PARTNERSHIPS For Public Safety

By Cheryl Crawford and Vincent Talucci

In 1999, more than 500,000 individuals were released from prison, a number nearly equal to the population of Washington, D.C., and greater than that of Wyoming. Many will return to urban areas — and disproportionately to certain neighborhoods. Too often, released offenders return to communities that are ill-equipped to offer them support to help change their behavior. Local law enforcement agencies often cannot track offenders in the community adequately enough to ensure proper risk management and protection for victims. Corrections officials also may not have sufficient resources or procedures in place to monitor offenders upon release, for discharge planning to determine offender support needs, to gauge the resources available in the community or to match available resources to identified needs.

The good news is that there are a growing number of jurisdictions in which corrections and law enforcement agencies have formed partnerships that are mutually beneficial and improve public safety. Two types of partnerships are frequently forged between police and corrections: enhanced supervision and fugitive apprehension programs. Both provide a foundation for the reintegration of offenders, upon release from prison, into the community as productive citizens. The examples cited here come from a 1999 National Institute of Justice (NIC) report titled *Police-Corrections Partnerships*, by Dale Parent and Brad Snyder of Abt Associates Inc.

Enhanced Supervision Partnerships

Enhanced supervision involves police and correctional officers performing joint supervision of selected offenders who are on probation or parole. Police and correctional officers also collaborate in support functions, such as information-sharing and training. Offenders usually are selected for joint supervision because they are deemed high risk or are believed to be criminally active. Most enhanced supervision partnerships try to reduce crime by deterring offenders from committing new crimes or technical violations and by improving offenders' access to needed services.

Neighborhood Probation In Maricopa County

The Maricopa County, Ariz., Adult Probation Department operates neighborhood-based probation services in the Phoenix area. Each service is a partnership between the probation department, the Phoenix Police Department and community organizations in various neighborhoods. In 1996, the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department established its first neighborhood probation project in the Coronado district of Phoenix. Two other neighborhood probation projects soon followed. Neighborhood probation projects have two goals: to reduce recidivism and to expand the role of probation to include problem-solving in the community.

Unlike intensive supervision programs, which define their target populations by offense, neighborhood probation partnerships define their target populations by existing neighborhood boundaries. For example, the Garfield neighborhood probation office targets all probationers living in the Garfield neighborhood of central Phoenix, an area a little more than two miles in diameter. Targeting established neighborhoods affords the partnerships easier access to community boards and churches.

Although each of the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department's three neighborhood probation partnerships adjusts its activities to fit the needs of its particular neighborhoods, they share several attributes.

Each office maintains a strong relationship with local law enforcement. Informally, police officers spend time in neighborhood probation offices familiarizing themselves with probationers in the neighborhood and discussing cases with probation officers. Formally, police and probation officers coordinate roundups and probationers' partic-

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ipation in community service projects. Police officers also provide backup for probation officers making home visits. In addition, police officers aid in the observation and supervision of probationers, serving as an extra set of eyes while they are on patrol. In return, probation officers use their broader search powers to aid in police investigations, and police officers receive increased cooperation from the community because residents know they are working with probation officers.

Partnerships maintain a strong relationship with the community. Both probation officers attend all community board meetings. Probation officers and police officers coordinate projects in which probationers perform their community service in the neighborhood. Sometimes, maintaining a strong relationship with the community requires a deep understanding of the neighborhood. Staff from the Garfield neighborhood probation office regularly visit and provide services (such as running errands) for several elderly women in the area who are considered the neighborhood "matriarchs." In exchange for these visits, staff receive valuable insight into the history of the neighborhood and the roots of any problems. Like police officers, community members often visit the neighborhood probation offices to talk with the officers about the neighborhood and its issues.

Finally, each partnership maintains a strong relationship with probationers. Geographic proximity allows probation officers more contact with their probationers. In addition, probationers receive supervision from local law enforcement officials who are aware of their probation conditions. Because they are seen as part of the community, probation and police officers believe the contacts are more productive and that they have better rapport with the probationers. The community also assists in the supervision of probationers. Because probationers are heavily involved in community service projects, residents see probationers performing valuable services for the neighborhood and, in turn, these residents are more likely to perform services (such as job placement) for the probationers.

The following example illustrates how these three functions interact. While attending a neighborhood board meeting in Coronado, probation officers learned that the biggest concern for the community was the condition of one particular home. The owner of the home had been accumulating garbage in his back and front yards for years. Community members complained about its appearance and its odor. Further, they believed the condition of the home was responsible for lowering property values and for discouraging working families from moving into the neighborhood. Police officers explained that they would continue to issue citations, but they could not force the owner to clean his house. The newly established Coronado Neighborhood Probation Office volunteered to have probationers clean the house as part of their community service obligations. The community board was thrilled and volunteered to provide extra equipment and labor, as did the local police precinct. The house was cleaned within a month.

