Hancock County

**Community Corrections Act Programs**

**Annual Report**

# Fiscal Year 2011

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Program Goals and Objectives

The Hancock County Community Corrections Act (CCA) Programs continue to achieve statewide program goals and objectives of reducing commitments to state prison and/or local jails while providing cost effective sentencing alternatives that allow for safely supervising offenders in the community. The following report will illustrate how Hancock County CCA Programs have met those primary goals and objectives, while improving the overall quality and efficiency of the local criminal justice system.

In Fiscal Year 2008 the Hancock County Community Corrections Act Programs were victims of a local flood which destroyed the offices that housed the CCA programs. Despite this development, the programs managed to maintain their extraordinary high level of service, while operating from a FEMA trailer in a county parking lot. The Hancock County Commissioners spent approximately $41,000.00 to house the CCA Programs in FEMA trailers for nine (9) months, while appropriate accommodations could be negotiated and modified. The programs are currently in their new location at 514 South Main Street, Findlay, Ohio. The location was purchased by the Hancock County Board of Commissioners in July of 2010.



The following report articulates the activity of Hancock County Community Corrections Act Programs for fiscal year 2011 (July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011).

**Presentence Investigations**

Hancock County 407 CCA Program continues to provide Presentence Investigations as requested to the Hancock County Common Pleas Court. The investigations are conducted in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 2951.03 and Criminal Rule 2.2 and offers the Court a thorough account of the offense; a criminal and social history of the offender; a risk/need assessment, and victim input, if applicable, to assist the Court in sentencing decisions. It should be noted that due to previous state budget cuts, the County General Fund supplements one-half of the Presentence Writer’s salary and benefits. A total of one hundred fifty five (155) reports were prepared for the Common Pleas Court in Fiscal Year 2011.

Adhering to the “Risk Principle,” an essential component of Hancock County Presentence Investigations is a risk/needs score for the Court’s consideration while considering sentencing alternatives. Commencing Fiscal Year 2011, Hancock County transitioned to utilizing the new Ohio Risk Assessment System - Community Supervision Screening Tool (ORAS-CSST) that was developed by the University of Cincinnati in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. The Hancock County Common Pleas Court acknowledges the importance of assessing offender risk/needs to assist them in making sound sentencing decisions. As required, Adult Probation Department staff has been certified in the tool and also received the subsequent “booster” training required by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

During Fiscal Year 2011, the Adult Probation Department dedicated time to restructuring the Court’s Presentence Investigation’s questionnaire to mirror many of the questions found in the new risk assessment tool.

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##### JAIL DIVERSION

Pretrial Release (Bond)

Hancock County’s 408/Jail Diversion Program continues to provide safe, cost-effective supervision through Pretrial Release (Bond). This program was designed to divert pretrial status offenders safely from the overcrowded Hancock County Justice Center. Offenders who are placed in this program must comply with Court restrictions placed on them, including no contact orders and reporting on a regular basis to the Adult Probation Department. At the end of Fiscal Year 2011 (June 30, 2011), the Pretrial Release (Bond) Program had met its goal of one hundred seventy (170) diversions as established by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, diverting a total of one hundred and eighty-eight (188) offenders, operating at 111% capacity.

This program also provides the Court valuable pre and post arraignment investigations. These reports provide the Court information early (and at various stages) in the case to assist them in determining which offenders are safe to release into the community pending trial. Commencing Fiscal Year 2011 (July 1, 2010) the department began solely utilizing the Ohio Risk Assessment System Assessment Tool - Pretrial Assessment Tool (ORAS-PAT). Again, this tool was developed by the University of Cincinnati in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to assess offenders for pretrial specific issues. As required, all Adult Probation Department staff has been certified in the use of this tool.

By performing as articulated above, the program met its goals of reducing commitments to the local jail, improving the quality and efficiency of the local criminal justice system and providing a cost effective option for safely supervising offenders in the community.

