Supervision

transferring unspent funds

- Ensure that no CSCDs are harmed while

Our goal is to print news of interest to CSOs.

We publish three issues a year.

- Stop funding facilities with CCP funds and find

We envision a responsive community corrections

 programs or create new ones.

TDCJ-CJAD to use the money to enhance

system that is inspired by and committed to

advancing the ideal of justice. As partners in corrections, we envision working ... open, to keep respect for cultural diversity a priority and to keep the hope of rehabilitating offenders alive.

The Committee understands the needs of women

Texas and other states.

“We want a snapshot of what’s being done across the state,” says Fred Rangel, director of Angelina County CSCD and committee co-chair with Vicki Trinidad, a TDCJ-CJAD employee who chairs the committee. “We’ve been told that, for instance, in some agencies, officers are not allowed to write down the problems that they observe on the job. We want to change that.

It’s official. TDCJ will remain in the criminal justice business until at least the year 2010. The Sunset Commission completed its standard 12-year review of the agency in May and gave it the A-O.K. to carry on for another 12 years. (Actually, the Legislature will have the final say but, with the Commission’s approval in place, getting the go-ahead from the Legislature is all but assured.) To read the full report (222 pages) or to read key

Minority Officers Help

Minority Officers Help Minority Offenders

Minority Officers

A diverse group of officers and TDCJ-CJAD employees is working with local departments to identify the needs of minority offenders. The group, known as the Minority Issues Committee, will report what it learns to the departments to help minority offenders stay out of trouble. The Committee is surveying all 122 departments on the ethnicity and

Minority Officers

gender of their officers, the programs the departments offer, and the problems that their minority and female offenders encounter.

“We want a snapshot of what’s being done across the state,” says Fred Rangel, director of Angelina County CSCD and committee co-chair with Vicki Trinidad, a TDCJ-CJAD regional director. “We’ll give the data to the departments to make the changes they deem appropriate.” Trinidad says the changes could include giving CSCDs tips on how to recruit more officers. It could also include training or educating officers who are already on the job and helping departments learn about successful programs in Texas and other states.

Some departments surveyed say that their problems include officers and officers misunderstanding each other because of cultural differences. Others say they’re unable to recruit Spanish-speaking officers or are ill-equipped to accommodate female offenders with children. Some departments offer culturally specific programs, while others say they do not.

The Committee understands the needs of women and people of color. In 20 members—16 officers and director and four TDCJ-CJAD employees—come from many different backgrounds.

“We’re white and black, Mexican and Asian, men and women, Republican and Democrat,” says Trinidad.

Committee members will gather and analyze survey responses throughout the summer. They’ll also look at data from the Census Bureau, the Criminal Justice Policy Council and TDCJ-CJAD offender and revocation profiles before making recommendations. Susan Crawford, director of TDCJ-CJAD, created the Committee in May in response to a division study and other sources that show that minority offenders are over represented in community supervision and, even more so, in prison.

The CSO Vision

We envision a responsive community corrections system that is inspired by and committed to advancing the ideal of justice. As partners in corrections, in envision working effectively to keep communities safe, to keep communication open, to keep respect for cultural diversity a priority and to keep the hope of rehabilitating offenders alive.
The most frequent reason I hear for not repairing the red jerseys has the ball, it will take the gain of 30 yards. If the team in blue has the ball, it will take 70 yards. Scoring a touchdown depends on whether a team is headed and where it starts, although the goal—to succeed—is the same for both. One team needs fewer opportunities, or fewer downs, while the other has its work cut out for it.

If you will, think about the last football game you watched. Two teams, score tied, both want to win, and one team has the ball on the 30-yard line.

The objective: to score a touchdown.

What will it take? Well, if the team in the red jerseys has the ball, it will take the gain of 30 yards. If the team in blue has the ball, it will take 70 yards. Scoring a touchdown depends on which way a team is headed and where it starts, although the goal—to succeed—is the same for both. One team needs fewer opportunities, or fewer downs, while the other has its work cut out for it.

