

---

---

# COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS MANAGEMENT

**Issues and Strategies**

---

---

**William D. Burrell**



**Civic Research Institute**

4478 U.S. Route 27 • P.O. Box 585 • Kingston, NJ 08528

Copyright © 2012

By Civic Research Institute, Inc.  
Kingston, New Jersey 08528

The information in this book is not intended to replace the services of a trained clinical professional. Civic Research Institute, Inc. provides this information without advocating the use of or endorsing the issues, theories, precedent, guidance, resources, practical materials, or programs discussed herein. Any application of the issues, theories, precedent, guidance, resources, practical materials, or programs set forth in this book is at the reader's sole discretion and risk. The author and Civic Research Institute, Inc. specifically disclaim any liability, loss or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the contents of this book.

All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced in part or in whole by any process without written permission from the publisher.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data  
Community corrections management: Issues and strategies/William D. Burrell

ISBN 978-1-887554-88-6

Library of Congress Control Number 2012937892

*To Jeanne:  
My wife and partner in life,  
with love and gratitude for your patience and support.  
In so many ways, this book is better because of you.*

# Foreword

This book is based on a collection of columns written for *Community Corrections Report* and published from 1998 to 2009. Originally presented under the heading "Management Issues," they cover a wide range of issues related to the management and operations of community corrections agencies, principally probation and parole. As the author, I was given essentially free reign to select the topics for these columns. During the period in which I wrote, I served as chief of adult probation services for the New Jersey state court system, then as a member of the criminal justice faculty at Temple University in Philadelphia, and most recently as an independent corrections management consultant. I have also been active state and regional correctional organizations, and with the American Probation and Parole Association, serving on its board of directors and as editor of *Perspectives*, the association's professional journal since 2000.

From these and related experiences came the inspirations for the "Management Issues" columns. The topics reflect the dual focus of managers in contemporary community corrections. They must address internal operational issues: essentially, what to do and how to best do it. At the same time, managers, particularly at the executive level, must also be concerned with more strategic issues that relate to agency purpose, direction, and relationships with the institutions and agencies of the justice system, the policy and political environment, and the community itself where our work is done.

With this dual focus and the independence to focus columns on what I was interested in at the time, the content of the columns ranges fairly widely. Fortunately, if inadvertently, I wrote about topics that fell into natural clusters or groups that reflect major themes or issues in community corrections. These groups form the nine parts of the book and the columns are the individual chapters. The chapters have been revised, updated, and arranged to provide a logical flow and thus don't appear in chronological order as originally published. Each part begins with an introduction to set the context for the chapters.

The organizing themes and related parts of the book are:

1. Mission and Vision for Community Corrections
2. Managing People and Organizations
3. Operational Strategies for Probation and Parole
4. "What Works" and Evidence-Based Practices
5. Probation/Parole Officers: Our Most Valuable Resource
6. Results-Driven Management
7. Negotiating and Managing the External Environment
8. Leadership in Community Corrections
9. Looking to the Future

These nine themes will serve managers at any level within community corrections as a useful road map for organizing their valuable time and limited resources. For those who may be serving in line or supervisory positions and aspire to managerial and leadership roles, these themes should guide your efforts in awareness, education, training, and professional development to prepare for advancement in the field. To those in higher and professional education fields, these themes should guide your efforts as you offer courses, training, and certifications to community corrections professionals. For elected officials, judges and paroling authority members, policymakers, and concerned citizens, these themes should provide you with a comprehensive yet manageable summary of the issues and challenges facing community corrections in the United States.

— *William Burrell*  
*March 2012*

# About the Author

**William D. Burrell** is an independent corrections management consultant specializing in community corrections, evidence-based practices, performance measurement, and organizational change. From 2003 to 2007, he was a faculty member in the Department of Criminal Justice at Temple University in Philadelphia. Prior to teaching at Temple, Mr. Burrell served for nineteen years as Chief of Adult Probation Services for the New Jersey state court system. He was responsible for monitoring adult probation services in the twenty-one local probation divisions and for providing support services such as research, training, program development, and technical assistance to probation administrators and staff.

