COMMUNITY BASED SUPERVISION

Since 1999, the Onondaga County Probation Department has been aggressively implementing the concept of community supervision. We have taken many steps, including the development of Community Reporting Offices, to move from an office-based service to a field-based program. Numerous partnerships, described below, enhanced this movement.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The year 2008 witnessed a continued expansion of our department’s effort at developing partnerships with other law enforcement entities.

As a result of our previous cooperative, successful partnerships we were invited to continue our participation in New York State’s Operation IMPACT Initiative. This brings us into partnership with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, including the Onondaga County District Attorney’s Office, the Onondaga County Sheriff’s Department, the Syracuse Police Department, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the New York State Police, New York State Parole, U.S. Marshall’s Office, DEA, and the Weed & Seed Program. The initiative began in August 2004 with the dedication of resources (including manpower and equipment) from the various partners to address crime and violence in our community. There are different types of enforcement details executed in the community on a rotating basis.

The details have resulted in community protection, numerous arrests, and as a deterrent to more crimes. They have also been well received by the citizens of the community.

During 2008, our County/DWI Unit continued “Operation Watchdog” to apprehend DWI offenders who are illegally driving. This program is a partnership with the Syracuse Police Department in which our officers do surveillance to determine illegal driving. The Syracuse Police Department apprehends and tickets the offender and tows their vehicle. As of the end of 2008, we have followed 78 individuals and detected 8 of them attempting to drive.

Probation officers participated in 1,620.75 hours of community details, including Operation IMPACT/Weed & Seed, Valley Field Days, town and village details, mall details, etc. We made 501 home visits during these details and detected 399 violations of probation. Numerous searches of probationers were conducted during the Operation IMPACT details, resulting in the confiscation of thousands of dollars of drug money, drugs, guns, other contraband, and new charges. The Syracuse Chief of Police states that the Probation/Parole/Police detail is one of the most productive of the Operation IMPACT operations.
**Juvenile Justice**

We continue to implement evidence-based reforms in the Juvenile Justice Unit. The new PINS law has provided us with an opportunity to increase our efforts to divert children from Family Court and continue to assist them in addressing their problems. In order to better serve families, we have merged our supervision and intake units to provide the continuity of the same probation officer for a child (or siblings) through the juvenile justice process. We also adopted the principles of School-Based Probation and have assigned probation officers to as many middle and high schools as possible. We continue to make the majority of our supervision contacts outside of the office, at home, school, and in the community. As the result of an 18-month partnership with the Vera Institute of Justice and several community shareholders, we have implemented a Risk Assessment Instrument to help make objective decisions on detaining youth as part of Juvenile Justice Reform.

**Community Partnerships**

Our effort to be community partners is enhanced through our active involvement with VIPP, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance’s (IMA) Ten-Point Project, Neighborhood Watch, PRISM, and various other committees and activities. Three of our probation officers volunteer their time at the Faith Hope Center on the Southside of Syracuse to help the youth of our community. The impact of our participation in these various efforts has resulted in a new image and respect for probation officers. Our efforts over the last several years to be more visible in a variety of ways in the community has paid wonderful dividends for our staff, our department, and County government.

The Neighborhood Watch programs in the City of Syracuse and the County continue to grow in numbers and effectiveness. Our department has been invited to participate in several of the Neighborhood Watch groups and to make formal presentations regarding the Probation Department at some of the groups.

Many of our staff volunteer their time as coaches for youth teams. Probation officers and staff helped provide security and manpower for the b.i.k.e.-Syracuse fundraising Tour De ’Cuse for the past two years. PO Delrena Braithwaite spearheads a yearly department collection of blankets for the residents of Van Duyun Home and Hospital. Several probation officers are serving as mentors for at-risk students in a partnership with the Center for Community Alternatives and the Syracuse City School District.

The Probation Department and the County Library have instituted a partnership to display children’s books in the two department waiting rooms. Books that have been withdrawn from circulation, or that the Library has chosen not to lend, are available for Probation Department clients to take home for their children. Department personnel have also contributed books and magazines to this effort. As recognition of our community efforts increases, invitations for more involvement grow. Our staff has been excellent at meeting this challenge.