I wonder sometimes if—while we are very careful with our offenders to define success (completing supervision)—we fail to consider all that will it take to get them there. When we assess their risks and needs, do we fully consider that some of our clients will need more opportunity just because of where they start, to stay in the game? When they fall short of the 10-yard run, do we help them get the resources they need? It’s important that we do.

We are learning many things from our recent Cohort study; a study of recidivism among Texas felons on community supervision. Some things are already known: We know that minorities have long been statistically over-represented in the criminal justice system. But now, through the study, we can also identify certain statistically significant risk factors for ethnic groups and for women that explain this phenomenon.

The great news about this is, armed with the specifics, we can begin to wage a war to even the odds. We can begin to direct our resources so that the playing field is equalized.

With a closer review of our study data, coupled with the work of our new Minority Issues Committee, we will be sharing the answers to some very important questions: What are additional risk factors for people of color? Are there different additional risk factors for ethnic groups? Are there different additional risk factors for women? Are there exemplary programs that have addressed specific needs? Are there some programs having an affect on community supervision failures?

There is much that we do very well, but there is much that we can do better. Only by closely examining ourselves will we be able to sort these things out. We should not be tentative in our quest to answer the questions. We should be excited about the possibilities the search will uncover. We have a better chance than any other discipline in the criminal justice system to affect change for minorities and women, and we should embrace the challenge. Imagine the roar of the crowd—the feeling of elation—when we break through the barrier and make the long, hard run into the end zone!

By James R. “Rusty” Ross, Administrator, TDJC-Interstate Compact

The Runaway Numbers

The number of runaway offenders has increased statewide, from $1,800 in 1950 to $4,000 in 1992. Something other than age is being overlooked. I believe we’re not actively working as a community to reduce the number of offenders who abscond.

Few CSCDs have full- or part-time absconder officers. The police will arrest some, but they can only do so much. In Williamson County, just fewer than 500 absconders were arrested on motions to revoke in 1997. But police, through routine traffic stops and other means, found only about 170 of them. Our department found the other 400. If you are not looking for your missing offenders full-time—no one is.

The most frequent reason I hear for not hiring a full-time absconder officer is lack of money. But have you considered how much money an absconder caseload can bring in? My department didn’t until a year ago.

"Why Didn’t We Think of That?"

Like other absconder officers, my goal, initially, was to find runaway offenders and put the offenders in jail; that is, until I stumbled on the idea of recovering money owed by absconders who leave the state. When I told my supervisors, they slapped their heads and said, "Why didn’t we think of that before?"

Absconders who are arrested in Texas often go to jail and the money they owe is lost. But local police are less likely to look for and return absconders who leave Texas, so we look for them and encourage them to pay their court costs, restitution payments and supervision fees. Most cooperate. They know if they’re ever arrested again, it may reduce their jail time.

Finders Keepers

Without enticement from our department, absconders paid almost $15,000 in 1997, including more than $5,000 in supervision fees and more than $1,700 in restitution. But by targeting out-of-state absconders and coming up with new ideas and programs, we’ve increased that amount considerably.

At June, we’ve recovered nearly $20,000 in supervision fees and more than $5,000 in restitution, alone. Recovering the money took less than 10 percent of my time. My supervisors are so pleased that they’ve hired an assistant for me and are expanding our efforts.

I bring a full-time absconder officer may still cost too much for some CSCDs, but not for most. My total caseload of nearly 600 absconders with active warrants could, potentially, bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars, just in supervision fees. Couldn’t your department hire a full-time absconder officer with just 10 percent of that amount—and still have money left over?

What Do We Tell the Victims?

If you don’t hire an officer, what do you tell the victims they owe restitution to? Do you tell future victims, "Sorry, we just didn’t have the money or time to pursue the criminal who offended again and ruined your life?" And since the courts require departments to try to find absconders, who will address diligence for your department in court?

We have a duty to protect the public and we do that every day. Nevertheless, we can and should do more. Hiring absconder officers is one way to protect the public, and recovering money owed by out-of-state absconders is one way to pay for it.

Finding Runaways Pays

• Mail your paperwork to the right address: Interstate Compact Office, 9800 N. Lamar, Austin, TX 78753. (IC is part of TDJC, but it is not part of TDJC-CJAD.)

