

## **Vermont Department of Corrections: Focused Deterrence Proposal**

### **Introduction**

The Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) is proposing to establish three demonstration locations in the state to pilot furlough supervision utilizing the concept of Focused Deterrence. The focus of the effort will be high-risk domestic violence offenders. The concept of Focused Deterrence is based on 20 years of research by subject matter experts, to include Professor David Kennedy from John Jay College in New York City. Professor Kennedy was the lead academic advisor in the development of Project VISION, launched in Rutland to address the opioid epidemic (2013).

Professor Kennedy, as the Director of the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) at John Jay College, has agreed to work with DOC on the development of a Focused Deterrence pilot program. The addition of Kennedy to the effort brings the resources of the NNSC and expertise of established research to help develop and implement supervisory community-based structures for these high-risk offenders.

### **Statement of the Challenge**

Vermont DOC runs a unique form of supervision in the furlough structure. Unlike all other states, there is a practice of furloughing inmates to the community and allowing them under supervision to serve their sentence in the community. This system is unlike any other reentry programming in the country. It puts high-risk and complicated individuals in the community to integrate them back into community life. As documented in the recent Council of State Governments report on Vermont Justice Reinvestment II, there is high number of those offenders being returned to custody for what is perceived as “technical violations”. These returns account for large number of entries into the jail system. As part of the work on the report it is acknowledge that much of this population is complicated and demand services in the community that may not exist or are not wrapped around individuals when furloughed. In order to have successful reentry via furlough there need to be better efforts to coordinate services that are directed at the individual’s needs.

### **Proposed Approach**

Professor Kennedy proposes that an approach be developed that models the principles of Focused Deterrence, Project VISION based in Rutland and the wraparound concepts of the Hub and Spoke Model directed at opiate addiction.

Using existing resources in the community a collaborative effort would be developed that brings the necessary resources to bear. Just as in Project VISION those resources would include but not be limited to the courts, prosecutors, public defender, local police agencies, DOC, AHS elements, local Justice Centers, faith communities, COSA, job training/recruiters, addiction coaches, etc. to form the wraparound services. It is thought that better coordination of existing resources will produce better outcomes.

Funding would be provided to the Justice Center to coordinate the wraparound plan. This would form the hub and the spokes would be the collaborative resources in place to support the reentry of the individual into the community. This would create the situation where the individual would not only have a contract with DOC but would also have a social contract with the community with the eyes of the community on the subject to support, but also hold accountable.

Focused Deterrence would be focused on a community effort to hold the offender accountable.

There is much detail to be worked out through the academic partnership with Professor Kennedy and the resources at NNSC. But, in principle the reentry into the community from jail would be structured around this process:

- The case worker begins the planning process for release to the community on furlough;
- The planning process would involve the case worker internally, the assigned probation officer and the case coordinator at the Justice Center;
- There would be a collaborative planning process with the wrap around team to individualize the services and support in the community- to include programing, clinical support, job training/pairing, housing and coordination with local law enforcement;
- The local probation/parole officer is the point for supervision of the person and there is a case manger from the Justice Center who is the coordinator of the services to support;
- Upon release the individual is welcomed back into the community at a “call in” where various officials welcome the individual back. This is where the social contract is solidified;
- This “call in” would include police officials, elected officials, key community members, faith community, etc. It is a supportive tone which offers supports but also a clear message that the community has expectations of the individual- if not met will result in swift consequences (furlough interrupt);
- The focused deterrence is intense follow up by the DOC, law enforcement and the community.

### **Conclusion**

This is an outline of the proposed concept to better manage high-risk domestic violence offenders. It is conceptual and will be the framework for future community-based focused deterrence programs. The work will be better defined with the assistance from the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College. It is hoped that the design of the concept will begin this summer and the piloting of the program will take place in three areas of the state by fall. The success of the effort will be measured by NNSC in late 2021. The goal is to reduce furlough returns, cut the jail population and have better outcomes, all part of the goals of the Vermont Justice Reinvestment II. If the pilot is deemed successful it can be expanded to other districts and other classes of offenders.

**Budget Needs**

Engagement with National Network for Safe Communities - \$100,000

Enhancements to three Justice Center Sites - \$375,000

Support to Network of Community Coaches/COSA - \$75,000

Data Analysis and Support - \$75,000

Development of Site Locations - \$120,000