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**PRISON DIVERSION**

Intensive Supervision (ISP)

Hancock County’s Intensive Supervision (ISP) or 407 Program is designed to supervise and monitor offenders at a higher risk, or those with higher needs, for recidivism in the community by providing more restrictive, *intensive* supervision, utilizing programming focusing on the offender’s criminogenic needs. This program consists of four phases, with gradually less restrictive sanctions based on the offender’s compliance with conditions and reduced risk/need levels. The program is nine (9) to twelve (12) months in duration.

Utilizing Evidence-Based Practices, principles that research has shown are effective in reducing the likelihood that an offender will commit a new crime, the Intensive Supervision Program has endeavored to create a program that mirrors what research indicates works with Ohio offenders. The following eight basic principles involved establishing evidence-based practices are as follows:

* Assessing the risk and need of the offender;
* Enhancing the motivation of the offender;
* Targeting interventions to the offender’s needs;
* Providing a skilled, trained staff;
* Increasing positive reinforcement;
* Engaging ongoing support in natural communities;
* Measuring relevant processes and practices;
* Providing measurement feedback.

Commencing Fiscal 2011, the Intensive Supervision Program began solely utilizing the new Ohio Risk Assessment System - Community Supervision Screening Tool (ORAS-CSST) that has been developed by the University of Cincinnati in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. The Hancock County Intensive Supervision Program acknowledges the importance of assessing offender risk/needs to enable them to target interventions specific to each offender. These identified risks and needs are incorporated into an individual case plan developed for each offender.

Again utilizing Evidence-Based Practices principles, the Hancock County Adult Probation Department has been zealous about enhancing the motivation of offenders placed in our program. To that purpose, we ensure that program staff remains sufficiently trained in skill sets proven to produce desired results with the high-risk/need offender population (i.e. motivational interviewing; crisis intervention training; 4 to 1 positive reinforcement ratio, etc.). In addition, the Hancock County Adult Probation Department collaborated with a local treatment provider and implemented an internal cognitive program in October 2005. The curriculum that was selected was Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) and it is now offered four times per week to both male and female offenders who are on community control and have been determined to be at high risk of re-offending and demonstrate high need(s). All Hancock County Adult Probation Department employees are certified in the MRT curriculum and co-facilitate with a Forensic Case Manager employed thru Century Health, Inc. and contracted thru the local ADAMHS Board.

As indicated above, in addition to providing this cognitive programming, the intensive supervision officers are also implementing structured case planning with offenders. In an effort to relate case management activities directly to the offender’s criminogenic needs identified during the risk/need assessment, these detailed case plans assist the offender in determining short term, attainable goals they must achieve throughout their supervision. These goals may consist of attending treatment programming and obtaining employment as well as simple tasks such as paying their bills and attending probation appointments. These case plans are reviewed with offenders at each appointment to monitor progress and establish and complete new goals and to assist the offender on how to plan for and accomplish these goals.

The Hancock County Adult Probation Department continually measures relevant processes and practices involving the program and shares this information with staff; the Court; treatment providers and other community organizations to ensure pertinent resources are available within the community. An amazing example of this in FY09 was the completion and dedication of a local permanent supportive housing facility for the offender population. The genesis of this program was the program measuring homelessness issues and how they related to the failure of offenders in our community. Once this information was shared, numerous community leaders collaborated with the Housing Consortium to complete this sixteen-bed facility. A more recent and ongoing example are quarterly meetings with local treatment provider Century Health, Inc. and the local ADAMHS Board. The meetings resulted in Century Health, Inc. agreeing to undergo a Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) conducted by the University of Cincinnati. The recommendations made in that report received in September of 2011 will be made a priority in revamping treatment interventions provided to the offending population.