Federal law regulates out-of-state transfers. To protect yourself and your department, copy and your request in the comments section of the transfer form. That tells the other state that you are doing it.

• Include all case material: If part of the packet isn’t available yet, you’ll send it when it’s available.

• Note whom the offender will live with and their relationship.

• Include all correspondence, except facsimiles: Yes, we acknowledge receipt of all correspondence, except facsimiles. If they’re ever arrested again, it may reduce the amount they owe by absconders who leave the state.

• Put the offenders in jail; that is, until I stumbled on the idea of recovering money owed by absconders who leave the state. When I told my supervisors, they slapped their heads and said, "Why didn’t we think of that before?"

• Include two copies of all correspondence, except facsimiles. Yes, we do need them. One copy is for us, and the other is for the compact officer in the state receiving the offender. Send us only one copy and your request will be delayed.

• Mail your paperwork to the right address: Interstate Compact Office, 9800 N. Lamar, Suite 110, Austin, 78753.

• Provide the Committee produces during the review; the documents are available to the public. Just by looking at the documents the Committee produces during the review; the documents are available to the public. Just invite up to 35 of your fellow officers to participate in the seminar.

The Sunset process has already saved T exans more than $630 million. How’s that for starters? Most are reviewed every 12 years. The review dates are published in the Sunset Act of 1977, legislation endorsing it passes and is signed by the governor. Even if the legislation would be delayed.

Who gets reviewed

• Most state agencies and advisory committees are reviewed. Some agencies, such as state universities, are excluded. Others are reviewed but cannot be automatically abolished. (The Commission isn’t bloodthirsty; it has rarely abolished an agency—only 42 in 21 years, and has merged many of the. Those the Commission’s goal is to make agencies better.)

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Why Bother?

The Sunset process has already saved T exans more than $630 million. How’s that for starts?

How to get involved

To tell the Commission members a thing-or-two about a state agency, write them a letter to suggest that they study a particular issue or that they require certain changes. Read the documents the Committee produces during the review; the documents are available to the public. Just invite up to 35 of your fellow officers to participate in the seminar.

Transfer Training at Your Door

Whether you’re a novice, need a hand with a particular case, or just want a refresher course, you can learn about out-of-state transfers without leaving town to do it. The folks at the TDJC-Interstate Compact Office in Austin will come to you. Just invite up to 35 of your fellow officers and find a place to meet. Sessions take three hours, are free and earn TDJC-CJAD training hours. Ask your training coordinator to call Rusty Ross or Chris Montray at (512) 491-7420, x8252.
A C A Names Dallas the “Best”

A Dallas treatment center whose graduates stay employed and out of trouble is included in a new book on top corrections programs in the U.S. and Canada. The book, “Best Practices: Excellence in Corrections” by the American Correctional Association, cites the Dallas County Judicial Treatment Center as “valuable proof of what works.” The center, which treats more than 225 men and women at high risk of offending again, boasts a low recidivism rate. According to a 1997 study by Texas Christian University, most of the center’s graduates (89 percent) had not committed new crimes one year after graduating. Offenders also must find work to graduate. Must do within two weeks and earn an average pay of $8 an hour. “We get them ready through assessment and training,” says Julian Devorak, the center’s director. Many graduates later serve as consultants to the center’s treatment counselors.

By Berny Schiff, TDJC-QAD

Tech Speak

Ring in a Happier New Year 2000

If you’re like me, you’ve assumed that the change to the year 2000 will have only minor consequences for your personal computer. You may have assumed that when we get closer to the year 2000 the calendar conversion is going to be so smooth that even a naive computer user will be ready for it. Experts say the problem is that we have a difficult time finding the latest version of your work and have not been able to convert it to the new century.

Do’s & Don’ts

• Do back up everything that’s critical to your computer, including financial data and work files.
• Don’t try to fix your computer before the year 2000 unless you have a working knowledge of the Windows operating system and the basic principles of computer operation.
• Do use proper procedures when you test your computer for the year 2000.
• Don’t fix your computer before the year 2000 unless you have a working knowledge of the Windows operating system and the basic principles of computer operation.
• Do test the system before you test the computer system and make sure your computer is up to date.
• Don’t fix your computer before the year 2000 unless you have a working knowledge of the Windows operating system and the basic principles of computer operation.

