

Community Corrections Service Center

Interim Evaluation Report
March 2, 2010

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Executive Summary

The current report is an interim process evaluation of the Napa County Community Corrections Service Center (CCSC). A full First Year CCSC Evaluation Report will follow. The evaluation includes data from the first year of CCSC operation; in particular, detailed information was obtained from a random sample of 41 (28%) case files from the total 147 population of participants. These case files include individuals who are currently enrolled in the program and participants who have graduated or been discharged. The evaluation focuses on process outputs of the CCSC and describes how the program is functioning and how well it meets certain expectations set forth by the County. The evaluation does not include an analysis of whether the program has achieved its intended goal of reducing recidivism, as this will require additional time for sufficient participants to graduate and a randomized controlled study to address.

The evaluation examined six areas of CCSC operation: 1) enrollment, 2) inter-agency coordination, 3) risk and needs assessment, 4) group program scheduling, 5) behavior change plans, and 6) intermediate outcomes. These were chosen based on their importance to meeting basic expectations for program success. The number and type of participants enrolled relates to how well the County is reaching intended participants of the program. As the CCSC targets medium and high risk probationers, some of whom are incarcerated in the jail, it is vital that these agencies coordinate well with each other to provide comprehensive supervision and services to participants. Research has demonstrated that to be effective, programs such as the CCSC should be tailored to meet the individual needs of participants. Therefore, the consistency and accuracy of risk and needs assessments conducted by CCSC staff was evaluated and

the level at which identified needs were subsequently addressed through group scheduling and behavior change plans was also measured. Finally, a set of intermediate outcomes was included in the evaluation to measure participant gains in areas that have been shown to relate to likelihood of re-offending such as overall risk scores and employment status. These are considered intermediate outcomes, as they do not measure the main outcome of recidivism, but rather factors related to recidivism. Both strengths and areas for improvement were noted in each area, as well as important areas to be further examined in future evaluations.

Participant Enrollment

The first area of evaluation concerns whether the County is meeting target figures for enrollment and if the correct type of participants are being enrolled. The following were key findings during the first year of CCSC operation:

Strengths

- The Out-of-Custody portion of the CCSC program has consistently maintained an average rate of 50-60 active participants since the third month of operation, which exceeds initial estimates.
- Only one instance of an inappropriate enrollment was recorded in the last seven months of CCSC operation.
- CCSC participants include a mix of both felony-level and misdemeanor-level probationers.

Areas for Improvement

- The In-Custody portion of the CCSC has never met initial estimates for participant enrollment, which has resulted in difficulties for full program implementation.

Areas for Future Evaluation

- The impact of various State and County policy changes on the jail population and referral procedures for CCSC-eligible inmates on the In-Custody participant numbers should be evaluated to determine the continuing viability of this portion of the CCSC program.
- Additional verification of criteria fidelity could be included in future evaluation reports through independent comparisons of official records to eligibility criteria. Also, a review of criteria could be conducted to determine if changes may be appropriate.
- Analysis of the referral process could be included in future evaluations to determine if there are eligible participants who are not being enrolled in the program.

Inter-agency Coordination

Napa County has contracted with an independent company, BI, Inc., to run the CCSC. As the criminal justice system in Napa County is collaborative in nature, and the CCSC is the result of a system-wide endeavor, it is important that BI is able to coordinate well with Napa County agencies. Most importantly, BI must coordinate with Probation on several important aspects of the program, including supervision and case

management of probationers. Also, BI must coordinate with Jail staff for the In-Custody portion of the program. For these reasons, BI, Probation, and Jail staff were interviewed for the evaluation to determine areas where collaboration is strong and potential areas for improvement.

Strengths

- Overall, coordination between BI staff and Napa County Probation and Jail staff is functioning well. Both formal and informal methods of communication exist, and when issues arise agencies appear able to work together to address them.

Areas for Improvement

- Some potential areas for improvement were suggested by Probation, Jail, and BI staff interviewed. For example, probation officers may benefit from first-hand observations of the CCSC group sessions and events to learn more about the content of the program and how it is run. Also, BI staff may be able to increase efforts to report positive information about participants to their probation officers in addition to negative issues that arise.

Areas for Future Evaluation

- The current evaluation included interviews from two BI staff, three Jail staff, and five Probation staff. Future evaluations could include interviews with additional staff from these agencies and/or staff from other criminal justice agencies that interact with the CCSC.

Risk and Needs Assessment

Research shows that programs should be targeted towards participants' individual criminogenic needs to be effective; all participants should not be receiving the same services in the CCSC. To tailor services, participant needs first must be assessed. The CCSC assesses participants' criminogenic needs by using the Level of Service Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI; Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004), which focuses on different factors that have been shown to statistically predict an individual's likelihood of recidivism. The LS/CMI gives a total risk score for likelihood of re-offending that fall into risk levels ranging from "Very Low" to "Very High." The assessment also places each of the criminogenic needs shown to affect likelihood of re-offending into similar risk levels; for example, an individual's employment/education need may range from "Very Low" to "Very High." To evaluate the effectiveness of risk and needs assessment in the CCSC, consistency of assessment administration and accuracy of scoring were measured.

Strengths

- BI Staff are regularly utilizing the recommended LS/CMI Interview Guide, which provides a structured interview format and promotes consistency of assessment administration.
- Most (71%) LS/CMI assessments conducted by BI staff were error-free.

Areas for Improvement

- Some errors affected the risk level for a criminogenic need (19% of reviewed LS/CMIs), but none affected the total risk level. However, these numbers suggest that room for improvement exists.

Areas for Future Evaluation

- Future evaluations could include information on inter-rater reliability for scoring the LS/CMI.
- Future evaluations could include information about the quality of information gathered during interviews and about the quality of rating decisions made by staff while filling out the assessment.
- Future evaluations could include information on reliability of administration or validity of LS/CMI assessments used in the CCSC conducted by probation officers in addition to BI staff.

Group Program Scheduling

The criminogenic needs identified by the LS/CMI are used to tailor programming services to the individual participant. While some groups are mandatory for all participants in the CCSC due to their focus on changing overall criminogenic thinking and behavior, other groups are assigned specifically to address certain needs for a subset of participants. In part, the determination for which of these additional groups a participant will be assigned is made by referring to the top four criminogenic needs from the LS/CMI. For the current evaluation, the top four criminogenic needs were compared to group assignments in each phase of the program.

Strengths

- The evidence basis of curriculum used on groups was examined by consultants from the Carey Group before implementation. The consultants determined that the core curriculum, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) is evidence-based.

Additional curricula lacked evidence supporting their effectiveness; however, there is a general lack of evidence in this area so this did not make the implementation of those groups inappropriate.

- Group scheduling appears to match top four criminogenic needs in most cases (88% in Phase 1, 91% in Phase 2, and 100% in Phase 3).

Areas for Improvement

- Currently, there is no decision-making guide for matching criminogenic needs to group assignments; such a guide may be helpful in ensuring consistent matches between needs and groups.

Areas for Future Evaluation

- Future evaluations could include an analysis of group content to verify that the group assignments for each identified criminogenic need are appropriate.
- Future evaluations could include an analysis of group session implementation, to ensure that facilitators are following the approved format and content of curricula.
- Future evaluations could include an analysis of group facilitator skills at leading group discussions.

Behavior Change Plans

Behavior Change Plans (BCP) are an additional method that BI uses to meet individual needs for participants in the CCSC. These plans include at least four positive goals for participants to achieve during their time in the program, and action items as steps to achieve these goals. To tailor the plans to individual participants, each goal should match a top four criminogenic need as identified on the LS/CMI. The current

evaluation compares the match between criminogenic needs and goals on the BCP at each phase of the program, and also describes how many action items are typically created and when they are completed among the sample of participants in the review.

