



December 2011

“WHAT WORKS” IN COMMUNITY SUPERVISION INTERIM REPORT

Under Washington’s sentencing laws, an adult convicted in superior court receives a sentence as prescribed by the ranges of the state’s sentencing guidelines.¹ Some sentences result in confinement in prison, while less serious offenses result in county jail confinement or supervision in the community.

Washington’s laws indicate which offenders are supervised in the community either after their prison term or as part of their sentence.² The Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) is required to supervise offenders convicted in superior court who are sentenced directly to community supervision.³

DOC contracted with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to examine effective practices for community supervision of offenders.⁴ The Institute was asked to provide an interim report by December 2011 and a final report by July 2012.

The first section of this interim report summarizes the main objective of this project; it will be completed by July 2012. In the second section, we summarize our findings to date on our systematic review of the literature regarding “what works” for community supervision.

Suggested citation: E. K. Drake (2011). “What works” in community supervision: *Interim report* (Document No. 11-12-1201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

Summary

The Department of Corrections contracted with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to examine effective community supervision practices of offenders. The specific research tasks, to be completed by July 2012, include:

- Task 1:** Evaluate DOC’s use of sanctions, including confinement, for offenders who violate the terms of their community custody.
- Task 2:** Review evidence-based practices for offenders on community supervision.
- Task 3:** Examine DOC’s use of evidence-based programming and practices of offenders on community supervision.

In this interim report, we provide background information on community supervision as it is delivered in Washington. We also summarize our findings to date on our systematic review of the literature regarding “what works” for community supervision.

The Institute has previously published findings on two types of supervision for adult offenders: intensive supervision focused on increased surveillance, and intensive supervision coupled with treatment. We review these findings in this interim report.

We also summarize our research results of an emerging literature on supervision using the “Risk Need Responsivity” approach—focusing on the risk, treatment, and supervision by the Community Corrections Officer.

Our findings indicate that intensive supervision focused on surveillance achieves no reduction in recidivism; intensive supervision coupled with treatment achieves about a 10 percent reduction in recidivism; and supervision focused on the Risk Need and Responsivity approach achieves a 16 percent reduction in recidivism.

¹ RCW 9.94A; affects offenders who committed felonies on or after July 1, 1984. Judges can set sentences outside the range in certain circumstances.

² RCW 9.94A.501

³ RCW 9.94A.701 & 702

⁴ The Institute’s Board of Directors approved this project on September 6, 2011.

I. DOC Outcome Evaluation

The primary task for this project is to evaluate DOC's use of sanctions, including confinement, for offenders who violate the terms of their community supervision. The Institute will complete this task and report its findings by July 2012.

Since it will not be possible to conduct a random assignment study of community supervision retrospectively, the Institute's approach will be to use a research design called a "natural experiment." This design arises when conditions occur in a real-world setting that allow a researcher to test a hypothesis. Natural experiments have been described in the judicial sentencing literature; they allow researchers to test whether variations in sentencing patterns have an effect on recidivism.⁵

This design will allow us, potentially, to examine how different types of sanctions by officers affect the recidivism patterns of offenders. Since we will need to rely on a natural experiment, in this interim report, we describe the context in which community supervision is delivered in Washington.

Community Supervision Background

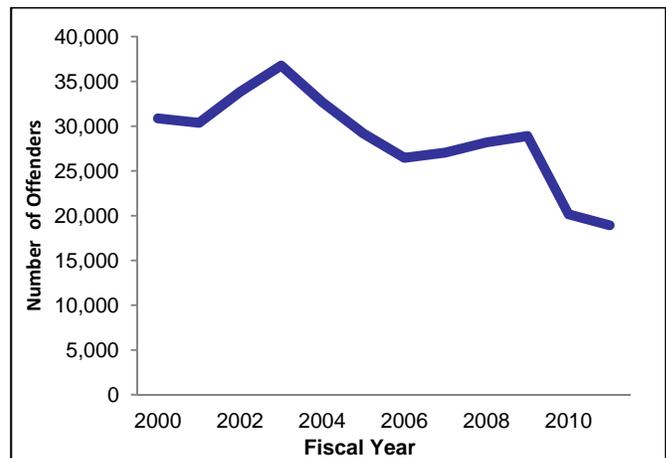
Population. Since 2000, the legislature has enacted many laws affecting which adult offenders are sentenced to community supervision and the duration of their sentences. These changes to the law, in turn, affect the number of offenders supervised in the community.

