roanoke, Richmond, Norfolk and Fairfax. Each of these efforts continued through 1980.

Virginia CARES, Inc.: In March 1979, the Virginia Community Action ReEntry System (Virginia CARES) was incorporated as a private non-profit agency. The purpose of incorporation was to allow a single agency, separate from the Community Action Agencies, to independently seek funding and begin planning for a statewide reentry program for offenders. In the 1980-81 program year, funds were first awarded directly to Virginia CARES. Prior to this time, awards had been made to TAP and VACAA. During this time period, Virginia CARES developed a proposal to provide structured post-release services to returning ex-prisoners. The federal Community Services Administration (CSA) and the Department of Labor (DOL) jointly provided \$550,000 to finance a post-release program. Twenty program sites were selected to provide post-release services. Staff consisted of a transition specialist in each location. During the first year of operation (1980-81) 1,019 ex-prisoners were provided services by the transition specialists in these twenty areas.

Funding for the pre-release program ended September 30, 1981. Funds for the post-release program were scheduled to end January 18, 1982. An extension from CSA was granted and additional funds of \$50,000 were secured from the Ford Foundation to operate the post-release program through June 30, 1982.

Pre-and Post-Incarceration Services (PAPIS): Since July of 1982, Virginia CARES' primary source of support has been the PAPIS funds made available through state appropriations by the General Assembly.

The PAPIS funds (\$175,000) made available to Virginia CARES for the fiscal year July 1, 1982 through June 30, 1983 supported the post-release program only. These funds enabled transition specialists working in Roanoke, Fairfax County, Norfolk and Richmond to provide direct services to ex-prisoners. The services included emergency food, clothing, shelter and counseling, job development and placement, and referral to other service providers. In January 1983, Virginia CARES was awarded an additional \$75,000 from the DOC budget to provide pre-release services to offenders in institutions around the four PAPIS post-release sites. Locations for pre-release activity were chosen because: a) the Virginia CARES post-release structure was already in place; b) the majority of Virginia's offenders are housed in facilities as close as possible to the areas to which they will be released; and c) released offenders could then avail themselves of the post-release services. Pre-release orientation sessions cover such topics as parole regulations and expectations, employment preparation, family reintegration, and budgeting.

In the second year of the 82-84 biennium, Virginia CARES received funding of \$164,500 through funds provided to DCJS. This amount reflected a 6% budget reduction ordered by the Governor. However, PAPIS funding through the DOC budget increased to \$150,000 for FY 83-84 resulting in an overall 26% budget increase for Virginia CARES over the FY 82-83 amount. Since the increase occurred through the DOC budget which was directed toward pre-release services, only pre-release services were expanded. Despite the reduction of PAPIS funds provided through DCJS, Virginia CARES maintained the level of post-release services established in the previous fiscal year.

In both FY 84-85 and FY 85-86, CARES has been awarded \$275,000 of DCJS' PAPIS funds and \$285,000 of DOC's PAPIS funds for a total of \$560,000 per year. This amount reflects a FY 84-85 funding increase of 78% over the preceding fiscal year. Funding for FY 85-86 remained at \$560,000. The increase in PAPIS funding for the 1984-86 biennium has enabled Virginia CARES to extend its pre-release services to more than 25 institutions, add two (2) pre-release sites (Wytheville 84-85/Bristol 85-86 and Halifax) which also provide some post-release services, and add two (2) post-release service sites in Alexandria and Hampton/Newport News. PAPIS funding provided Virginia CARES between 1982-86 is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Virginia CARES, Inc., PAPIS Funding History

<u>FUNDING YEAR</u>	<u>FUNDING SOURCE</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE INCREASE</u>
1982-1984 Biennium				
	DCJS	DOC		
1st Year (82-83)	\$175,000	\$ 75,000	\$250,000	-
2nd Year (83-84)	\$164,500*	\$150,000	\$314,500	26
1984-86 Biennium				
	DCJS	DOC		
1st Year (84-85)	\$275,000	\$285,000	\$560,000	78
2nd Year (85-86)	\$275,000	\$285,000	\$560,000	-0-

\*Reflects 6% Administrative Reduction

Source: Appropriations Act, Commonwealth of Virginia

As the above information clearly demonstrates, Virginia CARES has been remarkably successful in obtaining funding to support its objectives. While such funding patterns are not unusual for social service providers generally, the "patchwork" of funding sources for Virginia CARES is noteworthy. Obviously with so many sources of funding, each with its own special accounting, data collection, and evaluation requirements, there was limited potential for use of previous program activities in conducting PAPIS evaluations. However, with the provision of PAPIS funding and with contracts which built on the existing program model, CARES has been able to better coordinate and consolidate its service provision so as to facilitate a meaningful evaluation of program impact. Program participant data now exists for a period of more than three years, the minimum period considered appropriate for measurement and evaluation of impact on recidivism. Consistency of data collection, service objectives, and program monitoring has been established through this period. This is not to say, however, that the pursuit of funding in support of Virginia CARES' organizational objectives has ceased in response to the relatively consistent provision of PAPIS funds. Virginia CARES has continued its efforts in this area. For example, during FY 84-85 (in addition to PAPIS funding), Virginia

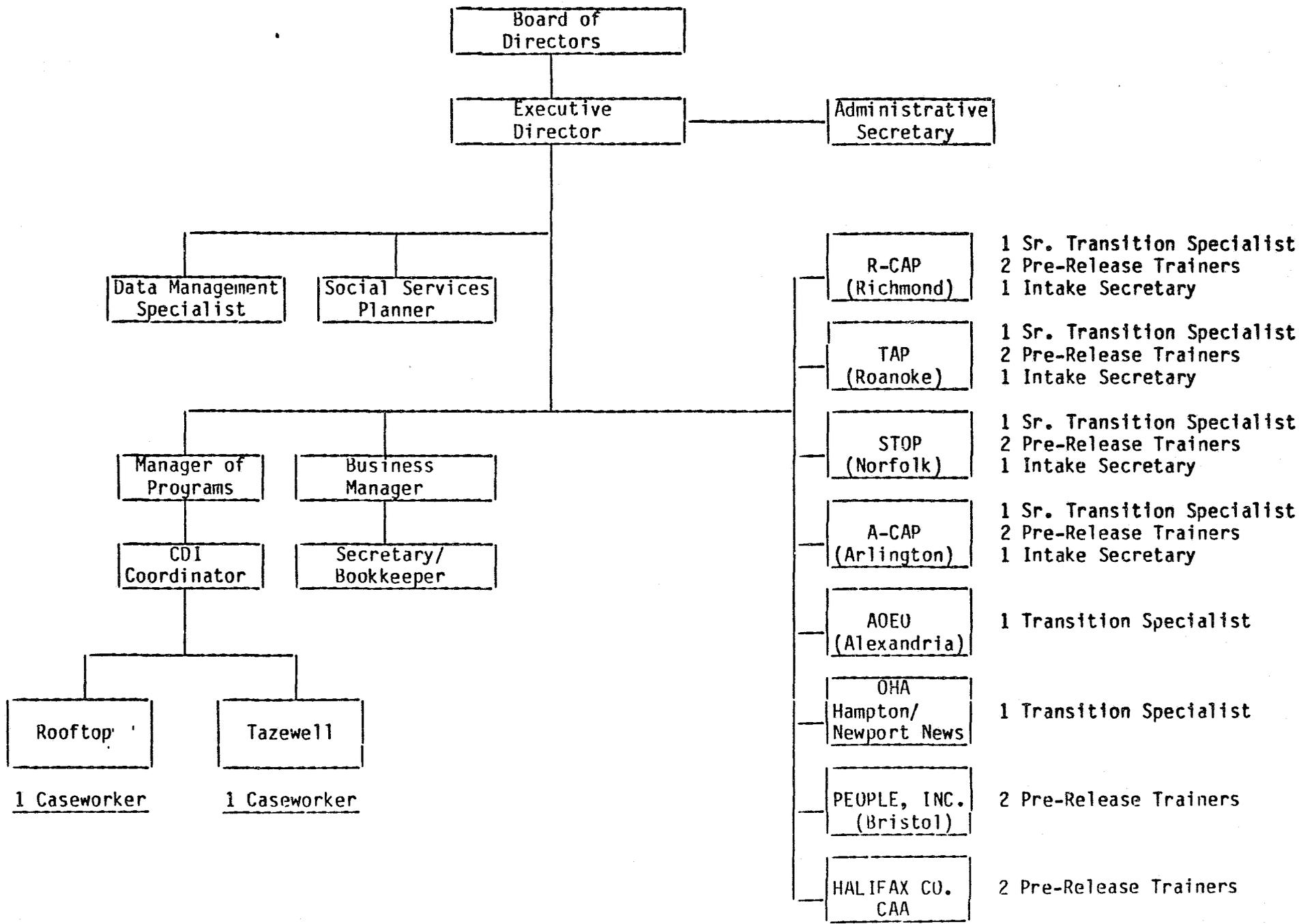
CARES: contracted through the Virginia Department of Highways for up to \$125,000 of federal funds in support of its ex-offender employment activities; received a Community Service Block Grant of \$12,000 through the Virginia Department of Social Services to allow direct purchase of services; solicited donations from church and civic groups; held raffles, bake sales, and other fund raisers; utilized volunteers and client volunteers. Although in one respect the continuing drive for additional funding in support of program objectives makes it difficult to determine exactly what level of services and degree of impact have been achieved through PAPIS funding alone, it is perhaps more appropriate to view the PAPIS funding as the major support of the Virginia CARES program which enables the pursuit of additional funds in support of their client group. Simply stated, the state dollar can then purchase or result in more than a dollar's worth of services.

### Organizational Structure

Virginia CARES is a private, non-profit agency consisting of a Board of Directors, central staff and subcontractor field staff which provides services to offenders and their families. Diagram 1 outlines the table of organization.

Board of Directors: The Virginia CARES Board of Directors consists of the executive directors of twenty (20) community action agencies and a representative of the Department of Corrections (DOC). The Board is responsible for policy, supervision of the executive director, and oversight of program activities. The Board of Directors represents twenty (20) of twenty-eight community action agencies in Virginia which participate in the Virginia CARES Network. The network of CAA's offers Headstart programs, Manpower programs, food "banks," clothing "closets," and other resources which can be supportive of the Virginia CARES client group. In the past, within different program models and with the support of the varying levels of funding described in the preceding section of this report, this network was able to participate more directly in the provision of the Virginia CARES program. If, in the future, additional funding is made available to Virginia CARES, the established network will again become more directly involved in the provision of pre-and post-release services to offenders. At present, eight (8) of the community action agencies are directly involved in the provision of services to offenders through subcontracts supported by PAPIS funds.

Central Staff: The Virginia CARES staff currently includes an executive director, program manager, business manager, social services planner, data management specialist, administrative secretary, and a secretary/bookkeeper. These individuals are responsible for continuing program development and coordination, training, internal monitoring and evaluation, client record maintenance, and normal administrative and business functions. The central office staff maintains offices at Total Action Against Poverty (TAP), the Roanoke community action program. Through the history of Virginia CARES, the number and responsibilities of the central office staff have varied in response to available funding and program model.



Virginia CARES' central staff function as liaison between the various subcontractors to maintain consistency and uniformity of program delivery. This is accomplished through centralized provision of training, through central staff monitoring, and through centralized program development. The Virginia CARES central office also maintains the fiscal coordination and auditing functions for the network of subcontractors, compiles and reports on statewide client data and contract compliance, lobbies for continued funding and develops new funding resources, and has a major responsibility for maintaining and building good public relations.

The Virginia CARES central staff also administers other non-PAPIS programs such as an ongoing Community Diversion Incentive program in southwestern Virginia and, during FY 84-85, the contract with the Virginia Department of Highways which, though considered to be supportive of the PAPIS activities, was distinct and separate from the PAPIS funded program. The central staff also serves as a technical assistance agency to other similar programs and networks in this state and other states and is involved in such advocacy issues as the elimination of civil disabilities for their client group.

Field Staff: The Virginia CARES field staff are actually employees of the eight (8) community action agencies presently involved in the direct provision of PAPIS programs. Each of the eight CAA's receives funding through sub-contracts with Virginia CARES. The larger subcontractors employ a transition (post-release) specialist, two (2) pre-release trainers, and a secretary in their PAPIS programs. The smaller subcontractors employ only a transition specialist or two (2) pre-release trainers. These staff are trained and monitored by the Virginia CARES organization, paid and given day-to-day supervision by the community action agency, and in a functional sense, are staff of both organizations.