AACA, ICPPA, APPA . . . AHHH!

Use this handy guide to keep the hodgepodge of capital letters straight and decide which professional group is best for you.

APPA

American Probation and Parole Association

Cost: Individual: $35/Agency: $150 - $300

Services/Benefits: Annual conference, center conferences, technical help, training courses and institutes, notification of potential funding, periodical journals, statistical reports, research monographs

Members: More than 3,250 in North America (est. 1973)

Mission: To serve, challenge and empower members and constituents by educating, communicating and training; advocating for funding, aiding in resource and conduct for information, ideas and support; developing standards and models; and collaborating with other disciplines.

Web: http://www.appa-net.org

Contact: (603) 244-8230, Lexington, Kentucky

ACA

American Correctional Association

Cost: Individual: $35, $115/Executive: $100 - $150/Agency: $300

Services/Benefits: Training, grants, technical assistance, correspondence courses and summer conferences, Corrections Today Magazine, On the Line newsletter

Members: More than 22,000, nationally (est. 1870)

Mission: To champion the cause of corrections and correctional effectiveness.

TASP

Texas Association of Residential Service Providers

Cost: Individual: $25/Agency: $150

Benefit: Include annual conference, regional workshops, legislative representation, a code of ethics, a TDJC newsletter

Members: More than 300 (est. 1978)

Mission: To ensure that residential rehabilitation provides the most competent and caring services available.

Web: None

Contact: (512) 346-5820, Austin (800) 462-3441, (512) 281-3441 Bastrop

SSCA

Southern States Correctional Association

Cost: Individual: $15/Agency: $100

Supporting Patron: $150

Benefit: Annual training conference, scholarships, Southern State Corrections Journal

Members: More than 1,200 in 18 states (est. 1969)

Mission: Call them!

Web: http://www.members.aol.com/joinSSCA/SSCA.html

Contact: (615) 436-1919, Nashville, Tennessee

TCA

Texas Correctional Association

Cost: Individual: $30 - $60/Agency: $50

Benefit: Annual conference, continuing education, technical assistance, annual and regional workshops, correspondence courses and summer conferences, Corrections Today Magazine, On the Line newsletter

Members: More than 500 (est. 1970)

Goals include: To promote acceptance of corrections work, strengthen the profession, promote effective legislation, provide a forum for discussion and build public support.

Web: http://www.tca.com/Group/TCA

Contact: (512) 454-8625, Austin

ICCA

International Community Corrections Association

Cost: Varies

Benefits: Research and educational conferences, technical help and networking

Goals: To promote and enhance the professionalization of the corrections profession.

Web: Coming soon

Contact: (603) 753-2020, LaGrue, (800) 462-3441, (512) 281-3441 Bastrop

Make IC Transfers EZ

If you need advice on supervising out-of-state offenders, but find the “Parole and Probation Compact Administrators’ Association Manual” daunting—she’s your hope. A shorter, easier-to-read handbook is due out this month.

The step-by-step guide is the brainchild of the Interstate Compact Advisory Committee. It will address many issues you face every day, but will not replace the IC manual, which will still serve you when you need in-depth advice. The Interstate Compact Office will mail this handbook to you.

The IC folk thank these helpful folks for their work on the handbook and other projects: Shannon Adams, Ball CSCD; Director Don Smith & Kate McBride, Tarrant CSCD; Director Tom Plumlee & officers Robin, Greg, Debbie & Don, Potter CSCD; Marry Griffith, Williamson CSCD; Teresa Velas, Lubbock CSCD; Genaro Melendez II, El Paso CSCD; & Director Doc Ann Rogers, Fort Bend CSCD.
Hats Off to Awardees

Roxane Marek was named Texas Corrections Association Line Officer of the Year at the TCA Conference in Fort Worth in June. Marek, a substance abuse officer in Wharton County, was honored for her work with crime victims. Her work includes writing a handbook of services for victims. She also created an impact panel that requires drunk drivers to talk with their victims about how the crime has harmed the victims’ lives. Marek and four other TCA honorees also were honored at a meeting of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice in July in San Antonio:

Montic E. Morgan, director of Jefferson CSCD, received the Clarence N. Stevenson Memorial Award for his innovative work and his commitment to TCA and to community supervision. Morgan was president of TCA from 1991-1992.