As **Exhibit 1** indicates, Washington's community supervision population has declined in recent years due to laws that have affected supervision for certain types of offenders. Major legislation impacting the population includes:

- Elimination of supervision in 2003 for certain low-risk property offenders (ESSB 5990).

- Elimination of supervision in 2009 for misdemeanants sentenced in superior court and low risk felons. This legislation also replaced community supervision ranges with set terms by the offender's current offense type (ESSB 5288).

Exhibit 1
Average Number of Offenders on Active Supervision by Fiscal Year



Source: Department of Corrections, November 2011
WSIPP, 2011

Risk. In 1999, the Offender Accountability Act (OAA) set state policy regarding the intensity of supervision; the act remains in effect today. The OAA directed DOC to classify offenders according to their future risk for re-offense and the harm they have caused society in the past. The legislation required DOC to deploy more staff and rehabilitative resources to higher risk offenders.

Risk for future offending is estimated using instruments that classify offenders into groups with similar characteristics. The Institute developed a "static risk" assessment, and DOC began using the tool as part of its Risk Level Classification system in 2008.⁶ Generally, static risk factors, such as criminal history, do not change over time. That is, criminal history may accumulate, but it does not usually go away.

⁵ Green, D. P. & Wink, D. (2010). Using random judge assignments to estimate the effects of incarceration and probation on recidivism among drug offenders. *Criminology*, 48(2).

⁶ Barnoski, R. & Drake, E. (2007). *Washington's Offender Accountability Act: Department of Corrections' Static Risk Assessment* (Document No. 07-03-1201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

Following is a breakdown of DOC's current Risk Level Classifications for offenders on active supervision, with the corresponding percentages of total offenders:⁷

- High violent (36 percent)—offenders who have a high probability of recidivating for a violent offense
- High non-violent (30 percent)—offenders who have a high probability of recidivating for a non-violent offense
- Moderate (18 percent)—offenders who have a moderate probability of recidivating
- Lower risk (16 percent)—offenders who have a lower probability of recidivating

Community Corrections Officers (CCO) supervise offenders mandated to serve their sentences in the community. Community safety is the primary goal of supervision; however, CCOs are also required to identify and address an offender's criminogenic needs, within available resources.⁸ For example, if an offender is found to have substance abuse issues, a CCO may refer him/her to drug treatment.

CCOs develop Offender Supervision Plans, which are used as a case management tool. The plans contain information about the offender's expectations of behavior, intervention strategies, and reporting requirements. DOC policy dictates the minimum contact standards required by CCOs.

Exhibit 2 describes the minimum contacts by risk level classification.

Exhibit 2
Supervision Minimum Contact Standards

Risk Level Classification	Contact Standards
High Violent	3 face-to-face contacts 1 collateral contact
High Non-Violent (drug/property)	2 face-to-face contacts 1 collateral contact
Moderate	1 face-to-face contact 1 collateral contact
Lower (special cases*)	1 face-to-face contact 1 collateral contact
Lower	Report by KIOSK**

* Includes sex offenders required to register, sentencing alternatives, and offenders diagnosed with mental health issues.

** A KIOSK is a computer terminal.

WSIPP, 2011

Conditions, Violations, and Sanctions.