#### Report Organization

This report is organized into four (4) chapters. This chapter has presented background information on the study. Chapter II examines the pre-release component of Virginia CARES' services and recommends a means for improving the delivery of these services. Chapter III examines post-release services, particularly employment placement, and provides both administrative and programmatic recommendations. The final chapter analyzes the impact of Virginia CARES' services on recidivism.

## II. PRE-RELEASE SERVICES

### Overview

The Virginia CARES program proposal describes the purpose and methodology for providing pre-release services as follows:

"The pre-release teams will present 40-hour workshops with the inmates to help them explore behavior that will assist them in making a successful re-entry. The inmates will participate in a series of experiential learning exercises which focus on self-esteem, decisionmaking processes, values clarification, job motivation, transitioning into society and consumer education. The pre-release staff work with institutional treatment staff to identify those inmates who will most likely make discretionary or mandatory parole and to negotiate scheduling and workshop space.

Volunteers from the business community will be utilized when possible to present the employment portion of the pre-release training program to assist the inmates with mock interviews. Parole officers from the district closest to the institution will be asked to talk about parole expectations to the inmates either before or during the workshop.

The last day of the pre-release workshop will be spent on gathering information from the inmates on their release plans, sharing resources available to them in their particular areas of re-entry, and the appropriate services available to them through Virginia CARES.

At the beginning of the workshop an intake is conducted with the inmate to determine a profile of the client and a needs assessment for use in the post-release component. When an inmate is released, that information is then sent to the Transition Specialist who will be working with the parolee. The staff will maintain an on-going communication with the institutional staff to follow up on the status of the Virginia CARES' participants."

As stated, the pre-release staffs work with the institutional staffs to select inmates for program participation. Such cooperative effort is vital to achieve maximum benefit from the program. Ideally, only inmates whose

releases are imminent should be referred to the pre-release programs; further, the most appropriate client is one who will be released to an area where Virginia CARES' post-release services are available. Earlier evaluations of the Virginia CARES PAPIS program were critical of this process of targeting and selecting inmates for workshop participation. Large numbers of pre-release participants were not released soon after program completion; many of those who were promptly released did not return to areas with post-release services. A need for improved cooperation between the Department of Corrections and Virginia CARES was indicated.

### Service Level

As with most facets of the Virginia CARES Program, the pre-release services component has expanded and contracted in response to available funding. However, the basic pre-release services model has been considered sound and has not varied substantially since the incorporation of Virginia CARES in 1979.

From January through June 1983, the period when PAPIS funds were first provided for pre-release services, Virginia CARES pre-release training was presented to 287 participants during fifteen (15) training sessions at twelve (12) institutions.

The Virginia CARES pre-release services goal for FY 1983-84 was 480 inmates. CARES actually served 464 inmates of whom 91.5% completed the training. During this period twenty-seven (27) workshops were conducted in thirteen (13) institutions. The average length of the workshops was 39 hours.

Consistent with funding increases, the contractual requirements for pre-release training as well as the number of inmates receiving the training increased in FY 1984-85. In this time period, the pre-release services requirement increased to 1290 inmates. CARES served 1173 participants of whom 94.5% completed the workshops. Seventy-seven (77) workshops were conducted in twenty-nine (29) institutions, or two-thirds of Virginia's state correctional facilities. The average length of the workshops fell to just under 32 hours during this period. Table 3 identifies the institutions served by each subcontractor during FY 84-85.

Table 3

Institutions Served by Virginia CARES Subcontractors

<u>Subcontractor</u>	<u>Institutions Served</u>
Richmond Community Action Program (R-CAP)	Virginia Correctional Center for Women Chesterfield Community Correctional Unit Caroline Correctional Unit #2 New Kent Correctional Unit #16 Haynesville Correctional Unit #17 Pocahontas Correctional Unit #13
Arlington Community Action Program (A-CAP)	White Post Correctional Unit #7 Culpeper Correctional Unit #11 Stafford Correctional Unit #21 Haymarket Correctional Unit #26 Fairfax Correctional Unit #30
Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project (STUP)	St. Brides Correctional Center Deerfield Correctional Center Nansemond Correctional Unit #3 Capron Correctional Unit #20 Tidewater Correctional Unit #22
Total Action Against Poverty (TAP)	Staunton Correctional Center Greenville Correctional Unit #10 Chatham Correctional Unit #15 Botetourt Correctional Unit #25
Mountain Community Action Program (Mountain CAP)	Bland Correctional Center Pulaski Correctional Unit #1 Wise Correctional Unit #18 Tazewell Correctional Unit #31
Halifax County Community Action Agency (Halifax County CAA)	James River Correctional Center Buckingham Correctional Center Rustbury Correctional Unit #9 Fluvanna Correctional Unit #12 Halifax Correctional Unit #23

Source: Virginia CARES' Quarterly Progress Reports to DCJS

Table 4 summarizes information regarding Virginia CARES' pre-release training in the fiscal years 1983-84 and 1984-85. Notable in these findings are the facts that the percentage of inmates actually paroled soon after their participation in CARES pre-release workshops decreased from approximately 48% in FY 83-84 to only 28% in FY 84-85, while the percentage of parolees released to localities with CARES post-release services also decreased in FY 84-85.

Table 4  
Summary of Pre-Release Training

	FY 83-84	FY 84-85
Number of Institutions Served	13	29
Number of Workshops Offered	27	77
Total Number of Participants	464	1173
Average Number of Participants/Workshop	17.2	15.1
Percentage of Participants Completing Workshop*	91.5%	94.5%
Average Length of Workshops in Hours	38.5	31.7
Participants Released During Follow-up Period*	48.2%	28.2%
Participants Released to Papis Site*	24.1%	15.6%
Participants Who Received Post-Release Services*	13.1%	7.1%

Source: Virginia CARES Quarterly Progress Reports to DCJS

\*Percentage of total number of participants (n=464 in FY 83-84 and n=1173 in FY 84-85)

The decrease in the number of participants per workshop appears to reflect the expanded number of workshops, which allows CARES staff to provide instruction to smaller classes, thereby offering more individual attention per inmate. The decrease in the average length of the workshops, however, cannot be viewed positively. It is the sense of the Virginia CARES central staff that due to a heightened sensitivity to security, together with continuing program conflicts, particularly work-release and the highway quota, the institutions have been less willing this year to make full 40-hour blocks of time available for the CARES training program. Therefore, CARES has provided evening sessions, modified the curriculum and utilized whatever time was allotted, from as little as 18 hours to a maximum of 40 hours. Further clarification of DUC's goals for pre-release preparation in view of these other concerns appears to be indicated.

While two years' data is too little to discern any trend, the decrease in the percentage of clients released during the follow-up period and the decrease in the percentage released to communities with PAPIS programs may indicate a continuation of the pre-release client targeting problem identified in the 1984 evaluation. The decrease in the percentage (the actual number increased from 61 to 84) of clients who request services at post-release sites after their release is not readily explained and also is cause for concern.

Service Changes: Three significant changes will be made to the pre-release component of the program during FY 85-86. Presently under discussion are plans to provide a more intensive and frequent pre-release program at Fairfax Correctional Unit and White Post Correctional Unit at the request of the DUC. This is in response to changes in the character of the populations of these units. Inmates within a few months of their mandatory paroles or with a high likelihood of imminent discretionary parole are being concentrated in these units. Clearly, it is logical to concentrate the delivery of pre-release training to these units. The second significant change for the current fiscal year is that pre-release services for the participating DUC institutions in southwestern Virginia will be provided by staff operating out of People, Inc. in Bristol rather than from Mountain CAP in Wytheville. The Wytheville program encountered substantial negative community sentiment and, by mutual agreement between Virginia CARES and the Wythe County Board of Supervisors, the program was discontinued at this site at the close of the fiscal year 84-85. The third change is the provision of services to several additional institutions including Harrisonburg Correctional Unit #8, Patrick Henry Correctional Unit #28, and Brunswick Correctional Center.

#### Virginia CARES Staff Perceptions

The Virginia CARES pre-release trainers in five of the six subcontracted sites offering pre-release services were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the pre-release program. The Wytheville program staff were omitted as the program had already been discontinued. Some few pre-release staff were also omitted due to scheduling conflicts. A survey instrument was utilized to assure a consistent interview approach, but the instrument was designed so as

to generate open discussion as well as some concrete information. A copy of the survey instrument used is included in this evaluation as Appendix A. Review of the information generated by the survey produced the following pre-release staff perceptions.

Client Targeting: With few exceptions, the staff stated that the institutions have been cooperative and effective in identifying for participation in pre-release training those clients who are likely to be released in the near future and those clients who will be released to areas with post-release services. The staff indicated that those clients identified for participation could benefit from the training, though a few immediately tempered their responses by adding "ninety-percent" or "two-thirds." The consensus of opinion on "why this is so" was: a) that even those inmates who were not appropriately targeted could benefit by exposure to the information provided; b) that those inmates who attended with improper motivation tended to drop out; and c) that even those inmates with serious educational deficits or mental health problems tended to gain benefits from the structured socialization and personalized contact with an outside agency. When they were asked for suggestions about improving the process of targeting and referring appropriate clients for pre-release training, the responses fell into three (3) basic categories:

a) Institutional staff could be more assertive in the selection and recruitment of participants, could do more to publicize and support participation in the training, could pay more attention to newly received and transferred inmates who frequently miss out on opportunities to participate, and could better communicate with the CARES staff regarding their needs even as far as requesting workshops when a viable training group is available.

b) Virginia CARES should better communicate with the institutional staff and provide more recruitment information and publicity tools such as posters to help attract and encourage participation.

c) Incentives for participation are needed. Some years ago, inmates could earn up to 30 days of pre-release credit by participating in a pre-release program. Not only is this no longer the case, but there are now certain disincentives such as lost wages, program conflicts, and conflict with the inmates' leisure time.

Scheduling: A clear majority of the CARES staff indicated that 40 hours is appropriate for the topics to be covered. Several noted the curriculum is designed to be delivered in this amount of time and that the average client is neither capable nor prepared to participate longer and could not absorb much more information in a workshop setting. Among the reasons for believing more than 40 hours time was necessary were: a) a desire to respond to inmate requests for a longer workshop; b) a need for more flexibility as issues were developed that generated more extensive discussion; c) and that "slower" inmates require a slower approach. Almost universally, the CARES staff indicated that less than 40 hours was not adequate except when a smaller class size permitted more expeditious treatment of the material. When they were

asked for suggestions to improve the scheduling of the pre-release sessions, among their most frequent responses were:

- a) allow 8 hours per day for 5 days;
- b) do not schedule evening workshops because the available time is too short, is after a full workday for participants, and conflicts with inmates' personal time;
- c) schedule in coordination with upcoming parole hearings; and
- d) schedule an annual calendar of workshops which would allow CARES staff time between workshops to complete paperwork and do follow-up.

Though complaints were voiced about specific facilities and praise given to others, the consensus was that the institutions do make available for pre-release training the best of their existing facilities except when there is conflict with established, ongoing programs. The CARES staff indicated a general willingness to work around problems. The most commonly cited difficulty in providing pre-release training was the scheduling of available hours. Second most common were difficulties with total hours available and with targeting clients.

Training Topics: Pre-release trainers rated the topics delivered in the training sessions in the following order of importance as helpful for release preparation:

1. job motivation
2. life planning
3. social skills
4. family/system relationships
5. consumer education
6. transitioning

Consistently the CARES staff indicated that while all the topics were of value, "job motivation" and "life planning" were inherently more valuable than the other topics, and little could be done to make the lower-rated topics any more valuable. While most of the staff stated that no additional training topics are needed, a few indicated that "mental health" and related sub-topics such as dealing with anger, self-image, drug dependency, depression, and alienation could be valuable additions to the program.

Communication: The frequency of contact between the pre-release staff and the institutional staff increased before and during workshops. Usually one but not both of the pre-release trainers at a particular site maintained contact with institutional staff. Contacts generally occurred once or twice a

month. Scheduling was the most frequently cited reason for contact, but most staff indicated a variety of other reasons as well. Among them were follow-up on particular clients, provision of feedback on particular clients, and need to obtain information for incomplete participant forms. Little "formal" contact with the post-release specialists was noted. Most reported that the sharing of roles and responsibilities together with a "team style" of operation resulted in continuing contact regarding clients which precluded any need for formal contact.

