

**To: Alabama Statewide Steering Committee**  
**Fr: Vera Institute of Justice & Crime and Justice Institute**  
**Re: Statewide Steering Committee Retreat held on July 23-25, 2008**  
**Date: August 11, 2008**

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From July 23-25, 2008, the Vera Institute of Justice and the Crime and Justice Institute jointly facilitated a retreat of the Statewide Steering Committee for the Cooperative Community Alternative Sentencing Project (CCASP). The retreat took place in Point Clear, Alabama, at the Marriott Grand Resort.

The retreat aimed to move the CCASP forward by accomplishing two tasks: (1) generate a list of key elements that the local jurisdiction must include in its comprehensive community punishment and supervision plan; and (2) finalize the site selection criteria and application packet.

The first section of this memorandum summarizes the key points of the meeting and identifies the primary themes that emerged throughout the retreat. The second section summarizes the next steps to be taken by the Statewide Steering Committee.

### **Summary of the retreat**

#### *Key themes*

From the beginning of the retreat with Foster Cook's presentation on the history of community corrections in Alabama, to the presentation by Annie Grevas about the community corrections framework in Kansas, and throughout the discussion about the elements that local jurisdictions should include in their comprehensive plans, the Statewide Steering Committee returned again and again to several key themes. These included:

- There is a need for a full continuum of community punishment and supervision services. The problems in the Alabama criminal justice system will not be solved by focusing solely on prison diversions. The success of the CCASP depends on expanding its focus beyond community corrections by including pre-trial diversion, court referral programs, probation services and parole supervision services.
- Collaboration and cooperation between and among all agencies and divisions must occur in order for the CCASP to succeed. All agencies—including probation services, community corrections, pre-trial diversion—must collaborate and contribute to the preparation of the local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. The

system must be structured in a way that ends the duplication of services and works together to create a true continuum of services.

- Foster Cook demonstrated that the initial focus of community corrections in Alabama was at the bottom of the pyramid—servicing low-end offenders. It is now time for all jurisdictions to move to the higher levels of the pyramid and service high-end offenders (while continuing to service the low-end offenders).
- The community corrections movement in Alabama has not realized its potential in part because it lacked clear expectations and goals. State Steering Committee members recognized that the committee must articulate its expectations and goals and structure the framework in a way that encourages and provides an incentive to the local jurisdictions to align their priorities with the stated goals.
- Incarceration is the most expensive sentencing option. No one advocates diverting all offenders into community supervision or punishment. However, Alabama must focus more on using their most expensive option more efficiently and effectively. Prison should be reserved for the most violent offenders, and a continuum of punishment and supervision must be developed and used for the low-level, non-violent offenders. If a significant percentage of the prison beds are filled with low-level drug offenders, a solution other than building a new prison is needed.

#### *Kansas: lessons learned*

Annie Grevas, the director of the community corrections program in Salinas, Kansas, provided the Statewide Steering Committee with an example of how a state-local community corrections partnership works in Kansas. Each committee member likely took something different away from her presentation; however, based on the questions asked, the key lessons learned include the following:

- The continuum of supervision and punishment in Kansas makes a clear distinction between probation and community corrections—with probation on one end of the spectrum, community corrections in the middle and incarceration at the other end.
- Offenders are placed in either probation or community corrections. All offenders sentenced to community corrections in Kansas are assessed using a validated risk/assessment instrument. Kansas uses the LSI-R. The assessment is performed at intake and a supervision plan is developed based on the results.
- If based on the risk assessment done at intake, the initial placement is not the most appropriate given the offender's risk level (either being too little or too much), then offenders can be moved back and forth between the two. This successfully occurs in Kansas because of collaboration between the agencies.
- Kansas has developed graduated sanctions for probation violators. The probation officer refers to a grid to assess how to respond to violations. In addition, with just a few exceptions, all probation violators are sentenced to community corrections prior to being revoked to prison.
- Committee members showed great interest in Kansas' SB123, a law that created mandatory drug treatment and community supervision for those convicted of drug possession for the first or second time. The evaluation of SB123 will be made available to the Committee when it becomes public.

*Goals of the state-local partnership*

After much discussion, the Committee reached consensus on the goals of the state-local community supervision and punishment partnership. The Committee agreed that the goals are to:

- reduce recidivism,
- enhance public safety,
- use evidence-based practices to change offender behavior and
- create a comprehensive system of community punishment and supervision.