Strengths

- 90% of participants who completed Phase 1 had created a Behavior Change Plan before they were promoted to Phase 2.
- 94% of Behavior Change Plans completed in Phase 1 matched the top four criminogenic needs as determined by the initial LS/CMI assessment.

Areas for Improvement

- Behavior Change Plans do not appear to be updated on a regular basis after new LS/CMI assessments reveal revised top four criminogenic needs. However, the sample size for these cases was small and caution should be used when interpreting findings.
- Clear practices regarding Behavior Change Plan completion were not evident. Overall, it appears that some participants are finishing all their assigned action items early in the program, while others are finishing theirs late in the program. However, the sample size for these cases was small and caution should be used when interpreting findings.
- Official BI company policies or Napa County CCSC program standardized practices regarding several aspects of Behavior Change Plans are lacking. These include:
 - When the plan should be updated to address changes to criminogenic needs

- Whether high criminogenic needs that are initially over-ridden (i.e., replaced by a lower need) should ever be included in the plan
- The minimum number of action items required for each goal
- Whether new action items should be included in the plan once old ones are complete
- How many action items a participant could be expected to complete in each phase

Areas for Future Evaluation

- Future evaluations could examine the number of days before plans are created. This would require data transfer from the BI computer system Accutrax to appropriately analyze.
- Future evaluations could include assessment of the quality of goals and action items.
- Future evaluations could include target performance measures for action item creation and completion once standardized practices or official policies are set.

Intermediate Outcomes

The ultimate measure of success for the CCSC is the rate at which the program reduces recidivism in participants; however, this outcome is not available at the current time. Instead, intermediate outcomes were included in the evaluation to measure changes in factors that predict recidivism. First, the total risk score from participants' initial LS/CMI was compared to their follow-up scores for those who have been re-

assessed. Change in employment status was also included, as underemployment is a risk factor for recidivism.

Strengths

- Risk scores on the LS/CMI appear to be declining an average of 3 points among participants in the CCSC with multiple assessments. Declining scores have resulted in lower risk levels for 30% of these individuals. It is important to note that these individuals were still making progress in the program at the time of re-assessment, so it is possible additional change may occur before graduation.
- Tracking of employment rates for discharged participants indicate that 16% more individuals were employed when they left the program than when they initially started it. It is noteworthy that these rates reflect employment gains for individuals who for the most part have not *graduated* from the program but are being discharged for other reasons, including termination for failing to abide by program rules. As more participants successfully complete the program, comparison of gains in employment of graduated vs. discharged clients will be possible.

Areas for Future Evaluation

- Policy questions remain on the appropriate timing of LS/CMI assessments for CCSC participants. While BI has a policy that participants should be re-assessed every six months, it is not clear how this applies to individuals who have had an assessment conducted by Probation months (but not six months) previous to their enrollment in the program. Ideally, a participant would have an entrance assessment to establish the baseline needs and risk level, a mid-program

assessment to check for changes to need that may need to be addressed by changes in programming, and an exit assessment to determine the risk and need levels upon program graduation. Given current program logistics this model does not appear to be feasible; however, it may be beneficial to discuss alternative practices that may make this model possible.

- More in-depth analysis of education and employment skill gains could be included as intermediate outcomes in future evaluations.
- Future evaluations should compare recidivism outcomes when this information becomes available.
- Future evaluations should assess the feasibility of different randomized control group study designs for comparing CCSC participant outcomes to non-participant outcomes.

Summary

The interim evaluation reveals areas of both strength and areas for improvement in CCSC operations. The evaluation aimed to give preliminary answers to the following questions: 1) Is the CCSC providing evidence-based services in an individualized fashion to probationers who may benefit from intensive supervision and programming?, and 2) Is the CCSC producing positive changes in participants that may ultimately lead to reductions in recidivism?

Findings from the initial review suggest that the CCSC is indeed providing individualized services to appropriate participants, and that many of these participants have shown short term positive gains during their time in the program for factors that

are associated with reductions in recidivism. However, initial findings also suggest that improvements could be made in several aspects of CCSC operation to increase the number of participants served and address changes in participant needs. Also, the initial review identified areas where official BI policy or standardized CCSC practice guidelines could be clarified to promote measurement of performance. Overall, these findings suggest that the CCSC has established a solid foundation for delivering services to at-risk probationers, but as a new program just completing its first year of operation, there remain adjustments to be made to reach certain County expectations.

It is important to stress the nature of this report as an interim evaluation. The current report is meant to offer an initial look at program operations, to point out areas that appear to be functioning well and areas that may need additional attention before the full year evaluation. In order to fully measure some aspects of the program, some changes in policy or standardized practices may need to be made so that expectations are clearly established. The full year evaluation should also include a larger sample size, which would allow for more meaningful interpretation of later phase information (where sample size in the current evaluation was especially small). Finally, while the current evaluation focused on six important areas of CCSC operations, there are several additional aspects of the program that should be included in a full evaluation, including examination of attrition rates and CCSC staff skills and training.

Introduction

Evaluation Purpose

The current report is an interim evaluation of the Community Corrections Service Center (CCSC) process implementation during the first year of operation. Thorough efforts were conducted by Napa County during the planning stages of the CCSC to base programming on evidence-based practices. A detailed review of these efforts can be found in the CCSC Initial Report, which chronicles the planning and implementation process of the CCSC. Research on offender-based programs indicates that while it is important to incorporate evidence-based principles into program design, program implementation and fidelity to those principles is also important for achieving reductions in recidivism (Dunsenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003). Therefore, the CCSC Oversight Committee has established an on-going quality assurance process and has produced the current CCSC Interim Evaluation Report, to be followed by the full First Year CCSC Evaluation Report. The purpose of these efforts is to determine the extent to which CCSC processes meet Napa County expectations, including accuracy and consistency of evidence-based practices such as assessing risk and needs and being responsive in tailoring programming to specific individuals. The current interim report is meant to offer an initial look at program operations, to identify areas that appear to be functioning well and areas that may need additional attention before the full year evaluation. In order to fully measure some aspects of the program, changes in policy or practice may need to be made so that expectations are clearly established.

The current evaluation examined six areas of CCSC operation: 1) enrollment, 2) inter-agency coordination, 3) risk and needs assessment, 4) group program scheduling,

5) behavior change plans, and 6) intermediate outcomes. These areas of focus were chosen based on their importance to meeting basic expectations for program success. The number and type of participants enrolled relates to how well the County is reaching intended participants of the program. As the CCSC targets medium-high risk probationers, some of whom are incarcerated in the jail, it is vital that these agencies coordinate well with each other to provide comprehensive supervision and services to participants. Research has demonstrated that to be effective, programs such as the CCSC should be tailored to meet the individual needs of participants (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, & Cullen, 1990). Therefore, the consistency and accuracy of risk and needs assessments conducted by CCSC staff were evaluated and the level at which identified needs were subsequently addressed through group scheduling and behavior change plans were also measured. Finally, a set of intermediate outcomes was included in the evaluation, to measure participant gains in areas that have been shown to relate to likelihood of re-offending, such as overall risk scores and employment status. These are considered intermediate outcomes, as they do not measure the main outcome of recidivism, but rather factors related to recidivism. The ultimate outcome of reduced recidivism was not included in the evaluation for two reasons: 1) not enough participants have graduated to allow for meaningful assessment of long-term program outcomes, and 2) a randomized controlled study of the CCSC would need to be implemented to allow for meaningful comparisons in outcomes for program participants and non-participants who are similarly matched on important eligibility criteria (additional discussion of this issue can be found below in the Intermediate Outcomes section).

Both strengths and areas for improvement were noted in each area, as well as areas to be further examined in future evaluations. Overall, the goal of the interim evaluation is to give preliminary answers to the following questions: 1) Is the CCSC providing evidence-based services in an individualized fashion to probationers who may benefit from intensive supervision and programming?, and 2) Are CCSC participants experiencing positive cognitive and behavioral changes that may ultimately lead to reductions in recidivism?

