

***“By addressing our challenges with evidence-based practices and programs, we at Napa County hope to save taxpayers future costs, reduce the need for more jail capacity, and begin to tackle one of the key issues that led to jail overcrowding in the first place – high recidivism.”***

—Mary Butler  
Chief Probation Officer,  
Napa County Probation Department

## **Napa County targets recidivism through program that combines treatment for inmates and community based offenders**



### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Unique program works with both jail inmates and community supervised offenders
- Targeting criminal behavioral changes through cognitive skills classes helps reduce pressure on jail long term
- Almost 150 offenders participated in the program in its first year
- After one year, three-quarters of participants were employed or in school full time while still going to the center

## PROGRAM

Napa County sits north of the San Francisco Bay Area in a semi-rural region with a very slow, stable population growth rate of 0.7 percent. While funding and support for Napa County's criminal justice system was also relatively stable – especially compared to departments in other cash-strapped California counties – officials at the 264-bed Napa County Jail noticed in 2004 that an increasing offender population had created overcrowding problems.

County officials responded by hiring consultants in 2006 who identified emerging trends at the jail and helped leaders draft a plan for the county corrections department's short- and long-term concerns. The researchers uncovered some troubling trends. Jail admissions, the average length of stay and average daily population were growing. Projections showed the jail would far exceed its current capacity and need future expansion.

Consultants also looked at jail populations in six other California counties with demographics similar to those of Napa County, and found that Napa County had an unusually large number of misdemeanor offenders – 77 percent of the inmate population – in its jail. The peer counties averaged a 67 percent felon and 33 percent

misdemeanant balance. Napa County officials decided they needed to divert more misdemeanor offenders away from jail time.

The Napa County Criminal Justice Committee, a group of stakeholders in the local criminal justice system, convened to look at options for addressing the emerging concerns at the Napa County Jail. The group looked for cost-effective, evidence-based solutions that could increase public safety, reduce overcrowding, cut offender recidivism and lower the county's long-term costs.

Acting on recommendations from the Justice Committee and consultants, the Napa County Board of Supervisors approved:

- Development of a Community Corrections Service Center (CCSC), which would offer day reporting and case management services as well as treatment and training.
- An in-custody program that would deliver cognitive behavioral treatment programs for inmates to address criminal thinking and prepare them for release.

Officials selected BI Incorporated to operate and deliver the treatment and training at the CCSC, in part because of the company's work running similar facilities in 30 jurisdictions around

the country and more than 10 in California. The Napa County Probation Department oversees the CCSC. The center opened in March 2009, operating seven days a week and was designed to manage 50 carefully screened program participants at a time. Counselors work with inmates at the jail also.

BI's programs offer cognitive behavioral treatment using evidence-based principles. Individuals referred to the CCSC go through a four-phase program. Participants will report daily at first, then less frequently as they comply with program guidelines. In addition to daily check-ins, participants are monitored closely for alcohol and drug use, meet with case managers, and participate in a series of treatment and training classes. Failure to comply with program rules and guidelines result in increased sanctions.

In Napa County's in-jail transition program, select inmates receive much of the same treatment and training that they will receive when they are released to probation and supervision through the service center. The goal is to introduce treatment and training to facilitate a successful transition to life at home, continue programming at the community-based service center and maximize the impact of programs delivered.

## RESULTS

Napa County's new plan for treatment and rehabilitation is paying dividends on many levels:

- The long term goal is to reduce jail crowding and divert more misdemeanor probationers to community supervision and treatment. While it is early to measure jail crowding effects, criminogenic risk has been reduced among participants.
- At the end of year one, 141 individuals had been enrolled in the program.
- The center places special emphasis on one criminogenic variable – employment. At the end of the first year, 73% of participants were employed or enrolled full-time in school.
- In addition to lowering the average daily population at the jail, the community-based treatment programs have helped slow the growth rate of the inmate population.

While the Napa County Jail will eventually require an expansion in the next few decades, it will be a smaller expansion than the one envisioned by officials before the CCSC opened. Building and operating a smaller expansion will save the county an estimated \$10 million in construction costs and millions more in operating expenses.

- The county is screening program participants before and after they complete rehabilitation programs to ensure corrections officials will meet their aggressive goal of lowering offender recidivism by 30 percent.

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