



**COLORADO**  
**Division of Criminal Justice**

Department of Public Safety

Office of Research and Statistics  
700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000  
Lakewood, CO 80215

To: Joint Budget Committee, Colorado General Assembly

From: Jeanne M. Smith, Division Director  
Christine M. Adams, Statistical Analyst  
Kim English, Research Director

RE: **Community Corrections Subsistence Grace Period Pilot Project: Study Findings<sup>1</sup>** (revised)

Date: August 27, 2015

**Background** For a seven month period ending June 30, 2014, the General Assembly funded the Subsistence Grace Period Pilot Project in the Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Community Corrections. Typically individuals serving a sentence in a Community Corrections program are required to pay \$17/day to the program; however, the Pilot Project allowed programs to waive this fee for the first 28 days in an attempt to determine if waiving the fee improved offender outcomes.

DCJ's Office of Research and Statistics compared those individuals who were randomly selected to participate in the Pilot Project (n=1193) with a comparison group that participated in Community Corrections during the same time period one year earlier (n=3173). A comparison of both groups, across age, gender, race/ethnicity, and average LSI<sup>2</sup> scores for both Diversion and Transition cases found that the groups were similar, however, the Transition comparison group had slightly lower average LSI scores. That is, the Transition Pilot Project group had an average LSI score of 28.8 versus 28.1 for the comparison group (p=.031), meaning that the Transition comparison group was slightly lower in terms of risk and needs as measured by the LSI (see Table 1, attached).

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<sup>1</sup> This study was conducted in response to Request for Information CDPS-75 in FY16 Long Bill: Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, Community Corrections – The Department is requested to submit the evaluation report for the Subsistence Grace Period Pilot Project to the Joint Budget Committee as soon as feasible after the project is completed but no later than November 1, 2015. The Department is requested to examine whether a subsistence grace period alters length of stay; rates of successful completion, technical violation, or escape; the amount owed to programs at termination; and the amount of savings at termination. The Department is requested to examine whether the effects depend upon the risk level of the offender. The Department is requested to estimate the magnitude of the effects and the precision of the estimates. The Department is also requested to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the benefits, if any, observed during the period covered by this study, exceed the cost. The report need not be limited to these questions.

<sup>2</sup> The Level of Supervision Inventory© is a 54-item risk/needs assessment.

**Findings** There was no statistically significant difference in average length of stay between the Pilot Project groups and the comparison groups (see Table 2), nor was there a difference for Diversion clients in the amount owed to the program when the individual was terminated from the program (see Table 3). However, Transition offenders in the Pilot Program owed significantly less at termination than the comparison group (\$549 versus \$686,  $p=.016$ ).<sup>3</sup>

**In terms of program outcome, a smaller proportion of Pilot Project participants succeeded in Community Corrections** (see Table 5). For Diversion clients, 42.0% of the Pilot Project group successfully completed Community Corrections versus 49.5% of the comparison group, a statistically significant difference ( $p=.007$ ). Additionally, Diversion Pilot Project participants more frequently terminated with an escape/abscond, at 23.1% compared to 17.0% ( $p=.003$ ) (Table 5). For Transition clients, 57.8% successfully completed versus 59.9% of the comparison group, a non-statistically significant difference. A greater proportion of the Transition Pilot Project clients terminated with a technical violation (27.2%) than did the comparison group (24.9%), however, the difference is not statistically significant, meaning that the difference is due to chance alone (see Table 5). A comparison of program outcomes by LSI score can be found in Figures 1-4.

## SUMMARY

The Community Corrections Subsistence Grace Period Pilot Project was expected to improve outcomes for clients serving community corrections sentences. However, Pilot Project participants were not more successful than the comparison group:

- Diversion clients in the Pilot Project were significantly more likely than the comparison group to abscond, and
- Transition clients in the Pilot Project were significantly more likely than the comparison group to terminate with a technical violation.

Given that there was no cost-benefit to the Pilot Project, cost-related analyses were not conducted.

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the Joint Budget Committee inquired about the amount of money saved by study participants, but these data are not collected and so are unavailable for analysis. Client earnings while in the program averaged between approximately \$5,200 and \$6,000 (Table 4); no differences in earnings were found between the Pilot Program participants and the comparison group.