CCSC Process

The CCSC was designed as an additional resource for probationers who were identified as being at-risk for recidivating. The goal of the CCSC is to reduce recidivism in these offenders through evidence-based supervision and programming aimed at changing criminal thinking and behavior. Participants may either start in the In-Custody or Out-of-Custody portions of the program. The two portions are designed to be complementary so individuals may move between them without substantial disruption to services; however, the In-Custody portion only includes a sub-set of services.

Referral to the Out-of-Custody portion is initiated by a probation officer, who includes a recommendation for CCSC placement in an offender's pre-sentence report if the offender meets all criteria. For the In-Custody portion, the Chief Probation Officer reviews a list of inmates and makes an initial determination of eligibility. The list of potential referrals is then sent to the Assistant District Attorney for review of charges to determine if individuals are likely to be sentenced to prison. Although formal criteria does exist for eligibility, an exception process has been created for review of atypical

cases. If an individual appears to be a viable program candidate but does not meet all formal eligibility criteria, a CCSC Exception Committee meets to make a final determination regarding referral. The Committee decision must be unanimous to approve an exception. The Committee consists of representatives from the County Executive Office, Probation, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Napa County Department of Corrections. Additionally, the Criminal Justice Analyst acts as a consultant for the Committee. During the first year of operation, the Committee has only approved one exception.

Once individuals are placed in the CCSC, they are supervised and engage in programming to address criminal thinking and behavior. Although some programming is standard, much of the other aspects of the CCSC are tailored to individual needs. These needs are assessed before participants enter the program and are re-assessed every six months. Services to participants include meetings with case managers to check on progress in the program and to offer individual attention focused on addressing issues the participant may be having in the program or in their daily lives that relate to their criminogenic needs. As part of case management meetings, participants create an individualized Behavior Change Plan, which contains goals and action items that participants must complete to achieve these goals. These plans are reviewed and updated in subsequent meetings. Additionally, participants are assigned to multiple groups that focus on changing criminal thinking and behavior, some of which are assigned only to individuals who have demonstrated a specific need (e.g., Drug Education).

In addition to programming, the CCSC also requires intensive supervision for all participants. For example, new participants must check in at the Center and receive a breathalyzer test daily, and they are tested for drugs, randomly, once a week. As the program progresses, those who do well and have no violations will have their level of supervision reduced while those who violate supervision will have their supervision requirements increased. For example, drug testing requirements may be changed to twice a week for someone who tests positive. Also, the frequency of case management meetings will increase or decrease depending on the participant's behavior in the program. GPS monitoring is assigned as additional supervision for offenders who are deemed to be struggling most in the program.

The Out-of-Custody portion of the CCSC program is organized into three phases and aftercare. Participants are expected to take approximately one year to complete the full program, although due to the individualized nature of the program individuals are not all expected to graduate at the same pace.

- Phase 1 focuses on orienting offenders to the program and creating commitment to change. Participants enter Phase 1 when they are referred to the Out-of-Custody portion of the program. Advancement to the next phase is based purely on participant progress and is not tied to a specific timeframe, although Phase 1 is expected to last approximately 45 days.
- In Phase 2, the focus shifts to making major changes to the offender's behavior and thinking patterns. This phase is expected to last approximately 225 days. Advancement to Phase 3 again depends on the participant's actual progress.

- Phase 3 focuses on preparing offenders for transitioning out of the program and into Aftercare. Participants are considered program graduates when they complete Phase 3. Phase 3 is expected to last approximately 95 days, but participants must meet certain progress standards to actually qualify for Aftercare.
- Aftercare is offered for six months following graduation from CCSC. Offenders check in weekly at the CCSC and attend monthly groups. Napa County does not pay for Aftercare.

Although individuals do not begin Phase 1 unless they are in the Out-of-Custody portion, the CCSC also includes In-Custody participants. Inmates who begin the program In-Custody are considered “pre-phase.” They participate in some group sessions and meet with their case managers. Participants who start in the Out-of-Custody portion and are arrested or remand to the jail while in the CCSC may continue the program while incarcerated, and return to the Out-of-Custody portion when released.

The CCSC is run by an independently contracted company, Behavioral Interventions, Inc. (BI). Although BI runs day reporting centers such as the CCSC in other jurisdictions, the Napa County program is different from other programs in several ways, the most important of which is that it is the first BI-run program with an In-Custody component. To enhance standardization among BI-run programs and fidelity to certain evidence-based principles that BI has incorporated into its practices, official company-wide policies exist for several aspects of the program. However, BI has also been responsive in implementing certain standardized practices that are unique to the Napa

County CCSC; these practices are expectations for CCSC staff set by the CCSC Program Manager that provide additional guidance beyond official BI policy.

The CCSC includes eight staff positions; a Program Manager, three Case Managers, an Employment and Education Coordinator, and four Client Services Specialists. Case load sizes for case managers have typically range from 10-30, with the Employment and Education Coordinator also managing a smaller case load of 1-9 individuals. Although currently no established standards exist for day reporting case load size, it appears that the CCSC does meet published standards for medium-high risk probation case loads (American Probation and Parole Association, 2006). As of March 1, 2010, the CCSC had reached 147 enrollments total, with 61 currently active on that date. Of the 59 active Out-of-Custody participants, 23 were in Phase 1, 20 were in Phase 2, and 16 were in Phase 3. An additional 2 participants were in the In-Custody portion of the program. Four participants had graduated from the program and were participating in Aftercare. The CCSC also supervises individuals released from jail on their own recognizance; 23 individuals were being supervised by the CCSC on that date.

CCSC Oversight and Quality Assurance

To address policy issues that arise and maintain on-going quality assurance for the CCSC, Napa County has created standing committees composed of members of the criminal justice system, the County Executive Office, and BI. During the first year of CCSC operation, the CCSC Quality Assurance Committee worked on translating the CCSC Logic Model, which guided vendor selection and program implementation, into a

Quality Assurance Plan. The Committee also worked on accessing and gathering data regarding CCSC processes and analyzed available information to identify areas for possible improvement. Potential issues relating to changes in CCSC policy were referred by the CCSC QA Committee to a different CCSC committee comprised of policy makers. This committee addressed low-level policy issues directly, and made recommendations for larger policy changes to the Criminal Justice Committee for approval. In December, 2009 these committees were re-formed so that the responsibility for both quality assurance and policy oversight of the CCSC was placed with the CCSC Oversight Committee, which reports to the Criminal Justice Committee. The current interim evaluation is a product of the quality assurance efforts of the CCSC Oversight Committee.

Evaluation Methods

Sources of Data

There are six sources of data available for evaluating the CCSC. First, information is available on participants in the Napa County Criminal Justice Information System (CJIMS). Information on participants is also tracked through the case management system used by BI, Accutrax. A data-sharing process is currently being implemented to transfer Accutrax data into CJIMS. This will allow Napa County staff to easily view program information on participants and will facilitate analysis of quality assurance items. Additionally, CCSC staff track certain information that has been requested by Napa County but is not entered into Accutrax in an outside spreadsheet that is uploaded to CJIMS on a monthly basis. A process is in-progress to build a CCSC

module in CJIMS to allow for direct data-entry to replace the use of this spreadsheet. Certain spreadsheets and reports are also created by CCSC staff for internal quality assurance tracking and have been made available to Napa County. Information not entered in computer systems or spreadsheets is tracked through paper case files maintained by CCSC staff. Finally, interviews were conducted with CCSC, Probation, and Jail staff to gather information on perceptions of inter-agency coordination.

