

Community Corrections Program

History

Henrico County Community Corrections Program (CCP) has been in operation since 1983. At its inception, CCP was known as Community Diversion Incentive (CDI) after the Community Diversion Incentive Act authorized funding from the State Department of Corrections for counties and cities to develop and maintain programs which provided sentencing alternatives for certain non-violent offenders.

The mission statement of CDI was “to serve the Community, Courts and Offenders efficiently and professionally through community supervision of non-violent offenders who can benefit from treatment and/or intermediate sanction. These sanctions include intensive supervision, residential placement, community service, restitution, court costs, and suspended sentence to incarceration.” CDI gave county courts additional sentencing options in place of incarceration to aid in alleviating overcrowding in jails and prisons. Offenders were required to make restitution to their victims by monetary reimbursement or direct services, and were referred to treatment programs, as needed.

CDI operated under the guidance of the Community Corrections Resources Board (CCRB). This voluntary, citizen based body received referrals from the court and made non-binding recommendations to the Judge based on the Board’s opinion regarding the ability of the offender to benefit from an alternative to incarceration. The board reviewed all potential felon participants, though most offenders who participated in CDI committed misdemeanors and were placed directly into the program by the court.

In 1993, CDI introduced a pre-trial component after CDI was awarded a grant to implement a Pretrial Services Program. The mission of the Pretrial Services Program is to provide information to the Courts to assist the bail decision and to provide supervision and services as ordered by a judicial officer (Judge or Magistrate) to pretrial defendants that will promote public safety and court appearance. These efforts are intended to honor the Constitutional presumption of innocence, provide protections for the community, assist in the fair administration of justice, and to promote equitable treatment of defendants. The program objectives include the following: to expedite release and improve judicial decision making through the provision of defendant background information and recommendations for use by judicial officers in determining or reconsidering the risk to public safety and appearance in court pending trial; to reduce failures to appear in court and improve public safety by providing supervision for pretrial defendants; to alleviate jail overcrowding, thereby reducing jail operating costs and future capacity needs of local jails, caused by the unnecessary detention of certain pretrial defendants; and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local criminal justice systems. Virginia Pretrial Services completed the Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (VPRAI) in 2002 and the risk assessment was phased in throughout the State between 2003 and 2004.

Over the decade of its existence, CDI:

- Supervised 3,150 people referred by Henrico Courts
- Approximately 191,500 hours of community services performed by program clients, equivalent to an estimated \$862,000 in volunteer services
- Over \$223,000 in court fees paid by clients
- Nearly \$162,000 in restitution to victims paid by clients
- Saved taxpayers an estimated \$10 million in incarceration related expenses
- In cooperation with VCU and the Retail Merchants Association, developed a Shoplifting Prevention Group which received a 1990 National Association of Counties Award
- Served as an internship placement for 12 VCU Social Work students
- Implemented a Drug Testing and Referral Program for clients

In 1994, funding for CDI was transferred to the Department of Criminal Justice Services. In the same year, the Comprehensive Community Corrections Act for Local-Responsible Offenders resulted in the establishment of Henrico CCP. Although the mission statement changed to read “To provide and support a comprehensive range of community-based sanctions and services for the purpose of promoting public safety, increasing defendant accountability and rehabilitation, requiring victim restitution, and reducing the level of criminal activity,” the main objectives of CCP reflected those of CDI.

In 1995, Henrico County established its own Community Criminal Justice Board. The 17-member Board is composed of six private citizens from each district in the county and eleven key policy makers from Henrico County and its criminal justice agencies, including the chief of police, sheriff and chief magistrate. The mission of the board is to provide support and a comprehensive range of community-based sanctions and services for the purpose of promoting public safety, increasing defendant accountability and rehabilitation, requiring victim restitution and reducing the levels of criminal activity. The role of the board is to advise and assist local agencies in establishing or modifying services for both victims and offenders and is integral in the development and implementation of new and existing programs, such as community service, substance use diversion, home incarceration, electronic monitoring, probation supervision, and substance abuse assessment, testing and treatment. Additionally, the CCJB reviews and endorses criminal justice agency grants.

The CCJB has created partnerships between the public and private sectors as a means of reaching its goals. For example, the successful partnership between the CCJB and Rite Aid Pharmacies resulted in the production and distribution on an educational video, *Playing with Fire*. Another partnership between the board and a private funder helped to develop its nationally recognized shoplifting video titled *Stop Thief*. However, after recognizing that most private sector businesses and foundations donate solely to tax exempt organizations, the CCJB formed a 501(c) (3) non-profit foundation in February

of 2002 in order to increase funding by expanding its private sector partnership and lessen the funding burden from the government.

Similar to its predecessor CDI, Henrico CCP brings together local government, the judiciary, mental health professionals and community providers to develop program alternatives that meet the needs of the individuals referred, such as differential community supervision and treatment, and community service placements. With a focus on client self-responsibility and accountability, CCP is designed to meet more than just the probation supervision needs of clients, but to address risk factors and criminogenic needs, as well.

In 2007, Henrico CCP became one of the initial 10 Evidenced Based Practices Pilot Sites in the state incorporating best practices into probation supervision. Probation and Pretrial Officers have received training in Motivational Interviewing skills, offender specific risk or needs assessments. Probation Officers conduct assessments on all offenders to guide levels of supervision and interventions (Modified Offender Screening Tool and Offender Screening Tool, as well as case planning).

The general purposes of Henrico CCP are:

- To provide post-sentencing alternatives in addition to probation supervision for certain offenders with the goal of reducing the incidence of repeat offenders
- To be more efficient and economical with correctional services by reducing the number of offenders who are incarcerated
- To assess the likelihood of a defendant's failure to appear in court and the danger posed to the community by the defendant
- To supervise bond conditions imposed by the court
- To oversee offenders making restitution to victims of crimes through financial reimbursement
- To allow the County to provide for specific rehabilitative needs of selected offenders rather than placing these offenders in programs which may be inappropriate
- To allow the County a greater involvement in responding to the problem of crime in the community and address public safety concerns through community supervision

Since its inception in 1983 until the present, Henrico County CCP has been a driving force in the criminal justice community. Through its mission, dedicated board, staff, its contributions to Henrico County and accomplishments as an organization, CCP has solidified itself as a major player in keeping communities safe.