Mr. Burrell received a bachelor's degree in sociology from Susquehanna University and a master's degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. He is the coauthor, with Todd R. Clear and Val B. Clear, of *Offender Assessment: The Presentence Investigation and Report* (Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing, 1989). Mr. Burrell serves as chairman of the editorial committee for *Perspectives*, the journal of the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), and he is a member of APPA's board of directors. He has consulted, developed, and delivered training on performance measurement and evidence-based practices for probation and parole agencies at the federal, state, and county levels across the United States.

# Acknowledgements

While a book carries the author's name, it always represents the contributions of many others in addition to the author. This volume is no exception. There are many individuals whose contributions made this book possible, and whose efforts contributed to both the content and appearance of the original publications in *Community Corrections Report* and to their collection in this volume.

First and foremost on this list is my friend and colleague of more than thirty years, Todd R. Clear. When he served as executive editor of *Community Corrections Report*, Todd suggested me as a potential contributor to the periodical, and, as they say, the rest is history. At Civic Research Institute, Deborah Launer was a constant source of support, both as managing editor and as editorial vice president. She played a lead role in conceptualizing this book and bringing it to fruition. Felicia Rosenfeld, Jill Shapiro, and Laura Greeney also served as *CCR* managing editors during my tenure, and I appreciate their light editorial touch as they transformed my manuscripts into the finished printed word. Publisher Mark Peel has been an unwavering source of encouragement, and his support for this book has been crucial.

Over the eleven years that I wrote for *Community Corrections Report*, I was fortunate to work with three Editors-in-Chief, Elizabeth (Beth) Walsh, Carl Reddick, and Russ Immarigeon. Their patience, guidance, and support made deadlines tolerable and significantly reduced the stress of the writing process. I greatly value their contributions to my writing and will miss working with them.

My largest debt is to the thousands of colleagues in probation and parole, corrections, and the research and academic communities across the United States and Canada. From my contacts, interactions, and discussions with them about their work, challenges, frustrations, and inspirations have come countless ideas and topics for the "Management Issues" columns. I am indebted to these colleagues beyond measure and I offer my heartfelt thanks to them all.

In those quiet moments just after clicking "send" and launching the latest column through cyberspace to the editor, I would often wonder whether anyone would find this latest column of interest or value. The feedback and encouragement I received from colleagues and readers helped to quell those anxieties and has inspired me time and time again.

My final acknowledgement is to my wife, Jeanne Mroczko. She cheerfully tolerated the time I spent writing, which in the first half of my tenure with *CCR* was time taken away from personal and family time, as I was working full time in probation. Jeanne has extraordinary skills and an unwavering eye for editing and proofreading, honed in her days writing presentence reports as a probation officer early in her career. She read and edited each page of the seventy columns I wrote, and her work improved every page. For her role as first editor and for her constant support, enthusiastic encouragement, and unconditional love, I owe her a debt which I doubt I will ever be able to repay.

As with any effort to which many contributed, but for which but one individual is listed as author, any errors or omissions are mine alone.

# Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i> .....	v
<i>About the Author</i> .....	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	ix
<i>Introduction</i> .....	xv
<b>Part 1: Mission and Vision for Community Corrections</b> .....	P1-1
Chapter 1: Facing Up to the Critical Task of Rehabilitating Probation's Public Image .....	1-1
Chapter 2: Correcting the Vision of Community Corrections .....	2-1
Chapter 3: "Broken Windows" Probation—Transformation or Back to Basics? .....	3-1
Chapter 4: Crime Prevention—The Future of Community Corrections? .....	4-1
Chapter 5: The Return of the Rehabilitative Ideal—Has the Pendulum Begun to Swing Back? .....	5-1
<b>Part 2: Managing People and Organizations</b> .....	P2-1
Chapter 6: Executing Strategy or Implementing Change—The Importance of Organizational Capability .....	6-1
Chapter 7: In Search of Effective Management Strategies .....	7-1
Chapter 8: Reinventing Probation—Organizational Culture and Change .....	8-1
Chapter 9: Storytelling as a Management Tool .....	9-1
Chapter 10: Creating an Effective Communications Culture— Encouraging People to Speak Up .....	10-1
Chapter 11: Fostering Innovation and Creativity .....	11-1
<b>Part 3: Operational Strategies for Probation and Parole</b> .....	P3-1
Chapter 12: The Technology of Community Supervision .....	12-1
Chapter 13: The Emergence of Collaborative Case Management in Community Corrections .....	13-1
Chapter 14: Back to the Community—Why and How to Return Probation to Its Roots .....	14-1
Chapter 15: Technology, Science, and Community Corrections .....	15-1
Chapter 16: Information Overload—The Downside of Technology for Community Corrections .....	16-1