Data Selection and Sample Characteristics

The current evaluation uses all six of these sources of data to provide a comprehensive review of CCSC processes. Information for all participants enrolled during the first year of program implementation (March 2, 2009 through March 1, 2010) was used for most computer system and spreadsheet data sources. However, for the interim evaluation logistical constraints limited the amount of information gathered from paper case files, as these required manual coding. Therefore, 41 case files (28%) were coded to form a representative sample of CCSC participants. Case files were chosen by pulling every fourth participant listed on the CCSC spreadsheet to gather an initial 25% randomly-selected sample of files. However, this sample did not include any participants who had graduated from the CCSC or files from a certain case manager. To increase the representativeness of the sample, a random selection of files from the case manager and for participants who had entered Aftercare were also included.

The resulting case file sample included 19 (46%) participants who were still active in the program, and 22 (54%) participants who were no longer active due to being discharged or graduating. As this is an open program with individuals starting and ending participation at different times, data was not available for all phases with every

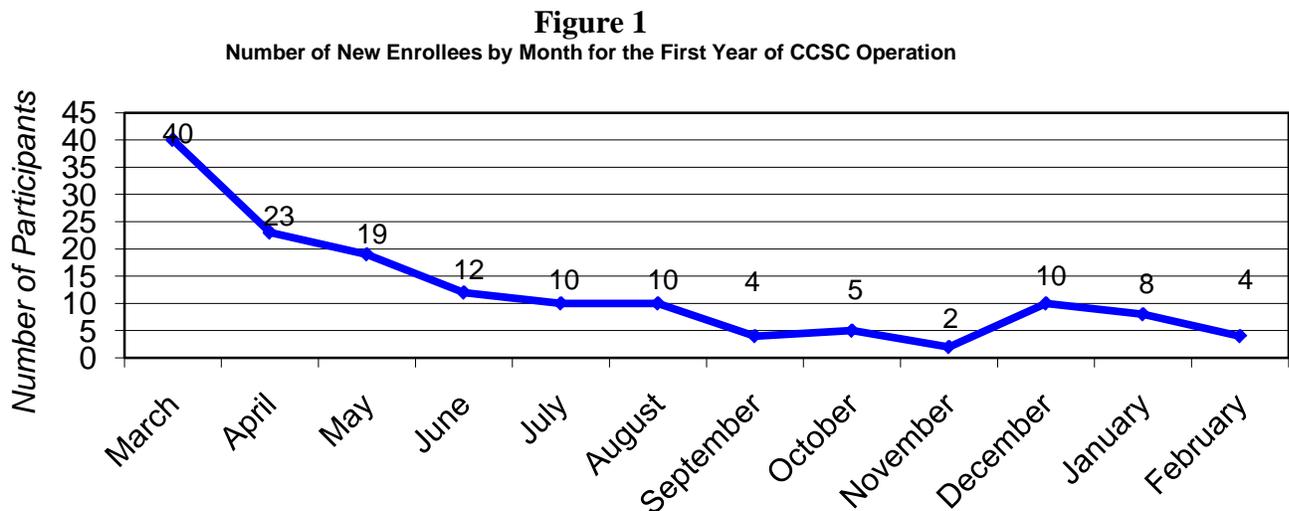
participant. Twenty-one participants (51%) had completed Phase 1 at the time of the review; ten (24%) had completed Phase 2, and two (5%) had completed Phase 3.

Evaluation Findings

Participant Enrollment

Enrollment Numbers

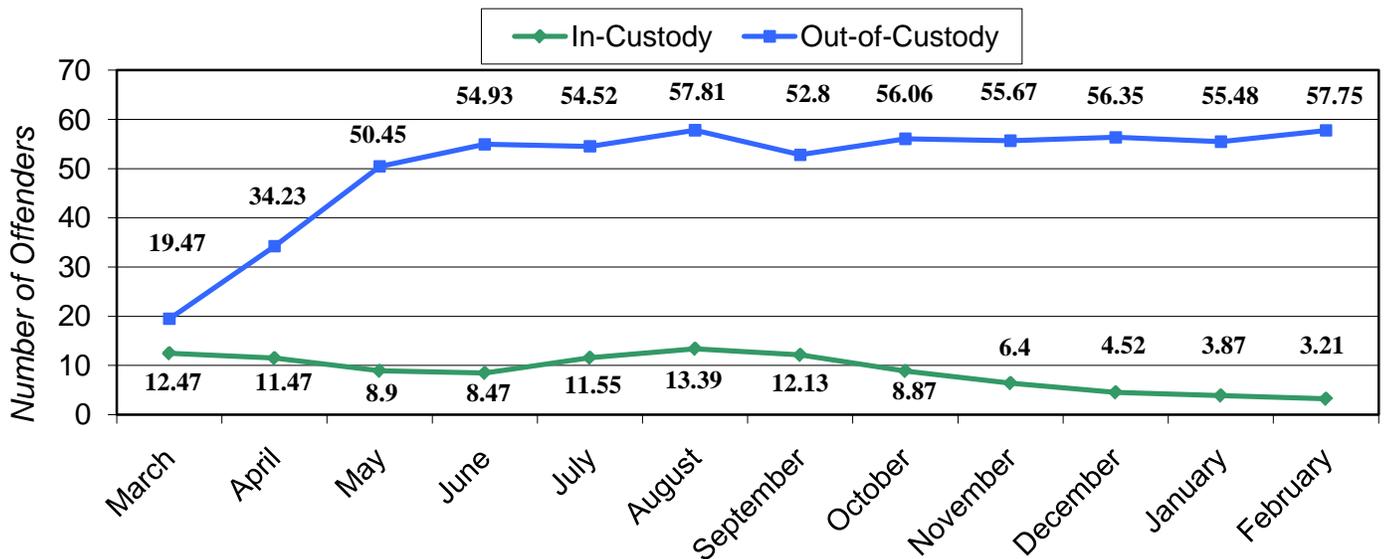
The CCSC QA Committee has been tracking enrollment on an on-going basis. During the first year of operation (March 2, 2009 through March 1, 2010), 147 cases had been enrolled in the CCSC. Because individuals may be enrolled in the program multiple times (e.g., a participant is discharged from the program and then is re-referred to start the program over again), this number represents 141 distinct individuals, six of whom have had two “episodes” (i.e., two different referrals) in the program. Figure 1 shows the number of clients enrolled in the CCSC by month during the first year of operation.



As Figure 1 demonstrates, enrollment numbers declined from initial months of operation to a low of two new participants in November 2009. The CCSC QA Committee identified this trend and the Probation Department responded by implementing changes to the internal referral process. The number of new enrollments subsequently increased but has declined again in February. As this is the last month before the evaluation, it is unknown whether this represents a new trend or an anomaly.

The original goal for the CCSC was to have 50 active participants at a time in the Out-of-Custody portion and 50 in the In-Custody portion of the program. The CCSC QA Committee has tracked the number of participants in the In-Custody and Out-of-Custody portions of the program over time; Figure 2 represents the average number of participants in each portion of the program by month for the first year of operation.

Figure 2
Average Number of In-Custody and Out-of-Custody Participants during the First Year of CCSC Operations



The program numbers in Figure 2 reveal that the Out-of-Custody portion of the program has consistently included higher numbers of participants than the In-Custody portion, and that the In-Custody portion has never reached the initial goal of 50 participants. It is also important to note that in January, a change to state law increased the amount of good time/work time credits inmates receive in the jail (instead of serving 2/3 of their sentence, eligible inmates now only serve 1/2), which resulted in shorter length of stays for some inmates that may have exacerbated the enrollment difficulties associated with the In-Custody program.