Offenders supervised in the community are required to follow conditions of supervision.⁹ The imposed conditions relate to community safety, supervision monitoring, the crime of conviction, or the offender's risk level. Examples of conditions include: prohibited contact with specified individuals, abstaining from alcohol or drugs, or participation in treatment.

Prior to implementation of the OAA, the superior court was responsible for oversight of the sanctioning process when offenders violated conditions of supervision. Under the OAA, DOC has jurisdiction over imposing conditions, responding to violations, and sanctioning offenders.

DOC policy indicates that conditions should be limited to high risk offenders, and conditions for low risk offenders must be authorized by a supervisor.

⁷ Data are as of October 2011. Retrieved from http://www.doc.wa.gov/aboutdoc/docs/msCommunitySnapshot_08.pdf on November 29, 2011.

⁸ DOC Policy 380.200

⁹ DOC Policy 390.600

Offenders must be informed of imposed conditions. If an offender does not follow the conditions, the CCO can determine that an offender is in “violation” of his/her conditions of supervision. Violations can include behaviors such as using drugs or alcohol, failure to report, or refusing/neglecting to pay legal financial obligations.

CCOs are required to respond to all alleged violations and new criminal charges.¹⁰ However, CCOs have discretion in how they respond to violation behavior. A violation “response guide” exists in DOC policy; it aids CCOs in responding to violation behavior. Responses, in order of increasing formality and severity, include:

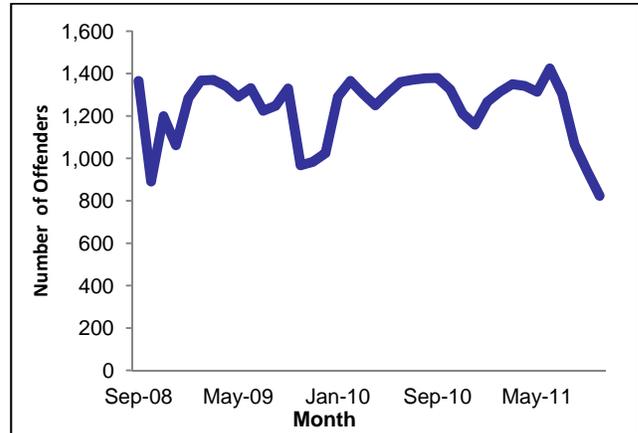
- Reprimand—a warning
- Stipulated agreement—agreement between the CCO and offender where the offender admits to the violation and agrees to comply with the imposed sanction
- Negotiated sanction—agreement between the CCO and offender, in addition to approval by a Hearing Officer, where the offender admits to the violation and agrees to comply with the opposed sanction
- Full hearing—Hearing Officer oversees violation hearing, considers evidence presented, and determines sanction

Offenders are entitled to a full hearing for alleged violations.

If the offender is found guilty of the violation, a sanction is imposed. After considering public safety, the seriousness of the violation, the offender’s crime of conviction and risk for re-offense, the hearings officer and CCO collaborate to determine an appropriate sanction. Sanctions can include confinement, enhanced supervision requirements, or treatment requirements.

Exhibit 3 displays the average number of community supervision violators in confinement.

Exhibit 3
Average Number of Community Supervision Violators in Confinement by Month



*Source: Department of Corrections, November 2011
WSIPP, 2011*

During Fiscal Year 2011, the average daily violator population was 1,319, which is approximately 7 percent of the active population on supervision. DOC’s estimated expenditures for confining violators are approximately \$35 million per fiscal year.¹¹ The average cost, therefore, was \$26,500 per violator confined.

¹⁰ DOC Policy 460.130

¹¹ Per email correspondence with the DOC, December 1, 2011.

II. Evidence-Based Supervision

In the second part of this interim report, we summarize our findings to date on our systematic review of the literature regarding “what works” for community supervision.