**Community Reporting Offices**

Our Community Reporting program continues to thrive. We have four locations at present: three in the City of Syracuse (the North Area Athletic and Educational Center on Pond Street, the Westcott Community Center on Euclid Avenue and the Syracuse Police Storefront on Otisco Street) and one in the County (at the Cicero CanTeen). Probation officers are available at these facilities one afternoon per week to allow probationers to report in their own neighborhoods and to connect appropriate individuals to the various services offered by each of our community partners. GED programs, counseling, computer training and recreational activities are just some of the fine services that are provided to our clientele at these facilities. We truly thank our partners for allowing us the privilege of using their facilities and the tremendous cooperation we have received from them. The CROs have enhanced our community-based supervision efforts to our probationers as well as strengthened community relations.
GED PARTNERSHIP

On 10/2/2001, the Onondaga County Probation Department and the Syracuse City School District began a partnership to provide GED classes on-site in the Probation Department’s offices. The Syracuse City School District assigned a teacher to provide the GED services and the Probation Department provides classroom space, equipment and referrals. Classes are held three days per week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Participants are referred by their probation officer and can attend all three days. Initial assessments are done to determine the participants’ current level of knowledge and target areas to address. Referrals are made to other educational programs if the participants’ level of knowledge so dictates.

This program helps high-risk individuals who, for whatever reason, could not adjust to regular school. It gives them the opportunity to master the skills needed to complete their high school education, assists the participants to regain their self-esteem and helps them gain the motivation to become a productive member of our community. The GED program has been successful well beyond our expectations. In the first seven years, we have already graduated 250 individuals. The unique skills of the instructor, Ms. Pat Button, to engage and motivate this population is appreciated by staff and students.

AWARDS

During 2008, several Probation staff received special recognition for their exceptional work:

- Commissioner Mary C. Winter received a Community Service Award from New Justice Conflict Resolution Services, Inc.
- PO Rick Schenosky was recognized as Probation Officer of the Year for his outstanding service. The award is presented annually by the NYS Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives.
- PO Donna Capria received a Letter of Commendation from the FBI for her invaluable role in the successful apprehension of a fugitive.
- Law Enforcement Service Award for “Operation Watchdog” details from Mothers Against Drunk Driving, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee, and the NYS Police.

NEW INITIATIVES

In 2008, Probation partnered with New Justice Conflict Resolution Services, Inc., and the Salvation Army to start “Project Restore.” This is an educational and employment oriented program targeted towards 16-21 year old high risk males. It is a 12-week cycle with group meetings twice per week and a Friday “Drop In” session. It involves guest speakers and field trips. To date, 33 youth have successfully completed the program and are currently employed, in an educational program, or in no further trouble with the law.

In 2008, one probation officer and one probation officer assistant were sent for three weeks of training in Albany to be certified as Offender Workforce Development Specialists. The results of this training formed the basis for our “Ready, Set, Work!” program. In 2008, the two staff, in partnership with JOBSplus!, ran their first session. The second session started in January 2009. It is a highly intensive program that meets twice per week for ten weeks to assist unemployed or underemployed probationers of all ages to better their skills and employment opportunities.
ONONDAGA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

AUTOMATION

In keeping with our ongoing efforts to increase efficiency through technology, in 2008 we began the process of adopting Caseload Explorer, a new case management system. In addition to a grant from the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, we were able to secure financial assistance from the Technology Venture Capital Fund to get the process started. Ultimately, Caseload Explorer will increase our efficiency, allowing us to focus on public safety and the delivery of services to our clients.

In 2008, we began using COMPAS, a validated risk and needs assessment tool designed for criminal court probationers. For years, we have utilized a variety of assessment tools with our juvenile population and now COMPAS will help us work smarter by identifying where we should focus our resources.

With the help of the Department of Information Technology and the County Executive’s Office, we began a pilot program to replace probation officers’ desktop PC’s with laptops. This will help our efficiency by allowing probation officers to enter contacts and manage information real time, while working in the community.

INVESTIGATIONS

3,702 investigations were completed in 2008. Presentence and social investigations are completed for criminal and family courts. Included in the investigations are appropriate treatment plans and referrals to community agencies for individuals recommended for probation.