*Elements of a comprehensive plan*

Although the details of the comprehensive plan will be fleshed out in greater detail by working groups created at the retreat, the Committee agreed that the local jurisdiction should include the following in their comprehensive plan:

- A description of the ongoing collaborative efforts of all agencies and stakeholders in the local jurisdiction.
- A description of the existing services and programs offered in the local jurisdiction, the goals and objectives of each service, which services appear to be effective and the identified gaps in the services.
- The identification of a target population for the program and each service, including the eligibility criteria.
- A description of the use of risk/needs assessment tools by the community punishment agencies and programs.
- A budget and the anticipated sources of funding for the program services.
- A timeline to develop new services and reach stated performance measures, including how best to prioritize the new services.
- A description of the data collection system and the information collected by the program.

**Next steps**

The work of the Committee will progress in several areas over the next few months: (1) site selection; (2) working groups and the comprehensive plan; and (3) the first pilot site.

*Site selection*

The Committee agreed to the site selection application and it was subsequently sent to all interested jurisdictions on August 1, 2008. The key activities in the site selection process are as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Appointment by Committee co-chairs of site selection working group	August 10, 2008
Applications due from local jurisdictions	September 15, 2008
Site selection work group meeting to select pilot sites	October 2, 2008
Full Statewide Steering Committee meets to approve pilot sites	October 3, 2008

*Working groups*

It was agreed upon at the retreat that working groups were needed to further discuss and make recommendations to the Statewide Steering Committee in the following areas, all contributing to the comprehensive plan that will be required by the local jurisdictions: (1) data; (2) evaluation; (3) programs services; and (4) risk/needs assessment.

The working group charges and membership were discussed at the retreat and are attached to this memorandum. Rosa Davis is coordinating the working groups. The working groups will be meeting between now and the next Statewide Steering Committee and reporting back at that next meeting.

*First pilot site*

At the meeting scheduled for October 3, 2008, the Statewide Steering Committee will select four pilot sites and determine which site will launch the program. As noted previously, work in the pilot sites will be staggered, with work in the second site starting approximately three months after the first site begins. The work on the local level will include meetings of the local steering committee and a comprehensive data diagnostic (to be performed by staff from Vera, with assistance from the local site). The data diagnostic will review the offender population—who is being sentenced to where—as well as the services being offered in the community.

The anticipated timeline for work at the local site is as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Approval of pilot sites by the Statewide Steering Committee	October 3, 2008
Appointment of chair of local steering committee by Chief Justice	October 6, 2008
Membership of local steering committee selected	October 15, 2008
First local steering committee meeting	November 14, 2008

**Next meeting:**

The next meeting of the Statewide Steering Committee will be on Friday, October 3, 2008. The meeting will take place at the judicial building in Montgomery, Alabama. Meeting materials and the agenda will be sent out one week before the meeting.

## **Cooperative Community Alternative Sentencing Project (CCASP)**

### **Data Working Group**

The Cooperative Community Alternative Sentencing Project (CCASP) is a project sponsored by the Chief Justice and the Alabama Sentencing Commission. The goal of the CCASP is to build an effective statewide continuum of community-based punishment and supervision programs. Four pilot sites will participate in the project. The core elements of CCASP are: (1) facilitated strategic planning; (2) research and data analysis; and (3) development of a comprehensive community punishment and supervision plan tailored to the local jurisdiction's needs. The Statewide Steering Committee is a subcommittee of the Alabama Sentencing Commission and was created to oversee the work in the local pilot sites and to develop state standards and expectations.

One of the Statewide Steering Committee's tasks is to set out the required elements of the comprehensive plan that will be drafted by the local jurisdiction. The Data Working Group is one of four working groups created by the Statewide Steering Committee to develop certain elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Data Working Group is charged with reporting back to the Statewide Steering Committee on the following questions:

- What data should be reported by the local jurisdictions in their comprehensive plans?
- What format should this data take?
- Is it feasible for the local jurisdictions to utilize the Midas information management system?
- Can data be shared across agencies and organizations?

The members of the Data Working Group are: Neal Armstrong, Bennet Wright, Melisa Morrison, a representative from the Alabama Department of Corrections, a representative from the Board of Pardons and Parole and a representative Community Corrections Program Director.