A considerable amount of knowledge exists about interventions and strategies proven to reduce crime.¹² Unfortunately, due to limitations in the research literature, much less is known about the effectiveness of supervision per se. Taxman (2002) concluded that supervision itself is “often considered inconsequential to effectiveness,” since it is either delivered in addition to other punishments and treatments or in lieu of confinement.¹³

To date, we have systematically reviewed three areas within the adult supervision literature to determine “what works?”:

- Intensive supervision—surveillance only
- Intensive supervision—with treatment
- Supervision using the “Risk Need Responsivity” model

The Institute has previously published reports on intensive supervision, but the third approach—Risk Need Responsivity model—is a new area of research.

The sidebar on this page describes the Institute’s approach to evaluating research on programs and interventions.

Intensive Supervision. In this broad grouping of studies, intensive supervision probation/parole (ISP) emphasizes a higher degree of surveillance than traditional supervision in the community. In our systematic review of the literature, we found 31 studies using intensive supervision.

What Does “Evidence-Based” Mean?

At the direction of the Washington Legislature, the Institute has conducted a number of systematic reviews of evaluation research to determine what public policies and programs work, and which ones do not work. These evidence-based reviews include the policy areas of adult and juvenile corrections, child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, prevention, K–12 education, and pre-K education.

The phrase “evidence-based” is sometimes used loosely in policy discussions. When the Institute is asked to conduct an evidence-based review, we follow a number of steps to ensure a rigorous definition. These criteria include the following:

- 1) We consider *all* available studies we can locate on a topic rather than selecting only a few; that is, we do not “cherry pick” studies to include in our reviews.
- 2) To be included in our reviews, we require that an evaluation’s research design must have a control or comparison group. Random assignment studies are preferred, but we allow quasi-experimental studies when the study uses appropriate statistical techniques. See the appendix of this report for a list of citations included in our analysis.

Formal statistical procedures, called meta-analysis, are then used to calculate an *effect* size, which indicates the magnitude of the relationship between the treatment and the outcome of interest. That is, we determine whether the weight of the evidence indicates outcomes are, on average, achieved.

For more information on our research methods see: Aos et al., 2011.

ISP can be delivered in lieu of incarceration, as a conditional release from incarceration in the form of parole, or as a probation sentence. Conditions of supervision vary across the studies, but some characteristics include urinalysis testing, increased face-to-face or collateral contacts, or required participation in treatment. The average number of face-to-face monthly contacts for studies included in our meta-analysis was 12.

¹² Aos, S., Lee, S., Drake, E., Pennucci, A., Klima, T., Miller, M., Anderson, L., Mayfield, J., & Burley, M. (2011). *Return on investment: Evidence-based options to improve statewide outcomes* (Document No. 11-07-1201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

¹³ Taxman, F. (2002). Supervision—Exploring the Dimensions of Effectiveness. *Federal Probation*, 66(2), 14.

We investigated additional policy questions regarding surveillance and treatment using multivariate regression analysis for the 31 effect sizes. Of the 31 studies included in our analysis, 14 were evaluations of ISP in conjunction with treatment, and the remaining 17 were surveillance-only studies. Our analysis uncovered an interesting interaction between supervision and treatment. As in past reports, we continued to find that supervision without treatment has no detectable effects on recidivism rates.¹⁴ However, there is a recidivism reduction for offenders who receive treatment during supervision, with more face-to-face contacts associated with a higher reduction.

