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Community Corrections in Ohio

Executive Summary

This study by Professor Nancy Marion at the University of Akron finds that Ohio has realized considerable cost savings by using community corrections programs instead of prison. In Fiscal Year 2000, 85 of Ohio's 88 counties had some community corrections programs in place. These facilities typically house non-violent, first and second time offenders who might be sentenced to prison if not for the community alternative. In 2000, Ohio diverted more than 8,698 offenders from state prison and 18,344 from local jails. These programs result in Ohio incarcerating a smaller portion of its correctional population incarcerated than the rest of the nation.

Lower Costs

According to 2002 data from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, in terms of total cost, the most expensive correctional option is prison, which costs \$54.39 per day with an average stay of 7 months and a total cost of \$11,422. Some programs (community based correctional facilities (CBCF) and jails) were more costly on a daily basis, but because the length of supervision time was significantly shorter, the overall cost was lower than that of prison.

Intensive probation (\$1367 total cost), electronic monitoring (\$325) and day reporting (\$945) were dramatically less expensive than prison (\$11,422), jail (\$1191), or CBCFs (\$9875), whether measured per day or as a total. Compared to prison, the state saved more than \$10,000 per offender over the course of confinement or treatment by using the least restrictive forms of community supervision and treatment (electronic monitoring, day reporting, intensive supervision). The table below portrays daily costs, length of stay, and total costs of various forms of supervision for Ohio offenders.

Cost Per Day, Average Stay and Total Costs, Different Forms of Supervision State of Ohio, 2000			
Program	Cost per day	Average stay	Total cost
Prison	\$54.39	7 months	\$11,421.90 *
Half-way House	\$53.95	84 days	\$4,531.80
CBCF	\$79.00	125 days	\$9,875.00
Intensive Probation	\$4.34	9-12 months	\$1,171.80-1,562.40*
Jail	\$60.47	19.7days	\$1,191.26
Day Reporting	\$21.00	45 days	\$945.00
Electronic Monitoring	\$5.43	60 days	\$325.80

Lower Recidivism

Available data indicate that successful clients of community correction programs are less likely to recidivate than people simply leaving prison. This indicates that community corrections programs in Ohio may be more effective at rehabilitation than prison. To better assess this, Ohio must improve data collection on re-arrest, re-conviction and re-imprisonment.

Previous Research

This study is consistent with other findings on the lower cost of alternatives to incarceration. Research by the Rand corporation found that a dollar spent on treatment saved \$7 in future costs. A 1994 four-state study found that community service, probation, electronic monitoring and house arrest were all cheaper than prison. And a 1997 analysis of the federal correctional population found that probation and pretrial services successfully managed offenders at one-tenth the cost of incarceration.

Recommendations

The report recommends that the state of Ohio increase the number and type of community corrections options available to courts, to ensure that the most efficient and effective option can be considered. Additional recommendations centered on improving data collection and maintenance, particularly on recidivism. Only with the best available data can Ohio make the best decisions for its corrections policy.

Data

Most of the data in the report is from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, Bureau of Research, and Division of Parole and Community Services. Some local community corrections system data was analyzed to get a sense of recidivism rates in community corrections facilities, and some national data was used.

About the Author and Organization

Nancy Marion, Professor of Political Science at the University of Akron, is the author of *Criminal Justice in America: The Politics Behind the System* (Carolina Academic Press, 2002), and *Crime and Criminal Justice in Ohio: Programs and Agencies*, 1998 (Midwest Press, 1998). She is a member of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, American Society of Criminology, and Midwestern Criminal Justice Association.

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Policy Matters Ohio (www.policymattersohio.org), which released the report locally, is an Ohio-based policy research institute, dedicated to bridging the gap between research and policy.