

# Colorado Probation Research in Brief

## *Recidivism as a Function of Day Reporting Center Participation*

Craddock, A. and Graham, L. (2002). *Recidivism as a Function of Day Reporting Center Participation*. Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 34: 1, 81-97.

**Key Words:** intermediate sanctions, day reporting center, DRC, substance abuse treatment

### Day Reporting Center Participation

#### Summary/Conclusions

Researchers studied two day reporting centers; one in a rural area and one identified as an urban area. They gathered data on all offenders who entered the program and discharged within a period of three years and ten months and used a comparison group of probationers who were eligible for the day reporting centers but did not participate. Analyses were conducted on completers and non-completers to determine if day reporting completion made a difference in recidivism rates or time to new arrest. In addition, researchers wanted to test if day reporting participation impacted recidivism rates by comparing participants to the comparison group.

#### Limitations of Information

The generalization of the outcomes of this study are limited due to the small size of the sample, which included two day reporting centers. The authors note there were also some data issues, such as the inability to disaggregate a category which included assault disorderly conduct. It should be noted that the sample of offenders contained almost exclusive men, with few female and minorities represented.

**Caveat:** The information presented here is intended to summarize and inform readers of research and information relevant to probation work. It can provide a framework for carrying out the business of probation as well as suggestions for practical application of the material. While it may, in some instances, lead to further exploration and result in *future* decisions, it is not intended to prescribe policy and is not necessarily conclusive in its findings. Some of its limitations are described above.

The research study described in this article was designed to answer three questions about the day reporting center (DRC) clients: 1. Are DRC completers less likely to be rearrested than non-completers? 2. Are DRC clients less likely to be rearrested than those on probation only? 3. What factors are associated with rearrest? Rearrest included new offenses and technical violations.

The sample included 231 clients in rural and urban DRC programs, and the comparison group included 312 probationers who met the criteria to enter the rural and urban programs but did not. The comparison group was further disaggregated into a subset of clients who were assessed as high risk/high need. The analysis of the groups was conducted using a one year follow-up period to measure the likelihood of rearrest.

This study was exploratory in nature, so not all research questions were answered definitively. In the urban program, non-completers were rearrested at twice the rate of completers and the difference was statistically significant (18.9% v. 37.7%). When the urban program's DRC completers were compared to probationers, the rearrest rate was lower, but not significantly. The rural program's completers were significantly less likely to be arrested than the comparison subset of high risk/high need clients. It also appeared that rural and urban completers were rearrested for less serious offenses than the comparison group clients. The limited significant results may reflect the somewhat differ-

ing populations that the two programs served; the rural program had a higher proportion of high risk offenders and the urban program had more of a mix of risk levels.

#### Practical Applications

- ✓ Utilize day reporting services with higher risk clients, while ensuring services are targeted at identified criminogenic needs.
- ✓ Discuss the types of services you need with your local day reporting center to increase the usefulness and effectiveness of their program.
- ✓ In lieu of revocation, consider a day reporting center for imposition of an intermediate sanction for higher risk clients. The program can assist the probation officer by providing increased supervision and vital support services to the client.
- ✓ Consider using a DRC as part of a behavior contract, with higher risk clients who are engaging in non-compliant behaviors.
- ✓ Make sure that case plans are updated when day reporting services are added to the client's obligations.
- ✓ Higher risk offenders should have 40-70% of their initial time on supervision structured. Consider using the services of a DRC to increase the percent of time that's structured.
- ✓ Employment is an important contributor to success for a variety of reasons. Maximize the use of day reporting centers to teach skills, identify potential employers, and provide assistance in the job search.

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