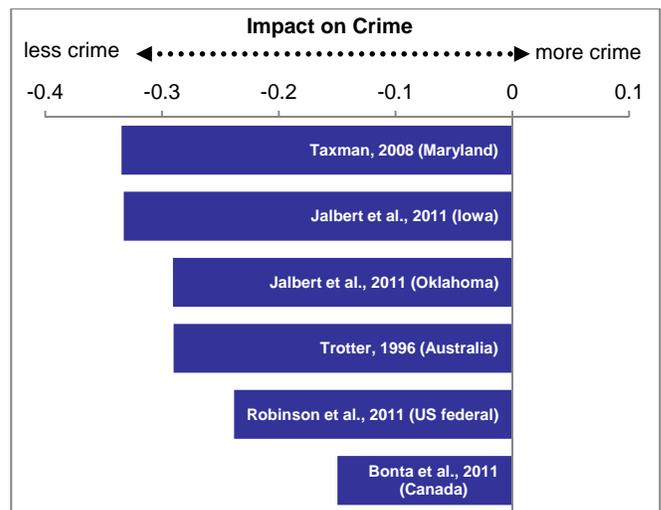
Risk Need Responsivity Supervision. The Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) model was first termed by Canadian researchers in 1990 and is defined as follows:¹⁵

- *Risk principle*—utilize interventions commensurate with an offender’s risk for re-offense
- *Need principle*—target offender’s criminogenic needs such as anti-social attitudes or substance abuse
- *Responsivity principle*—utilize interventions geared toward the offender’s abilities and motivation (generally cognitive behavioral or social learning interventions)

In our systematic review of RNR supervision literature, we located six studies that met our standards of rigor for inclusion. This broad grouping of studies spanned supervision delivered to moderate to high risk offenders on both probation and parole. Although the supervision models were different for each study population, officers were trained on how to deliver supervision to offenders utilizing principles of the RNR model.

Exhibit 4 displays our findings for the individual studies included in our analysis. The adjusted mean effect size for this grouping of studies is $-.303$ —a reduction in crime outcomes.¹⁶

Exhibit 4
Adjusted Effect Sizes for Supervision
With Risk Need Responsivity



WSIPP, 2011

¹⁴ Aos, S., Miller, M., & Drake, E. (2006). *Evidence-based public policy options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice costs, and crime rates* (Document No. 06-10-1201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

¹⁵ Andrews, D., Bonta, J., & Hoge, R. (1990). Classification for effective rehabilitation: Rediscovering psychology. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 17, 19–52.

¹⁶ See Technical Appendix II of Aos et. al., 2011 for methods regarding effect size adjustments.

Summary

According to some criminologists, the goals of offender supervision have changed over the past three decades.¹⁷ The first generation of supervision in the 1980s primarily focused on surveillance and monitoring the offender. Gradually, in the 1990s, surveillance and monitoring of the offender was supplemented with programs such as drug treatment or cognitive behavioral treatment. Supervision has shifted once again to a behavioral management approach, which incorporates the Risk Need Responsivity model into the officers supervision and case management approach.

Exhibit 5 summarizes our findings of the supervision literature. The results of our meta-analysis parallel the shift of these supervision strategies over the decades, and that shift indicates an increasing effect of crime outcomes.

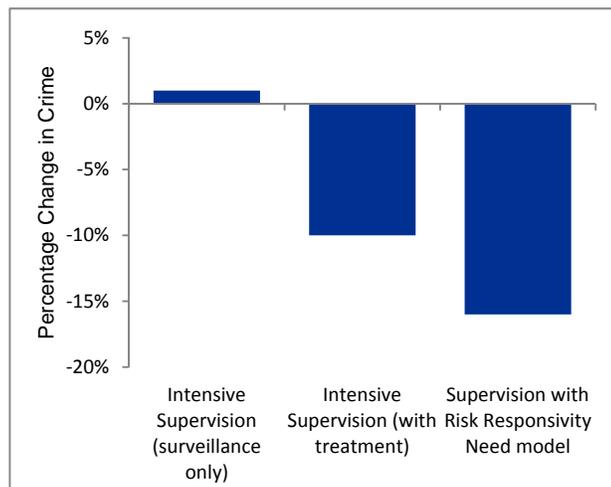
Exhibit 6 displays the percentage change in crime outcomes for each of the three supervision areas systematically reviewed.