As yet, Maricopa County's neighborhood probation partnerships have not been evaluated. Nonetheless, officials believe the programs are meeting some of their goals. They note that there has been a 45 percent decrease in crime in Coronado, and that turnover is lower among neighborhood probation officers than among traditional probation officers.

Fugitive Apprehension Units

In fugitive apprehension units, police and correctional officers collaborate to apprehend persons who have absconded from probation or parole supervision. Often these persons have outstanding arrest warrants for other reasons as well. These partnerships also involve information-sharing, training, tactical communication and joint operations. A good example of a fugitive apprehension program is California's Parolee-At-Large (PAL) Apprehension Teams, which are partnerships between the parole and community services divisions of the California Department of Corrections (CDC) and federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. The agencies share resources, information on absconders and periodically conduct joint operations.

According to Marisela Montes, director of the parole division, the number of parolees-at-large (parolees with whom parole agents have not had contact for more than 30 days) in California grew from 2,698 in 1983 to more than 17,000 in 1995. The Parole and Community Services Division had been unable to focus efforts on recapturing at-large parolees due to a lack of resources. Funding for parole in California is based on the size of the division's active parolee caseload. When parolees abscond, a warrant is issued and their parole is suspended. When parole is suspended, the cases of parolees-at-large become "inactive" and no longer part of the funding base. Therefore, if the division had embarked on a large-scale effort to recapture absconders, money to support that effort would have had to be diverted from funds used to supervise active cases.

In 1996, California's Parole and Community Services Law Enforcement Consortium became concerned that parolees-at-large were a serious threat to public safety because their numbers were increasing and more than 21 percent of absconders were classified as serious or violent sex offenders. The consortium recommended that the division reduce the number of parolees-at-large. CDC obtained legislative funding to create the PAL Apprehension Teams project.

Although the PAL Apprehension Teams project targets all parolees-at-large, it focuses on locating and apprehending the most serious and violent offenders, including those convicted of murder and manslaughter.

PAL Apprehension Teams were established in eight locations in California. Team sizes vary from two to six agents, with supervisors overseeing operations and a statewide administrator managing the entire organization. Unlike other parole agents, PAL Apprehension Team staff do not carry active caseloads — their sole assignment is to find and apprehend parolees-at-large. Willingness to commit this level of resources to the PAL Apprehension Teams project is evidence of CDC's commitment to return absconders to supervision.

CDC recognized from the start that it would need cooperation from law enforcement to achieve the PAL Appre-

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hension Teams' goals. As a result, each PAL Apprehension Team was charged with establishing partnerships with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. These partnerships focus on improving the flow of information about parolees-at-large. Local police sometimes have information to share with parole agents regarding where an absconder was last seen, with whom he or she associates, or other information that will help PAL Apprehension Teams capture the person safely.

PAL Apprehension Teams routinely apprehend absconders without assistance from law enforcement. However, if a team anticipates serious problems when arresting an absconder, it may conduct a joint apprehension with local law enforcement officers. In addition, if problems develop during an apprehension, PAL Apprehension Teams can call the local police department for backup.

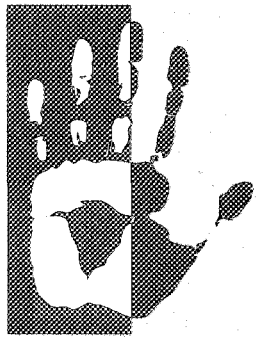
PAL Apprehension Teams periodically conduct joint sweeps with law enforcement in neighborhoods where many parolees-at-large are believed to reside. The teams will prepare a list of absconders (with their presumed addresses) whom they want to capture and then, along with police officers, move from one address to the next. In the course of these operations, the team may encounter parolees who have not absconded, but are violating conditions of their release. If so, the team may arrest these nonfugitive parolees.

PAL Apprehension Team members receive extensive training (more than 200 hours in the first year) in tactical entry techniques, firearms and investigations. They wear bulletproof vests and carry radios that link them with one another and with police for backup. Parole agents in California (including those on the PAL Apprehension Teams) carry firearms.

In the program's first year of operation, PAL Apprehension Teams arrested 2,125 parolees-at-large. Parole administrator Richard Rimmer estimates that parolee-at-large cases were reduced by more than 1,000 from projected 1996-1997 levels. PAL Apprehension Teams also seized more than 300 firearms. Unit supervisor Roy Chu points out, "This was accomplished without injury to parole agents or their law enforcement partners, and without a single public complaint or lawsuit."