Chapter 17: The Presentence Investigation Report—Do We Reinvent It or Let It Go? . . . . .	17-1
Chapter 18: Offenders, Employment, and the Workforce . . . . .	18-1
Chapter 19: Violations, Credibility, and Community Corrections . . . . .	19-1
<b>Part 4: “What Works” and Evidence-Based Practices . . . . .</b>	<b>P4-1</b>
Chapter 20: Why <i>What Works</i> Isn’t Working in Community Corrections . . . . .	20-1
Chapter 21 : Implementing Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections—Helpful Lessons . . . . .	21-1
Chapter 22 : Implementation—The Achilles Heel of Evidence-Based Practices . . . . .	22-1
Chapter 23: “What Works” for the Line Probation/Parole Officer . . . . .	23-1
Chapter 24: Cognitive Behavioral Tactics—The Next Phase for Evidence-Based Practices . . . . .	24-1
Chapter 25: Lessons From Drug Courts . . . . .	25-1
Chapter 26: Risk and Community Corrections . . . . .	26-1
Chapter 27: Managing Caseloads: The Challenge of Low-Risk Offenders . . . . .	27-1
<b>Part 5: Probation/Parole Officers—Our Most Valuable Resource . . .</b>	<b>P5-1</b>
Chapter 28: Learning From Our Line Officers—Role Conflict in Probation and Parole Supervision . . . . .	28-1
Chapter 29: The Plight of the Street-Level Bureaucrat— Lessons From Child Welfare . . . . .	29-1
Chapter 30: How to Prevent PPO Stress and Burnout . . . . .	30-1
Chapter 31: Role of the First-Line Supervisor—A Critical Link . . . . .	31-1
Chapter 32: Enhancing Agency Capability Through Staff Involvement in Organizational Improvement Efforts . . . . .	32-1
Chapter 33: Managing the Generations in Community Corrections . . . . .	33-1
<b>Part 6: Results-Driven Management . . . . .</b>	<b>P6-1</b>
Chapter 34: Measuring and Managing the Performance of Community Corrections . . . . .	34-1
Chapter 35: Setting Performance Management Goals in Community Corrections . . . . .	35-1

Chapter 36: Lighting a Fire Under Probation Performance—Lessons From NYPD’s Compstat System . . . . .	36-1
Chapter 37: Transforming Supervision—Riding the Case Plan Into a Results-Driven Future . . . . .	37-1
Chapter 38: Evidence-Based Management and Community Corrections . . . . .	38-1
<b>Part 7: Negotiating and Managing the External Environment . . . . .</b>	<b>P7-1</b>
Chapter 39: Strategic Alliances in Community Corrections . . . . .	39-1
Chapter 40: The Boundary-Spanning Role of Management . . . . .	40-1
Chapter 41: Conflict Resolution—The Key to Effective Collaboration . . . . .	41-1
Chapter 42: Getting the Most Out of Probation/Police Partnerships . . . . .	42-1
Chapter 43: Public Opinion and Community Corrections— A Prime Opportunity . . . . .	43-1
Chapter 44: Public Opinion or Public Expectations—What Matters Most for Community Corrections? . . . . .	44-1
<b>Part 8: Leadership in Community Corrections . . . . .</b>	<b>P8-1</b>
Chapter 45: Leadership—Debunking the Myths and Learning to Lead . . . . .	45-1
Chapter 46: Is Your Agency Doing Things Right? Is It Doing the Right Things? . . . . .	46-1
Chapter 47: Achieving Balance in Leadership—Lessons From Both Genders . . . . .	47-1
Chapter 48: Leadership in a Time of Crisis—A Guide for Managers . . . . .	48-1
Chapter 49: Building for the Future—Developing the Next Generation of Leadership . . . . .	49-1
Chapter 50: The Challenge of Developing the Managers of the Future . . . . .	50-1
<b>Part 9: Looking to the Future . . . . .</b>	<b>P9-1</b>
Chapter 51: Reflections on the Future of Community Corrections . . . . .	51-1
Chapter 52: From “Good to Great”—Can Community Corrections Make the Leap? . . . . .	52-1