PROBATION SUPERVISION

3,549 cases were under supervision at the end of 2008

Eligible: All “A” and “B” misdemeanors, felonies as allowable by law, Juvenile Delinquents and Persons in Need of Supervision.

Program: Monitoring of conditions of probation, referrals to community agencies for appropriate treatment. Drug and alcohol testing conditions as required. Probation officers are mandated to work at least 14 hours per month making home visits at night and on weekends. (The only department in the State doing this,) Over 50% of probation violators are referred to more intensive Alternative to Incarceration programs.

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED

Eligible: Anyone convicted of a drinking/driving offense. This group constitutes approximately 15.29% of the adult probation caseload.

Program: Community safety, supervision, and monitoring of DWI probationers. All probationers are referred to appropriate treatment programs. Testing for alcohol/drug use is routine.
SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS (cont’d)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/SEX OFFENDER UNIT

Eligible: Individuals convicted of crimes related to the sexual, physical, psychological, emotional abuse of children and spouses, and/or any individual convicted of a sex offense.

Program: Specialized attention to the treatment and monitoring of designated domestic violence/sex offenders, formulation of policies and procedures, and specialized training and education related to sexual abuse and spousal abuse issues. At the end of 2008, this department was supervising 253 registered sex offenders.

In compliance with DNA legislation, we have taken 3,882 DNA samples to date. 892 were taken in 2008.

In 2007, our department received special funding to enhance our efforts in monitoring sex offenders and to collect DNA. In 2007, we used this funding to add an additional probation officer to the Sex Offender Unit, contract for polygraphs and treatment, and to establish two Intensive Supervision caseloads for Level 2 and 3 sex offenders. All of these enhancements continued to be fully operational in 2008.

“Operation Halloween” continued in 2008. This detail makes home visits to selected sex offenders on Halloween to make sure they are not participating in the holiday tradition. They have been previously ordered by their probation officer not to participate.

ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION PROGRAMS

ELECTRONIC HOME CONFINEMENT

Eligible: Incarceration-bound individuals convicted of felonies or misdemeanors. Probationers must be willing to participate in the program. In addition, we accept inmates at the Justice Center on Pre-Trial Release/Electronic Home Confinement to help alleviate jail overcrowding.

Program: Probationers are confined to their homes and monitored by electronic technology. They are allowed to leave only for work and treatment. Probation officers also make personal and collateral contacts to ensure compliance with conditions. Caseload capacity is 50 and length of confinement is usually four to six months.

INTERIM SUPERVISION

During 2008, the department continued to provide Interim Supervision Program (IPS) services. At the end of 2008, 11 individuals were being monitored.

Eligible: The defendant must have pled to or been convicted of an offense and be eligible for a probation sentence; the prosecutor must be in agreement; the defendant must consent; and the criminal court may adjourn sentencing to a specified date not to exceed one year from the date the conviction is entered. All conditions relating to formal probation supervision are ordered.

The defendant’s record of compliance with IPS conditions as well as other relevant information must be included in the presentence report, or updated presentence report prepared for the court. If the individual is successful on IPS, the conviction may be reduced and incarceration will be avoided.
**Alternatives to Incarceration Programs (cont’d)**

**Intensive Supervision Program**

**Eligible:** Incarceration-bound felons and felony probation violators.

**Program:** Enhanced supervision, frequent contact with probation officers, referral to community agencies. Program capacity is 75. Probationers stay in the program for one year. Currently, we are running well above capacity.

**Probation Day Reporting and Alternative to Incarceration Programs**

**Eligible:** Chemically dependent incarceration-bound felons, felony probation violators and felony charged pre-trial releasees, as well as a select group of misdemeanor offenders.

**Program:** Highly intensive individualized treatment and accountability program which includes, but is not limited to: inpatient treatment for alcohol/substance abuse, halfway house for those who need additional treatment following inpatient, ongoing intensive outpatient treatment and aftercare, 12-step programs, extensive educational programming, frequent drug testing and curfew. Some of these individuals also participate in Syracuse Treatment Court.

Total program capacity is 160.

The funding for these programs also provides case management services for selected clients. The Probation Department contracts with Central New York Services to provide case managers who work closely with our probation officers.

