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Overview of the Illinois DOC High-Risk Parolee Reentry Program  
and 3-Year Recidivism Outcomes of Program Participants

Operated by Illinois Department of Corrections  
in Partnership with BI Incorporated

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### **The Design of the Reentry Program**

The Reentry program at Southside Day Reporting Center is intended to protect the public by providing parolees a combination of maximum supervision, immediate reporting (7 days per week), and intensive treatment, at one location. Each parolee is assigned to an individual case manager who meets with each parolee at least one time per week and documents pertinent information, tracks identified transportation and housing needs and reports offender progress at least monthly. DRC case managers notify the IDOC Supervising Parole Agent of any program violations. After completing a Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R Risk/Needs Instrument) with each assigned parolee, the case manager develops an individualized supervision and treatment plan that focuses on reducing criminogenic risk factors and substance abuse while helping build adaptive life and employment skills. Parolees may be assigned up to three separate rehabilitation activities per week including:

- Substance Abuse Education and Treatment
- Adult basic education
- GED preparation
- Survival Skills Building
- Cognitive Restructuring (Moral Reconciliation Therapy®)
- Parenting and Family Reintegration Group
- Anger Management
- Employment Skills Building
- Career Development Counseling
- Aftercare Group

Progression through the Day Reporting Center is individually paced and based on each parolee's compliance with and success in fulfilling the requirements of each of three supervision phases of varying levels of accountability. For example, no parolee may move to a reduced level of reporting until he or she has maintained abstinence from drug use for 30 days. All parolees are required to complete the MRT (Moral Reconciliation Therapy®) cognitive restructuring program, to break entrenched criminal thinking patterns, prior to entering aftercare. Please refer to Attachment A for a visual diagram of the Chicago Reentry Model.

# THREE-YEAR RECIDIVISM OUTCOMES

## II. Three-Year Recidivism Outcomes of Southside Day Reporting Center Participants as Compared to Recidivism Outcomes of a Matched Comparison Group

1503 clients were assigned to the Southside Reentry program between April 1, 1998 and April 1, 2001. In order to evaluate program impact, the IDOC Research and Information Systems drew a matched comparison sample of 871 parolees released to Chicago's West Side during this same period who went into regular parole supervision without day reporting services. Chicago's West Side is a community similarly impacted as is the South Side by gangs, crime, violence, drug use and dealing, and family and community dissolution. Approximately 300 parolees released to the West Side were drawn for each year that were similar in age, number of incarcerations, longest holding crime type, race, and level of education to parolees assigned to the Southside Reentry program.

### The Outcomes:

#### Recidivism Data for the Southside and Westside Parole Groups

For the purposes of this research **recidivism was defined as reincarceration to prison as a result of a new crime conviction**. Recidivism outcomes for the two groups are represented in the following table.

**Table 1:  
Differences in Percentage of Re-incarceration for New Conviction Patterns**

Period of time in the Community	Recidivism rate of Reentry Center participants (N=1503 Parolees)	Recidivism rate of matched comparison group w/no DRC experience (N=871 Parolees)	Difference in % of recidivism
<b>3 years</b> Inmates released from prison, 4/98-3/99	35%	52%	17%
<b>2 years</b> Inmates released from prison, 4/99-3/00	26%	45%	19%
<b>1 year</b> Inmates released from prison, 4/00-3/01	10%	33%	23%
<b>Average</b>	25.7%	43.3%	17.6%

### III. The IDOC Reentry Program is Achieving Its Goals

#### I. “To reduce recidivism through a highly structured program where parolees modify their behavior patterns that lead to criminal activities:”

- As highlighted in the above table, parolees placed in the highly structured Southside Reentry program were reincarcerated for new criminal convictions at a much lower rate than the Westside group. This was true for parolees in each of the 3 cohorts – those released and in the community for 3 years, 2 years and 1 year. Overall, this represents a 40.6% reduction in new criminal convictions over the comparison group (or 263 fewer crimes committed) which translates into an estimated saving of \$3.6 million over 3 years to the Illinois taxpayers .

#### 2. “To decrease substance abuse and sex offender relapses.”

- Fortunately, there were no reconvictions of sex offenders who were placed either in the DRC or in the Westside comparison sample during the study period. All sex offenders in the Reentry program were transferred by IDOC to other supervision modalities by mid-2000 based upon policy change. The decrease in sex offender relapses that this implies cannot be attributed to the Southside program intervention.
- The average number of UAs per month in the DRC that were positive for drug use or refused (counted as positive) was 16% for year one and 15.6% for year two. This indicated that approximately 84% of parolees were not using drugs in a given month, a significant figure considering the high percentage of substance abusers and addicts represented in the population. Serious addictions to crack cocaine or heroin undoubtedly accounted for a number of program failures. Drug of abuse as related to outcome will be tracked in future program data gathering.

#### 3. “Increase parolees’ ability to find jobs and stay employed.”

- The employment program at the Southside DRC was successful in preparing parolees for employment and placing them in suitable jobs. During the program’s first year, 24% of parolees were employed, 49% were employed during the second year, and 47.5% of parolees were employed during the third year. It was not possible to track how long each parolee maintained his/her job because of program movement, but this will be targeted in future data gathering efforts. It is important to note as well that many of the parolees entering Southside Day Reporting Center reported never having worked at a formal job before in their lives.

#### **4. “To structure the activity of assigned parolees within the community and provide increased documentation to field agents.”**

- This objective was accomplished through the immediate and continuing structure and accountability that was demanded of each parolee referred to the program beginning 24 hours after institutional release. This created some resentment from parolees who were not psychologically prepared for the transition to the DRC and felt that they had done their time and did not require close supervision. However, it was frequently remarked by parolees at later stages of the program that the structure had been very helpful for them. It has been BI's experience that the close cooperation with the Department has been a key element of the program's impact. It was essential that parolees understood that noncompliance would be dealt with promptly and firmly and IDOC field agents provided the essential enforcement element that the program required.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Preliminary results from the Southside Parolee Reentry Center described above confirm that the program has been successful in enhancing public safety and facilitating community reintegration for a number of parolees. Based upon three years of operation, the Southside Day Reporting Center has served the vision to protect public safety, enforce zero tolerance for inmates, and offer services to those who truly want to better their lives. Intensive Reentry programming puts parolee in a high visibility position that rapidly separates those who are serious about making changes from those who try to avoid responsibility. Noncompliant parolees are rapidly identified and sanctioned or returned to prison. The Southside program intends to work closely with the Department to continue with the development of effective responses for technical parole violators. It is urgent to leverage these parolees into positive action if feasible to maintain them in the community, preserving expensive prison beds for dangerous and violent inmates.

To receive the complete 3-Year Southside Reentry Center Report, further information on BI's Reentry Programs or to find out how BI Incorporated could be of assistance in developing a Reentry program in your State, please contact:

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## Sources

<sup>1</sup> Illinois Department of Corrections. *Request for Proposal: Day Reporting Center*. (January, 1997)

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<sup>2</sup> Andrews, D.A., and Bonta, J. *The Level of Service Inventory-Revised Manual*, Multi-Health Systems, Inc. (Niagara Falls, NY, 1995), 14.

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<sup>3</sup> See full Three-Year Outcome Report for the IDOC for a complete explanation of the calculations.

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