Chapter 53: Getting Incentives Right in Community Corrections . . . . .	53-1
Chapter 54: Sustainability—A New Goal for Correctional Policy . . . . .	54-1
Chapter 55 : Probation and Parole—Do They Still Matter? . . . . .	55-1
Chapter 56: Transforming Community Corrections—An Urgent National Priority . . . . .	56-1
<b>Afterword</b> . . . . .	A-1
<b>Index</b> . . . . .	I-1

# Introduction

Probation departments and parole agencies comprise the bulk of the community corrections system in the United States. Together, they are responsible for supervising 70 percent of the adult offenders under correctional supervision (Glaze & Bonczar, 2009). In addition to supervision of offenders, probation and parole agencies are involved in almost every aspect of criminal and juvenile justice. It is safe to say that our contemporary systems of criminal and juvenile justice would quickly grind to a halt were it not for probation and parole.

Both probation and parole are American contributions to contemporary justice systems. John Augustus, a bootmaker, established the first instance of what came to be known as probation in the police courts of Boston in the 1840s. While there were efforts under way in England at about the same time by magistrate Matthew Davenport Hill to provide similar alternatives to harsh punishments, Augustus was the first to develop and apply all of the core components (investigation, release on conditional liberty, conditions of supervision, and possible revocation for failure to comply) that characterize contemporary probation. The first law authorizing probation was enacted in Massachusetts in 1878.

The roots of modern parole can be traced to the nineteenth century and the work of Alexander Maconochie on Norfolk Island off Australia, and of Sir Walter Crofton of the Irish prison system. But it wasn't until Zebulon Brockway was appointed superintendent of Elmira (New York) Reformatory that the full model of parole release and supervision that we know today was first instituted, in 1877.

Both probation and parole grew in popularity in the late nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, most states had adopted both. The establishment of the juvenile court in Cook County, Illinois, hastened the development of juvenile probation.

## **A DECENTRALIZED AND FRAGMENTED SYSTEM**

The governmental structure of the United States has produced a large, decentralized, and fragmented structure to provide probation and parole services. Unlike some countries (the United Kingdom, for example), we have no national probation service to provide service uniformly across all parts of the country. Rather, we have hundreds of agencies at the federal, state, county, and even municipal level that provide probation and parole services. There are even private probation service providers, some of which are nonprofit and others that operate to make a profit. The structure and jurisdiction of these agencies is also a mind-boggling array of possibilities. In some jurisdictions, probation and parole are combined. In others, they are separate. Some agencies supervise both adults and juveniles, while in other jurisdictions they are handled by separate agencies. Some agencies handle felons and misdemeanants; others separate them out. Probation agencies may be part of the judicial branch of government, or part of the executive branch. Most parole agencies are part of the executive branch of government.

The dazzling array of possibilities for the structure and governance of probation

and parole not only makes it hard to describe and categorize our "system," it also makes it challenging to develop and implement uniform, standardized, evidence-based strategies and practices across the country. Add to that the varying levels of funding and political support provided to community corrections agencies, and the management challenges of probation and parole become clear, and daunting.

## THE SECOND CENTURY OF PROBATION AND PAROLE

From their establishment in the 1870s through their first century of existence, probation and parole grew and assumed a central role in criminal and juvenile justice system across the country. It would have been hard during the latter part of that first century to imagine a world without probation and parole.

