



ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS DIRECTORS

OACCD
Executive Board
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Eric Guyer
OACCD President,
Jackson County
Community Justice

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*Committed To, And
Value, Offender
Reformation,
Services to Victims,
Crime Prevention,
And Community
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SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY HEARING ON COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS FUNDING SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

Chair Williamson, Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, my name is Eric Guyer and I am the Director of Jackson County Community Justice. I am here today to speak on behalf of the Oregon Association of Community Corrections Directors (OACCD). I am again grateful for the opportunity to share my experiences in working with justice-involved Oregonians over the past twenty years, and the visionary and transformative work that has taken place in our state since the passing of SB 1145 in 1996. It is in support of this vision for the dignity, welfare and safety of Oregonians that our Association supports increased funding for Community Corrections along with support for the Actual Cost Study (ACS).

There has been considerable discussion of the cost study and what it represents. It is important to note that while mandated every six years, the 2006 cost study was fully funded, the 2012 cost study was only partially funded, and the 2018 cost study received zero funding. There will be numerous examples of the challenges that many of the larger counties are facing as a result of this, but these challenges are being felt across the state. The Actual Cost Study represents the increased time, and subsequent cost, of providing evidence-based practices to justice-involved individuals in the community.

Over the last decade, in an effort to make the biggest impact on the people we serve (justice-involved individuals, the community and victims), Community Corrections has increased expertise and proficiency in delivering evidence-based practices focusing on the risk, needs and barriers of the individuals on supervision. This has caused a shift from a reactive to a proactive style of case management. The role of Community Corrections has grown from that of referee (catching and responding to rule violations) to also include that of a coach (invested in the success of the players, teaching new plays and celebrating the wins). Rather than solely brokering resources, staff are now providing case plans, education and encouragement to those on supervision.

Although staff focus on criminogenic needs to decrease recidivism, they also address those humanitarian needs which are often barriers to success. Case management is a mix of decreasing barriers while increasing knowledge and motivation. Staff work with clients to identify and reach goals that will decrease their risk. This is accomplished through focusing on the causes of behavior and teaching new skills and interventions to change the criminal behavior. Staff are now spending more time with clients, much as a coach would with his or her team.



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Community Corrections has had to add to a model of accountability, one of empathy as well. Many of our clients have family issues, trauma, substance use disorders and behavioral health needs. Goal-oriented case management takes more time, energy, patience and compassion but creates a team approach with clients that increases their participation, and decreases recidivism.

And while we have implemented this and other changes in work practice and the general orientation of our work due to the fact that they work, it is important to note that they were mandated through the implementation of SB 267 in 2003 and subsequently written into Administrative Rule.

Community Corrections funding provides the foundation for the work that impacts justice-involved individuals in our communities. Compared with imprisonment, traditional behavioral health interventions and other more costly residential options, Community Corrections is still the best value in providing services to justice-involved Oregonians. It bears repeating, Community Corrections is the human side of the Criminal Justice System. It is the element of the system where many Oregonians suffering from Substance Use Disorder receive life-saving and transformational alcohol and drug treatment. It is the element of the system most clearly tasked with decreasing the lasting socio-economic impact on Justice-involved Oregonians. It is the element of the system where trauma-informed and gender-responsive interventions change lives daily. It is the element of the system where housing is found, employment is gained and families are kept together, intent on ending intergenerational transmission of crime.

There are a number of my colleagues who will share about the impacts that not funding the Actual Cost Study is having on their communities. We look forward to working together again in November on this very subject to give more detail and context. I also feel it is imperative that those of us before you accurately reflect what an investment in the Actual Cost Study truly represents. I am passionate about the changes that have taken place in this work. These changes have been born from a partnership between the State and Counties. But more than that, these changes have risen from advocacy, research, practitioners, stakeholders and legislators coming together to provide essential services for Oregonians in their communities. I am confident that it is this same spirit that will lead to continued investment in the work of Community Corrections.