Most staff stated that the quarterly staff meetings, the central staff monitoring, and the open communication possible with the central staff were very helpful in maintaining a clearly defined role. However, while most of the established field staff (generally with 3 or more years experience) believed their duties were adequately defined, newer staff indicated less security in their role definition. With some frequency, the idea of developing a service (standard operating procedures) manual was mentioned by newer staff.

Staff Suggestions: The interviews identified a number of ideas for improving the overall quality of pre-release training for the clients including the following:

- a) require less written work of participants;
- b) offer the training more frequently to smaller groups;
- c) increase the number of post-release sites to increase likelihood of follow-up to pre-release;
- d) provide some special follow-up to those inmates who do not make parole;
- e) provide increased staff training;
- f) review and update the curriculum;
- g) use videotape equipment for immediate feedback; and
- h) increase/emphasize the use of community expertise.

### Institutional Staff Perceptions

Department of Corrections personnel were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the pre-release program. Efforts were made to obtain information from both administrative and line-treatment staff at both major institutions and field units concerning each of the six pre-release programs. When possible, interviews were scheduled with staff who had had experience with the CARES program at more than one institution and experience with more than one pre-release team. Almost all of those interviewed had frequently observed workshops, though not often at great length.

Client Targeting: The most common method for selecting inmates for the training program appeared to be through the counselors screening their caseloads. Most institutions, however, used this as the basic approach combined with posted information, parole hearing list review, sign-up sheets, and "persuasion" to attract appropriate clients. The most common suggestions to improve targeting and referral were to coordinate scheduling so that

training was offered just prior to the parole hearings, and to interview each client to evaluate his/her interest, intent, and appropriateness for the training rather than accepting all inmates who wish to attend.

Scheduling: The consensus among the staff interviewed was that an adequate number of classes was offered and that the total hours were adequate. Only two of the staff interviewed suggested that more time was needed, while a majority of those interviewed indicated the workshops may be too lengthy. The latter group pointed out class length could (or should) be reduced; 40-hours training in a week is too intensive for most inmates and the program is far in excess of DUC Division Guideline requirements. Scheduling problems and conflicts with required work programs were frequently mentioned as difficulties. Many staff indicated that Virginia CARES' preferred schedule for presenting workshops caused problems, but the benefit of having an outside organization provide such training made it worthwhile to work around the problems so as to benefit from the service.

A variety of suggestions were put forth to improve scheduling including the following: a) scheduling the workshops prior to the parole hearings; b) establishing pre-release centers to address work and program conflicts; c) offering workshops to two institutions on alternate days for two weeks to allow for more "processing" time and more practical work (homework); and d) utilize evening rather than day-time hours to avoid interference with work.

Training Topics: Few of those interviewed indicated sufficient knowledge about the total curriculum to suggest additional topics. Those who did consistently voiced the following concerns: a) the employment portion should involve more practical information and exercises; b) increased emphasis should be given to family and marital problems, parenting, and the newly released offender as a "stranger in the family"; and c) the material covered should be updated. One interviewee made a particularly strong case for including additional information related to general health, family planning, venereal disease, genetic counseling, nutrition, parenting, and child care.

The most often voiced recommendation for improving the quality of the pre-release workshops was to bring in more "experts" from the community so as to make the training topics more practical and less academic.

Communications: Most of the institutional staff indicated that while program attendance sometimes resulted in improved behavior, attitudes, or self-esteem on the part of the inmates, more often no changes were observed. The majority of those interviewed did note increased interest in pre-release planning among the inmates who completed the program and that the programs helped to identify gaps in pre-release planning.

Almost universally the institutional staffs felt that the CARES program made their job easier by relieving them of the responsibility for arranging and providing a pre-release program as required by DUC Division Guideline 842. Some staff did indicate that they believed inmates often completed the program with mistaken impressions of what Virginia CARES would be able to do for them.

Staff Suggestions: The interviewees identified a number of suggestions and concerns regarding the overall quality of pre-release training including the following:

- o Virginia CARES could expand its impact by offering training to staff on the post-release services available to assist inmates. The occasional workshops they have offered at the Academy for Staff Development can be attended only by a few field staff. Training for all the treatment staff at a major institution and the counselors from nearby field units could serve as a much better introduction to the resources available and the CARES organization itself.
- o The differences observed between established pre-release trainers and new trainers are of such proportions that it is clear that better preparation and training of new CARES staff should occur.
- o The DUC should not have to depend on an outside agency to provide a service that is such an integral part of operations. The Department or the Department of Correctional Education should take greater responsibility for providing pre-release training.

#### Client Perceptions

As part of the pre-release workshop, the inmates are requested to complete an evaluation form. For the present evaluation, a sample of fifty (50) inmates was selected from among those who participated in the training during FY 83-84. The client names were forwarded to CARES with a request for copies of their completed pre-release evaluation instruments. Of the sample group, forty-two (42) evaluation forms were obtained. Eight (8) could not be obtained since the participants are not required to indicate their names on the evaluation forms. Review of the evaluations indicates that the sample includes a good mix of different pre-release workshops, institutions, and subcontractors.

The participants were asked to assign a numerical rating from zero (0) through ten (10), worst possible to best possible, to the following categories: group overall; staff; program content; other participants; and, self as a participant. As can be seen in Table 5, the ratings were overwhelmingly positive with no rating of any category by the sample group being below five (5) and the mode in each category being ten (10). Ratings for "other participants" and for the "group overall" reflected more lower values than the other categories.

Table 5

Client Ratings of Pre-Release Workshops  
Fiscal Year 1983-84

<u>Categories</u>	Rating (0 Worst --> 10 Best)						
	0-4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Group Overall	-	4	2	6	6	-	24
Staff	-	-	-	-	3	3	36
Content	-	4	-	-	3	-	35
Other Participants*	-	6	1	4	8	-	22
Self Participation	-	2	-	2	2	5	31

\*"One (1) no Opinion"

Source: Virginia CARES Client Evaluation Forms

The pre-release participants were also asked to express their opinions concerning the most positive and most negative elements of the workshop. The most commonly recurring comments regarding the positive aspects of the workshop were:

- that the whole workshop was helpful;
- that the staff were very positive and helpful; and
- that the training elements regarding budgeting, character analysis, goal setting, looking for work, and readjustment were most helpful.

The most commonly recurring comments regarding the negative aspects of the workshop were directed at the "games" and exercises and at the negative attitudes and disruptiveness of the other inmate participants.

The evaluation form asked finally for suggestions for changes to improve the workshop. The most common response was that no changes were needed. Almost as common, however, were responses requesting more time, program expansion, and additional staff to allow more individual attention. Several comments indicated that the staff should maintain better control of the class. This is consistent with the lower ratings assigned to other participants as shown in Table 5.

## Conclusions

Virginia CARES has been in substantial compliance with the pre-release portions of its contracts for each of the three years of PAPIS funding. Virginia CARES is providing a needed and required service since pre-release training is considered to have inherent value. It would be difficult for most institutions to provide this service without Virginia CARES' assistance. An inordinate amount of staff time would be required to design and update, coordinate, and conduct even a minimally acceptable program of pre-release training. In the examination of the pre-release programming, however, some problems have become apparent.

Client Targeting: The Virginia CARES program model is designed so that the most appropriate participants are those for whom release is imminent and who will be released to an area in which CARES' post-release services are available. An earlier evaluation of Virginia CARES indicated a need for CARES to develop closer communication with the Department of Corrections (DOC) "to insure that only those inmates nearing release date will receive pre-release services." In 1983-84, the targeting seemed to be improving; however, in 1984-85, some reversal occurred. Because of the major increase in the number of offenders provided the training in 1984-85 (1173) compared to 1983-84 (464), it is apparent that the service provision has simply outpaced the immediate need for and the availability of post-release services.

Scheduling: Virginia CARES believes its forty (40) hour curriculum is most effectively delivered in five (5) days at eight (8) hours per day. This is the most cost-effective manner for CARES to provide the program. The inmates are fresh, not tired after a day's work. The program is less disjointed and experiences fewer conflicts with established evening programs, counts, and lockdown. The institutions generally prefer that the program be offered in the evenings. This would eliminate major program conflicts for the institutions such as the need to accomplish institutional work and most particularly conflicts with the "road quota". It is clear that the priority assigned to meeting the "road quota" is often in direct conflict with the provision of pre-release training. As a result, the pre-release program has often been considered a secondary priority, the average program hours are decreasing, and the program is presented in an abbreviated and disjointed manner.

Training Topics: The Virginia CARES pre-release curriculum has been subject to minor modifications but has been fundamentally unchanged through the PAPIS period. Information and material is presented which could help the newly released offender make a successful transition from prison to free society. While the curriculum is considered sound, some suggestions for improvement merit consideration.

## Recommendations

1. To improve the communication and coordination between DOC and Virginia CARES, the following steps should be taken:

- o Virginia CARES should conduct periodic information and training sessions for DOC institutional staff, particularly counselors, regarding CARES' pre- and post-release services.
  - o A formal system of communication between Virginia CARES' trainers and DOC institutional staff should be developed covering scheduling, attendance, and inmate participation information.
  - o Virginia CARES should develop and distribute additional information designed to publicize their program, and the materials should be displayed and promoted by DOC institutional staff.
- 2. The DOC should review its plans and purposes in pre-release programming with a view toward better utilizing available Virginia CARES services. This review should address:
  - o The priority placed on pre-release training versus competing institutional programs.
  - o The identification by counselors of inmates who are nearing release or have a high likelihood of release, and subsequent referral of these inmates for training.
  - o Inmate incentives for successful participation and completion of a pre-release preparation program.
- 3. Based on the policy decision as to the emphasis to be placed on pre-release preparation, the DOC should work with Virginia CARES to assure that:
  - o Adequate periods of time are made available for the presentation of the Virginia CARES pre-release program.
  - o Referrals are appropriate candidates for services.
  - o Class sizes remain small and manageable.
  - o Adequate meeting facilities are provided.
- 4. Virginia CARES should review its pre-release training curriculum and consider revision and expansion of topics addressing:
  - o General health, family planning, venereal disease and nutrition.
  - o Family and marital problems, parenting, and child care.
  - o Employment expectations and employment environment.
  - o Outside or private sector expertise in actual classroom presentations.

### III. POST-RELEASE SERVICES

#### Overview

The post-release program, like its pre-release counterpart, is operated by Virginia CARES through its network of Community Action Agency (CAA) sub-contractors which employ transition specialists. The major responsibility of the transition specialists is the development of resources for their clients.

The largest single group of clients who request Virginia CARES' services consist of those referred by their parole officers. An increase in the number of post-release clients who received pre-release services was noted during FY 84-85, as compared to the previous biennium. Other clients who receive post-release services are walk-ins or are referred by friends, other clients, or other social service agencies. For those clients who have attended pre-release training, a needs assessment has already been completed. For those clients who are new to CARES, an intake form and needs assessment are completed on their first visit to the post-release site to establish the priority of needs and the appropriateness of the client. Appropriate clients for CARES' services are ex-felons and their families. The most appropriate clients are those who have been recently released and those who have participated in pre-release training while still in the institution. Priority needs (housing, food, and clothing), as identified by the needs assessment, are the first to be addressed. Employment needs, counseling, family guidance, and referrals to other social service providers, while important, are considered and treated secondary to the basic human needs.

The program's relationship with the CAAs is of great value in providing post-release services, as these agencies have long been in the business of bringing resources to bear on the poor, minorities, the disadvantaged and underprivileged, and the chronically unemployed. Perhaps the major focus of the post release program, beyond immediate basic human needs, is employment development. Ex-offenders, despite their many problems, often fail to qualify for supportive social services because they are "young and able-bodied." Yet, with criminal histories, poor employment backgrounds, and often functional illiteracy, this generally "young and able bodied" group has significant problems finding employment. Though no clear causal relationship has been proven between employment and recidivism, employment does certainly play some major part in assisting the ex-offender and reducing recidivism. Employment assistance for the offender is also the most distinct special service that Virginia CARES provides and the most frequently noted reason for referral to CARES by parole officers.

#### Service Level

Table 6 provides a comparative description of Virginia CARES' clients and levels of service during the fiscal years 1983-85. During the first year of PAPIS funding (FY 82-83) the projected number of released offenders to be served was 400; however, Virginia CARES served a total of 515 ex-offenders. The majority of those served were black (69.7%) and male (92.8%). Most of CARES' clients during that period were on parole (72%), and probation and

parole offices were the most frequent source of referrals (45.4%). The percentage of successful employment, training, or school placements was approximately 25.8 percent.