The CCSC QA Committee referred the issue of low In-Custody enrollment to the CCSC Oversight Committee, which addressed the discrepancy through two policy recommendations. First, enrollment in the In-Custody and Out-of-Custody portions of the program were changed to reflect a total of 100 slots for the entire CCSC program, so that the County could be flexible in placing more participants in the Out-of-Custody program as needed. Also, slots not filled by CCSC program participants have been filled by individuals released from jail under supervised recognizance. These individuals are supervised by BI (e.g., drug testing) but do not participate in any program activities. Additionally, the CCSC Oversight Committee recommended, and the Criminal Justice Committee approved, a policy change in January to the referral process for In-Custody inmates. Previously, only inmates already on formal probation were referred to the program. The policy was changed to allow pre-sentenced inmates on summary probation to also be referred to the program on a voluntary basis if their charges would likely result in formal probation upon sentencing. As this policy change is newly implemented, analysis of its impact will be included in the First Year CCSC Evaluation

Report instead of the current CCSC Interim Evaluation Report. Additionally, California prison reform efforts may increase the number of inmates in the jail, thereby potentially increasing the number of CCSC-eligible inmates. However, these reforms have not yet been implemented and their impact cannot be estimated at this time.

Although there is currently no minimum enrollment number for the In-Custody program, the current low participant numbers are creating logistical problems for implementation. For example, BI has a policy that there must be at least three participants available to hold a group meeting. As not all In-Custody participants are of the same security level, groups are often held in two different locations, which means that even though five inmates may be enrolled in the CCSC, two of them may not be able to attend a group if they are housed separately from the other three. Additionally, some groups held in the jail require extra staff resources to address safety/security concerns. Ideally, the Jail would prefer to have a female officer present if female inmates are in the area (groups are often mixed-gender, as there are not sufficient number of participants to hold separate male and female sessions). The Jail committed to providing an extra hire staff when groups were held in the library/classroom area (which lacks video cameras), and a female officer was assigned as needed. Due to program implementation and jail resource considerations, if enrollment numbers remain at current low levels, a re-evaluation of the viability of the In-Custody program may be warranted in the future.

Fidelity to Eligibility Criteria for Participant Enrollment in the CCSC

The current criteria for CCSC eligibility are that the participant must:

- be a Napa County Resident after release from jail OR employed in Napa County 20 hours a week or more after release from jail;

- have no history of sex offenses;
- have LS/CMI Score between 18 and 29 OR proxy score 5 or above;
- be guilty of no offense or enhancement listed in either Penal Code Section 667.5 (C)(1)-(22) or Penal Code Section 1192.7 (c)(1)-(42);
- not be a flight risk (pre-trial only);
- have no out-of-county holds.

To determine the extent to which participants enrolled in the CCSC match this criteria, the percent of mistaken referrals identified by BI and/or Probation. As part of the CCSC QA Committee's on-going quality assurance process, BI staff keep a record of all cases where participants were enrolled in the program but did not actually match one or more criteria. These records indicate that a total of 13 individuals (9% of total enrollments) were enrolled in the program but later discovered to be ineligible. The most common reason was due to having an LS/CMI score outside the approved range (54% of ineligible enrollments); no other systematic errors were identified. All but one of these cases were referred during the first five months of CCSC operation. As an independent method for evaluating criteria fidelity, a report is being created from the Criminal Justice Information Management System (CJIMS) to match official records for participants against criteria; information from this report is not yet available and therefore will be included in the First Year CCSC Evaluation Report.

One additional concern was that the CCSC might be enrolling participants only on felony probation instead of including both felony and misdemeanor probationers. Analysis of the data shows that this is not the case; 33% of participants in the CCSC were on misdemeanor probation when they started the program.

Inter-Agency Coordination

Napa County has contracted with an independent company, BI, Inc., to run the CCSC. As the criminal justice system in Napa County is collaborative in nature, and the CCSC is the result of a system-wide endeavor, it is important that BI is able to coordinate well with Napa County agencies. Most importantly, BI must coordinate with Probation on several important aspects of the program, including supervision and case management of probationers. Also, BI must coordinate with Jail staff for the In-Custody portion of the program. For these reasons, BI, Probation, and Jail staff were interviewed for the evaluation to determine the areas where collaboration is strong and potential areas for improvement.

Napa County and BI staff indicated that communication between agencies is open and both formal and informal methods of interaction exist. Formal methods of collaboration include officially designated BI liaisons within the Probation department and regularly scheduled meetings between BI and Napa County staff. Every week a probation officer liaison attends BI staff meetings to discuss participant issues, and additional meetings occur with a probation liaison, Jail, and BI staff to discuss In-Custody participant issues as needed. Additional formal methods of coordination include shared trainings with Jail, Probation, and BI staff (e.g., LS/CMI) and trainings offered by the Jail for BI staff on safety and security issues in incarcerated settings. Probation officers may also choose to sign up for daily reports via email on probationers in the CCSC. For the first graduation, a list of CCSC participants in Aftercare was also circulated to probation officers so they could attend the ceremony to support their probationers' success at the program.

Informal methods of collaboration also exist that foster working relationships between agencies and allow for triangulation of services for participants. For example, individual probation officers may interact with BI staff directly, in addition to discussing issues with the probation officer liaisons. Interviews with probation officers indicate that BI staff are approachable for impromptu visits and phone calls, and usually respond in a timely manner to email communication. Also, BI staff appear to contact probation officers as issues arise so that they are kept informed. Similarly, BI staff communicate with Jail staff via phone calls and email when there are issues concerning In-Custody participants; recently BI staff have increased their efforts at communication by copying all relevant Jail and BI staff on messages to ensure everyone is kept informed. The BI Program Manager also meets with the Chief Probation Officer and Director of Corrections as needed.

Overall, the interviews revealed a sound model of collaboration between BI staff and Napa County agencies. As one interviewee noted, the County and BI started with a solid foundation for communication—an emphasis on evidence-based practices. BI and Napa County staff appear to “speak the same language,” with both already being familiar with key program principles such as addressing criminogenic needs. This has aided all parties in addressing issues that arise and coming to a commonly accepted solution. Comments suggest that processes have changed over the first year, with all agencies working out issues and implementing improvements. For example, an issue arose concerning individuals who report to the CCSC only for supervision as a requirement for being released from the jail on their own recognizance. These individuals have different requirements than program participants, with Probation

needing to be notified immediately by BI in cases of positive drug tests. Recently, some confusion arose regarding this difference in process; however, Probation and BI staff have clarified requirements and are working together on resolving the issue. Probation and Jail staff report that BI is generally responsive to issues that arise. Multiple individuals mentioned they felt there was an “open door” policy, and that this worked in both directions. One probation officer reports being able to stop by the CCSC any time to check in, and BI staff have stated that Probation and Jail staff are welcome any time to call, email, visit in person, and even sit in on group sessions or staff meetings. Jail staff also encourage BI to make requests for accommodation for the program (although some requests may not be possible to grant).

Although overall perception of the relationship between BI and Napa County staff was positive, some areas for possible improvement were noted by individuals. These areas appear to be part of the adjustment process for implementing a new program and not major deficiencies. Areas of communication that might benefit from additional strengthening include:

- Encouraging BI staff to report positive updates about participants to their probation officers in addition to negative issues that arise, or send a type of regular summary report that includes the complete picture of probationer progress in the program. If feasible, sharing GPS information with probation officers may also be helpful in coordinating supervision of participants.
- Encouraging Probation and Jail staff to attend group sessions, special events, and staff meetings at the CCSC to become familiar with the program content and process.

- Discussing additional ways to address scheduling issues with participants who work full time or have other serious time commitments. Although BI staff have responded by trying to be more flexible working with the participants' schedules, some probation staff have expressed remaining concerns with the possibility that these participants may have a difficult time meeting all program requirements.
- Jail staff reported initial issues regarding certain BI personnel, but it was also stated that these issues have since been resolved and current interactions with BI staff are positive. However, tighter control in regards to personnel issues may be warranted to avoid future problems. Future hiring of personnel with law enforcement or corrections background may also aid in adjustment to working with In-Custody CCSC participants.
- BI staff turnover appears to have sometimes caused communication lapses, with probation officers not automatically being updated on the new case manager for CCSC participants on their case load. However, it also appears that BI staff may not always be automatically updated when a CCSC participant is moved from the case load of a court unit probation officer to a supervision officer.
- It is important to maintain the appearance of unified support between agencies, although Probation and BI staff may be expected to disagree on certain decisions at times. These situations may require extra communication efforts for all parties involved to avoid sending conflicting messages. In addition, extra communication may be needed in situations where a probation officer decision may affect aspects of programming (e.g., excused absence from a group session). BI staff do report feeling a high level of support from Probation overall.

