

State of New Jersey, Department of Corrections  
William H. Fauver, Commissioner



ANNUAL REPORT

COUNTY WORK RELEASE PROGRAMS

CALENDAR YEARS 1977 AND 1978

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## INTRODUCTION

This report is the sixth summary of data pertaining to the County Work Release Program in the State of New Jersey. The report was prepared by Mr. James A. Finn, Administrator, County Work Release Programs, and Mr. Joseph W. Hartmann, Operations Analyst of the Bureau staff. It provides pertinent information about the programs which were operating in 20 counties on December 31, 1978. This report is based on data secured through the valuable cooperation of sheriffs, jail administrators, probation officials, and rehabilitation directors. Reports were compiled for all inmates who served sentences on work release to successful or unsuccessful completion during calendar year 1977 and 1978.

### Definition of County Work Release

County Work Release is a program which permits selected offenders committed by the municipal or county court to a county correctional facility to be in the community on order of the court during specified periods to engage in remunerative employment, to attend vocational training, and, in the case of female offenders, to attend to family needs.

### Objectives

Work Release is a multi-purpose program: (1) It provides for full time normal employment or vocational training in the community; (2) it permits the developing or strengthening of good work habits and skills, thus lessening the job-finding problem when discharged; (3) it affords inmates opportunities to continue or strengthen constructive ties with family, friends, and the free community; (4) it permits pre-release preparation and an opportunity to test readiness for release to the community; (5) it permits deduction from inmate earnings to help defray the cost of incarceration, to support dependents, and to reduce debts and pay court fines; (6) it enables the accumulation of savings to help meet financial needs or burdens after release from confinement; and (7) it provides opportunity to meet family needs by inmates confined in the county correctional facilities.

### Role of the Department of Corrections

Chapter 372, Public Laws of 1968, as amended by Chapter 243, Public Laws of 1969, provides that the State Department of Institutions and Agencies shall prepare and enforce regulations for the operation of this act in accordance with the provisions thereof. The new State Department of Corrections, therefore, makes staff available for maintaining general supervision over work release operations.

The following services are provided for county governments by the Bureau of County Services:

1. County officials are afforded consultation in determining the feasibility of establishing a work release program.

2. Technical assistance is made available to help county officials to begin operating their programs.
3. Consultation is provided upon request to help resolve operational problems as they develop.
4. Recommendations are offered periodically in order to enhance program effectiveness.
5. Experiences of various counties with well operated programs are shared with those counties interested in beginning or improving operations.
6. Quarterly reports are collected and audits are conducted so that records are kept on how many inmates are participating, where their earnings are allocated, and how operational procedures are being improved.

Counties with Work Release Authorization as of December 31, 1977

<u>County</u>	<u>Dated Adopted</u>	<u>County Work Release Administrator</u>
Essex	3/13/69	Frank D. Micelli, Administrator
Bergen	4/16/69	Sheriff Joseph F. Job
Burlington	5/28/69	Glenn Miller, Administrator
Middlesex	7/3/69	Arthur C. Richardson, Coordinator Rehabilitation Services
Morris	8/13/69	Sheriff John M. Fox
Passaic	10/1/69	Sheriff Edwin J. Englehardt
Salem	10/15/69	Wilbur E. Brown, Chief Probation Officer
Somerset	4/21/70	Frank Kolodieski, Administrator
Mercer	7/21/70	Albert W. Van Lieu, Administrator
Gloucester	8/21/70	Sheriff George G. Small
Warren	10/7/70	Warden Robert Sharr
Atlantic	5/10/70	Ralph S. Petti, Administrator
Hudson	7/27/72	Warden James J. McCaffery
Union	7/27/72	Sheriff Ralph Froehlich
Hunterdon	8/15/72	Warden Harold Atkinson
Cape May	8/22/72	Sheriff Beech N. Fox
Ocean	3/21/73	Sheriff James N. Rutter
Cumberland	5/10/73	Joseph L. Hackett, Chief Probation Officer
Camden	3/20/73	Daniel Gleeson, Acting Administrator
Monmouth	12/3/74	Sheriff Paul Kiernan

The above table indicate the counties wherein the Board of Chosen Freeholders adopted the enabling resolutions, the dates they were adopted, and the person designated as the County Work Release Administrator.

The county work release program began in the State in Fiscal Year 1969 with 3 counties, expanded to 8 counties in Fiscal 1970, 11 counties in Fiscal Year 1971, and 12 counties in Fiscal 1972. The 1973 report reflected 18 counties with operational work release programs. During calendar 1974, the Camden County Work Release Program began operating, providing separate housing for work releasees, while the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders adopted an enabling resolution on 12/3/74. The remaining county, Sussex, has not adopted an enabling resolution.

#### Number of Inmates Assigned to the Program

This data is gleaned from the Quarterly Reports submitted by the 20 participating counties and is based on the number of inmates in the program during each quarter.