Table 6  
Comparative Description of Post-Release Clients  
Fiscal Years 1982-85

<u>Descriptors</u>	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1984-85</u>
Number of Post-Release Clients	515	522	634
Male	93%	91%	90%
Female	7%	9%	10%
Black	70%	70%	79%
White	30%	30%	20%
Other	.7%	.5%	.7%
On Parole	72%	73%	75%
On Probation	17%	16%	6%
Currently Incarcerated	<.19%	<.1%	0%
Other	11%	11%	19%
Participated In Pre-Release	7%	17%	19%
Referred From Pre-Release	5%	15%	18%
Referred By Probation and Parole	45%	47%	37%
Walk-in	2%	5%	6%
Referred By Friend, Relative, Other	14%	10%	10%
Referred By Prison Counselor/DJC	6%	3%	3%
Referred By Other	28%	21%	26%

\*Figures when added may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Virginia CARES Quarterly Reports

During the second year of PAPIS funding (FY 83-84), the projected number of released offenders to be served remained at 400. Again Virginia CARES exceeded this goal through services to 522 clients. The majority of those served again were black (69.5%), male (90.8%), and on parole (72.9%); referrals from probation and parole offices (46.9%) increased during the period. The percentage of successful employment, training, and school placements of those clients enrolled for employment placement also increased to 38.5%.

In FY 84-85, based on the significant increase in funding, the number of released offenders projected for service increased to 650 (two new post-release service sites were added and limited post-release services at the two new pre-release sites were expected). Virginia CARES fell just short of this goal by providing services to 634 released offenders. The majority of those served continued to be black (79.3%), male (90%), and on parole (75.3%); referrals from probation and parole offices declined to 37.2%. The percentage of successful placements in employment, training, or schools rose to 50.6%.

Length of Service: Little structure is given to the length of time an ex-offender may be considered a Virginia CARES client. It is not possible to predict how long it will take for a client to make a successful transition to society and become established as a productive citizen. There are major variations in the circumstances of individual clients, the amount of time served in the institution and the amount of time elapsed between release and first contact with CARES. Therefore, an individual case is closed or positively terminated when the client seems to be self-sufficient and no longer requesting assistance; a case is negatively terminated when contact is lost over a period of time or when the client is recommitted.

Client Profile: An analysis of the statistics presented in Table 6 provides some insight into the population served by Virginia CARES. While just less than 70 percent of its clients were black in the first two years of PAPIS funding, almost 80 percent of the clients were black during FY 84-85. This may indicate that the improvements in the general economy and in the employment market had more impact on white ex-offenders than on black ex-offenders, thus concentrating more blacks on CARES' rolls. The FY 1984-85 decrease in referrals from probation and parole is very likely a reflection of two factors: first, the continuing improvement in the general economy and employment rates; second, increased availability and utilization of funds by probation and parole offices for direct purchase of services for which ex-offenders were previously referred to Virginia CARES. The decrease in the percentage of clients on probation with a concurrent increase of the "other" category during FY 84-85 likely reflects the increased utilization of diversion programs. The increases in "referred by others" seemed clearly to reflect increases in referrals by other agencies and by CDI.

### Service Types

Table 7 reflects volume and type of services provided through PAPIS funds during fiscal years 1983-85.

Table 7

Number of Clients Served by Type of Service  
Fiscal Years 1983-85

<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1984-85</u>
Food	123	131	189
Clothing	65	62	92
Housing	63	82	138
Transportation	205	216	288
Counseling (Career, Family, Group, Individual)	368	836	883
Referrals (Legal, Medical, Substance Abuse, Other)	129	88	224
Other Assistance (General Relief, ADC, Social Security, Direct Financial Assistance)	147	129	115
Placement Enrollment	487	493	616
Entered Employment	100	175	302
Entered Training/School	26	15	10
Successful Employment, Training, School Placement	25.8%	38.5%	50.6%
Job Leads	N/A	384	418
Average Wage/Hour	\$4.56	\$4.25	\$4.17
Services By Volunteers	N/A	179	88
Client Volunteer (Hours)	N/A	236	473
Total Family Members Served	N/A	80	212
Family Members Helped By Employment, School, or Training Placement	N/A	1	4

Source: Virginia CARES Quarterly Reports

As can be seen, in FY 1983-84, Virginia CARES served 522 post-release clients. Of these, 493 were enrolled in job placement activities. Employment, training, and school placements were successful for 190 clients or 38.5% of those seeking these services. Of the 634 clients provided post-release services in FY 1984-85, 616 were enrolled for job placement activities and of

these 312 (50.6%) found work, entered school, or training. Clearly increased emphasis on employment, the major new contractual stipulation of the FY 1984-86 contract, and the increase in FY 1984-86 funding, appear to be yielding positive results. However, this finding must be considered in light of improvements in the general economy (decreased unemployment) and the difficulty of determining whether the clients, Virginia CARES, the parole officers, or other persons or agencies had the greatest impact on employment. These considerations make it difficult to give the Virginia CARES program total credit for the offender employment results noted.

### Virginia CARES Staff Perceptions

Each of the six Virginia CARES' Transition (post-release) Specialists was interviewed using a survey instrument to assure consistency. A copy of the survey instrument is in Appendix A.

Referrals: Probation and Parole referrals were considered to be the primary source of clients according to five of the six Transition Specialists. The sixth specialist rated Pre-Release Training as the primary source of referral with probation and parole the second most frequent referral source. The latter view however is not supported by FY 1984-85 program reports and statistics reflected earlier in this chapter. Interviewees indicated that clients from pre-release were always appropriate referrals and were generally better prepared for release, better motivated, and more realistic. Referrals from probation and parole were reported as almost always appropriate. Referrals from other sources were also considered to be generally appropriate. All six Transition Specialists provided formal feedback to the Probation and Parole Offices regarding referrals, and most reported frequent informal telephone contact with parole officers.

Importance of Services: The post-release staff, when asked to rank the major post-release service categories by value to clients, most often considered employment placement assistance, then housing assistance, as the most valuable services offered. Substance abuse counseling referrals and volunteer advocates were considered to be the least important services to the client according to the staff perceptions. The value assigned the services seemed to relate most closely to the frequency of need, though all Virginia CARES' services were considered very valuable to certain clients individually. Low-cost housing, transportation assistance, and the provision of emergency readjustment funds were the staff's most frequently mentioned suggestions for additional and needed services.

Communications: The staff reported CARES to be one of the few organizations to provide advocacy and services specific to ex-offenders. At the same time they report generally favorable relationships with a variety of other social service providers to which they refer clients. The post-release staff also reported a very positive relationship with the central office staff and considered their jobs well defined.

## Probation and Parole Staff Perceptions

Parole officers in each of the districts where post-release services are offered were interviewed using a survey instrument. A copy of the instrument is in Appendix A.

Referrals: These interviews indicated that employment placement needs were the most frequent cause for referral to Virginia CARES. Virginia CARES' emergency services (food, clothing, housing) were also valued and utilized, though reportedly less frequently than in the past due to the availability of purchase of service funds in the parole offices. Most of those interviewed claimed to make regular, if not frequent, referrals to Virginia CARES.

Importance of Services: The consensus was that the officers utilize almost any resource available for their clients and Virginia CARES is one of the few agencies which focuses on the ex-offender. One of the most frequent suggestions was that Virginia CARES should be allowed to offer services to probationers as well as parolees. Regarding the effectiveness of CARES' services, none found it "very effective" but neither did anyone describe it as "not effective at all."

Communications: Despite their opinions on CARES' effectiveness, the probation and parole staff views were generally favorable regarding the post-release program. Most indicated that CARES could not be blamed for level of effectiveness because the clients were a group among whom little improvement was likely to be realized.

## Employment Services

Earlier evaluations of Virginia CARES stated concerns regarding the absence of specialized services - services provided by CARES that were not duplicated by other agencies in the community. The most commonly proposed special service which could be provided by CARES was employment placement which focused on the special needs and problems of the ex-offender. Virginia CARES' own perception of needed services has consistently included employment placement services as among the most important. Post-release staff interviews show employment preparation and placement to be the most valuable service that they can provide to the offender. Interviews with institutional and probation and parole staffs further support employment services as the highest area of need. Emphasis on employment activities is therefore clearly justified. The Virginia CARES PAPIS contract for FY 1984-85 and FY 85-86 requires that increased efforts be directed to employment activities. (Appendices B and C provide examples of contractual requirements.)

Because of this, further analysis was conducted in this evaluation to document and verify the employment services provided. The data for this analysis were gathered through a review of selected Virginia CARES' client records, quarterly progress reports required by DCJS, Probation and Parole client records, and interviews with CARES' staff and parole officers.

With the cooperation of Virginia CARES' central office staff, 113 clients who were enrolled in the Virginia CARES program and who requested employment assistance in the first six months of the FY 1984-85 were identified (July 1, 1984 through December 31, 1984). Their records were reviewed to determine demographic characteristics (race, age and sex), the referral source, the time between program enrollment and employment placement, starting wage, place of employment, and follow-up information regarding employment.

Demographic Characteristics: As shown in Table 8, the demographic characteristics of the sample group are very similar to those of the total client population for FY 84-85 which was made up of approximately ninety percent (90%) males and approximately seventy-nine percent (79.3%) blacks. The majority of the participants was under the age of thirty (30).

Table 8

Race, Sex and Age of Employment Service Clients

<u>Race and Sex</u>	<u>% of Clients</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>% of Clients</u>
Black Male	70.8	20 Years and Under	1.8
White Male	19.5	21-29 Years	51.3
Black Female	5.3	30-35 Years	19.5
White Female	4.4	Over 35 Years	27.4
	100		100
	N=113		N=113

Source: Virginia CARES Client Records

Referral Sources: As Table 9 indicates, the largest number of employment service clients was referred by Probation and Parole Offices (37.2%) with the next largest number coming from other sources including walk-in and referral from miscellaneous social service agencies (23.9%). This is consistent with the overall referral source patterns for Virginia CARES in FY 1984-85.

Table 9

Referral Source For Employment Services Clients

<u>Service</u>	<u>% of Clients</u>
Probation and Parole	37.2
DOC Counselor	7.1
Pre-Release	13.3
Friend/Other Client	17.7
Other	23.9
Unknown	.9
	<u>100*</u> N=113

\*Rounding may produce percentage greater than 100%.

Enrollment and Placement Time: The six-month sample of Virginia CARES' employment service clients demonstrated that approximately seventy percent (69.9%) of the clients were placed in employment in a month or less. Table 10 depicts the length of time between program enrollment and employment placement:

Table 10

Time Between Enrollment and Job Placement

<u>Time</u>	<u>% of Clients</u>
Week or Less	35.4
1 to 2 Weeks	13.3
2 to 3 Weeks	8.0
3 to 4 Weeks	8.8
1 Month	15.0
2 Months	10.6
3 Months & Over	8.8
	<u>100</u> N=113

Types of Placements and Wages: The Virginia CARES client records generally indicated the place of employment and the beginning wage. However, determining the types of positions was difficult. The starting wage of 102 of the clients for which wage information was available ranged from a low of \$1.25 per hour for restaurant work to a high of \$10.00 per hour for construction work. The average wage for the group was approximately \$4.40 per hour. The most frequent placements were in construction, maintenance and janitorial services, restaurants, landscaping, and industry. A number of the jobs listed appeared to be day labor jobs through private employment agencies while two (2) of the clients were employed by the local weatherization program, a part of the community action agency.

Duration of Employment: It was clear from the client records that follow-up of clients after placement was attempted by Virginia CARES' staff. The follow-up information most frequently noted the employment status, employer, and wage. The follow-up time periods, however, were inconsistent, with the most frequent times being three months and six months after placement. Sixty (60) of the client records indicated follow-up by CARES' staff approximately three months after placement.

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Table 11

Client Employment Status Follow-up

<u>Three Months After Placement</u>	<u># of Clients</u>	<u>Six Months After Placement</u>	<u># of Clients</u>
Employed In Original Job	34	Employed In Original Job	13
Employed In New Job	11	Employed In New Job	27
Unemployed	5	Unemployed	3
Incarcerated	2	Incarcerated	1
Unable to Contact	8	Unable To Contact	9
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	60		53

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Fifty-three (53) clients were followed up at six months after placement. The number of clients who could not be contacted in the three-month and six-month follow-ups, along with the number who have changed jobs, give some indication of the difficulty in maintaining follow-up information on the client population. As Table 11 shows, the vast majority of those who could be located were working. However, over half of the clients were working in jobs other than the ones in which they were originally placed.