Table 1. **Average LSI Scores**, Pilot Program and Comparison Group by Diversion/Transition

		Pilot Program		Comparison		Statistical Significance
LSI Scores:	Legal Status	Average LSI	N	Average LSI	N	
	Diversion	29.35	508	29.51	1517	n.s.
	Transition	28.76	650	28.10	1583	.031

Table 2. **Average Length of Stay (Days)**, Pilot Program and Comparison Group by Diversion/Transition

		Pilot Program		Comparison		Statistical Significance
Length of Stay (days):	Legal Status	Average LOS	N	Average LOS	N	
	Diversion	181.12	496	182.16	1539	n.s.
	Transition	166.13	645	171.30	1609	n.s.

Table 3. **Average Amount Owed to Program** at Termination, Pilot Program and Comparison Group by Diversion/Transition

		Pilot Program		Comparison		Statistical Significance
Amount Owed to Program (dollars):	Legal Status	Average Owed to Program	N	Average Owed to Program	N	
	Diversion	\$652.76	497	\$649.72	1539	n.s.
	Transition	\$549.25	644	\$686.11	1600	.016
	Overall	\$594.33	1141	\$668.27	3139	n.s.

Table 4. **Average Savings** at Termination, Pilot Program and Comparison Group by Diversion/Transition

		Pilot Program		Comparison		Statistical Significance
Earnings (dollars):	Legal Status	Average Earnings	N	Average Earnings	N	
	Diversion	\$5252.08	497	\$6055.95	1539	n.s.
	Transition	\$5804.83	644	\$5902.77	1600	n.s.
	Overall	\$5781.85	1141	\$5977.87	3139	n.s.

Table 5. **Program Outcome**, Pilot Program and Comparison Group by Diversion/Transition

		Diversion			
Termination Reason:		Pilot Program	Comparison	N	Statistical Significance
	Successful Completion	42.0%	49.5%	862	.007*
	Escape	23.1%	17.0%	335	.003
	New Crime	2.5%	2.2%	41	n.s.
	Technical Violation	32.4%	31.4%	572	n.s.
	N	445	1365	1810	
		Transition			
Termination Reason:		Pilot Program	Comparison	N	Statistical Significance
	Successful Completion	57.8%	59.9%	1251	n.s.
	Escape	13.5%	13.7%	288	n.s.
	New Crime	1.5%	1.5%	32	n.s.
	Technical Violation	27.2%	24.9%	539	n.s.
	N	599	1511	2110	

Figure 1. **Successful Completions** by Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI) category (Low, Medium, High), Pilot Program and Comparison Group

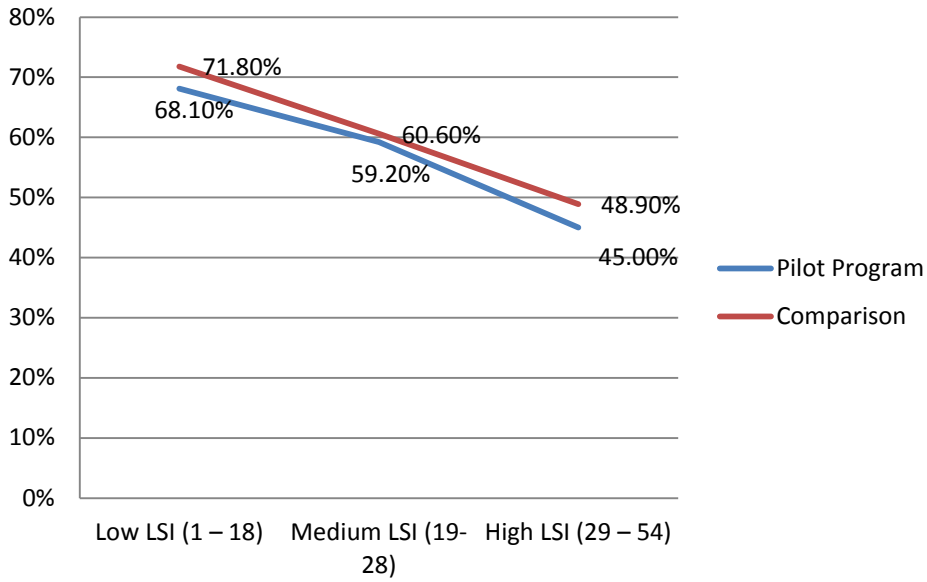


Figure 2. **Escape/Abscond Terminations** by Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI) category (Low, Medium, High), Pilot Program and Comparison Group

