

**2008 Innovations Awards Program
APPLICATION**

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-9-350K

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Oklahoma

Assign Program Category (applicant): Corrections (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name: Central District Community Corrections Diversion Program
2. Administering Agency Oklahoma Department of Corrections
3. Contact Person Chris Hudson, Assistant District Supervisor
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9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The Central District Community Corrections Diversion Program is a project that was developed in order to place a greater focus on offenders exhibiting chronic non-compliant behaviors and technical supervision infractions that typically lead to sentence acceleration or revocation. The Diversion Program is a collaborative effort with representation from probation and parole, the district attorney's office, the public defender's office, as well as mental health and substance abuse treatment professionals and a literacy instructor.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 1, 2008 to be considered.

The Central District Community Corrections Diversion Program has been operational since May 2007.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

During calendar year 2006, there were 241 offenders revoked in Oklahoma County as a result of technical violations. The Diversion Program was created in an effort to reduce the number of offender revoked in Oklahoma County for technical violations. Diversion supervision is very intensive, with officers spending a great deal of time with offenders addressing their criminogenic needs. Officers also actively engage family members and other capable guardians in the offenders' supervision and change process.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

The leadership at Central District Community Corrections began working to develop this prison diversion program during February 2007 with the main focus of impacting, through the application of evidence-based supervision practices, those prison-bound probation offenders exhibiting chronic non-compliant behaviors and supervision infractions that typically lead to probation revocation.

Prior to implementation, it was imperative that program support be received from the agency's external stakeholders. During March 2007, discussions were held with members of the judicial branch, the district attorney's office and the public defender's office, all of which displayed overwhelming support for the proposal. Frustration with huge dockets, largely comprised of technical violators, was a common complaint; nonetheless, each stakeholder was thrilled to learn that the agency was actively working to address this shared dilemma. Moreover, they each agreed that intermediate sanctions, up to and including small jail sentences, were an appropriate and effective means to address chronic technical violations, while at the same time reducing the number of offenders going through the revocation process. Once consensus was achieved on that issue, Central District Community Corrections administration met with Oklahoma County jail leaders during April 2007 to receive their approval to sanction offenders to small periods of incarceration time.

Building community partnerships is an important component of evidence-based practices; therefore, collaboration with other professional agencies that have a genuine interest in successful offender outcomes was a key next step in the development of this program. It was decided that a containment team of sorts needed to be developed. Central District leadership next met with an assortment of mental health, substance abuse and cognitive behavioral professionals, and all agreed to active participation in the program. The first containment team staffing took place during July 2007. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure ongoing communication regarding diversion offenders' progress, so that non-compliance can be addressed through the use of swift, effective and proportionate interventions and intermediate sanctions. Officers also use a wide range of supervision incentives to increase positive reinforcement and reward pro-social behaviors exhibited by this offender group.

During May of 2007, the district began identifying offenders who would be appropriate for the program as a result of their persistent technical violation behaviors, such as refusal to participate in treatment/programmatic plan, failure to report or non-compliance with intermediate sanctions. Approximately 110 offenders were initially identified as being potential candidates, and 90 were approved for transfer.

Soon after the program's implementation, officers realized that, in addition to meetings with treatment providers, they also needed to have regular ongoing meetings with the district

attorney's office, so persistent violations could be addressed in a timely fashion. During June 2007, the diversion team had their first meeting with the assistant district attorney assigned to the program. The diversion team currently meets with the district attorney's office at least every 2 weeks, so sanctions can be imposed as close in time to the violations as possible.