### Employment Recordkeeping

Verification of the employment information obtained from Virginia CARES was attempted through on-site review of probation and parole records in two (2) districts. This verification revealed few discrepancies in the comparisons made in one district, while a significant number of discrepancies were found in the comparisons made in the other. The parole records were utilized as the base for comparison because frequent (generally monthly) contact is required between the client and his parole officer and because employment verification in the form of paycheck stubs or other proof is documented.

Overall Services: Few significant inconsistencies were found regarding the services provided to clients by Virginia CARES. The services CARES listed as having provided matched client needs indicated in the parole records. Those services which could be verified through the parole records (such as temporary or emergency housing, transportation by CARES to a job interview, food or clothing assistance) showed accurate reporting by Virginia CARES.

Referral Services: The Virginia CARES records of "referral source" were frequently in conflict with the parole records. The parole records reflected more referrals to Virginia CARES by parole officers than did the Virginia CARES records. Three possible explanations are readily apparent. First, CARES' post-release intake records reflect information provided by the client. The clients may, in some cases, fail to report referral by their parole officer. Second, the clients may have been referred by more than one source (e.g., pre-release trainer before release and parole officer upon release) but usually only one referral source is recorded. Third, some parole officers may suggest that their clients contact Virginia CARES but not officially refer them. In any event, it would seem that the parole officers are sending clients to Virginia CARES more often than CARES' records reflect. This raises some questions about the referral data reflected in Table 6.

Duration of Employment: Employment initiation and termination dates were frequently inconsistent between Virginia CARES' records and parole records. However, since these dates are frequently based on client reports and because employment for this group is often very sporadic and difficult to verify, most of these discrepancies appear to be relatively unimportant.

The major reporting area in which inconsistencies occurred was in the follow-up information. Virginia CARES' follow-up with clients was irregular in nature. Some few clients maintained good contact with Virginia CARES causing their records to be regularly and accurately updated. Otherwise, CARES follow-up information on employment was very sporadic and often inaccurate.

In a few cases, major inconsistencies between the parole records and Virginia CARES' records were clearly the result of patently false information being provided to one or both parties by the clients.

## Conclusions

Virginia CARES has been in substantial compliance with the post-release portion of its contract for each of the three PAPIS years. In most instances and most notably in "employment placement," CARES has exceeded its contractual requirements for the provision of post-release services. It is clear that CARES is helping to fill a service gap and is providing services that Probation and Parole, at current funding and staffing levels, cannot provide. The Probation and Parole caseload does not allow time for much job development. The officers have little time to give direct assistance with completing employment applications, to transport clients to job interviews, or to provide supportive follow-up except during scheduled appointments with clients. CARES can and does provide assistance of this sort. Until recently, few Probation and Parole offices had funds for the direct purchase of emergency housing, food, or clothing. Virginia CARES, in linkage with the Community Action Programs (CAP) network, has been able to develop and provide such resources.

Referrals: Probation and Parole has been the most frequent source of client referrals to CARES. In fact, Probation and Parole records reflect more referrals to CARES than CARES' records show. This seems to be because the officers sometimes suggest that clients contact CARES but do not do a formal referral and because, when a client is referred by more than one source, the parole officer referral might be omitted. Because parole officer referrals have the greatest potential to link the newly released offenders to CARES' services, the relationship between Probation and Parole and Virginia CARES must be continuously maintained and strengthened. The 1984-85 post-release data show that the percentage of referrals to CARES from parole officers has dropped from preceding years. This may be a reflection of the availability of funds in the parole offices for direct purchase of emergency services, lessening the need for CARES' service brokerage. At best, less than half of the referrals to CARES were from the parole offices. It is clear that strategies must be pursued to improve the working relationship between Virginia CARES and Probation and Parole and to increase the referral of newly released offenders - CARES' target population.

Service Levels: The 1983 evaluation of Virginia CARES indicated a need to develop a better client management system. At that time CARES counted as equal the client who received single or multiple referrals for emergency services and the client who received extensive counseling or long-term assistance with job placement and self-sufficiency. This practice has not been corrected, making it difficult to assess the actual substance of many of CARES' post-release services. While total program funding increased seventy-eight percent (78%) between 1983-84 and 1984-85 and the post-release capability increased over sixty percent (62.5%), the only significant post-release service categories showing an increase of more than fifty percent were housing assistance (68.2%), referrals to other providers (154.5%), entered employment (72.5%), volunteer hours by clients (100%), and family members served (165%). That the other services did not show comparable increases may be indicative of diminishing returns or may, conversely, indicate improved services to clients with identified needs. For example, counseling services in 84-85 increased just

5.7 percent over the preceding year. Perhaps this reflects better services to a more particularly targeted needs group, thus resulting in the very positive increase in employment placements.

Employment Services: The 1983 DCJS evaluation of Virginia CARES recommended that CARES place more emphasis on the development of specialized services. Beginning in FY 1984-85, CARES' contractual agreement reflected the increased emphasis with the focus on employment services. The statistics from the year also indicate a significant increase of clients enrolled in employment placement and those actually placed in jobs. Interviews with program staff and DUC staff stress the importance of employment services and indicate that employment is the most frequent reason for referral. From a review of client records in Virginia CARES and at Probation and Parole, it is evident that clients were referred to CARES for employment assistance but the exact links between program participation, self motivation, Probation and Parole's assistance, and the state of the general economy and employment cannot be determined.

From the review of employment records, three major concerns which must be addressed become quite clear. First, while some very accurate records were found, the available data contain too many inaccuracies, discrepancies, and gaps to be considered reliable for use in program assessment. Several particularly serious inaccuracies were found in the CARES' program records which could not be accounted for solely on the basis of poor client reporting. More regular follow-up must be done and more contact must occur between the Virginia CARES' staff and the individual parole officer. Second, several cases were reviewed in which Virginia CARES was reporting client contacts while the parole officers had lost contact with the clients. This is a particularly serious matter in those cases where warrants for arrest of the clients have been issued. This situation must be a priority for correction. Third, in most, though not all, cases it is very unclear exactly what role Virginia CARES actually played in the employment of the ex-offender. It is difficult to gauge the impact that the parole officer's encouragement/insistence has on a client finding a job, compared to the job lead or transportation or help with an application provided by Virginia CARES, and the initiative and determination shown by the client. Nevertheless, attention must be directed to better reflecting and assessing Virginia CARES' involvement in the process of assisting ex-offenders to find and retain employment.

#### Recommendations

1. To improve communications between Virginia CARES and Probation and Parole, Virginia CARES should:
  - o increase the frequency of direct contact with the clients' supervising Probation and Parole officers; and
  - o develop written treatment plans for long-term clients, and provide copies or summaries of the plans to Probation and Parole.

2. To improve communications, Virginia CARES and Probation and Parole should work together to develop a system and scheduling of regular two-way reporting on client status and progress, with special emphasis on employment and treatment programs.
3. To improve client follow-up records, Virginia CARES and Probation and Parole should jointly explore additional strategies for monitoring clients, which, at a minimum, should include a system of Probation and Parole notification to Virginia CARES of significant changes in the status of clients they have referred; this system should, in particular, include notification as to offenders for whom arrest warrants have been issued.
4. To improve the client management information system, Virginia CARES should:
  - o develop procedures which will differentiate the number and intensity of services provided to individual clients; and
  - o develop standard procedures for case closure.
5. To maximize service impact, Virginia CARES should continue to emphasize job development, educational/vocational placement and, as their unique services, develop specific procedures for monitoring of employment assistance.

## IV. RECIDIVISM IMPACT

### Overview

Virginia CARES' funds are intended to reduce recidivism by assisting offenders in their transition from incarceration to free society. While the value of this goal may be subject to debate, it does require that the study include an analysis of recidivism in order to measure Virginia CARES' progress in reaching that goal.

### Methodology

To determine the program's impact on recidivism rates, Virginia CARES' clients who were paroled from state correctional institutions during two time periods were analyzed. The periods are July 1, 1981 through December 31, 1982 and July 1, 1983 through June 30, 1984. The earlier time period was chosen to provide a longer follow-up period on clients receiving post-release services, while the later period provided recidivism data on a more current group of clients and identified any changes in clients served. Virginia CARES did not receive PAPIS funds during the earlier time period; however, the program design was in place and basically the same as present. Clients released on parole during these time periods were chosen, rather than all clients, because newly released state felons are the targeted PAPIS client group. Focusing on these groups made it possible to compare Virginia CARES' clients to parolees who were released during the same time period but were not involved in Virginia CARES. The data available on parolees in both the client and non-client groups makes it possible to determine how the two groups differ in terms of demographics and recidivism rates. These findings indicate whether the Virginia CARES program has had an impact on reducing recidivism rates.

### Data Sources:

The Department of Corrections (DOC) served as the key data resource for this effort by providing listings of all parolees released to the four (4) parole districts where Virginia CARES offered post-release services during the specified time periods. The localities included the Fairfax, Richmond, Norfolk, and Roanoke areas. Using Virginia CARES' records, parolees enrolled with Virginia CARES were identified. A random sample of the remaining parolees was then selected for use as the non-client comparison group. The following information was used in the analysis:

- Race/Sex
- Date of Birth
- Marital Status
- Last Grade Completed
- Offense Code
- Release Type
- Release Date
- Length of Stay

Department of Corrections' staff conducted a review of inmate records to determine the recidivism status of each of the client and non-client group members. The recidivism information compiled included the following:

Current Status  
Date of Recommitment  
Recommitment Offense Code

Virginia CARES' records provided information on the date of enrollment in the post-release program for the client group and whether the clients had participated in the pre-release program.

#### Client and Non-Client Group I - (Paroled July 1, 1981 through December 31, 1982)

The first study group includes 184 clients and 184 non-client parolees chosen from among the 2,028 inmates paroled to the Richmond, Fairfax, Roanoke, and Norfolk area parole districts during the time period July 1, 1981 through December 31, 1982. The purpose of comparing these two groups is to describe the characteristics of the two groups and how they may differ in their recidivism rates.

Findings from the previous DCJS evaluation of Virginia CARES in 1983, which focused on a similar group of parolees, found a statistically significant difference in the recidivism rates of the two groups. However, the report also indicated that a longer follow-up period should be undertaken in order to determine if the differential impact continues.

This study attempts to determine if Virginia CARES' clients have lower recidivism rates than the non-client group over a longer time period. It also uses a measure of recidivism which has greater potential for determining correctional system savings and better addresses the goal of the PAPIS funding which is aimed at reducing correctional costs. This measure of recidivism is recommitment to a Department of Corrections' institution.

#### Characteristics of Client and Non-Client Group I

The following sections describe and analyze the demographic, criminal background, and recidivism characteristics of the client and non-client groups.

Demographics: The majority of the clients were black (72.3%) and male (94%). A smaller percentage of the non-client group was black (58.7%); however, a comparable percentage was male (92.4%). Table 12 depicts the race and sex of the client and non-client groups:

TABLE 12

Race and Sex Comparison of  
Client and Non-Client Group I

<u>Race</u>	<u>% Client Group I</u>	<u>% Non-Client Group I</u>
Black	72.3	58.7
White	27.2	40.8
Other	.5	.5
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0	100.0
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	94.0	92.4
Female	6.0	7.6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0 N=184	100.0 N=184

The age of Client Group I ranged from eighteen (18) to sixty-five (65) with the median age approximately twenty-eight (28) years. The non-client group was quite similar, ranging in age from seventeen (17) to seventy-one (71) with a median age of approximately twenty-seven (27) years.

The majority of both groups were single: approximately seventy-one (70.7%) percent of the client group and three-quarters (75%) of the non-client group. The educational level of the two groups was also similar. Approximately one-third of the client group (31%) and the non-client group (33.2%) had an eighth grade education or less, while approximately half (51.6%) of the client group and forty-four percent (44%) of the non-client group had some high school.

Of the demographic characteristics - race, sex, marital status, age and education - only the difference in the racial characteristics of the two groups was statistically\* significant. From the demographic data it appears that Virginia CARES' clients are somewhat more likely to be black than the parolees released to the districts served by the Virginia CARES post-release program.

\* $\chi^2 = 7.59336$  with 2 degrees of freedom  
Level of statistical significance  $\leq .05$

Criminal Background: Three measures related to criminal background were analyzed, including length of incarceration prior to parole, type of parole, and offense type. Approximately thirty-two percent (31.5%) of Client Group I had been incarcerated 12 months or less compared to thirty percent (30.4%) of Non-Client Group I, while approximately thirty-eight percent (37.5%) of the client group and thirty-one percent of the non-client group had been incarcerated for over three years. The overall median length of incarceration prior to parole for both groups was 1.9 years.

