



Office of Community Corrections
700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000
Lakewood, CO 80215

Date: October 1, 2021

RE: Baseline Audit/Evaluation Reports

To Whom it May Concern:

The Office of Community Corrections (OCC) has reached another important milestone in the innovative and progressive path to improving the quality of services and outcomes of community corrections. The OCC has completed baseline audits and evaluations of community corrections programs across Colorado in order to determine the current alignment and performance on the *Colorado Community Corrections Standards*, and identify targeted training and technical assistance needs. Core Security audits and Program Assessment for Correctional Excellence (PACE) evaluations review critical components of the *Colorado Community Corrections Standards* through a combination of file review, direct observations, and interviews. The audits and evaluations started in 2017 and ended with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the severe and protracted nature of the pandemic became more evident, it was determined that there would be too many confounding variables to include scores from the remaining programs in the baseline data, and as such they have been excluded from the data and interpretation within the respective reports. Each of the reports highlights the areas of strength and growth for the system. Community corrections boards and providers should utilize the information in these reports to compare to their individualized feedback in order to identify areas for growth and focused implementation efforts in their programs. The Office of Community Corrections is always available to help provide technical assistance, training, and support for future implementation efforts.

Purpose

Through regulation, innovation and collaboration, the Office of Community Corrections (OCC) strives to support our community partners in delivering superior services to clients, building a stronger, safer Colorado. In order to advance our system in respect to this mission, the OCC has been advancing towards the goal of performance - based contracting (PBC). PBC is an innovative, transparent & fiscally responsible strategy ensuring local, safe & accountable providers deliver services & support to community corrections clients. Community corrections has been striving towards a system of PBC that represents measurement in both the direct and in-direct control of providers. The original plan for PBC was developed and initiated in 2015. The plan stipulated that performance should be defined by compliance with critical security practices, evidence-based client-centered practices, and risk informed outcomes. The plan identified the need for the *Colorado Community Corrections Standards* to be revised to align more closely to the research regarding what practices are effective when working with community corrections clients. In 2017, the revised *Standards* were released and the accompanying Core Security audit and PACE evaluation readied. A baseline measurement of performance on the *Standards* covered in the Core Security audit and PACE evaluation needed to be conducted to inform the specific metrics of performance for PBC. It is essential to understand the current performance on these metrics across the state in order to determine





COLORADO

Division of Criminal Justice

Department of Public Safety

realistic and meaningful targets for performance in the future. At the same time, successful and sustainable implementation takes time, and it is understood that our system is still embarking on this journey with changes to the *Standards*.

Limitations - COVID - 19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for the entire world, inclusive of the community corrections system in Colorado. The primary impacts to the PACE and Core Security audit baseline include programs being left out of the data contained in these reports and limitations due to a possible shift in priorities for programs away from EBP implementation to focus on crisis management and public health.

Three (3) programs have been excluded from the PACE data interpreted within the report, and six (6) programs have been excluded from the Core Security Audit data. Each of these programs have participated in evaluation activities. However, these evaluations have been completed with various modifications and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating too many confounding variables to reasonably include them in the baseline data. As the field pivoted to an emergency management focus, DCJ likewise shifted focus to supporting and regulating public health responses to the greatest extent possible. The need to focus on pandemic response and recovery has the propensity to have limited implementation efforts around EBPs for community corrections agencies during this timeframe.

Content of Reports

Within the following PACE and Core Security Audit report you will find a variety of data tables illustrating each process and the average evaluation findings across the state as well as an overview of each process including:

- Methods
- Statewide Areas of Strength
- Statewide Areas of Growth
- Context & Limitations
- Feedback Considerations

What is Next

The forward progression to Performance- Based Contracting represents a paradigm shift for community corrections in Colorado by modifying how programs are compensated for their work based on various metrics. While the exact form PBC may take is still being determined, the PACE, Core Security Audits, and risk-informed outcome measures are slated to be part of the operationalization of “performance.” The PACE and Core Security Audits represent measures that are in the direct control of programs to improve. As decisions are made around the future for PBC in Colorado community corrections, OCC will make those details available. For more information on PBC, please visit the [website](#). The website provides helpful and informative links to reports, documentation, and videos related to the development of the PBC project. To ensure the PACE and Core Security Audit processes remain based upon the best evidence available for achieving positive outcomes with corrections clients, periodic review of new EBP literature and correctional best practices will be a necessary step.

While there are still many more milestones ahead, these reports represent an important and necessary step towards PBC in community corrections. PBC represents an opportunity to





COLORADO
Division of Criminal Justice
Department of Public Safety

continue to further the quality of programming in Colorado and improve outcomes for the betterment of individuals, communities, and the state. Any successful endeavor takes support, collaboration, and the desire to move forward together. We are thankful for the conviction of our stakeholders and communities as we strive for a stronger, safer, and more effective community corrections in our state.

Respectfully,

Katie Ruske, Manager
Office of Community Corrections
Division of Criminal Justice
Colorado Department of Public Safety