During the first three years of operation, there were 348 inmates given the opportunity to work in the community while serving their sentences. By the fourth year, the program had expanded so that in fiscal year 1972 there were 350 inmates participating. Calendar year 1974 reports indicated a continued and significant increase with 1,173 inmates given the opportunity to enter the program. During calendar year 1975, 979 inmates participated in the program, and calendar year 1976 had 962 inmates participating in the program.

During calendar year 1978, it was reported that 1,073 inmates participated in the program against 927 inmate participates in 1977. Participants engaged in work release were employed an average of 48 days during 1978 against 44 days in 1977.

Although some counties reported that Pre-Trial Intervention (P.T.I.) and an increase in weekend commitments reduced the number of eligible work release candidates, it appears that these relatively new court procedures have not had a significant impact, at least one which would adversely affect the work release program. However, changes in sentencing procedures with regard to drunk driver offenses have significantly reduced the number of eligible candidates in this category.

Among the 1,073 inmates engaged in work release during 1978, 750 inmates successfully completed the program as against 681 during 1977. There were 299 inmates removed from the program during 1978 compared against 208 during 1977. These inmates were removed from the work release program for the following reasons: Job termination, 5 in 1978 against 12 in 1977; inmate requests, 8 in 1978 against 3 in 1977; infractions, 145 in 1978 against 158 in 1977; escapes, 11 in 1978 against 4 in 1977; employer's request, 27 in 1978 against 8 in 1977; for various other reasons, 103 in 1978 against 23 in 1977. There were 774 inmates remaining in the program at the end of calendar year 1978 as against 38 remaining at the end of 1977.

The average inmate worked 88 days during 1978 as against 70 days during 1977. Reportedly, more inmates were able to maintain their former positions after being sentenced due to rapid processing of their work release applications. However, some counties still encounter difficulty in this area and there appears to be a definite need for improved coordination between the Work Release Administrators and Coordinators, the Court, the Prosecutor, the Probation Department, and other involved parties in order to expedite qualified candidates entry into work release.

#### Diminution of Term

The Statutes governing County Work Release Programs provide that a work releasee may be granted a diminution or not more than 1/4 of his term if his conduct, diligence, and general attitude merit such diminution. During the calendar year 1978 there was a reduction of sentences by 12,782 days as against 10,087 days during calendar year 1977. This reduction was based on one day for every four day period actually in work.

#### Annual Total Earnings and Disbursements (1977 and 1978)

Inmates earned a total of \$1,176,435 during 1978 as against \$894,195 in 1977. They contributed 51,126 man days of work during 1978 as against 40,346 man days during 1977.

A portion of these earnings, which amounted to \$219,840 in 1978 and \$222,284 in 1977 was made available to inmates upon their release to assist them in dealing with the financial demands encountered upon re-entry into society.

Inmates contributed \$447,855 in 1978 as against \$299,371 in 1977 toward the support of dependents for whom they are responsible. The support of these individuals through the work release program relieves a community of an appreciable public assistance burden.

Also, the work releasees contributed \$168,189 in 1978 as against \$138,051 in 1977 toward board to reduce the cost of their incarceration and they contributed \$105,189 in 1978 as against \$80,314 in 1977 toward payment of financial obligations.

To assist the inmate in getting started on a job, cash advances are sometimes required. A total of \$14,562 in 1978 as against \$22,739 in 1977 of earnings went toward repayment of cash loans for such items as work clothes, travel clothes, or work tools. Also to assist inmates, another \$139,384 in 1978 as against \$81,783 in 1977 was distributed from their earnings to pay for transportation and other daily personal expenses (e.g., cigarettes and lunches). Another \$28,345 in 1978 as against \$17,912 in 1977 went toward the payment of court costs and fines. According to the quarterly reports, there was a \$219,840 balance remaining in inmate accounts at the end of calendar year 1978 as against \$31,745 in 1977.

## Vocational and Family Care Release

Although the statute provides for these release opportunities, the experience to date remains minimal. The small number of inmates who have participated is indicative of considerable underutilization. In calendar year 1978 there were 19 inmates who participated in vocational release, contributing 749 man days as against 32 inmates who contributed 1,123 man days in 1977.

Among the reasons given for the underutilization of vocational release, as related by many administrators, are the following: funding, transportation, difficulty in adapting to regular semester schedules, lack of union cooperation with regard to apprenticeship and on-the-job training, and lack of maintenance income from vocational trainees.

However, it should be noted that some counties are formulating plans to expand vocational training.

In Calendar year 1978 there were 19 female inmates who participated in family care release, contributing 796 man days as against 6 female inmates who contributed 435 man days in 1977.

This program should also be given additional consideration, not only for the rehabilitative value, but also because of the positive aspects in relation to efforts made to keep intact, where possible, the family unit.

## Issues and Problems Encountered

County Work Release Administrators reported several counties continue to increase the number of work release placements of those inmates sentenced for illegal possession and use of drugs and illegal selling of gambling services. Reportedly, work release consideration is given to the type of person and his willingness to cooperate, rather than primarily focusing upon the type of offense. Among the steps taken to effectively deal with the problems presented by these types of offenders are: tight contraband control, careful review of employment opportunities, drug test, and special counselling.