Staff report that many of these issues are currently being discussed and in the process of being addressed, or that the issues are not problems but rather areas that may call for enhanced attention at some times. Overall, formal and informal communication processes appear to be functioning at an acceptable level, with continual improvements as staff learn from implementing a new program.

Risk and Needs Assessment

Research shows that programs should be targeted towards participants' individual criminogenic needs to be effective (Andrews et al., 1990). Therefore, all participants should not be receiving the same services in the CCSC. To tailor services, participant needs first must be assessed. The CCSC assesses participants' criminogenic needs by using the Level of Service Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI; Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004), which focuses on eight different factors that have been shown to statistically predict an individual's likelihood of recidivism. The LS/CMI gives a total risk score, ranging from Very Low to Very High, and risk levels associated with seven different criminogenic needs (the eighth factor is criminal history, which cannot be addressed in programming). These needs are: 1) Education and Employment, 2) Family/Marital, 3) Leisure/Recreation, 4) Companions, 5) Alcohol/Drug Problems, 6) Pro-criminal Attitude, and 7) Antisocial Pattern. Research has shown that individuals who are underemployed or lack sufficient education to compete in the labor market are at higher risk for recidivating. Likewise, individuals who lack meaningful pro-social family support or pro-social activities and friends are more likely to re-offend. Substance use issues also place individuals at higher risk for recidivism, as do pro-

criminal thinking and attitudes, and a pattern of anti-social behavior. Research has shown that that programs should target at least four criminogenic needs to be effective (Gendreau, French, & Taylor, 2002). Therefore, the CCSC utilizes the LS/CMI to identify participants' top four criminogenic needs to guide individual programming decisions.

The LS/CMI assessment is administered to participants by either Probation or BI staff and these risk scores form the basis of the individualized treatment plan for their time in the CCSC. Individuals are only considered eligible for participating in the CCSC if their total risk score falls between 18-29 (Medium-High Risk) and their Behavior Change Plans and group schedules are based on the top four criminogenic needs identified by the assessment. Therefore, it is critical that the LS/CMI assessment is both reliable (consistent) and valid (correct).

Reliability of assessment administration was measured by examining the use of LS/CMI Interviewer Guides. These guides are recommended by the LS/CMI authors as part of a complete interview assessment, although they are not considered mandatory (Multi-Health Systems, Inc., 2004). However, the use of these interview guides falls under official BI policy to promote consistency of interview administration. As part of the evaluation, case files were coded to determine how often BI staff were using these guides when conducting assessments. The review found that all LS/CMI assessments conducted by BI staff in the evaluation case file sample were accompanied by a completed interview guide. Reliability of scoring is also an important area to evaluate. Although inter-rater reliability checks are conducted during LS/CMI trainings, this data is not tracked for analyses. For future evaluations, consistency of scoring the same interview by different staff members should be compared.

Validity of LS/CMI refers to the accuracy of the final risk levels assigned during the assessment. There are several components that are important for achieving an accurate risk level; first, appropriate information must be gathered during the interview that completely addresses each item on the assessment. In addition, information must be interpreted correctly so that items are correctly rated on the assessment to provide risk scores (e.g., Should the participants' relationship with his or her parents be rated as unsatisfactory and therefore a potential risk factor?). Finally, scoring must be conducted without errors so that risk levels are appropriately calculated and reported (e.g., Were items added correctly?). Although all of these steps are important for determining validity of assessments, the CCSC Interim Evaluation Report focuses only on the last issue of scoring. For the full First Year CCSC Evaluation Report, the Napa County LS/CMI trainer will also review the quality of information obtained from participants during the interview and the rating decisions by staff for a sample of assessments.

To determine the number of scoring errors for the interim evaluation, a total of 21 LS/CMI assessments conducted by BI staff from the 41 case sample were reviewed using the Assessment QA Matrix¹ (Multi-Health Systems Inc., 2006). This matrix measures how well interviewers score the assessment following certain logic rules (e.g., If question #2 is scored as "yes" then question #3 must be scored "yes" as well.) and also checks for mathematical errors and that certain sections were filled out completely and accurately (e.g., Was the right risk level circled for each criminogenic need?)².

¹ The number of LSCMI assessments reviewed is not 41 as many cases only had LS/CMIs conducted by Probation staff.

² Strengths coding was not scored as the criteria for whether an area qualifies as a strength was not clear.

Figure 3
Percent of LS/CMI Scoring Errors

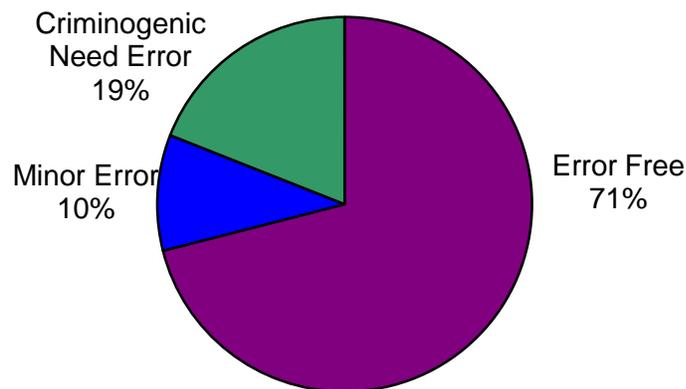


Figure 3 reveals that of the 21 LS/CMIs reviewed, 15 (71%) were error-free as determined by the QA Matrix. However, not all errors affected the total risk level or the risk levels for individual criminogenic needs. In fact, there was no error identified that resulted in an inaccurate total risk level (e.g., a participant being labeled as Medium risk instead of High risk, or vice-versa). Four LS/CMIs (19%) contained errors that affected the risk level for criminogenic needs; however, none affected the identification of the top four needs that are used for programming purposes. The dates of these assessments ranged from May to October 2009, which fall within the first seven months of the CCSC start date. It is possible that these represent early learning errors, although only six assessments in the sample were conducted November 2009 through February 2010 so this interpretation should be made cautiously.

Group Program Scheduling

The criminogenic needs identified by the LS/CMI are used to tailor programming services to the individual participant. While some groups are mandatory for all participants in the CCSC due to their focus on changing overall criminogenic thinking

and behavior, other groups are assigned specifically to address certain needs for a subset of participants. In part, the determination for which of these additional groups a participant will be assigned is made by referring to the top four criminogenic needs from the LS/CMI. According to BI, criminogenic needs are addressed by groups in the following way:

- Alcohol/Drugs: Participants with this top need should be assigned to Drug Education group. Participants may also be assigned to this group if they have positive drug or alcohol tests, even if their LS-SCMI risk score for this need is not in the top four. This group is educational in nature, and is not meant to provide substance use treatment. Individuals with serious substance use issues should be referred for additional services.
- Family/Marital: All participants are assigned to Life Skills group, which addresses this need in addition to other criminogenic issues. Participants with this top need may also be assigned Parenting and Anger Management classes, if appropriate.
- Companions: All participants are assigned to Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) and Life Skills, both of which address anti-social companions as a risk factor for recidivism.
- Pro-Criminal Attitude: All participants are assigned to MRT and Life Skills, both of which address pro-criminal thinking as a risk factor for recidivism.
- Anti-social Pattern: All participants are assigned to MRT and Life Skills, both of which address anti-social behaviors as a risk factor for recidivism.