Dawson CSCD received an Exemplary Program award for its community service restitution program that puts offenders to work growing vegetables. The garden has been feeding jail inmates and locals in need since 1993. What produce is left, Dawson trades for supplies such as bicycles that offenders can ride to look for jobs.

Montgomery CSCD received an Exemplary Program award for its two-year-old victim impact panel. The department’s goal is to reduce the rising number of drunk drivers being placed on community supervision.

Nueces CSCD received an Exemplary Program award for its 30-minute television talk show. Department employees produce the show, which has been broadcast locally since 1993. Guests such as local judges and awareness groups discuss criminal justice issues. The goal is to help the public, particularly victims, understand the justice system.

The Judicial Advisory Council presented its 1998 Special Recognition Awards in Austin in July. The council honors one employee, one program and one volunteer each year:

Fred Rangel, director of Angina CSCD, was honored for starting specialty programs and incentives. They include training, awards, and merit increases for employees and culturally specific caseloads and anger- and money-management classes for offenders.

Josephine Rodriguez, an 82-year-old volunteer with Fort Bend CSCD’s literacy program, was honored for her five years of work as a tutor.

Nueces CSCD’s television talk show was honored for its innovative approach to public awareness.

Just the FAQs, Ma’am

Officers frequently ask us to run a list of frequently asked questions. Well, here it is. We’ll answer more questions in upcoming issues. If you’ve got a question, please let us know. After all, if something’s got you puzzled, it probably has others wondering, too.

What’s TDCJ-CJAD got to do with us?

We’re the community supervision division of TDCJ. One of our many jobs is to pass on money to departments for their annual budgets. The funds total more than $209 million a year.

Of course, we can’t take all the credit. The cash comes from the Texas Legislature, which allocates the money in two-year increments. We divvy it up and send it out. Then we visit your departments and do the math to account for what you’ve used.

The state funds that we pass on cover about 65 percent of what it costs to run your department. The rest of your department’s budget comes from the court-ordered fees it collects and from your local government, which picks up the tab for office space and some equipment.

We enforce supervision standards, including the methods you use to supervise offenders. We also give your department administrative and technical help, such as starting new programs and linking to new computerized tracking and communications systems, such as CSTS and OJINS. Last, but not least, we train and certify officers.

We don’t do all of this alone, mind you. We seek approval from the Texas Board of Criminal Justice or TBCJ before adopting standards, rules and guidelines. We also seek guidance from our advisory council of citizens and judges—aptly named the Judicial Advisory Council or JAC.

How does TDCJ-CJAD fund programs?

Our planners and budget folks in Field Services dole out the dough. They review your department’s request for funds and place the Community Justice Plan your department submits to us every other year. Who gets how much is decided according to specific formulas and categories.

Basic supervision - All departments get money to pay for the basics—equipment, salaries and other essentials. How much you get is based on the number of felons your department supervises and the number of new misdemeanors placements at your department.

Community corrections - All departments get money to pay for standard supervision programs, such as substance abuse treatment for specialized caseloads. How much your department gets is based on the ratio of felons placed directly on supervision there and the population of the counties in your department’s jurisdiction.

Diversion - Departments compete for these grants. The grants are awarded for specialty programs, community corrections facilities and other special programs.

TAPIP - Departments compete for these grants. The grants are awarded for screening, assessing, referring and treating substance-abusing offenders who can’t afford any other treatment.

Who’s at Risk of Offending

African-Americans on community supervision failed to complete their supervision more often than their Anglo or Hispanic counterparts according to a recent TDCJ-CJAD study of felons on supervision. Even after controlling for known risk factors, such as being young, lacking education and committing certain crimes, African-Americans still had higher rates of revocation. The rates of revocation for Hispanics were comparable to Anglos.