Offenders who are released on mandatory parole have not been determined to be eligible candidates by the Virginia Parole Board for discretionary parole. Approximately twenty-eight percent (27.7%) of the client group compared to approximately thirty-six percent (36.4%) of the non-client group were released on mandatory parole. However, the difference in the two groups is not statistically significant.

As seen in Table 13, the two groups differ in the types of crimes for which they had been serving time prior to release. The client group had a higher percentage of participants who were incarcerated for crimes against persons (40.8%) than the non-client group (29.9%). Crimes against persons include such crimes as homicide, assault, sexual assault, and robbery. The difference between the two groups is statistically significant.

Table 13

Type of Conviction Comparison of  
Client and Non-Client Group I

<u>Group</u>	<u>% Personal Crimes Conviction</u>	<u>% Property Crimes Conviction</u>	<u>% Other Crimes Conviction</u>	
Client Group I	40.8	49.5	9.7	100
Non-Client Group I	29.9	52.2	17.9	100
				N=184
$\chi^2 = 7.62238$ with 2 degrees of freedom Level of statistical significance < .05				

Recommitment to a Department of Corrections facility is the measure of recidivism used in this study. Table 14 shows the recidivism rate for the groups. Approximately twenty-eight percent (28.3%) of the Client Group I clients were found to have been recommitted while approximately thirty-five percent (35.3%) of Non-Client Group I had been recommitted. Additionally,

five (5) of the clients and two (2) of the non-client group were listed as fugitives from parole. Although there is approximately a six percentage point difference in the two groups, the difference, using a Chi square test, is not statistically significant. This indicates that the difference between the two groups' recidivism rates may have occurred by chance.

Table 14

Recidivism Comparison of  
Client and Non-Client Group I

<u>Group</u>	<u>% Successful</u>	<u>% ReCommitted</u>	<u>% Fugitive</u>	
Client Group I	69.0	28.3	2.7	100
Non-Client Group I	63.6	35.3	1.1	100
				N=134

$\chi^2 = 3.13999$  with 2 degrees of freedom  
Level of statistical significance > .05

The data also show that the length of time between parole and recidivism is relatively the same for the CARES and non-CARES groups. Approximately sixty-three percent (62.7%) of the CARES' participants who were recidivists were recommitted after they had been on parole for a year or more. Approximately fifty-eight percent (57.8%) of the non-CARES group recidivists were on parole for a year or more before recommitment. The median length of time between parole and recommitment for the CARES group was 1.4 years, for the non-client group it was 1.3 years.

Summary: Overall the client and the non-client groups are similar except in two variables, race and type of offense. The difference in recidivism rates is not statistically significant and could have occurred through chance. Therefore, determining if there is a difference in recidivism rates when the effects of race and the effects of previous offense type are controlled becomes important. This was done statistically by using a cross-tabulation procedure which compares the recidivism measure of the client and non-client group while holding the effects of other variables such as race and offense type constant. The results of this procedure indicate that, even if the effects of the differences in race and the differences in offense type for which the offenders had been serving time are removed, there continues to be no statistically significant difference in the recidivism rates of the two groups.

Client and Non-Client Group II - Paroled July 1, 1983 through June 30, 1984)

To further analyze the Virginia CARES post-release program's impact on recidivism, a second comparison was made using parolees released in the period between July 1, 1983 and June 30, 1984. From a list of the 1,444 inmates paroled during this time period, 240 Virginia CARES program participants were identified. A comparable-sized sample of the remaining parolees was then randomly chosen for the non-client comparison group. As with the first comparisons, the purpose in comparing these second groups is to describe the characteristics of the two groups and how their recidivism rates may differ.

Characteristics of Client and Non-Client Group II

The following sections describe and analyze the demographic, criminal background, and recidivism characteristics of the two groups.

Demographics: As shown in Table 15, the majority of the clients were black (69.6%) and male (93.3%). The non-client group was similar, with approximately sixty-two percent (62.2%) black and approximately ninety-two percent (91.7%) male.

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Table 15

Race and Sex Comparison of  
Client and Non-Client Group II

<u>Race</u>	<u>% Client Group II</u>	<u>% Non-Client Group II</u>
Black	69.6	62.2
White	29.6	37.8
Other	.8	.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0	100.0 (241)
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	93.3	91.7
Female	6.7	8.3
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0 N=240	100.0 N=241

---

The ages of those in Client Group II ranged from approximately nineteen (19) to fifty-eight (58) years with the median age at approximately thirty (29.5) years. The non-client group ages are similar, ranging from approximately nineteen (18.5) to sixty-three (62.8) years. The median age for the non-client group was twenty-eight (28) years.

Table 16 describes the marital status of the two groups. The majority of both groups were single; however, the percentage of clients who were single is somewhat higher than in the non-client group. Approximately eighty-four percent (84.2%) of the client group and approximately sixty-eight percent (67.6%) of the non-client group were reported as being single. The differences in the two groups' marital status is statistically significant.

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Table 16

Marital Status Comparison of  
Client and Non-Client Group II

<u>Group</u>	<u>% Married</u>	<u>% Single</u>	<u>% Unspecified</u>	
Client Group II	84.2	9.6	6.3	100 N=240
Non-Client Group II	67.6	13.7	18.7	100% N=241

$\chi^2 = 20.95085$  with 2 degrees of freedom  
Level of statistical significance  $\leq .05$

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The educational levels of the two groups also differed. Approximately thirty percent (29.6%) of the Virginia CARES clients had an eighth grade education or less, compared to approximately twenty-three percent (23.2%) of the non-client group. A larger number of the non-client group members had education beyond high school. Table 17 shows the differences in educational levels. These differences were statistically significant indicating that the non-client group had a somewhat higher educational level than the client group.

Table 17

Educational Level Comparison of Client and Non-Client Group II

<u>Group</u>	<u>% Eighth Grade or Less</u>	<u>% 9 to 12 Years</u>	<u>% Beyond 12 Years</u>	
Client Group II	29.6	50.4	20.0	100 N=240
Non-Client Group II	23.2	47.3	29.5	100 N=241

$\chi^2 = 6.42345$  with 2 degrees of freedom  
Level of statistical significance  $\leq .05$

Criminal Background: The same measures of criminal background used in the earlier comparison groups were also used for this more recent group comparison. The measures included length of incarceration prior to parole, type of parole, and offense type. Table 18 depicts the difference in length of incarceration. As shown, approximately thirty-four percent (34.2%) of Client Group II had been incarcerated twelve months or less compared to forty-three percent (43.2%) of the Non-Client Group II. In contrast, a higher percentage of client group members had been incarcerated for over three years, compared to the non-client group. The overall median length of incarceration for the client group was 1.8 years and 1.2 years for the non-client group. Using the Chi-square test of significance, the difference in the length of incarceration between the client and non-client group is statistically significant. This indicates that the two groups differ in the length of incarceration, with the client group having been incarcerated longer prior to parole.

Table 18

Length of Incarceration Comparison of Client and Non-Client Group II

<u>Group</u>	<u>% Less Than One Year</u>	<u>% 1 to 3 Years</u>	<u>% 3 Years &amp; Over</u>	
Client Group II	34.2	29.6	36.3	100 N=240
Non-Client Group II	43.2	35.7	21.2	100 N=241

$\chi^2 = 13.42455$  with 2 degrees of freedom  
Level of statistical significance  $\leq .05$

When the type of parole release is compared, a larger number of the non-client group were not considered eligible for discretionary parole compared to the client group.

Approximately one-fourth (25.4%) of the client group was released on mandatory parole, while the number of non-client group members released on mandatory parole was (35.3%). The difference between the two groups is statistically significant as shown in the following table.

Table 19

Type Of Release Comparison of  
Client and Non-Client Group II

<u>Group</u>	<u>% Discretionary Parole</u>	<u>% MANDATORY PAROLE</u>	
CLIENT GROUP II	74.6	25.4	100 N=240
Non-Client Group II	64.7	35.3	100 N=241

$\chi^2 = 5.06601$  with 1 degree of freedom  
Level of statistical significance  $\leq .05$

The two groups differ in the types of crimes for which they were serving time prior to their parole. The client group had a somewhat larger percentage of members who were incarcerated for crimes against persons, including such crimes as homicide, sexual assault, assault, and robbery (39.2% compared to 30.3% of the non-client group). Approximately forty-seven percent (46.7%) of the client group had been serving time for property offenses as compared to fifty-one percent (51%) of the non-client group. However, the difference in the two groups is not statistically significant and may have occurred through chance.

Table 20 provides information on the recidivism rates of the two groups. Thirty percent (30%) of the client group had been recommitted to a Department of Corrections' institution following release, while a smaller percentage (23.7%) of the non-client group had been recommitted. In addition, thirteen (13) of the client group were listed as fugitives from parole compared to six (6) of the non-client group. Although there is a difference in the actual percentage points with the non-client group having a lower reported recidivism rate, the difference in the two groups is not statistically significant using the Chi-square test of significance.

Table 20  
 Recidivism Comparison of  
 Client and Non-Client Group II

<u>Group</u>	<u>% Success</u>	<u>% Recommitted</u>	<u>% Fugitive</u>	
Client Group II	64.6	30.0	5.4	100 N=240
Non-Client Group II	74.2	23.7	2.5	100 N=241

$\chi^2 = 5.90967$  with 2 degrees of freedom  
 Level of significance  $> .05$

The length of time between parole and recommitment, however, differed for those individuals in the two groups for which a recommitment date was available. The median time between release and recommitment was approximately one (1) year for the client group and approximately nine (9) months for the non-client group. The following table shows the difference in the length of time between release and recommitment for the groups. The difference in time is statistically significant.

Table 21  
 Time Between Release and Recoinmitment  
 Comparison of Client and Non-Client Group II

<u>Group</u>	<u>% Less Than Six Months</u>	<u>% 6 to 12 Months</u>	<u>% Over 1 Year</u>	
Client Group II	6.8	47.5	45.8	100 N=59
Non-Client Group II	22.0	52.0	26.0	100 N=50

$\chi^2 = 7.54909$  with 2 degrees of freedom  
 Level of significance  $\leq .05$

Summary: The findings from the recidivism study of Client Group II and Non-Client Group II do not indicate a lower recidivism rate for Virginia CARES' program participants. The findings are inconclusive in that any difference in the two groups may have occurred through chance. The findings from the study do show how Virginia CARES' post-release clients who were paroled during the July 1, 1983 to June 30, 1984 period differ from a randomly selected group of parolees to the same areas. From this it appears that Virginia CARES served a population of parolees that were more likely to be single, have a lower educational level, and had been incarcerated for a longer period of time prior to their release. If this is coupled with the finding that the Virginia CARES recidivists are staying on parole longer than the non-client group recidivists, this may indicate some potential impact on recidivism rates that may not be evident at this early stage in follow-up.

### Conclusions

The recidivism study is inconclusive in showing that Virginia CARES has an impact on the recidivism rate of participants. It is clear that the program does not have the extremely positive impact on recidivism that CARES predicted while seeking for funds from the General Assembly in 1982. The study completed in 1983 did show that the conviction rates were lower for CARES' participants than for non-client parolees. The current study, focusing on the same group for a longer follow-up period, failed to show a significant difference in recidivism rates when recidivism is defined as a recommitment to a DJC institution.

The issue of recidivism is complex. The concept is a difficult measure on which to judge a program. It may be unrealistic to expect a program such as this to have a significant impact on recidivism. It is clear that recidivism rates should not be the sole criterion on which to judge a program like Virginia CARES. If an impact on recidivism were used to assess most criminal justice programs, few would be found to be effective.

### Recommendations

1. The Department of Criminal Justice Services should:
  - o continue to examine recidivism
  - o develop, in cooperation with Virginia CARES, additional qualitative and quantitative measures of program impact including cost effectiveness.
2. Virginia CARES should deemphasize the importance of recidivism as a measure of program success.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
POSITION/LOCALITY \_\_\_\_\_  
LENGTH OF TENURE \_\_\_\_\_  
INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### PRE-RELEASE PROGRAM STAFF INTERVIEWS

The Department of Criminal Justice Services, is responsible for conducting an evaluation of the Virginia CARES Pre-Release program. Therefore, we would like to ask you some questions regarding the Pre-Release program. The information will be used to assist in program improvement and future funding decisions. Your responses will in no way be identified with you. The interview will last approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. If you have any questions during the interview, please feel free to ask. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

1. How are inmates in the institutions you serve identified for participation in the CARES' Pre-Release program?

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2. Are the clients who attend the CARES' Pre-Release sessions generally capable of gaining from the experience?