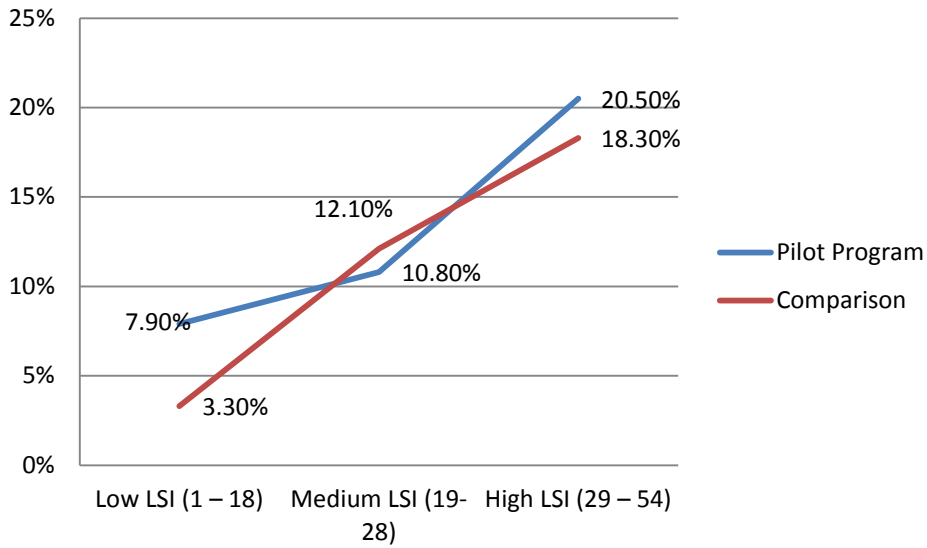


Figure 3. **New Crime** Terminations by Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI) category (Low, Medium, High), Pilot Program and Comparison Group

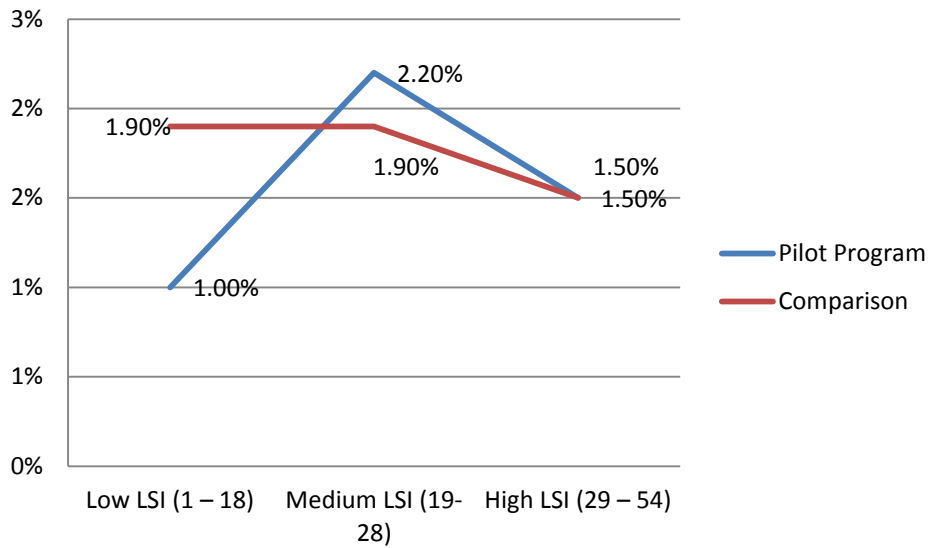


Figure 4. **Technical Violations** by Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI) category (Low, Medium, High) Pilot Program and Comparison Group