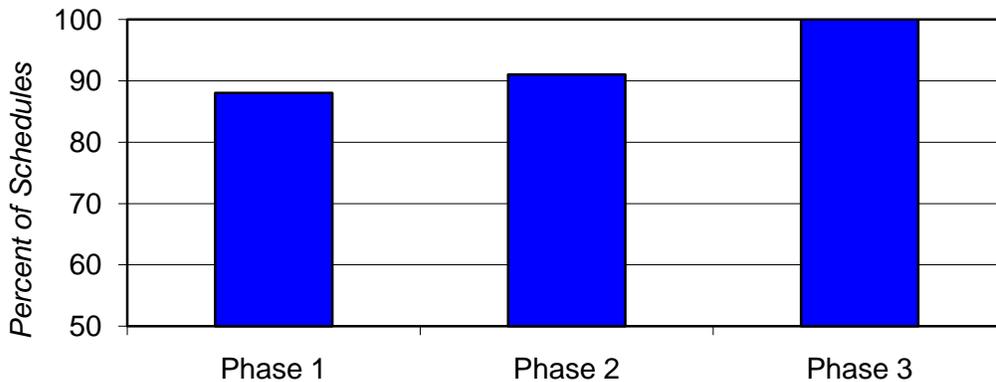
- Education/Employment: All participants are assigned to an Education and Employment group; however there is not set policy on how many hours they should be assigned.
- Leisure/Recreation: All participants are assigned to Life Skills, which addresses time management, interests, skills, and activities.

During the CCSC planning stages, consultants from The Carey Group reviewed the evidence basis for the group programs BI selected to implement. According to their findings, the cognitive-behavioral core curriculum for the CCSC, MRT, is evidence-based in that research exists supporting its effectiveness (http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/programfulldetails.asp?PROGRAM_ID=181). The consultants also determined that although the remaining curricula offered through the Change Companies may include evidence-based principles and content, research does not exist on the effectiveness of these groups. The recommendation was to support the use of these curricula by BI as research in this area is lacking in general and no curricula could be identified with a greater evidence basis. Future evaluations should include an analysis of curricula content to verify that groups match criminogenic needs (e.g., the Life Skills curriculum sufficiently addresses issues related to family/marital, companion, pro-criminal attitude, leisure/recreation, and anti-social pattern criminogenic needs). Currently, there is no decision-making guide for matching criminogenic needs to group assignments.

For the interim evaluation, group schedules for each phase were compared to the participants' top four criminogenic needs (e.g., If alcohol/drugs is a top four criminogenic need, was the participant assigned to Drug Education group?). This

analysis revealed that in Phase 1, 88% (29 of 33³) of participants were assigned to appropriate groups based on their top four criminogenic needs (see Figure 4). In Phase 2, 91% of participants (19 of 21 total in Phase 2) were assigned groups that matched their needs, and in Phase 3 100% of participants' schedules matched their needs (10 of 10 total in Phase 3). A review of the four cases with schedules that were not entirely matched to top four criminogenic needs revealed no consistent pattern of error.

Figure 4
Percent of Group Schedules Matching Top Four Needs



Behavior Change Plans

Behavior Change Plans (BCP) are an additional method that BI uses to meet individual needs for participants in the CCSC. These plans include at least four positive goals for participants to achieve during their time in the program, and action items as steps to achieve these goals. To ensure that these plans are created to encourage behavioral change ultimately leading to reduced offending, BI has an official policy that guides case managers on what types of goals and action items to include in the plan.

³ Group schedule information is not available for all 41 cases as some individuals were not in the program long enough to be assigned groups. Likewise, the number of available group schedules at each phase drops due to participant attrition.

According to this policy, each BCP should have a minimum of four goals in progress (one participant may have multiple BPC versions during the length of the program). Goals should be chosen based on criminogenic need risk levels identified in the LS/CMI. Criminogenic needs with the highest level of risk should be included as goals on the BCP first. Over-rides are allowed at the case manager's discretion, but these should be clearly noted. Action items are the steps to achieve these goals. According to the BCP instructions, goals should be "specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic, with an appropriate timeframe" (SMART) and the BCP should be reviewed at least once a month. No official policy describes when the plan should be updated to address changes to criminogenic needs; whether high criminogenic needs that are initially overridden should ever be included in the plan, the minimum number of action items required for each goal; whether new action items should be included in the plan once old ones are complete; or how many action items a participant would be expected to complete in each phase and/or total in the program. Therefore, the current evaluation takes the following approach to the BCP: 1) Reporting the percentage of plans that had been created in Phase 1, 2) Comparing goals to the top four criminogenic needs identified in the LS/CMI to measure how well the BPC is tailored to the participants' individual needs, and 3) Describing patterns for action item creation and completion in the review sample of BCP. For future evaluations, it would be beneficial to if additional policies regarding action items were established so that this process could be measured and outputs compared to meaningful target performance expectations.

First, timeliness of BCP creation was examined. Although the expectation of Napa County is that the initial BCP be created within 14 days of program start date,

review of the current cases indicates that this expectation may not be feasible in some circumstances. Case notes indicate that some participants were enrolled in the Phase 1 Out-of-Custody portion of the program, but then remanded to the jail to continue to the program In-Custody shortly after. As BCP are only used in the Out-of-Custody phases, time incarcerated interferes with BCP creation. The dates of transfer between In- and Out-of-Custody portions of the program are best tracked through the electronic case management system, Accutrax. The data transfer process for this system is currently in progress and this data is not currently available in an easily-analyzed format. Therefore, a review of the BCP creation timeframes will be included in the full CCSC Year Evaluation Report after the data transfer from this system has been completed. As an interim measure, the percent of BCP created in Phase 1 are reported. Of the case files for participants who completed Phase 1, 90% (19 of 21) of initial BCPs were created before they were promoted to Phase 2⁴.

Next, BCP goals were compared to criminogenic needs from the LS/CMI. For Phase 1, 94% of case files with a completed BCP (30 of 32) had goals that entirely matched the top four criminogenic needs identified in the initial LS/CMI. Although BI policy does not specify how and when BCPs should be updated in response to changes in participant criminogenic needs, responsiveness to changes in criminogenic needs is important for ensuring the program is tailored to individual participants. Therefore, this information was examined in the current evaluation for descriptive purposes. Of case files where a new LS/CMI was conducted in Phase 2 and changes to top four

⁴ This number does not include all 41 case files included in the general sample. In some cases, individuals were not in the program long enough to warrant the creation of a BCP; also, if participants were discharged in Phase 1 their non-complaint behavior may have resulted in no BCP being created. Therefore, to avoid biasing the results, only participants who were promoted to Phase 2 were included in this analysis.

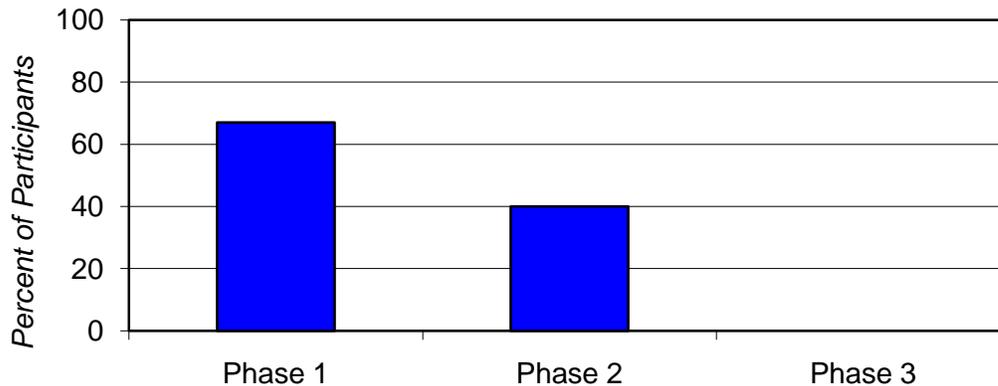
criminogenic needs arose, 50% of BCPs (3 of 6) in Phase 2 matched the newly identified needs. For Phase 3, this percentage is 33% of BCPs (1 of 3). An important note for these descriptions concern the sample size; the number of relevant BCPs examined in Phase 2 and 3 are quite small, as the sample consists of participants who have had new LS/CMIs administered in these phases and *had their needs change*. Future reviews should include a greater number of case files so that these sample numbers increase.