- a. YES
- b. NO
- c. UNKNOWN

Why do you think this is so? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What suggestions could you make to improve the process of targeting and referring appropriate clients for Pre-Release training?

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PRE-RELEASE Program Staff Interviews - continued

4. Are the number of total hours for the Pre-Release training appropriate for the topics that need to be covered?

- a. YES  
b. NO

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What suggestions could you make to improve the scheduling of the Pre-Release sessions?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are the facilities where the Pre-Release sessions are held conducive to learning?

- a. YES  
b. NO

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the most significant difficulty you experience in providing Pre-Release training within the institutions you serve?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Targeting and referral of clients  
\_\_\_\_\_ Total training hours available  
\_\_\_\_\_ Scheduling of available hours  
\_\_\_\_\_ Facilities (Available training space)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Institutional staff acceptance  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

PRE-RELEASE Program Staff Interviews - continued

8. Please rank each of the topics covered in the Pre-Release training as to their helpfulness in preparing inmates for their release? (1 = Most Helpful and 6 = Least Helpful)

Life Planning	_____
Social Skills	_____
Family System	_____
Relationship	_____
Job Motivation	_____
Transitioning into	_____
Society	_____
Consumer Education	_____

For the Pre-Release topics which you ranked 5th and 6th, indicate why and what could be done to increase the helpfulness of the topics?

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9. Are there topics that are not covered that need to be covered in the Pre-Release training?

- a. YES  
b. NO

If YES, explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What suggestions could you make to improve the overall quality of Pre-Release training for the clients?

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PRE-RELEASE Program Staff Interviews - continued

11. How often do you have contact with the institutional treatment staff in institutions where you provide Pre-Release training?

- a. Never or almost never
- b. Once every 6 months
- c. Once every 3 months
- d. Once a month
- e. Twice a month
- f. Weekly
- g. Several times a week

12. What is the most frequent purpose in your contact with institutional treatment staff?

- a. To discuss scheduling of sessions
- b. To discuss release plans of specific inmate
- c. To discuss referrals of inmates to Pre-Release training
- d. To discuss special needs of specific inmates
- e. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. How often do you have formal contact with the Transition Specialist serving your area regarding Pre-Release participants who are seeking Post-Release services?

- a. Never or almost never
- b. At least once every 6 months
- c. At least once every 3 months
- d. Once a month
- e. Twice a month
- f. Weekly
- g. Several times a week

14. Do you believe that your duties as a Pre-Release trainer are well defined by the Central CARES staff?

- a. YES
- b. NO
- c. UNKNOWN

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PRE-RELEASE Program Staff Interviews - continued

15. Is there anything else you would like to share with us concerning the CARES Pre-Release training?

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YOUR COMMENTS ARE VERY IMPORTANT IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COMMENTS AND YOUR TIME.

JMH:pb

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Position/Locality \_\_\_\_\_  
Length of Tenure \_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

CARES PRE-RELEASE PROGRAM  
(Criminal Justice)

Virginia CARES, Inc. has contracted to provide Pre-Release Training, three times each year in your institution. The training is intended to prepare potential parolees for re-entry into the community. The inmates participate in a series of experiential learning exercises which focus on self-esteem, decision making, values clarification, job motivation, transitioning into society and consumer education. The pre-release staff and the institutional treatment staff work together to identify those inmates who will most likely make discretionary or mandatory parole and to negotiate scheduling and workshop space.

My agency, the Department of Criminal Justice Services is responsible for conducting an evaluation of the Pre-Release program. You have been chosen to respond to some questions regarding the pre-release program in your institution. The information will be used for program improvement and future funding decisions. Your responses will in no way be identified with you. The interview will last approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. If you have any questions during the interview please feel free to ask. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

1. Have you observed (sat in on) Virginia CARES' Pre-Release Training?

1. Yes
2. No

2. How often have you observed, among your clients who have participated in the pre-release training, improved behavior, attitudes, and/or self-esteem?

1. never or hardly ever
2. sometimes
3. fairly often
4. very often or always
5. unknown

3. How often have you observed, among your clients who have participated in the pre-release training, an improvement in pre-release planning skills or an interest in pre-release planning?

1. never or hardly ever
2. sometimes
3. fairly often
4. very often or always
5. unknown

4. Has CARES' Pre-Release Training made your job easier?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Has CARES' Pre-Release Training made your job more difficult?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Despite any changes (positive or negative) that you observe in Pre-Release Training participants while they remain in the institution, do you believe this training will benefit them when released?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why do you believe this is so? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Are there topics that are not covered that need to be covered in the pre-release training?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. How are inmates at your institution identified for participation in the CARES' Pre-Release Program?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Are the clients who attend CARES' Pre-Release session generally capable of gaining from the experience?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why do you think this is so? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What suggestions could you make to improve the process of targeting and referring appropriate clients for pre-release training?

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11. Are there an adequate number of pre-release classes offered so that clients in need of the services are able to attend?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why to you think this? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Are the sessions scheduled at times that are most conducive to clients attending?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why do you think this? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Are the number of total hours for the pre-release training appropriate for the topics that need to be covered?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Are the number of hours devoted to pre-release session realistic given your institution's schedule?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. What suggestions could you make to improve the scheduling of the pre-release sessions?

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16. Are the facilities where the pre-release sessions held conducive to learning?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What suggestions could you make to improve the overall quality of pre-release training for the clients?

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18. Was pre-release training provided in your institution prior to the CARES' program?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

If yes, by whom and what was the length of the training? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. Is pre-release training currently provided in your institution by any other individual or group other than CARES?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. unknown

If yes, by whom and what is the length of the training? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Is there anything else you would like to share with us concerning the CARES' Pre-Release Training?

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Your comments are very important in the evaluation process. Thank you very much for your comments and your time.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 POSITION/LOCALITY \_\_\_\_\_  
 LENGTH OF TENURE \_\_\_\_\_  
 INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE \_\_\_\_\_

POST-RELEASE PROGRAM STAFF INTERVIEWS

The Department of Criminal Justice Services is responsible for conducting an evaluation of the Post-Release program. Therefore we would like to ask you some questions regarding the Post-Release program in your community. The information will be used to assist us in program improvement and future funding decisions. Your responses will in no way be identified with you. The interview will last approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. If you have any questions during the interview, please feel free to ask. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

1. Please rank the two most frequent sources of referrals to Virginia CARES Post-Release services?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Probation and parole
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pre-Release participant referral
- \_\_\_\_\_ Self-referral
- \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by friends or other clients
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social service agencies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Institutional counselors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Overall, for each of the sources of referrals to CARES, how appropriate do you think the referrals are?

	<u>Almost Always Appropriate</u>	<u>Generally Appropriate</u>	<u>Generally Inappropriate</u>
Probation and Parole	_____	_____	_____
Pre-Release participant referral	_____	_____	_____
Self Referral	_____	_____	_____
Referred by friends or other clients	_____	_____	_____
Social service agencies	_____	_____	_____
Institutional counselors	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____

3. Once an individual has been referred to you for Post-Release services, do you routinely provide any feedback to the referring agency?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES  
\_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, briefly describe \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please rank CARES Post-Release services as to their value to the client. (1 = Most Valuable; 8 = Least Valuable)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Employment placement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Career counseling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Temporary housing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency support services (food, clothing, transportation)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Referral to social service providers (medical, legal aid, welfare, food stamps, AFDC, rehabilitative services, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Referral to substance abuse counseling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer advocates
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family guidance and counseling

For the Post-Release services which you ranked 7th and 8th, indicate why and what could be done to improve the value of the services?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there other services that you feel are important to provide that are currently not being provided by CARES or any other agency in your area?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES  
\_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, specify \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. For each of the services that you have referred CARES clients, do you feel that the services were very helpful, somewhat helpful or not helpful?

	<u>Very Helpful</u>	<u>Somewhat Helpful</u>	<u>Not Helpful</u>
Employment Assistance (VEC)	_____	_____	_____
Social Services (DSS)	_____	_____	_____
Counseling (General)	_____	_____	_____
Drug and Alcohol Counseling	_____	_____	_____
Legal Aid	_____	_____	_____
Housing Assistance	_____	_____	_____
Medical Assistance	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____

7. Once you have referred a CARES client to another agency for services, is there any follow up?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, briefly describe process \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you have a current community service directory that you either developed or which was already available in your community?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES, CARES developed  
 \_\_\_\_\_ YES, already available (Provide copy)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ NO

9. Does Virginia CARES provide services which are not available from other agencies in your locality?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ NO

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

10. From your experiences, what is the most significant difference between your clients who have completed the CARES Pre-Release program and the clients who have not completed Pre-Release training?

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11. Do you believe that your duties as a Transition Specialist are well defined by the central CARES staff?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES  
\_\_\_\_\_ NO

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What do you feel is the major impact of the CARES program in your community? and why?

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13. What suggestions could you make to improve the overall quality of CARES Post-Release services in your area?

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14. Is there anything else you would like to share with us concerning the CARES Post-Release services in your area?

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YOUR COMMENTS ARE VERY IMPORTANT IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COMMENTS AND YOUR TIME.

JMH:pb  
March 22, 1985

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
POSITION/LOCALITY \_\_\_\_\_  
LENGTH OF TENURE \_\_\_\_\_  
INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

CARES POST-RELEASE PROGRAM INTERVIEWS  
(CRIMINAL JUSTICE)

Virginia CARES, Inc. has contracted to provide post-release supportive services to offenders released from prison to your community. These services are to include: employment placement, career counseling, temporary housing, emergency support services (food, clothing, transportation), referral to social service providers (medical, legal aid, welfare, food stamps, AFDC, rehabilitative services, etc.), referral to substance abuse counseling, volunteer advocates, and family guidance and counseling.

My agency, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, is responsible for conducting an evaluation of the Post-Release program. You have been chosen to respond to some questions regarding the Post-Release program in your community. The information will be used to assist us in program improvement and future funding decisions. Your responses will in no way be identified with you. The interview will last approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. If you have any questions during the interview, please feel free to ask. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

1. Has the Virginia CARES Transition Specialist(s) in your area contacted you or anyone in your agency?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unknown

If YES, approximately when were you first contacted? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you know the name(s) of the Transition Specialist(s) in your area?

1. Yes
2. No

3. Do you know where the CARES office is located?

1. Yes
2. No

CARES Post-Release Program Interviews

4. Has the Transition Specialist(s) explained the CARES Post-Release program to you?

1. Yes
2. No

If YES, did the explanation provide you with a satisfactory understanding of the program?

1. Yes
2. No

If NO, have you gained an adequate understanding from another source?

1. Yes
2. No

5. Have you ever met with the Transition Specialist(s) face to face to exchange information about your working relationship?

1. Yes
2. No

If YES, explain under what circumstances this occurred.

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6. On the average how often do you and the Transition Specialist(s) have contact?

1. Never or almost never
2. Once every six months
3. Once every three months
4. Once a month
5. Twice a month
6. Weekly
7. Several times a week

7. Approximately how many individuals have you referred to CARES Post-Release program?

1. None
2. Less than 10
3. 11 through 25
4. 26 through 50
5. 51 through 100
6. More than 100

*avg # per ...*

CARES Post-Release Program Interviews - continued

8. For which of CARES services have you referred individuals? (Check all that apply).

- Employment placement
- Career counseling
- Temporary housing
- Emergency support services (food, clothing, transportation)
- Referral to social service providers (medical, legal aid, welfare, food stamps, AFDC, rehabilitative services, etc.)
- Referral to substance abuse counseling
- Volunteer advocates
- Family guidance and counseling

9. For each of the services for which you have referred individuals, do you feel that they were very helpful, somewhat helpful, not helpful at all?