Creating a Common Mission

The police-corrections partnership examples described above are working with and within communities to increase public safety. These partnerships can provide the groundwork for developing more comprehensive strategies by reaching out to other agencies and community-based organizations to better manage released offenders. Depending on the needs of offenders and available resources, such strategies might include community-based supervision based on a case management model; housing; health and mental health services; job training, placement and retention; alcohol and drug treatment; and education programs. Too often, social service, housing, criminal justice and education agencies have not acknowledged that, for the most part, they are all working with the same population.



Police-Corrections Partnerships:

A Sample Statement of Common Mission

- Whereas, we recognize that the police and corrections professions share a commitment to enhancing the safety of the public; and
- Whereas, we acknowledge that the national climate in the corrections profession is ripe for developing and engaging in partnerships within both institutional and community corrections; and
- Whereas, we acknowledge that the police profession is moving to a pro-active involvement with the community for the purpose of crime reduction; and
- Whereas, we acknowledge that there are a number of grassroots efforts in law enforcement and corrections from which partnership developments are continuing to emerge; and
- Therefore, we, the undersigned, commit to the following:
  - — Development of professional collaborations at the local level;
  - — Sharing information about criminal activities of offenders that are of concern to police and correctional agencies at the staff level;
  - — Working to ensure the successful reintegration of offenders returning to the community;
  - — Working in partnership with the communities we serve to reduce crime; and
  - — Working toward the implementation of technical applications to facilitate the sharing of offender-specific data among operational-level police and corrections personnel.

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Pooling resources (financial and staff) and the creation of a common mission have changed the way government systems interact with and impact local communities. A common mission statement can be used as the basis for a more detailed memorandum of understanding between agencies entering a partnership. For an example of a common mission statement, see the accompanying sidebar.

Efforts Within the U.S. Department of Justice

Encouraged by police-corrections partnerships and community-based initiatives, the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs is developing comprehensive strategies for improving the way communities manage and support offenders upon release from prison. NIJ, the Corrections Program Office, the Executive Office of Weed and Seed and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services are collaborating on the Reentry Partnership Initiative, designed to strengthen the working relationships between criminal justice agencies and the community, including the business community, to prepare for and manage the transition of offenders from prison to the community. In May 1999, eight state correctional administrators met with DOJ representatives to discuss the potential impact of developing re-entry partnership strategies. In October 1999, teams from these eight states (Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, South Carolina, Vermont and Washington) participated in a meeting to discuss re-entry challenges and potential approaches to building the collaborations necessary to support and sustain necessary long-term partnerships in their jurisdictions.

These new partnerships seek to lessen the negative effects of the prison-to-the-community transition by promoting strategies that balance surveillance and sanctions with efforts to reduce recidivism while providing support services for released offenders who seek to improve their long-term individual viability, thereby enhancing public safety. In each community the promise lies in framing the mix of governmental, private, community and individual responsibilities for the reintegration of offenders back into society.

REFERENCES

Parent, D. and B. Snyder. March 1999. *Police-Corrections partnerships*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, NJC 175047.

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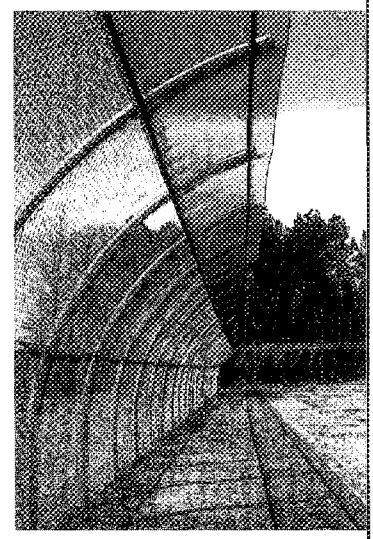

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Pamunkey Regional Jail Authority, serving the Town of Ashland and the counties of Caroline and Hanover, is seeking a Jail Superintendent. The facility, located in Hanover County, has a core service capacity of 592 inmates. The superintendent is responsible for planning and directing all administrative, operating and program functions of the jail under the direction of the Regional Jail Authority Board. Experience in managing a full-service detention facility of similar size or larger is desired. Candidates also should possess any combination of education and experience equivalent to graduation from an accredited college or university with major course work in criminal justice, public administration or a related field. Progressively responsible supervisory experience in the area of treatment, security and administrative support functions is required. Salary is open, depending on experience, and will be negotiated directly with the Regional Jail Authority Board. Pamunkey Regional Jail application, along with resume, must be received no later than February 25, 2000, at the Hanover County Personnel Office, P.O. Box 470, Hanover, VA 23069. 804-537-6075. (Hearing Impaired # 730-6140) EOE/MFH.

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