

*“Offenders in this program must learn to make good decisions to stay in the community. In a correctional facility, most of the decisions are made for them.”*

– Ralph Watson,  
Executive Director

## **Community Corrections Program Includes Technology, Treatment and Training, and Offender Pay Elements**



### **KEY POINTS:**

- Hamilton County Community Corrections offers court-sanctioned options for nonviolent offenders
- Program ensures offenders comply with sanctions and focus on positive decision-making skills by employing technology and ongoing supervision officer contact
- Offenders pay electronic monitoring fee, saving valuable taxpayer dollars
- Program records an 88% offender completion rate

## THE PROGRAM

Hamilton County Community Corrections, based in Noblesville, Indiana, offers a full-service program for nonviolent adult and juvenile offenders released to community supervision. Typically, the adult offenders in the program are convicted of either low-level felonies (theft, habitual traffic violations, second-time DUI) or misdemeanors (first-time DUI, possession, trespassing). Juveniles are placed in the program either upon adjudication or as a condition of pre-detention supervision. Hamilton County officials have worked with BI Incorporated for supervising technology and services for almost 15 years.

Hamilton County employs a range of BI technology, including active and passive GPS tracking, RF electronic monitoring, and more. The technology employed by the county with offenders depends on the risks and needs of the individual. Specifically, the county uses:

- BI ExacuTrack® AT, an active GPS tracking system, which provides near real-time data on offender movement in the community

- BI ExacuTrack®, a passive GPS tracking system, which logs offender movement in the community and downloads this data to a monitoring server periodically to ensure compliance to conditions of release
- BI HomeGuard® 200, an electronic monitoring system
- BI HomeCell®, an EM system that includes cellular technology
- BI Drive-BI®, a handheld system that allows checks on individuals from outside a home or workplace
- BI GuardCenter®, BI's 24/7 national monitoring center
- BI TotalAccess®, a software system that allows supervising officers to directly access and update or modify offender details via a secure website

With each of these systems, supervising officials are immediately paged if an alert is issued, following a series of standard response procedures, which could ultimately result in notifying the court of the violation.

Referrals to the program come from six superior courts, two municipal courts, and a circuit court. As judges' confidence in the supervision technology and program has grown over the years, so has its size. The program today averages about 140 adult offenders and 15 youth at a time.

Officials point out that electronic supervision is an important element of the community corrections program, but that it is only a tool that must be backed up by a strong human presence. Officers are highly involved in individuals' supervision, making frequent in-home visits. Also, officers closely monitor client attendance at required treatment and support programs.

Offenders must meet strict requirements to enter and remain in the county's electronic monitoring program. First, all are screened for substance abuse at least once monthly. Second, unless disabled, a full-time student, or excused by the court for extenuating circumstances, all offenders must work. Third, unless indigent, offenders pay \$10 daily or an hourly wage (whichever is greater) to participate.

## THE RESULTS

As the population of Hamilton County has grown quickly in the last two decades, the community corrections department has offered judges a cost-effective alternative to expensive incarceration. In 2009, 246 adult felons, 75 misdemeanants, and 83 youth were referred to the program. Adults were involved for an average length of 132 days, while youth were involved for an average of 45 days.

The savings are significant for the county. An Indiana DOC bed costs almost \$55 a day, a county jail bed \$35 a day, while the electronic monitoring program costs less than \$20 a day for both adult and juvenile offenders – half of which is eliminated by the offender's \$10 daily fee. "The payment shows the offender that they have to be both physically and fiscally responsible for the cost to the community," says Ralph Watson, Executive Director of the program.

The program boasts a positive 88% completion rate for offenders also. More importantly, Mr. Watson says the offenders learn to make good decisions, as they are being held

strictly accountable for electronic monitoring supervision requirements as well as the counseling and treatment programs they must complete.

"These offenders pose little risk to public safety. Instead, the Hamilton County Community Corrections and electronic monitoring program allows them to remain in the community, where they hold jobs, pay taxes, restitution or child support; something they cannot do from prison and jail," Executive Director Watson adds.

### TECHNOLOGY:

- BI ExacuTrack® AT
- BI ExacuTrack®
- BI HomeGuard® 200
- BI HomeCell®
- BI Drive-BI®
- BI GuardCenter®
- BI TotalAccess®



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