The three groups show different patterns of risk when they begin their supervision. Compared to Anglos, African-Americans were younger, more likely to be female and more likely to have been placed on supervision for a drug-related crime. They had about as much education as Anglos, but had poorer histories of employment. As a group, African-Americans scored lower in risk than Anglos on emotional needs and problems with alcohol.

Hispanics were much less likely to have a high-school education, but scored at less risk on factors such as marriage and family stability. “Adjusting for known risk factors reduces some but not all of the differences in revocation rates,” says Gaylon Oswald, manager of TDCJ-CJAD’s Data Management section. “We don’t know yet if more precise measures of risk factors could explain all of the differences. Statistically, we can’t discount the possibility of racial or ethnic bias in the system. It’s something we all need to be aware of.”

The study looked at more than 4,000 felons on supervision from 1993-1996. TDCJ-CJAD is preparing a full report, known as the Felony Cohort Project.

Two More CSCDs to Carry Handguns

Officers at two more departments are the latest to become certified to carry handguns. The new certifications bring the total to three, since June when Bexar County became the first CSCD in Texas history to authorize its officers to carry weapons.

Only some officers at the three departments will carry handguns, and they will carry them strictly for self defense. Department directors may approve their officers to carry, but it’s ultimately up to the authorized officer to decide. Directors cannot require their officers to carry.

Before officers can carry handguns, they must complete a five-day training that focuses on safety and liability. The training covers double-action revolvers and semiautomatic pistols. It does not authorize officers to carry handguns while they’re off duty.

Departments will write their own handgun policies. The policies must carry incentives. They include training, awards, and writting when officers will carry their handguns and where they’ll store them.

All CSCDs must submit handgun policies and procedures to TDCJ-CJAD before their officers can attend certification training. TDCJ-CJAD’s standards for CSCDs do not require departments to have their handgun policies approved by the division; however, they do require departments to have the policies on file with the division.

More departments may authorize their officers to carry in coming months, but most say they will not. The Legislature passed a law last year allowing officers to carry, something many others states already allow officers to do.

Who Pays?

TDCJ-CJAD policy divvies the costs this way:

• The handgun
• Ammunition
• Training

CSCDs:
• Application fee (training)
• Training
• Substance-abusing psychological exam
• Ammunition (training and certification, only)
• Liability insurance

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Before officers can carry a pistol, you must complete five days of training at a TCELOSTE academy.

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and technician. Tararrant is the first CSCD to apply for and receive a VAWA grant. Received $79,000, which it used to hire a victims’ services coordinator, court liaison to them just last year when TDCJ-CJAD encouraged them. El Paso applied and received $52,000. Of the state’s 122 CSCDs, only 17 have full-time victims’ services coordinators. Some departments will use the money to hire full-time victims’ services coordinators. The importance of an officer’s work and main- ly a skill in the criminal justice system. The T welfth Skills for Effective Intervention Conference, or Skills, as it’s called, is the only statewide TDCJ-CJAD training conference for community supervision officers in Texas. The TDCJ-CJAD Training and Staff Development section coordinates the conference. This year’s theme was “Committed to Excellence.” Special thanks to the hard workers who put the conference on: Director Nancy Powell Bartlett and training employees Tim Bearden, Russell Brown, Gary Carlile, Ron Capechich, Angie Guerrero, Denise Lane, Bob Lynch, Eddie Mendoza, Debbie Small, Geraldine Tadlock, John Wagner, Anthony Welebob and Kim Wheeler.

Belinda Tolbert, an officer in Dallas, is “Friend of the Training Division” for 1997-1998. Tolbert was honored for promoting training by developing a training academy for her department and for helping TDCJ-CJAD trainers conduct training sessions. The Twelfth Skills for Effective Intervention Conference, or Skills, as it’s called, is the only statewide TDCJ-CJAD training conference for community supervision officers in Texas. The TDCJ-CJAD Training and Staff Development section coordinates the conference. This year’s theme was Committed to Excellence.