In the 1970s, that world began to change, rapidly and fundamentally. The first years of probation and parole's second century ushered in changes that radically altered both their role and their practices. The first driver of these changes was a radical shift in sentencing philosophy and practices. The indeterminate sentence was attacked from both sides of the political spectrum. The punitive, get-tough-on-crime advocates wanted more people to spend more time in prison and saw the determinate sentence as a way to accomplish that. The "just deserts" advocates believed that the measure of punishment should be fixed by the judge and applied uniformly across all offenders convicted of the same crime. Both groups saw the flexibility and thus the unpredictability of the indeterminate sentence as problematic and worked to eliminate it. These dual pressures for change were strengthened by the emergence of the "nothing works" ideology on correctional treatment (Martinson, 1974).

The combination of these forces resulted in a rapid and fundamental transformation of sentencing and corrections in the United States. In short order, all fifty states changed their sentencing structure from indeterminate with discretionary parole release to a determinate sentencing system, where the judge set the specifics of the sentence. Sixteen states abolished parole released and the remainder tightened parole released practices (Rhine, Smith, & Jackson, 1991).

Rehabilitation and correctional treatment suffered a fatal blow. The "nothing works" ideology took hold and soon any efforts at treatment were marginalized, if not eliminated. The sentencing and correctional philosophy and practice in the United States became one of locking up ever increasing numbers of offenders for longer periods of time and doing essentially nothing but warehousing them until their predetermined release date.

It isn't difficult to see how the standing and stature of community corrections declined in the "get tough" era. Neither probation nor parole had much to offer in the rush to get tough and punish offenders. In fact, the opposite was seen to be the case. Both were seen as "get out of jail" cards that let offenders out of prison (or kept them from incarceration in the first place) and allowed them to roam essentially free in the community. This was the exact opposite of what the political rhetoric and public policy was calling for at the time.

Despite falling out of favor with politicians and policymakers, probation continued to handle the majority of diverted and adjudicated juveniles, as well as diverted and convicted adults. In contrast to the unrelentingly punitive rhetoric of the "war on

drugs” in the 1980s, probation absorbed the majority of the drug offenders swept up in the aggressive enforcement strategies against drug users (Beck, 2005). Unfortunately, resources did not keep up with sentencing patterns, and average probation caseloads ballooned during this time.

During these “dark days” of probation and parole, there wasn’t much to be optimistic about. Caseloads were large and growing, staff were overwhelmed, our mission had been discredited, our role in the justice system was marginalized, we had a poor (soft on crime) public image, there were no compelling performance measures, and we lacked public and political support.

## **SIGNS OF HOPE: THE EVOLUTION OF CORRECTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE**

As we entered the 1990s, some small, hopeful signs appeared on the horizon. The first was the emergence of the “what works” research, a body of sound, empirical research into correctional treatment. This research focused largely on studies that were published after the cutoff date (1967) for the study that Martinson reported on (Lipton, Martinson, & Wilks, 1975). Compiled largely by a group of Canadian correctional psychologists and academics, this research showed that well-designed and well-implemented correctional treatment programs can produce a significant reduction in recidivism (Gendreau & Ross, 1987). This research was boosted by the development of meta-analysis, a powerful research technique that enabled researchers to create datasets from multiple studies and discover even more powerful effects. From this technique emerged the principles of effective correctional treatment (risk, need, and responsivity, or RNR) that have become the foundation of contemporary, research-based correctional treatment (Andrews et al., 1990).

In Miami in 1989, frustration with the failure of the war on drugs led to the development of the first drug court (Nolan, 2001). Noteworthy for a number of reasons, that first court and all subsequent drug courts were upfront and unabashed in their embrace of addiction treatment for substance abusing offenders. The success of drug courts in reducing recidivism and getting addicted offenders clean and sober changed much of the public and political discourse about treatment and rehabilitation of offenders.