During October 2007, the diversion team made a presentation to the Oklahoma Board of Corrections regarding the program and explained the cost savings that could occur if they were able to divert a large number of technical violators from revocation. The team was asked to return in February 2008 to discuss program outcomes, as well as the financial impact on the agency. The team was proud to report a number of positive outcomes that are detailed below in question #22. The team also elaborated on the cost saving effect the program has already had. Since inception of the program in May 2007, there have been 231 offenders participate in the program; this number includes both current and past participants. To date, only one of these potentially prison-bound offenders has been revoked to a term of incarceration. These 231 offenders have collectively spent approximately 12,000 days in the program at a supervision cost of \$2.58 per day, which amounts to a total cost of supervision of \$30,960. The cost to incarcerate this same group of offenders for an equal number of days at community level security level (\$50.75 day) would have been \$609,000. ***By successfully diverting these offenders from incarceration, the cost saving to the agency has been approximately \$578,040 (before first year start up costs of approximately \$171,689.64 is factored in). Based on these figures, Central District Community Corrections Diversion Program has saved the agency approximately \$406,350.36 since May 2007.***

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

The Central District Community Corrections Diversion Program is a new and creative approach to diverting chronic technical violators from revocation due to the project's enhanced focus on collaborative relationships and application of scientifically validated principles to change offender attitudes and behaviors. Officers not only spend a significant amount of time engaging offenders in the change process, but they also actively seek to involve family members and other capable guardians in the offenders' supervision. Diversion team officers have frequent and ongoing collaborative meetings with mental health and substance abuse providers, so offender progress or lack thereof can be assessed and appropriately responded to. Officers make every effort to divert offenders from the revocation process. To accomplish this goal, they staff violations with the district attorney's office every 2 weeks, so violations can be responded to with timely, proportionate, consistent and individualized sanctions. Central District Community Corrections has contracted with the Oklahoma County jail, which has allowed for jail sanctions to occur when other lesser sanctions have failed. The Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office and members of the judicial branch have been supportive of this graduated method of addressing offender violations, as it reduces the number of individuals being brought before the court for chronic technical violations.

14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

First year start up costs for the program was approximately \$171,689.64 (detailed below).

Two (2) Probation and Parole Officer Salaries \$71,868.72

Benefits for these officers @ 45%	\$32,340.92
One (1) new vehicle	\$15,000.00
Three (3) computers (\$1,000/each)	\$ 3,000.00
Office Furnishings	\$ 4,000.00
Phone/Cell Service	\$ 480.00
Treatment Contracts	\$45,000.00

15. What are the program's annual operational costs? Approximately \$149,689.64 (detailed below).

Two (2) Probation and Parole Officer Salaries	\$71,868.72
Benefits for these officers @45%	\$32,340.92
Phone/Cell Service	\$ 480.00
Treatment Contracts	\$45,000.00

16. How is the program funded?

Central District Community Corrections, as a unit of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, is funded by the legislature. Funding for the Diversion Program comes from the district's existing budget. No additional funding was received from the legislature specifically for this program.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

No.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

Central District Community Corrections, with assistance from the agency's research and evaluation unit, developed a Microsoft Access Database that allows for the tracking of past and current program participants and the analysis of multiple outcomes measures. We currently track information related to revocations, absconder rates, employment and treatment participation, progression through the stages of change and the ratio of sanctions to incentives. We are in the process of transferring the data to a web-based application system entitled COMIT (Criminal Offender Management Information Tracking). This system is already being utilized for the collection and tracking of data relative to offender treatment, module assignment and transition planning.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

Yes, the program did originate in the state of Oklahoma. The innovator is Central District Community Corrections District Supervisor Karen White, 3814 N. Santa Fe, Oklahoma City, OK 73118. Her contact numbers are (405) 962-0474 (office) and (405) 962-0453 (fax).

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? No.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken? Yes.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

As previously stated, the program was developed in response to the large number (241) offenders who were revoked in Oklahoma County for technical violations during 2006. The program has been in effect since May 2007, with approximately 231 current and past participants. To date, only one participating offender has been revoked to a term of incarceration.

Thirty-five (35) offenders have discharged from the program, and of these inactive offenders, seventy-one percent (71%) successfully completed the program; twenty percent (20%) failed [one revocation and six absconders], and the remaining nine percent (9%) either transferred out of district or entered the county Drug Court Program.