## **Cooperative Community Alternative Sentencing Project (CCASP)**

### **Evaluation Working Group**

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One of the Statewide Steering Committee's tasks is to set out the required elements of the comprehensive plan that will be drafted by the local jurisdiction. The Evaluation Working Group is one of four working groups created by the Statewide Steering Committee to develop certain elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Evaluation Working Group is charged with reporting back to the Statewide Steering Committee on the following questions:

#### **Progress Monitoring**

- What information should the local jurisdictions include in their comprehensive plans in regard to progress monitoring?
- Are there certain elements of the program services that should be monitored and tracked?
- How often should the local jurisdiction report back to the Statewide Steering Committee on the progress and performance?

#### **Quality Assurance**

- What is the recommended quality assurance process that should be used by the local jurisdictions?
- What needs to be reviewed in this process?

#### **Long-term Evaluations**

- What data needs to be collected by the local jurisdictions in order to conduct proper process and outcomes evaluations in the future?

The Evaluation Working Group should consult with the Data Working Group as needed to answer these questions.

The members of the Evaluation Working Group are: Foster Cook, Ellen Brooks, Kent Hunt, Becky Goggins and a representative of VOCAL.

## **Cooperative Community Alternative Sentencing Project (CCASP)**

### **Program Services Strategy Working Group**

The Cooperative Community Alternative Sentencing Project (CCASP) is a project sponsored by the Chief Justice and the Alabama Sentencing Commission. The goal of the CCASP is to build an effective statewide continuum of community-based punishment and supervision programs. Four pilot sites will participate in the project. The core elements of CCASP are: (1) facilitated strategic planning; (2) research and data analysis; and (3) development of a comprehensive community punishment and supervision plan tailored to the local jurisdiction's needs. The Statewide Steering Committee is a subcommittee of the Alabama Sentencing Commission and was created to oversee the work in the local pilot sites and to develop state standards and expectations.

One of the Statewide Steering Committee's tasks is to set out the required elements of the comprehensive plan that will be drafted by the local jurisdiction. The Program Services Strategy Working Group is one of four working groups created by the Statewide Steering Committee to develop certain elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Program Services Strategy Working Group is charged with reporting back to the Statewide Steering Committee on the following issues:

- Define the core program areas that the local jurisdictions should consider when developing their comprehensive plans (e.g. drug/alcohol addiction; education; cognitive behavioral therapy, etc.)
- Develop standards for various aspects and components of the program services (e.g. administration, fiscal management, personnel, staff development, management information system, etc.)

The members of the Program Services Strategy Working Group are: Judge Pete Johnson, Judge Clark Hall, Judge Michael Bellamy, Jerry McQueen (representing the Montgomery Police Department), David Horn, Lee Knowles and Jeff Williams.

## **Cooperative Community Alternative Sentencing Project (CCASP)**

### **Risk/Needs Assessment Working Group**

The Cooperative Community Alternative Sentencing Project (CCASP) is a project sponsored by the Chief Justice and the Alabama Sentencing Commission. The goal of the CCASP is to build an effective statewide continuum of community-based punishment and supervision programs. Four pilot sites will participate in the project. The core elements of CCASP are: (1) facilitated strategic planning; (2) research and data analysis; and (3) development of a comprehensive community punishment and supervision plan tailored to the local jurisdiction's needs. The Statewide Steering Committee is a subcommittee of the Alabama Sentencing Commission and was created to oversee the work in the local pilot sites and to develop state standards and expectations.

One of the Statewide Steering Committee's tasks is to set out the required elements of the comprehensive plan that will be drafted by the local jurisdiction. The Risk/Needs Assessment Working Group is one of four working groups created by the Statewide Steering Committee to develop certain elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Risk/Needs Assessment Working Group is charged with reporting back to the Statewide Steering Committee on the question of whether Alabama should implement a standard risk/needs assessment tool statewide. And, if the answer is yes, to recommend a specific instrument. It is anticipated that the working group will examine the following:

- What assessment tools are being used in the local jurisdictions and by state agencies?
- Are these tools validated?
- At what points in the process and for what purposes are the tools being used?
- What is the feasibility (including the cost) of adopting a statewide instrument, including the feasibility of each of the instruments reviewed?

The members of the Risk/Needs Assessment Working Group are: Deborah Daniels, Rebecca Johnson, Cynthia Dillard, Rosa Davis and a representative appointed by Foster Cook.