REMEMBER!! October is Crime Prevention Month

Get a Grant in 1999

To apply for VOCA or VAWA grants in 1999, don’t delay. Your regional Council of Government sets your deadline, which could be as early as November. Look for deadlines in the Governor’s Criminal Justice Plan for Texas, due out in October. Your department can apply for a VOCA grant every two years and there’s no limit to the number of grants it can receive. The amount will not decrease from year to year, as long as you can continue to justify it.

VOCA grants have been available since the 1980s, but CSCDs began applying for them just last year when TDCJ-CJAD encouraged them. El Paso applied and received $70,000, which it used to hire a victims’ services coordinator, court liaison and technician. Tararrant is the first CSCD to apply for and receive a VAWA grant. For details, call Ray Ramirez, TDJC victims’ services coordinator, at (512) 305-1094.

Parle Vous?

CCP - Community Corrections Facility: The broad term for residential treatment facilities that are run by CSCDs. There are 39 CCPs in Texas. A limited number of beds are also available at non-CSCD facilities through TAPF and other funding.

CCP - Community Corrections Program

CJNS - Community Justice Intra-net System

CJP - Community Justice Plan

CSCD - Community Supervision and Corrections Department

CSTS - Community Supervision Tracking System

IC - Interstate Compact

JAG - Judicial Advisory Council

MHMR - Mental Health and Mental Rehabilitation

Program Notes (cont. from page 3)

- Ask your directors about the statewide meeting for SAFPP coordinators in Austin in October. They’ll receive details soon.

- Don’t go to the Sam Houston Training Academy for the 7th Annual Conference on Working with Adult Sex Offenders. The conference will be held in San Antonio, from October 3-6, but at a new, soon-to-be-disclosed spot. Attendance has been so good that the event’s planners need a bigger home for it. Expect announcements soon.

- Dallas CSCD recently told two of its officers to hit the bricks. As an exercise in neighborhood supervision, the pair will supervise 140 offenders—and do it on foot. They’ll work in a high-crime neighborhood out of donated office space near the offenders’ homes. Director Ron Goethals says, “The officers will talk with local businesses to get them interested in hiring offenders. They’ll also identify and help solve neighborhood problems. As you improve the neighborhood, you improve the offenders’ chances of making it.” Similar programs are working well in Spokane, Washington and several cities in Wisconsin.

- Keep an eye out for details on the Second Annual Abecedarian Conference in Huntsville, January 11-12. Brochures will go to departments in early October. Conference topics will include resources for finding absconders, networking with law enforcement and verifying offender data. The deadline to registration is in early December.

Cranford Named to National Committee

Susan Cranford, director of TDCJ-CJAD, has been appointed to the American Correctional Association’s prestigious Congress Planning Committee for 1999.

Cranford and the other members will plan the theme, goal, and major sessions for the association’s 116th Annual Congress of Corrections, a convention for corrections and community corrections employees, worldwide.

Cranford was appointed by ACA President Richard Stalder to represent adult community supervision. Other members include directors, assistant directors and wardens in adult and juvenile corrections.

“The Committee is always working to present new ideas and improve the content of the conferences,” says Cranford. “I’m happy to have been appointed and will work hard to represent community corrections.”


Victim Grants (cont. from page 2)

Some departments will use the money to hire full-time victim’s services coordinators. Others will hire employees and equipment to support coordinators who are already on the job. Successful programs will receive the same funds and matches again in 1999. Of the states’ 122 CSCDs, only 17 have full-time victim’s services coordinators.

Tarrant County CSCD also received a $52,000 grant through the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, or VAWA. The one-year grant supports programs for victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. Tarrant will use the money to serve victims, particularly offenders in the department’s battering intervention and prevention program. The Office of the Governor awarded all of the grants based on need. To find out how to apply next year, see “Get a Grant in 1999.”

If you’ve worked in community supervision for 20 or 25 years – tell us. We’d like to run a list for each issue.
Minority Officers Help

A diverse group of officers and TDCJ-CJAD employees is working with local departments to identify the needs of minority offenders. The group, known as the Minority Issues Committee, will report what it learns to the departments to help minority officers stay out of trouble. The Committee is surveying all 122 departments on the ethnicity and gender of their officers, the programs the departments offer, and the problems that their minority and female offenders encounter.