The turn of the new millennium saw two additional factors enter into the political equation on correctional policy. The first was the concept of prisoner reentry. The decades-long flow of offenders into prison that began in the late 1970s was about to be reversed. Those long, determinate sentences that stocked our prisons to overflowing through the 1980s and 1990s were coming to an end in big numbers. A literal flood of inmates was about to be released on our communities. Beginning around 2001, upwards of 600,000 state and federal inmates were to be released each year for the foreseeable future. These were the inmates whose long terms of incarceration coincided with adoption of the “nothing works” ideology, which led to the elimination of almost all treatment and program services for inmates. It wasn’t hard to see that these inmates were coming out of prison no better, and likely much worse, than when they went in. They were completely unprepared to return to society and live a law-abiding, productive life.

Though efforts led by Joan Petersilia and Jeremy Travis, the concept of reentry

developed and spread across the country. A central tenet of this philosophy is that we have a critical obligation to society to address inmates' criminogenic problems while they are incarcerated so they will be better prepared to return to society when their sentences are over (Petersilia, 2003, Travis, 2005). The rapid and widespread embrace of reentry has provided further support for the concept of providing effective correctional treatment for offenders as a core function of institutional and community corrections.

The second development in the new millennium has been driven by the fiscal crises of the last decade. The first and now seemingly mild downturn early in the decade began to put pressure on state budgets. Some pioneering states began to look at the size of their prison budgets (huge) and the crime trends (down for almost a decade at that time) and surmised that perhaps less public money should be invested in locking people up. This developed into the concept of "justice reinvestment," where less expensive options, such as community-based addiction treatment and probation or parole supervision, are substituted for incarceration. Some of the savings from the shift to less costly community-based supervision are reinvested in expanding and strengthening community treatment and supervision capacity. Research has shown that such strategies are more effective and less costly than incarceration (see, e.g., research reported at <http://www.justicereinvestment.org/>). The recent and catastrophic financial crisis has increased interest in this concept and is providing more evidence that well-designed and strategically implemented treatment works.

These two factors have strengthened the case that rehabilitation and treatment should be made a part of the core mission of corrections, including probation and parole. There is a compelling argument that probation and parole agencies must reform their missions and policies to focus on behavior change and institute practices and programs to reduce risk and recidivism. While many may readily accept this argument, implementing such a policy requires a sustained, long-term commitment to organizational change that is daunting for even the most capable community corrections executive. When combined with the pressures of budgeting, demands for accountability, and the myriad smaller but no less urgent issues that occur in the normal course of business, such mission realignments are extremely difficult to accomplish. As the momentum of and the demand for change increases, the job of the community corrections manager gets increasingly challenging and difficult.

In the chapters that follow, I deconstruct this challenging management environment into smaller pieces in the hope that their smaller size and scope will lead to easier digestion and absorption of the lessons of experience and research. It is my hope that the reader, while feeling challenged, will feel empowered to undertake the change process.

## ***References***

---

- Andrews, D. A., Zinger, I., Hoge, R. D., Bonta, J., Gendreau, P., & Cullen, F. T. (1990). Does correctional treatment work? A clinically relevant and psychologically informed meta-analysis. *Criminology*, 28(3), 369–404.
- Beck, A. J. (2005, October 24). *Trends in community corrections statistics*. Paper presented to the Community Corrections Research Network, Washington, DC.
- Gendreau, P., & Ross, R. R. (1987). Revivication of rehabilitation: Evidence from the 1980s. *Justice Quarterly*, 4(3), 349–408.

- Glaze, L. E., & Bonczar, T. P. (2009). *Probation and parole in the United States, 2008*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Lipton, D. S., Martinson, R., & Wilks, J. (1975). *The effectiveness of correctional treatment*. New York: Praeger.
- Martinson, R. (1974). What works? Questions and answers about prison reform. *The Public Interest*, 35, 22–45.
- Nolan, J. L., Jr. (2001). *Reinventing justice: The American drug court movement*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Petersilia, J. (2003). *When prisoners come home: Parole and prisoner reentry*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rhine, E. E., Smith, W. R., & Jackson, R. W. (1991). *Paroling authorities: Recent history and current practice*. Laurel, MD: American Correctional Association.
- Travis, J. (2005). *But they all come back*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.