**Halfway House/Supportive Living Program**

**Eligible:** Incarceration-bound felony pre-trial releasees, incarceration-bound felony probationers and felony probation violators, as well as a select group of misdemeanor offenders.

**Program:** Four to six months are spent in residence at a Halfway House and at least three months in aftercare. Individuals residing in a supportive living program are also eligible. A probation officer works daily with probationers to develop and follow through on the treatment, residential, counseling, educational, employment, and training program components.

**Pre-Trial Release**

2,341 released to Pre-Trial in 2008

**Eligible:** Criminal defendants held in the Onondaga County Justice Center.

**Program:** Probation assistants supervise defendants released by the courts. In the past several years, the utilization of pre-trial release has increased approximately 50%. This is directly related to the overcrowding of the Justice Center. Releasees report by phone or in person to the Probation Department to ensure return to court. A high percentage of releasees have additional conditions of release such as work and attendance at drug and alcohol programs. Rearrests or serious failure to adhere to conditions result in surrender back to the court.

We continue to cover weekend arraignments and conduct a weekly review of the jail population in an effort to ensure that all eligible inmates are recommended for release.
JUVENILE JUSTICE UNIT—ALTERNATIVE TO PLACEMENT

INTAKE

1,329 JD complaints handled in 2008

Eligible: Probation Intake reviews each Juvenile Delinquency complaint (crime) made in Onondaga County prior to Family Court action to determine which cases are eligible and appropriate for diversion services in lieu of formal Family Court intervention. Youths between the ages of 7 to 16 years old are eligible. The respondent must agree to participate and the victim must agree to allow the Probation Department to attempt to handle the complaint.

Program: This program of community-based services with youth and their family may include counseling, mediation, Youth Court participation and/or educational programming. Community service is an integral part of many plans. The department works closely with school personnel, police, community agencies and victims. Restitution to victims is a significant component of our diversion program.

PINS Diversion Program

681 PINS complaints handled in 2008

Eligible: Juveniles (under age 18) referred to Probation Intake Services for truancy and/or ungovernable behavior.

Program: In response to the new PINS law, we have collaborated with the Department of Social Services, Mental Health, the Youth Bureau, Contact Community Services, and the Salvation Army to develop a comprehensive plan for youths at risk and their families. We have instituted a biweekly Parent PINS Orientation to help empower parents by assisting them in making an informed decision as to how to address their children’s problems. We have developed a comprehensive resource manual for parents which also serves as a reference guide for service providers. We have instituted a 24-hour response line to allow parents to obtain help at the time of need. We have also established two beds at Booth House to provide respite for families in crisis. Additionally, we have also arranged for MST (Multisystemic Therapy) and FFT (Functional Family Therapy) for pre-diversion referrals.

Juvenile Intensive Supervision

Eligible: This program integrates supervision services for Juvenile Delinquents who are placed on probation by Family Court.

Program: Goals of the program are: greater public safety, rehabilitation of the client through contacts with family and community agencies, and the reduction of placements.

PRISM (Probation Rehabilitation Intensive Services & Management)

Eligible: Juvenile Delinquents and Persons in Need of Supervision who are at risk of placement.

Program: An intensive case management program providing 24 hours a day, seven days per week coverage. The program is a collaboration among Probation, the Department of Social Services, and the Salvation Army. Program components include a primary case manager assigned to each youth, home-based outreach and field work, intensive involvement with the youth’s family, and a comprehensive individualized treatment plan for each youth. Functional Family Therapy, an evidence-based best practice model, is an integral part of the PRISM treatment process.
JUVENILE JUSTICE UNIT—ALTERNATIVE TO PLACEMENT (cont’d)

JUVENILE ELECTRONIC MONITORING

Eligible: Alternative to placement for high risk Juvenile Delinquents.

Program: Juvenile Delinquents are monitored electronically as well as intensively supervised. Probation officer has daily contact with probationers. There is drug testing and referral to community agencies.

JUVENILE RISK INTERVENTION SERVICES COORDINATION (J-RISC)

Eligible: High risk Juvenile Delinquents both on probation and in diversion.

Program: The goal of J-RISC is to measurably reduce the risk of recidivism among high risk youth. This is a five year, one million dollar grant from the NYS Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives. We have contracted with Liberty Resources to provide for 40 additional MST slots per year.

MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY

Eligible: Alternative to placement/secure and non-secure detention for both Juvenile Delinquents and PINS and early releasees from the Office of Children and Family Services (formerly the Division for Youth).

Program: This program, a Blueprints evidence-based best practice, is provided by contract with Liberty Resources, a community agency. Targeted population are Juvenile Delinquents who are chronically violent and substance-abusing.

JD/PINS PLACEMENT UNIT

Eligible: Juvenile Delinquents and Persons in Need of Supervision referred for placement through the Probation Review Board or directly from Family Court.

Program: JD/PINS does placement planning for adjudicated PINS and Juvenile Delinquents, who are considered too high a risk to community safety, to remain on community supervision. We provide a comprehensive review of the case record, arrange for evaluations if necessary and make referrals for the appropriate level of care. During this process, additional efforts are made to keep the youth in the community by locating a relative or suitable adult where the juvenile could reside and be provided a high level of supervision. As a result of extensive use of graduated sanctions and evidence-based practices, the number of JD/PINS placements has been significantly reduced. In the past twelve (12) years, new JD/PINS placements are down by 89%.
Probation Cases By Residence—2008

Cases:

Family Court 175
Criminal Court 3374
Total 3549

Residence in City 2184
Residence in County 1161
Residence in NYS–Outside County 138
Residence in Another State 66
ONONDAGA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT QUICK FACTS—2008

- Probation officers collected $395,751.83 in supervision, investigation, drug testing fees, and restitution surcharges.
- $452,532.65 in restitution was collected by probation officers and returned to victims.
- 2,010 cases/complaints (1,329 JD; 681 PINS) were processed by Intake.
- Our Juvenile Pre-Diversion Program successfully worked with 382 cases during 2008.
- 2,341 inmates were released by the Pre-Trial Release Program.
- 3,182 investigations were completed for the Criminal Courts; 520 for Family Court.
- 185 new probation cases were received from Family Court for supervision, with 175 cases under supervision at the end of the year.
- 1,807 new probation cases were received from the Criminal Courts for supervision. 3,374 cases were under supervision at the end of the year.
- There were 3,549 cases total (from the Criminal and Family Courts) under probation supervision at the end of the year.
- 1,121 Violations of Probation were filed in Criminal Court. Of those, 746 cases were revoked.
- Since 1/1/96, the Probation Department has reduced the number of juveniles in placement from 170 to 18 (as of 12/31/2008). The results have produced better outcomes for juveniles and saved millions of dollars for taxpayers.
- To ensure adequate supervision and protection of the community, probation officers worked in excess of 9,000 "enhanced" (weekend, night and holiday) hours and made 22,596 positive home visits.
- The Probation Department is a major partner in the Syracuse Violence Intervention and Prevention Project.
- The community (public and private) has looked to Probation to take a leadership role in establishing partnerships to enhance the quality of life in our community.
- Alternative programming has saved taxpayers millions of dollars of tax relief over the years. Electronic Home Confinement alone has saved County taxpayers over $3 million dollars this year  (Note: Since its inception, EHC has saved taxpayers approximately $58 million dollars).
- Probation officers conducted 6,815 drug screens. Of those tested, 432 were positive for cocaine and 884 were positive for marijuana.
- Probation cases received from Criminal Courts were 75% male, 25% female.
- Probation cases received from Criminal Courts were 55% White, 39% African American, and 6% Other.
- In addition to a four-year degree, probation officers must successfully complete 175 hours of training within the first year of their employment.
- Probation officers must complete 21 hours of continuing education credits per year to maintain their Peace Officer status.
- Probation officers are trained in Aerosol Restraint Spray, weapons, and defensive tactics. Currently, 47 officers and supervisors carry a firearm.
- Probation officers must have a working knowledge in the disciplines of mental illness, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, the law, domestic violence, and have knowledge of community resources.
MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Onondaga County Probation Department is to create safer communities by enabling offenders to be productive members of society.

We strive to accomplish our mission through supervision, treatment and prevention. The ultimate goal is long-term public safety and the reduction of further victimization.

Working together with you, the citizens of our community, we can make Onondaga County a safe, nurturing environment in which individuals and families can grow and prosper.