The Administrators report that their experience to date, with few exceptions, remains satisfactory.

## County Furlough Programs

A furlough program enables the authorization of absence from the institution for a specified period of time, when the inmate is not under escort by an officer. Unlike the State Work Release Statute, the County Work Release Statute has no provisions for a furlough program. Many county officials involved in operating the work release programs continue to express interest in having furloughs added to their programs.

It has been suggested by several work release officials that the purposes for which furloughs may be granted could be modeled after the State program. Selected inmates, with the consent of the court from which the inmate was committed, would then be permitted to receive furloughs to visit a designated place or places for a stipulated period for specified reasons consistent with the public interest, including visits to a dying relative, attendance at the funeral of a relative, obtaining medical services not otherwise available, contacting prospective employers, or for any other compelling reasons.

### Satellite Units

Sheriffs, Freeholders, and other county officials in several counties continue to give attention to the establishment of minimum security facilities either apart from or adjoining the main jail to house work releasees. Counties that have established such units are Bergen, Gloucester, Passaic, Camden, Union, and Burlington.

Other counties with work release programs contemplating alternative housing for work releasees are Essex, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Ocean, and Monmouth.

Among the reasons given for utilizing this type of facility are the following: (1) The problems that can arise where physical facilities do not permit separation from inmates not in the program; (2) effectiveness of separate facility in alleviating overcrowding in the main jail; and (3) the positive experience with work release since the implementation of separate facilities.

The accessibility of adequate transportation for inmates to place of employment has been given increasing consideration in the establishment of work release units in any particular location. It appears that this is a significant factor to consider since some work release officials have reported difficulty in securing transportation for inmates.

### Classification

The use of classification procedures continues to receive support of several counties. Professional staff have been employed to provide diagnostic services to aid the County Work Release Administration in preparing data to be made available to the court when a work release application is considered. This practice provides the court with the basic information needed for deciding which inmates are to be placed in the work release program.

## After-Care Services

Post-incarceration counselling is being employed and has been expanded on a compulsory or non-compulsory basis in some counties. In the former, an inmate is given a split-sentence by the court wherein he is required to report to a probation officer after period of incarceration. In the latter, an inmate may decide to voluntarily visit a counsellor employed by the county. These services are offered for the benefit of not only work release but all released inmates requesting them.

The State Law Enforcement Planning Agency (SLEPA) and Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) funding has helped implement and expand classification, after-care, and other services by the following counties: Essex, Union, Gloucester, Middlesex, Atlantic, Hudson, Mercer, and Ocean.

## Annual Meeting

The interest in having an annual meeting to include all those involved in work release and related programs, such as: County Work Release Coordinators, Judges, Attorneys, Probation and Parole Officials, Sheriffs, Employers, and Community Services, continues to be expressed by the majority of those involved in administering the program. The Department is giving serious consideration to planning and coordinating such a meeting.

Such meetings would, in the opinion of those involved in the program, help alleviate some present difficulties encountered, including: (1) transfer of an inmate from one county to another on work release; (2) improve the total program through interaction and discussion; (3) provide an avenue and climate of mutual understanding and cooperation; (4) help in bringing about uniformity in certain areas of work release which appear desirable; (5) bring forth problems and solutions which otherwise would probably remain unresolved; (6) provide a format in which legal and other matters could be explored in depth; and (7) provide an opportunity for the sharing of experiences of various counties.

## Summary

By the end of calendar year 1978, there were 20 counties with enabling resolutions adopted, whereby the work release programs have been established.

In the past year 1,073 inmates as against 927 during 1977 were given the opportunity to work in the community while serving their sentences. The majority of them successfully completed the program. A small percentage of inmates had to be removed for violating the rules, failing to return to the institution, employer request, inmate request, infractions, job termination, or other reasons.

Participants worked an average of 48 days during 1978 as against 44 days in 1977. They earned 12,782 days reduction in their sentences as against 10,087 during 1977.

From total earnings of \$1,176,435 in 1978 as against \$894,195 in 1977, work releasees made substantial contributions toward reducing the cost of their incarceration; toward supporting their dependents; and toward paying court costs, fines, and personal debts.

Operational problems and issues were encountered in a few county work release programs, but these have been resolved following consultation with Department staff.

Improvements and modifications to the county work release program continue to receive attention at the county level to enhance the benefits that may be derived from the program. These include furlough programs, use of satellite units, classification procedures, and after-care services.

From the data accumulated during the past years, a positive program experience is indicated and this has led to increased interest in utilizing this alternative to incarceration.

Although calendar year 1978 was one characterized by a lack of employment opportunities, it should be noted that the earnings were the highest reported since the inception of the program. Earnings were \$5,626 higher than earnings reflected during calendar year 1974 (\$1,170,809) the second highest period, although slightly less inmates (1,073 vs. 1,173) were engaged in the program. Thus, those involved in implementing this program continue to deserve our congratulations for their efforts in overcoming many difficulties and also for their contributions toward improvement and expansion of the program.

**END**