Finally, the total number of action items and how many were completed at each phase are reported for descriptive purposes, as no set policies regarding this information are available for evaluation. Although no official policy regarding the number of action items exists, a review of BCPs show a clear standardized practice has emerged to list three action items for the first goal and two action items for each remaining goal, for a total of nine action items per plan. For 79% of cases that should contain a BCP (27 of 34), there were a total of 9 action items set for the participants' entire time in the program (which varies by individual).

Review of files show that participants are more likely to complete action items earlier in the program, although this pattern was not followed for every participant. For the current description, only participants who completed each phase were included, as individuals who did not complete a phase may still be working on their items or may have been discharged for their lack of progress. Caution should thereby be used when interpreting these numbers due to small sample sizes. Of the 21 participants in the case file review sample who completed Phase 1, 14 (67%) completed at least one action item during this phase (see Figure 5). Of the 10 clients who completed Phase 2, 40% (4)

completed at least one action item during this phase; neither client who completed Phase 3 completed an action item in this phase.

Figure 5
Percent of Participants Completing An Action Item in Each Phase



Findings indicate that there is no clear pattern for when BCPs are accomplished. Thirty-percent of participants in the review sample who completed Phase 2 (3 of 10) had not finished any action items when they were promoted to Phase 3; in contrast, 20% of participants who completed Phase 2 had finished all of their assigned action items when they were promoted to Phase 3.

Intermediate Outcomes

The ultimate measure of success for the CCSC is the rate at which the program reduces recidivism in participants; however, this outcome is not available at the current time. Instead, intermediate outcomes were included in the evaluation to measure changes in factors that predict recidivism.

Changes to Level of Risk

First, the total risk score from participants' initial LS/CMI was compared to their follow-up scores for those who have been re-assessed. The policy for BI is to re-assess participants after six months has passed from the last assessment date; two LS/CMI scores were available for 23 participants⁵. Comparison of scores from the initial to the follow-up assessments demonstrate a reduction in overall risk scores for 16 (70%) of these participants, with an average and median reduction in risk of 3 points. For seven participants (30%), the reduction in risk scores actually changed their identified risk level from High to Medium (the remaining 70% did not change risk levels, see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Change in Number of Participants at each Risk Level from First to Second Assessment

		<u>First LS/CMI</u>	
		High Risk	Medium Risk
Second LS/CMI	High Risk	11	0
	Medium Risk	7	5

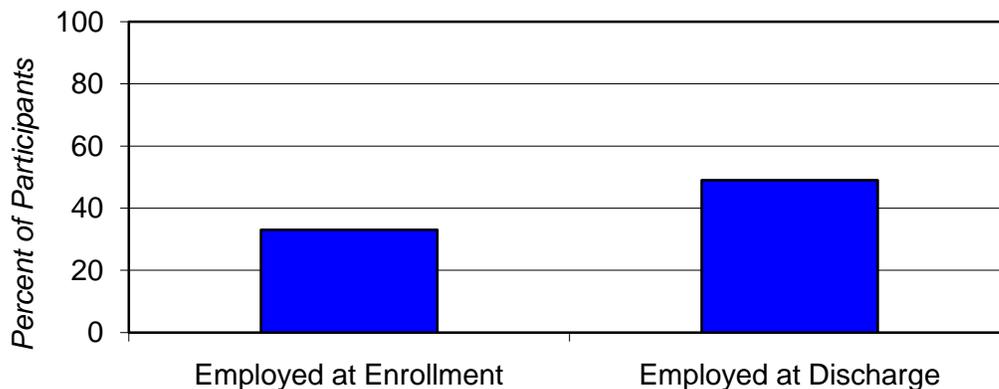
Changes to Employment Status

Change in employment status is also measured on an on-going basis by BI for internal quality assurance purposes. Employment increases are calculated by examining the employment status change for discharged participants. The percent of discharged participants who were employed at the program start date is compared to

⁵ This data was obtained from a different data source than the case file data and therefore includes individuals not in the official 41-case sample.

the percent of these same participants who were employed at their end date, and the difference in these rates is calculated. These reports reveal that 33% of discharged clients were employed at their enrollment, and 49% were employed when leaving the program, for a total gain in employment of 16% (see Figure 7). It is noteworthy that these rates reflect employment gains for individuals who for the most part have not *graduated* from the program but are being discharged for other reasons, including termination for failing to abide by program rules. For future evaluations, a more in-depth analysis of participant employment gains would be beneficial.

Figure 7
Change in Percent of Participants Employed During Program



Caveats

The current pre-post reductions in risk level and gains in employment are promising; however, caution should be used in interpreting these intermediate outcomes. As these are pre-post measures without a control group comparison, causal attributions to the CCSC must be limited. Without a randomized controlled study, it is unknown how many of these participants would have made changes to their lives that would have led to lower risk scores or obtained employment without intervention. Such

a study would allow for causal interpretations because a group of similar probationers (who meet all the CCSC eligibility criteria but are not assigned to participate in the program) could be selected as controls and their outcomes compared to program participants. If control and program participants are similarly matched on characteristics such as LS/CMI risk score, one can then interpret differences in outcomes to the program. However, if the non-program comparison group differs on important characteristics, such interpretations are limited because it is possible that those factors are responsible for differences in outcomes. For example, individuals with lower LS/CMI risk levels could be expected to have lower recidivism rates without program intervention.

For this reason, a randomized controlled study is planned to measure intermediate and long-term outcomes. Ideally, the study would use a wait-list control design, with CCSC Out-of-Custody enrollment numbers maintained at approximately 50 participants and additional eligible probationers assigned to a wait-list control group for the limited duration of the study. Given the current enrollment numbers from the past year, this design may not be feasible unless referral numbers increase to a level that would require a waiting-list. If this does not occur, it may be necessary to temporarily lower the number of individuals enrolled in the CCSC to create a control group of non-participants. The County plans to evaluate the feasibility of a wait-list control study design after the second year of operation to allow for assessment of how changes in State and County policies impact eligibility numbers.

Summary

The interim evaluation reveals areas of both strength and areas for improvement in CCSC operations. The evaluation aimed to give preliminary answers to the following questions: 1) Is the CCSC providing evidence-based services in an individualized fashion to probationers who may benefit from intensive supervision and programming?, and 2) Are CCSC participants experiencing positive cognitive and behavioral changes that may ultimately lead to reductions in recidivism?

Findings from the initial review suggest that the CCSC is indeed providing individualized services to appropriate participants, and that many of these participants have shown short term positive gains during their time in the program for factors that are associated with reductions in recidivism. However, initial findings also suggest that improvements could be made in several aspects of CCSC operation to increase the number of participants served and address changes in participant needs. Also, the initial review identified areas where official BI policy or standardized CCSC practice guidelines could be clarified to promote measurement of performance. Overall, these findings suggest that the CCSC has established a solid foundation for delivering services to at-risk probationers, but as a new program just completing its first year of operation, there remain adjustments to be made to reach certain County expectations.

It is important to stress the nature of this report as an interim evaluation. The current report is meant to offer an initial look at program operations, to point out areas that appear to be functioning well and areas that may need additional attention before the full year evaluation. In order to fully measure some aspects of the program, some changes in policy or standardized practices may need to be made so that expectations

are clearly established. The full year evaluation should also include a larger sample size, which would allow for more meaningful interpretation of later phase information (where sample size in the current evaluation was especially small). Finally, while the current evaluation focused on six important areas of CCSC operations, there are several additional aspects of the program that should be included in a full evaluation, including examination of attrition rates and CCSC staff skills and training.

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