American Correctional Association

PUBLIC CORRECTIONAL POLICY ON COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

1985-1

Introduction:

Community corrections are comprised of residential and nonresidential programs that are a critical component of the public safety continuum that supervises individuals under the legal authority in the community. These programs are proven to reduce crime and victimization and should be used for both juveniles and adults for reentry from post-incarceration and, when appropriate, to divert non-violent offenders from incarceration.

The effective use of community corrections programs should be utilized to provide programming and treatment of offenders to protect the public, reduce recidivism and to reserve jail and prison space for those individuals deemed to be the highest risk to public safety.

To be successful, community corrections programs must promote public safety and a continuum of care that responds to the needs of victims, offenders and the community. These programs enable offenders to work and pay taxes, make restitution, meet court obligations, maintain family ties and develop and/or maintain critical support systems with the community.

These programs should include a collaborative, comprehensive planning process for the development of effective policies and services.

Policy Statement:

Community corrections programs shall require offenders, based upon a validated risk and needs assessment, to participate in certain activities and/or programs that are specifically directed toward reducing their risk to the community. Those responsible for community corrections programs, services and supervision should:
A. Seek statutory authority and adequate funding for community programs and services as part of a comprehensive corrections strategy;

B. Embrace and fully utilize a validated risk and needs assessment and base offender programming on criminogenic needs established by the assessment. Further dosages of programming and/or treatment should match the identified risk and needs established by the assessment;

C. Implement and maintain evidence-informed practices and approaches when developing all programming and curricula. These programming and curricula shall encourage behavior change for offenders by offering incentives for behavioral change while also holding offenders accountable;

D. Deliver all programming and curricula with fidelity by establishing an effective quality improvement plan.

E. Communicate with the public about the benefits of community programs and services, the criteria used to select individuals for these programs, and the requirements for successful completion;

F. Recognize that public acceptance of community corrections is enhanced by the provision of identifiable needs of victims and victim services, community service and conciliation programs.

G. Mobilize the participation of a well-informed constituency, including citizen advisory boards and broad-based coalitions, to address community corrections issues;

H. Participate in collaborative, comprehensive planning efforts that provide a framework to assess community needs and develop a system wide plan for services; and

I. Ensure the integrity and accountability of community programs by establishing a reliable system for monitoring and measuring performance and outcomes in accordance with accepted standards of professional practices and sound evaluation methodology.

This Public Correctional Policy was unanimously ratified by the American Correctional Association Delegate Assembly at the Winter Conference in Orlando, FL on January 20, 1985. It was last reviewed and reaffirmed at the 2020 Winter Conference in San Diego, CA on January 11, 2020.