At the end of Fiscal Year 2011 (June 30, 2011), the Intensive Supervision Program diverted sixty (60) offenders, just shy of its seventy three (73) per year goal. Upon reviewing this trend with staff, the Court and several other criminal justice partners, it was determined that the goal was not met in FY11 for several reasons. First, we are utilizing the new risk/needs tool and screening numerous offenders out of the program that should not be receiving intensive services. Second, our local criminal indictments (offenders charged with felony offenses and may be eligible) decreased from 311 in 2009 to 267 in 2010. Lastly, a large majority of those felony offenses charged were by the State Police, resulting in indictments of our of town offenders, making them ineligible for Intensive Supervision services. This is a trend we will continue to monitor.

Each year, the program painstakingly evaluates those offenders who were noted as unsuccessful in the program. This year, we found the criminogenic targets most noted were substance abuse (specifically opiate or prescription abuse); poor peer associations and poor attitudes, values and beliefs. This information is communicated to the probation staff; the Court; local treatment providers and the community corrections planning board as we continue to collaborate to address these problem areas.

As evidenced above, the program continues to meet its goals of reducing commitments to state prisons; improving the quality and efficiency of the local criminal justice system and providing a cost effective option for safely supervising offenders in the community.

It should be noted that this is the program that has received the Cliff Skeen Community Corrections Award from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction on numerous occasions.

(See below statistical report.)

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**Program Highlights**

**Cognitive-Based Offender Programming**

Mirroring the University of Cincinnati research that states effective programs contain a component of cognitive programming, our Prison Diversion Program continues to offer moral reconation therapy (MRT), a quality cognitive curriculum for offenders deemed high-risk and high-need. Commencing in October of 2005, and partnering with the local ADAMHS Board and Century Health, Inc., the Hancock County Adult Probation Department now offers four (4) groups at various times and locations for male and female offenders. Cognitive programming aims at altering offender’s attitudes and belief systems in anticipation of reducing criminal thinking patterns and ultimately recidivism. In an attempt to increase program effectiveness, utilizing CA Grant funds, the program contracted with the University of Cincinnati to conduct an assessment of the MRT program along with an assessment of the services the offenders are receiving from Century Health, Inc. Those assessments were received in September of 2011 and offered numerous recommendations. The Adult Probation Department is already creating a plan to implement the recommended changes in calendar year 2012, which includes but is not limited to:

* Training all probation and designated Century Health staff in Thinking for a Change Curriculum
* Transitioning the probation department’s MRT (Moral Reconation Therapy) curriculum to Thinking for a Change
  + Utilizing a “readiness” assessment prior to entering group
  + Creating surveys to be utilized throughout group
  + Creating objective completion criteria
  + Creating formal discharge summaries
* Increasing Quality Assurance Activities
* Increasing staff training/utilization of punishers and reinforcements
* Increasing staff training/utilization of skill building/rehearsal in individual appointments
* Increasing staff training in the following areas: effective interventions, behavioral strategies (role-playing), application of reinforcers and punishers, and risk/need factors related to criminal conduct.

In an effort to address many of these recommendations, we will be coordinating with Century Health, Inc, ADAMHS Board and Findlay Municipal Court. We hope to increase our request for General Fund dollars as well as apply for Probation Improvement Grants that are anticipated being offered in October 2011.

**Community Corrections Planning Board**

The Community Corrections Planning Board remains remarkably active not only in the CCA Grant Programs, but comprehensively in the local criminal justice system. In Fiscal Year 2011, the Hancock County Community Corrections Planning Board held more than the statutorily required meetings, specifically meeting on August 26, 2010; October 14, 2010; February 10, 2011, and June 14, 2011. In addition, the Board coordinated and hosted a local Criminal Justice Summit that was held on Saturday, May 21, 2011. The Summit was attended by over fifty (50) local and state elected officials, leaders and interested persons. The agenda was facilitated by the Supreme Court and ultimately began to create a comprehensive plan to address crime in Hancock County in the face of failing city, county and state budgets. The following areas were discussed on the agenda:

* + **Jail Expansion:**

Municipal Judges Fry, Starn and Common Pleas Judge Niemeyer gave a presentation to the group that revisited the 2006 jail needs assessment which indicated at that time that without new legislative changes or changes in sentencing philosophies, our community was deficient in jail space. The various issues surrounding the need for jail expansion; the possibility of building a misdemeanant facility, and utilization of community supervision alternatives were discussed and it was determined that the Findlay Municipal Court judges would sanction an updated study to ascertain our community’s needs relating to this topic. This report is pending and should be available by October 2011.