	<u>Very Helpful</u>	<u>Somewhat Helpful</u>	<u>Not Helpful</u>
Employment placement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temporary housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency support services (food, clothing, transportation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referral to social service providers (medical, legal aid, welfare, food stamps, AFDC, rehabilitative services, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referral to substance abuse counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer advocates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family guidance and counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Once you have referred a client to the CARES Post-Release program, is there any follow-up contact with CARES?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Have not made referrals

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

CARES Post-Release Program Interviews - continued

11. Are there any services that the CARES program does not provide that you feel would be helpful?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Unknown

If YES, list: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Of all the services CARES provides, please rank the three most important services:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Employment placement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Career counseling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Temporary housing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency support services (food, clothing, transportation)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Referral to social service providers (medical, legal aid, welfare, food stamps, AFDC, rehabilitative services, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Referral to substance abuse counseling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer advocates
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family guidance and counseling

13. Do you feel that CARES provides any special services that are not readily available from any other agency in your community?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you feel that the CARES Transition Specialist is aware of and utilizes most of the existing community resources for clients in your area?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CARES Post-Release Program Interviews - continued

15. Prior to the existence of CARES, were adequate services for the newly released offender available in your community?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. What do you feel is the overall effectiveness of the CARES program in your community?

1. Very effective
2. Somewhat effective
3. Not very effective
4. Not at all effective
5. Unknown

Why do you believe this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. What suggestions could you make to improve the overall quality of CARES Post-Release services for clients in your area?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Is there anything else you would like to share with us concerning the CARES Post-Release program?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

YOUR COMMENTS ARE VERY IMPORTANT IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS. - THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COMMENTS AND YOUR TIME.

A P P E N D I X    B

Virginia CARES' Response  
to the  
Department of Criminal Justice Services'  
Evaluation

Virginia CARES Response  
to the  
Department of Criminal Justice Services  
Evaluation for FY 1984 - 1986

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It is difficult, at best, to concisely respond to a lengthy evaluation which has taken months to assemble. It is hoped this response will be included with the executive summary, as well as the evaluation, as two individual responses have not been prepared.

The evaluation contained four parts: Introduction, Pre-Release Services, Post Release Services, and Recidivism Impact. This response will be directed toward the latter three, as the Introduction is accepted as accurate.

The reader should understand that, if a response is not given to a particular point, the author accepts that point as valid.

#### Pre-Release Services

Much discussion is given to the appropriate targeting of participants whose release is eminent and who will return to an area of PAPIS Post Release service. It is implied that this targeting is less than adequate. It is suggested that the "service provision has simply outpaced the immediate need for and the availability of post-release service."

Virginia CARES believes this to have some effect, as it remains underfunded. However, there is no mention of the affect that the increased security monitoring at all institutions as a result of the Mecklinberg escapes in May of 1984 has had. Thus, institutional counselors screened out those who may have been perceived as a greater security risk, even though their release was eminent and/or they were to return to a PAPIS service area.

The presence of institutional counselors and/or guards in the workshop at some of the institutions, because of heightened security, has turned away some of those inmates who were appropriate participants. Data taken from the workshop and used to threaten the inmate with institutional charges is certainly a deterrent to participation.

Many requests have been made to the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Department of Corrections to arrange meetings to alleviate the scheduling and client targeting problems. However, no meetings have occurred.

The institutional counselors suggest that "better preparation and training of new CARES staff should occur." However, Virginia CARES is not allowed to use monies funded by DCJS for staff training. Virginia CARES supports the recommendation and further suggests that staff training would be an appropriate line item in the 86-87 fiscal year budget.

Virginia CARES has long contended that, as an outside private agency, we gain more support and trust with the participant, thus rendering us more effective in providing supportive services. Further, we are community based and network with other support systems in the community from which the participant can draw. I feel this important aspect of the program deserves merit, since it is beyond what can be provided in any other entity including the Rehabilitative School Authority.

Virginia CARES supports the recommendation that we should train correctional personnel regarding our services and further recommends that monies should be allotted for this purpose.

Finally, the evaluation recommends that "employment expectations and environment" should be addressed in the curriculum and that "outside or private sector expertise in actual classroom presentation" should be addressed. Virginia CARES maintains that these two recommendations are and have been incorporated into the curriculum and that the author of this segment of the evaluation based the recommendation on erroneous information and further, that the author should attend a pre-release workshop to discuss the facts.

#### Post Release Services

While much discussion is given to Virginia CARES' achievements in providing post release services, i.e. employment placement, little credit is given to Virginia CARES.

For example, the evaluation discusses a suggestion of the 82-84 fiscal year evaluation, that is "recommended that CARES place more emphasis on the development of specialized services" (employment). The Virginia CARES program policy makers, agreeing with the concept of the recommendation, elevated its attention on employment services, with the knowledge that other services would be less developed. The fact that employment placement increased from 38.4% in fiscal year 83-84 to 50.6% in fiscal year 84-85 is indicative of the success of the endeavor.

However, the evaluation of FY 84-86 states "this finding must be considered in light of improvements in the general economy (decreased unemployment) and the difficulty of determining whether the clients, Virginia CARES, the parole officers, or other persons or agencies had the greatest impact on employment. These considerations make it difficult to give Virginia CARES' program total credit for the offender employment results noted."

It is difficult to understand why the author of this part of the evaluation is reluctant to give Virginia CARES the credit for its success. Even more peculiar is the Evaluation's qualification of the significance of post release services. The Report states:

"while . . . the post release capability increased over sixty percent (62.5%), the only significant post release services categories showing an increase of more than fifty percent were housing assistance (68.2%), referrals to other providers (154.5%), entered employment (72.5%), volunteer hours by clients (100%), and family members served (165%)."

Focus on these services, particularly employment, was emphasized by the former evaluation. The Virginia CARES' compliance with this recommendation and achievements are slighted by this one.

At points, one wonders about the author's full understanding of the Virginia CARES program. At one point, discussion suggests that perhaps we provided "better services (counseling) to a more particularly targeted needs group, thus resulting in a very positive increase in employment." Indeed, this is not the case. Counseling has little, if anything, to do with employment placement. The availability of employment opportunities does. Spending specialized time with employers in the community urging them to hire felons has everything to do with it.

The evaluation indicates weaknesses in the Virginia CARES follow-up system. We concur. A Law Enforcement Assistance Administration study, of a few years ago, shows that adequate and appropriate follow-up cost \$280 per client. We recommend full funding of Virginia CARES to rectify this problem.

Finally, the recommendations made for this evaluation for Post Release Services merit some discussion. It is stated that Virginia

CARES should "increase the frequency of direct contact with the clients' supervising Probation and Parole officers; and develop written treatment plans for long term clients.

Virginia CARES has developed significant ties to the Probation and Parole Department's across the state. This is reflected by the fact that Probation and Parole officers are the single greatest referral source to Virginia CARES. However, Virginia CARES staff are not to be confused with "Parole Aids". Virginia CARES provides an important service of brokered opportunities and encouragement in a voluntary relationship of openness and trust unviolated by extended police powers. That relationship is violated when Virginia CARES is or even perceived to be a part of the Corrections System. Finally, since Virginia CARES is not a mental health program and prisoners, though usually poor and disadvantaged, are not necessarily sick, the idea that Virginia CARES participate in the development of treatment plans is curious at best. At worst, it is a detraction from Virginia CARES' major purposes -- To provide necessary opportunities and community support to the prisoner so he will have the greatest chance of a crime free life.

The second recommendation states that "Virginia CARES and Probation and Parole should develop a system and scheduling of regular two-way reporting on client status and progress . . ." Virginia CARES has an adequate and appropriate reporting system which has been deemed as such by Probation and Parole and by the Department of Criminal Justice Services in 1982. We have no plans to change this.

Lastly, the program intends to divide participants into two categories: active and inactive, thereby providing an alternative to the recommendation "to develop standard procedures for case closure."

We further intend to examine the recommendation that we "develop procedures which will differentiate the number and intensity of services provided to clients."

Recidivism Impact

While this evaluation made a striving attempt to define recidivism and then examine recidivist statistics based on that definition the results only indicate the near impossibility of that worthy goal.

Two participant groups, the first served during FY 1982 and the second served during FY 1984, and two non-participant groups were compared for analysis.

The first participant and non-participant groups, more similar in characteristics than different, held the recidivism differences, even though the measures of recidivism differed from the first report to the second.

1982 - 1984 Evaluation

Recidivism Rates By Type and Group

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	<u>Client Group I</u> <u>Virginia CARES</u>	<u>Non-Client Group I</u> <u>Comparison Group</u>
Any New Arrest	29.9%	38.8%
New Felony Arrest	20.3%	27.9%
Any New Conviction	11.9%	25.9%
New Felony Conviction	3.4%	11.9%
Currently Confined	6.2%	12.9%

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1884 - 1986 Evaluation

Recidivism By Group

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	<u>Success</u>	<u>Recommitted</u>	<u>Fugitive</u>
Client Group I	69.0%	28.3%	2.7%
Non-Client Group I	63.6%	35.3%	1.1%

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The second participant group and non-participant group, more different than similar, indicated that Virginia CARES had no affect on recidivism and, indeed, had a higher recidivism rate than the comparison group.

We believe the results occurred for two reasons. First, we have had to give priority to referrals from the Probation and Parole Officers, at the request of the Department of Criminal Justice Services. As a result, we have been getting the "worst of the worst" parolees, only those that the Probation and Parole Officers cannot or will not work with.

Second, as further testimony to the above mentioned argument, the two groups compared are dissimilar to the point that questions must be raised. The participant group are significantly more single than married, while the non-participant group are more apt to have family support. The Virginia CARES' group were less educated than the non-participant group and were incarcerated for a longer period of time than the non-participant group.

The following chart shows the percentage differences between the first and second comparison groups.

+ More than Non-Participan  
Group  
- Less than Non-Participan  
Group

	Client Group I	Non-Client Group I		Client Group II	Non-Client Group II	
<b>RACE:</b>						
Black	72.3%	58.7%	+13.6	69.6%	62.2%	+7
White	27.2%	40.8%	-13.6	29.6%	37.8%	-8
Other	.5%	.5%		.8%	.0%	
<b>SEX:</b>						
Male	94%	92.4%	+ 1.6	93.3%	91.7%	+1
Female	6%	7.6%	- 1.6	6.7%	8.3%	-1
<b>MARRIAGE:</b>						
Single	70.7%	75%	- 4.3	84.2%	67.6%	+16
Married				9.6%	13.7%	- 4
Unspecified				6.3%	18.7%	-12
<b>EDUCATION:</b>						
8th Education	31%	33.2%	- 2.2	29.6%	23.2%	+6
Some High School	51.6%	44%	+ 7.6	50.4%	47.3%	+3
Beyond High School				20%	29.5%	-9
<b>CRIMINAL RECORD:</b>						
Incarcerated 12 mos. or less	31.5%	30.4%	+ 1.1	34.2%	43.2%	-9
Incarcerated over 3 years	37.5%	31.0%	+ 6.5	36.3%	21.2%	+15
<b>PAROLE:</b>						
Disc. Parole				74.6%	64.7%	+9.9
Mandatory Parole	27.7%	36.4%	- 8.7	25.4%	35.3%	-9.9
<b>OFFENSES:</b>						
Offense Against Per- sons	40.8%	29.9%	+10.9	39.2%	30.3%	+8.9
Off. Against Property	49.5%	52.2%	2.7	46.7%	51.0%	-4.3
Other Crimes	9.7%	17.9%	- 8.2			

The questions that must be raised are:

1. What affect does race, education, length of incarceration, family status, and type of crime have on recommitment statistics?
2. What is the affect of the results if, in fact, the two comparison groups' characteristics differ?
3. Can a comparison group be found with very similar characteristics, if in fact, we continue to get the hardcore parolee referral?
4. What role do other characteristics, not examined in this study, play in an analysis of recidivism? For example, I.Q.; family background; physical abuse; and work history.
5. Can we be held responsible for recidivism, if we continue to serve those most likely to be recommitment?

#### Conclusion

Based on the discussions, in this response, Virginia CARES recommends the following:

1. To fully fund the Virginia CARES program, so that attention can be given to staff training, corrections personnel training, support programs, and other priorities of this evaluation.
2. To accept the established relationship between Virginia CARES and the Department of Corrections as adequate and appropriate for the mutual goals and objectives of the two entities.
3. To give the authority to the Department of Criminal Justice Services to broker relationships between Virginia CARES and the Department of Corrections in order to correct scheduling problems and others that may arise.
4. To give Virginia CARES credit where credit is due.
5. To ask the Department of Criminal Justice Services to visit an institution and attend an entire Virginia CARES Pre-Release Program in session.
6. Do develop an assessment of the cost effectiveness of Virginia CARES.

7. To further study recidivism, what it means, and how it may or may not be used in conjunction with evaluating Virginia CARES.