Exhibit 5
Supervision for Adult Offenders:
Effect on Crime

Supervision Strategy	Number of Studies	Adjusted Effect Size	Standard Error	Percentage Change in Crime*
Supervision with Risk Responsivity Need model	6	-.303	.030	16%
Intensive Supervision Probation/Parole (with treatment)	17	-.205	.071	10%
Intensive Supervision Probation/Parole (surveillance only)	14	.004	.065	0%

* The percentage change in crime is dependent on a base recidivism rate, which changes at each year of follow-up. We calculate the percentage change in crime using a long-term follow-up of 15 years.

Exhibit 6
Percentage Change in Crime Outcomes for Supervision



WSIPP, 2011

¹⁷ Taxman, F. S. (2006). What should we expect from parole (and probation) under a behavioral management approach? *Perspectives*, 30(2), 38–45.

Appendix Studies Used in the Meta-Analysis

Supervision With Risk Need Responsivity Model

- Taxman, F. S. (2008). No illusions: Offender and organizational change in Maryland's proactive community supervision efforts. *Criminology and Public Policy*, 7(2), 275-302.
- Trotter, C. (1996). The impact of different supervision practices in community corrections: Cause for optimism. *The Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 29(1), 1-19.
- Robinson, C., VanBenschoten, S., Alexander, M., & Lowenkamp, C. (2011). A random (almost) study of staff training aimed at reducing re-arrest (STARR): Reducing recidivism through intentional design. *Federal Probation*, 75 (2).
- Bonta, J., Bourgon, G., Ruge, T., Scott, T., Yessine, A., Gutierrez, L., & Li, J. (2011). An experimental demonstration of training probation officers in evidence-based community supervision. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 38(11).
- Jalbert, S. K., Rhodes, W., Kane, M., Clawson, E., Bogue, B., Flygare, C., Kling, R., & Guevara, M. (2011). *A multi-site evaluation of reduced probation caseload sizes in an evidence-based practice setting* (NCJ No. NCJ 234596). Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

Intensive Supervision: Treatment

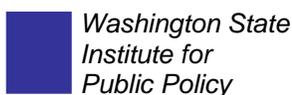
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- Hanley, D. (2002). *Risk differentiation and intensive supervision: A meaningful union?* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH.
- Johnson, G., & Hunter, R. M. (1995). Evaluation of the Specialized Drug Offender Program. In R. R. Ross & R. D. Ross (Eds.), *Thinking straight: The Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program for delinquency prevention and offender rehabilitation* (pp. 214-234). Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Air Training and Publications.
- Lichtman, C. M., & Smock, S. M. (1981). The effects of social services on probationer recidivism: A field experiment. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, 18(1), 81-100.
- Paparozzi, M. A., & Gendreau, P. (2005). An intensive supervision program that worked: Service delivery, professional orientation, and organizational supportiveness. *The Prison Journal*, 85(4), 445-466.
- Pearson, F. S., & Harper, A. G. (1990). Contingent intermediate sentences: New Jersey's intensive supervision program. *Crime & Delinquency*, 36(1), 75-86.
- Petersilia, J., & Turner, S. (1990, December). *Intensive supervision for high-risk probationers: Findings from three California experiments*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
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- Smith, L. G., & Akers, R. L. (1993). A comparison of recidivism of Florida's community control and prison: A five-year survival analysis. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, 30(3), 267-292.
- Stichman, A., Fulton, B., Latessa, E., & Travis, L. (1998, December). *Evaluating the prototypical ISP: Hartford Intensive Supervision Unit Connecticut Office of Adult Probation Administrative Office of the Courts* (Final Report). Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati, Division of Criminal Justice.
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Intensive Supervision: Surveillance

- Bagdon, W. & Ryan, J. E. (1993). Intensive supervision of offenders on prerelease furlough: An evaluation of the Vermont experience. *FORUM on Corrections Research*, 5(2). Retrieved June 23, 2011 from http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/e052/052j_e.pdf
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Document No. 11-12-1201



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