“When we want a snapshot of what’s being done across the state,” says Fred Rangel, director of Angelina County CSCD and committee co-chair with Vicki Trinidad, a TDCJ-CJAD regional director, “We’ll give the data to the departments to make the changes they deem appropriate.” Trinidad said the changes could include giving CSCDs tips on how to recruit more officers. It could also include training or educating officers who are already on the job and helping departments learn about successful programs in Texas and other states.

Some departments surveyed say that their problems include offenders and officers misunderstanding each other because of cultural differences. Others say they’re unable to recruit Spanish-speaking officers or are ill-equipped to accommodate female offenders with children. Some departments offer culturally specific programs, while others say they do not.

The Committee understands the needs of women and people of color. In 20 members—16 officers and director and four TDCJ-CJAD employees—come from many different backgrounds.

“We’re white and black, Mexican and Asian, men and women, Republican and Democrat,” says Trinidad.

Committee members will gather and analyze survey responses throughout the summer. They’ll also look at data from the Census Bureau, the Criminal Justice Policy Council and TDCJ-CJAD offender and revocation profiles before making recommendations.

Susan Crawford, director of TDCJ-CJAD, created the Committee in May in response to a division study and other sources that show that minority offenders are over represented in community supervision and, even more so, in prison.

For professionals in Community Supervision in Texas

Sunset Gives TDCJ the A-OK

It’s official. TDCJ will remain in the criminal justice business until at least the year 2010. The Sunset Commission completed its standard 12-year review of the agency in May and gave it the A-OK to carry on for another 12 years. (Actually, the Legislature will have the final say but, with the Commission’s approval in place, getting the go-ahead from the Legislature is all but assured.)

To read the full report (222 pages) or to read key issues in full (all direction have a copy), see the Commission’s Web page at www.sunset.state.tx.us. If that’s too much of a good thing for you, here’s the condensed version. For details on the Sunset process, see “How Sunset Works,” inside.

What That Means to You

The two issues that pertain to CSCDs are:

Changes how TDCJ-CJAD gives state money to CSCDs

Offers CSCDs more flexibility in spending state funds, but also requires greater scrutiny of the funds they spend. (For details on how TDCJ-CJAD funds programs, see “Just the FAQs,” inside.)

• Limits savings—Allows a department to save leftover money, but limits the amount to two-months-worth of the department’s annual budget. CSCDs that need a larger reserve can request a waiver.

• Eliminates required PSI reports—Requires PSIs only if the judge orders one, rather than requiring them on all felony cases. A field and TDCJ-CJAD committee is looking at how departments and judges use PSIs and whether the reports are reliable.

• Redistributes extra money—Allows departments to reallocate state supervision fund and community corrections program funds to TDCJ-CJAD to redistribute the money to departments that need them. Keeps in the discretionary fund the $4 million that used to pay for PSI reimbursements and allows TDCJ-CJAD to use the money to enhance programs or create new ones.

Requires SAFPf offenders to pay fees

Improves treatment and saves $1.4 million in general revenue funds.

• Requires offenders living in SAFPFs to pay fees of up to 25 percent of their gross income, as set by the judge. Although judges already have the option of requiring offenders on supervision to pay fees, none required offenders living in SAFPFs in 1997 to pay fees. Some treatment officers say that paying fees helps offenders “buy into” treatment. They also say it can improve an offender’s chances of being rehabilitated. However, any fees that offenders fail to pay will have to be replaced by other funding sources.

The CSO Vision

We envision a responsive community corrections system that is inspired by and committed to advancing the ideal of justice. As partners in corrections, we envision working effectively to keep communities safe, to keep communication open, to keep respect for cultural diversity a priority and to keep the hope of rehabilitating offenders alive.

(See 3 cont.)

- Emphasize program performance when awarding discretionary grants to CSCDs

- Ensure that no CSCDs are harmed while transacting unspent funds