



Overview of Community Corrections

By Aaron Carpenter

Community corrections programs serve as an alternative to prison or as a transition for individuals in prison to reenter society. This *issue brief* provides a general overview of community corrections.

What is Community Corrections?

Community corrections is a state-funded, locally administered program that offers services and supervision to two types of populations:

- individuals who are in prison and recommended to community corrections by either the Department of Corrections (DOC) or the Parole Board to *transition* back to society; and
- individuals who are sentenced to community corrections by the courts to *divert* them away from prison.

Individuals who are in community corrections are placed in either residential or nonresidential settings. Table 1 shows how many beds the state allocated to community corrections programs in FY 2018-19 by placement type.

Table 1
FY 2018-19 Community Corrections Bed Type Allocation

Placement Type	Beds
Standard Residential	2,756
Cognitive Behavioral Treatment Pilot	48
Intensive Residential Treatment	150
Inpatient Therapeutic Community	112
Residential Dual Diagnosis Treatment	124
Residential Sex Offender	90
Standard Nonresidential	584
Outpatient Day Treatment	86
Total	3,950

Source: House Bill 18-1322.

Residential placements. If an individual is placed in a residential setting, the individual stays at a community corrections facility and is closely monitored. In a standard residential placement, individuals are allowed to leave the facility, but only with special permission. A number of in-house services are offered, and individuals work with a case manager to coordinate the completion of required services. Services may include help with employment, substance abuse and mental health treatment, life skills, and other trainings. Residential placements can also offer programs to help individuals with specific problems. For example, the Intensive Residential Treatment Program assists individuals with serious substance abuse problems, while the Residential Dual Diagnosis Treatment Program helps individuals with extensive mental health and substance abuse problems. Other programs include the Cognitive Behavioral Treatment Pilot, the Inpatient Therapeutic Community, and the Sex Offender Treatment Program.

Nonresidential programs. When placed in a nonresidential program, an individual does not live in a community corrections facility. Instead, he or she meets with a case manager, participates in treatment or support services, retains employment, honors his or her financial responsibilities, and remains drug- and alcohol-free. Individuals are also subject to random monitoring and may be transferred back to residential placement, if needed.

Community Corrections Boards

Each community corrections program is overseen by a community corrections board. Boards may be established by local governing bodies and range

from having an advisory role to being an independent governing body. Currently, there are 22 community correction boards, one for each judicial district, with the number of members and those who serve on them varying by board. Only 16 boards have created a community corrections program in their jurisdictions. Judicial Districts 3, 5, 11, 15, 16, and 22 have not. In FY 2017-18 there were a total of 34 programs in the state

Authority. Community corrections boards have the authority to receive grants; establish community corrections programs; approve or disapprove the establishment of a program (if delegated from the local government); establish and enforce standards for the operation of a community corrections program; and accept or reject any offender referred for placement in a program in their jurisdiction. Community corrections boards may also enter into contracts with nongovernmental agencies to administer a community corrections program in their jurisdiction. The administrator of the program also has the authority to accept or reject any offender referred to the program.

Placement in Community Corrections

As mentioned above, individuals can transition into community corrections from prison through a recommendation by the DOC or the Parole Board, or they can be sentenced directly to community corrections by the courts to divert them away from prison. According to the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) in the Department of Public Safety, 50 to 60 percent of those referred are accepted into a community corrections program.

Transition process. The executive director of DOC may refer any offender who does not have an active felony warrant and has displayed acceptable institutional behavior to a community corrections program. When making the referral, the executive director must give information including, but not limited to, a current risk and needs assessment, projected release dates, verified parole plan, a

victim statement, and an offender statement.¹ The Parole Board may also refer any parolee for placement in a community corrections program. The executive director or the Parole Board must first refer the offender to the community corrections board where the offender plans to reside after release unless the offender needs a specialized community corrections program, or the offender requests a specific placement.

When a community corrections board or program receives a referral, it will review the placement and decide whether to accept or deny the placement based on its specific acceptance criteria. If a placement is denied, the executive director may make a subsequent referral to another community corrections program, if the offender qualifies. If an offender is not accepted into a community corrections program, he or she is transferred back to the referring agency. In FY 2018-19, there were 2,364 transition offenders in community corrections. The completion rate was 59 percent, with an average length of stay of 204 days.

Diversion process. Any judge of a district court may sentence any offender convicted of a felony, if the crime does not require a DOC sentence by statute, or refer any offender as a condition of probation to community corrections. The community corrections board or program can then accept or deny the placement based on its acceptance criteria. If the placement is denied, the courts must resentence the offender. In FY 2018-19 there were 2,382 diversion offenders in community corrections. The completion rate was 50 percent, with an average length of stay of 235 days.

The State's Role

Community correction boards and programs are overseen by the DCJ. The DCJ establishes standards for programs, audits programs, and collects and reports data about each program. Finally, the DCJ is responsible for allocating any appropriations from the General Assembly to local community corrections boards and programs.

¹ Section 18-1.3-301 (2)(a)(II), C.R.S.