The Diversion Program has been in place for approximately 8 months, and during this time, Central District Community Corrections has had an average of 71.6 new absconders each month. Numbers were analyzed for the same time period immediately preceding implementation of this program, and it was determined that the average number of new absconders each month was 83.5. Based on these figures, there has been a 14% reduction in the number of new absconders since inception of this program

The "Stages of Change" model developed by Prochaska, DiClemente, and Norcross is used in the management of offenders and best demonstrates the sequence of behaviors leading to pro-social change. This model identifies six stages (*pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and relapse*) in the behavioral change process, each of which can be identified through interaction with the offender. Offender stage of change is identified upon entry and exit from the program. Of the twenty (25) offenders who successfully discharged, eighty percent (80%) experienced an improvement within their change process. Upon entry, seventy-two percent (72%) were in either the Pre-contemplation or Contemplation stage; by the end of the program, seventy-six percent (76%) were in either the Action or Maintenance stage.

Steady employment and program participation are both vital for offenders to make lasting pro-social change. These two outcomes are measured at the onset and conclusion of diversion program supervision. Nineteen (19) males have successfully completed the Diversion Program. At program entry, 11 of these male offenders were employed full-time (58%), six were unemployed, but able to work and seeking employment (32%), and two were unable to work due to disability (11%). Of the six offenders who were initially seeking employment, two found full-time jobs and two entered school. Due to these improvements in employment status, by the end of the program, (68%) of successfully discharged males were employed full-time, (11%) were students, (11%) were seeking employment, and (11%) were unable to work due to disability.

Six females have successfully completed the Diversion Program. At program entry, only one of these female offenders were employed full-time (17%), four were unemployed, but able to work (67%), and one was unable to work (17%). By the end of the program, 50 percent of successfully discharged females were employed full-time and the other 50 percent were unemployed, but able to work.

Of the 25 offenders who have successfully completed the Diversion program, 17 had a court ordered or assessed treatment need and eight were not ordered to treatment. The majority of those ordered to treatment were not attending treatment when they entered the Diversion program (53%). By the time these offenders left the Diversion program, 76% had improved their treatment status, with 65% having completed treatment and 12% attending treatment.

The biggest obstacle faced by the diversion team thus far has been working with the large number of dual diagnosis offenders. Most active offenders in the program have an identified need or history of substance abuse (77%), and of these, 41% are poly-substance abusers. Eighteen (18%) of active diversion offenders with a current or historical substance abuse problem also have a mental health diagnosis. Officers work closely with mental health and substance abuse professionals to address issues like self-medicating and medication non-compliance. Many of these offenders have continued their chronic technical violation behavior, which in the past, would have subjected them to potential revocation. Diversion officers, however, have been collaborating with the district attorney and public defender's office, so this population can be considered for placement in the county's drug or mental health courts as opposed to facing revocation to prison for technical violations.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

The program has grown from an initial size of 90 offenders to approximately 210. When we initially started the program, it was anticipated that we would be able to move offenders into the action stage of change and have them back into compliance within 90 days; however, we have found that, in most cases, it is taking longer than 90 days to get the offender actively engaged in the change process and into compliance. Although collaboration has been a focal point of the program since inception, it too has continued to grow. Officers have found that they need more frequent and ongoing interactions with treatment providers to ensure offender behavior is addressed with the most timely incentives and sanctions. The frequency of meetings with the district attorney's office has also increased significantly; officers have found that they need to meet with them at least every 2 weeks to ensure that sanctions, up to and including jail time, occurs as soon after the violation as possible. The number of diversion offenders being reviewed for drug and mental health courts has also increased, largely due to the growing number of offenders with poly-substance abuse problems and/or a dual diagnosis. It was initially thought that our first year expense for substance abuse and mental health treatment would be \$30,000; however, the cost is going to be closer to \$45,000, and it is anticipated that this figure will continue to grow.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

Other states might expect to encounter resistance from their district attorney's office and/or some judges; members from both groups are sometimes reluctant to allow anyone other than themselves to address offender violations and feel that offenders who commit technical violations should have to appear before the court and face possible revocation for their non-compliance. Other states should also be careful to not underestimate the number of offenders who have both substance abuse and mental health issues that will need to be addressed simultaneously; they will need to be prepared to collaborate and work closely with mental health professionals if they are truly going to impact this group and keep them from eventually facing revocation for their chronic technical violations. To this end, they will need

a sufficient amount of money budgeted to address the multiple criminogenic needs of this population.