* + **Reentry Initiatives:**

A comprehensive Reentry report was submitted to the Community Corrections Planning Board the preceding year and the summit was scheduled to give this topic time and attention and make an effort to prioritize the various subcommittees. It was reiterated that it is imperative all reentry initiatives embrace what research indicates works with the offending population. Chair Precia Stuby subsequently coordinated a kick-off meeting in August 2011. Those subcommittees continue to make progress in the various areas previously identified as follows:

* + - * + Housing
        + Peer/Family Pro Social Support
        + Health/Behavioral Services
        + Education/Employment
        + Communication
  + **Principles of Effective Intervention:**

Director Switzer gave a presentation on the principles of effective intervention in the community corrections setting based on the various research that has been presented throughout the nation by the University of Cincinnati. There was enough interest from Summit participants that it was determined Director Switzer would coordinate a presentation by the University of Cincinnati for all of those interested in Hancock County.

**Community Training on Effective Interventions**

Utilizing CCA Funds, Director Switzer hosted the University of Cincinnati on June 9, 2011, to present effective interventions with offenders to Findlay/Hancock County. Those in attendance ranged from law enforcement; treatment providers; religions leaders; elected officials and community corrections professionals. It was again reiterated that reentry initiatives adopted in the community should closely adhere to these principles.

**Drug Testing**

Hancock County CCA Programs continue to provide random urinalysis of high-risk offenders in an attempt to monitor and prevent drug usage. The program currently has the ability to test for Marijuana, Cocaine, Opiates, Methamphetamine, Oxycontin, Ecstasy, PCP, Amphetamines, Oxycodone, Methadone, Suboxone and Benzodiazepines. In Fiscal Year 2011, a total of 8,342 tests were performed, with 8.0% resulting positive. Additional drug and alcohol screening is completed in the field utilizing instant saliva tests and breathalyzer technology.

**Staff Training**

Despite significant budget cuts, Hancock County CCA Programs continue to emphasize the importance of employee training. Administration strived to utilize many free-of-charge resources, ensuring that training hours are focused on COB or “changing offender behavior.” As highlighted in the University of Cincinnati findings, we will be focusing on their recommendations for in-house training for FY12.

**Community Service**

During fiscal year 2011, the Hancock County Common Pleas Judges continued to order offenders to complete community service hours as a special condition of supervision. Hancock County CCA Programs completed community service hours utilizing the following agencies:

* + National Emergency Grant/ Findlay River Cleanup Crew
  + Hancock Park Service
  + Hancock County Litter Landing
  + Habitat for Humanity/ReStore
  + Liberty Township Fire Department
  + Hancock County Courthouse Maintenance Department
  + Hancock County Metropolitan Housing Department
  + Focus on Friends Drop-in Center
  + Salvation Army Thrift Store
  + Findlay City Street Department
  + Compass
  + Blanchard Valley Center
  + Historical Society

**Financial Overview**

A continued area of concern relates to local and state budget decreases that could dramatically impact jail space and local sanctions available to safely and effectively supervise offenders in our community. As a reminder, the CCA Grants and this report reflect only a portion of felony offenders supervised within the Hancock County Community.

Mission Statement

The Hancock County Adult Probation Department is dedicated to promoting citizen safety and victim reparation by providing strict court ordered monitoring and cognitive behavioral programming for offenders.