

# Correctional Program Checklist: Summary of the Fresno DRC Evaluation

## Summary of Day Reporting Center Program Value

April 2009

### Introduction

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) periodically reviews its programs to ensure they are operating effectively and efficiently. Determining a program's value is especially critical given the current budget crisis. Reports such as this one that provide unbiased, quantitative analysis can help identify programs that work.



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### Report Background

As part of its training for certification by the University of Cincinnati, a team of CDCR researchers evaluated the Fresno DRC using the Correctional Program Checklist (CPC), a widely respected correctional assessment tool. The FDRC provides treatment and training programs to address issues like substance abuse and poor decision-making skills that often lead to criminal activity for high-risk, adult parolees in Fresno County. BI Incorporated has operated the FDRC since 2005.

The CPC, modeled after the widely-used Correctional Program Assessment Inventory developed by Paul Gendreau and Don Andrews in 1992, provides an objective, consistent rating system for evaluating how effectively offender intervention programs reduce the likelihood that participants will commit another offense and return to jail or prison. Through structured interviews with staff and participants, thorough review of program materials and researcher observation, the CPC evaluates how well these programs incorporate current corrections research in treating at-risk offenders and reducing the likelihood that they'll return to jail or prison. The CPC is a concrete evaluation tool that provides important feedback for improving offender intervention programs and helps governmental agencies determine which programs offer the best investment for limited resources—a vital issue today.

The CPC not only considers the content of a program but also its capacity to deliver that content in ways that lead to high completion rates and reduced

recidivism among participants. Ratings of “highly effective,” “effective,” “needs improvement” or “ineffective” are given in five different areas: program leadership and development, staff characteristics, offender assessment, treatment characteristics and quality assurance. Based on these ratings, an overall rating is applied to the evaluated program.

Impressively, the FDRC earned “highly effective” or “effective” ratings in each of the CPC’s five evaluation categories. Most importantly, the FDRC received an overall rating of “highly effective” as an intervention program for offenders—a rating few other programs have earned. Following is a brief summary of the evaluation results for the FDRC.

## Report Highlights

**Program Leadership and Development:** The FDRC received an effective rating for the longevity of the program and the program director’s high degree of drug abuse rehabilitation experience. Evaluators recommended composing a literature review to explain the theoretical foundations of the program to staff members to help them better understand the structure and reasoning behind the treatment and counseling they provide participants. Specific comments include:

*“The program appears to be valued by the local and criminal justice communities evidenced by the consistency of referrals. The agency is deemed stable in that it is over eight years old.”*

**Staff Characteristics:** The FDRC received a highly effective rating in the area of staff characteristics for meeting education and training requirements. The evaluators commented:

*“From interviews, staff appears to be very supportive of rehabilitative efforts. Participants who were interviewed spoke positively about the helpfulness and dedication of the staff.”*

**Offender Assessment:** The FDRC also received a highly effective rating in this area of assessment. This category takes two factors into account: participant risk assessment and the placement of participants in appropriate supervision, treatment and training regimen based on their assessed risk. The FDRC conducts a pre-admission and exit risk analysis using the Level of Service Inventory—Revised before offenders move on to Aftercare.

**Treatment Characteristics:** The FDRC received a highly effective rating for providing treatment that successfully addresses criminal behavior and for providing relapse prevention support through group meetings and other strategies, such as role playing, to help participants handle situations they will face after completing the program. Evaluators commented:

*“We observed clients encouraged to participate actively and communicate thoughts to enhance the learning process.”*

**Quality Assurance:** The FDRC received an effective rating for evaluating how well the program is doing from the participant and staff perspectives. Evaluators recommended clarifying the criteria for successful completion of the program and closely tracking that information to enhance transparency among the FDRC, Division of Adult Parole Services and the CDCR.

**Overall Program Evaluation:** Overall, the FDRC was rated highly effective. Only 7 percent of the more than 400 programs evaluated using the CPC have received highly effective ratings. This puts the FDRC in an elite class of offender treatment programs that have proven successful in reducing the likelihood that participants will commit another offense and return to the criminal justice system after completing the program.