

Palm Beach County Criminal Justice
Commission

Annual Monitoring Report
of
Pride Misdemeanor Probation
Services



October 1, 1999 – September 30, 2000

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ATTACHMENTS

Pride Mission Statement

Pride Board of Directors

Pride Organizational Chart

Pride Probation Client Flowchart

The data for this report was collected by CJC temporary employee's and the information was collated into report form by Jerry Wardrop, Senior Criminal Justice Analyst with the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission and presented to the Probation Advisory Board on June 20, 2001.

PROBATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP

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Honorable William A. Bollinger

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15th Judicial Circuit

Members

Mr. Ted Booras

Assistant State Attorney
15th Judicial Circuit

Ms. Virginia Cataldo

U.S. Probation

Mr. Steven A. Cohen, P.A.

Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

Ms. Justice Patterson

Correctional Probation Supervisor
Department of Corrections

Mr. John Rivera

Assistant Public Defender
15th Judicial Circuit

Ms. Justice Patterson

Correctional Probation Supervisor
Department of Corrections

Ms. Linda Rondone

Director, Criminal Court Services
Clerk of Courts Office

PROBATION ADVISORY BOARD
PRIDE MISDEMEANOR PROBATION SERVICES
2000 AUDIT REPORT

In accordance with F.S. 948.15, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) with approval of the Chief Judge is required to oversee misdemeanor probation services for county court. The Probation Advisory Board (PAB) was created by provisions in the County Probation Services contract with Pride Integrated Services, Inc., to monitor and report to the BCC via the Criminal Justice Commission of their findings. An audit on Pride misdemeanor case files is conducted annually as part of that report. The present reporting period is October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2000. A total of 5802 case files were terminated during this period. A random sampling of 6.7% of the total closed case files were audited totaling approximately 387 from all four Pride offices that include West Palm Beach, Delray Beach, Belle Glade and North County.

1) West Palm Beach Pride Office

A total of 3756 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 14th case resulted in 270 cases being audited.

2) Belle Glade Pride Office

A total of 396 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 20th case resulted in 20 cases being audited.

3) Delray Beach Pride Office

A total of 1290 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 19th case resulted in 69 cases being audited.

4) North County

A total of 360 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 13th case resulted in 28 cases being audited.

The audit focused on the accuracy, timeliness, quality and contract compliance by Pride in providing services to the Court on misdemeanor cases in Palm Beach County. The audit data was collected through the Probation Audit Form adopted by the PAB and then entered into a Microsoft Access database.

The audit criteria was extrapolated from the Contract for Professional Services existing between Pride and Palm Beach County which originated in 1993. The contract was renewed annually until December 6, 1999 when the BCC, acting upon the recommendation of the CJC, entered into a 3-year contract. The contract remains in effect until December 5, 2002. The following is a synopsis of the audit findings, recommendations, and statistical data derived from the audit.

SUMMARY

Contract Requirements	Compliance Status
1) Intake Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • orientation & conditions of probation • personal history information • offense information & prior criminal history 	Yes Yes Yes
2) Enforce monthly reporting by probationer	Yes
3) Maintain monthly written record of probationer activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain probable cause affidavits • maintain victim contact & information • conduct palm checks • document violation of probation filings 	Yes Yes Yes Yes
4) Enforcement of court ordered conditions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fine, court costs, restitution & supervision costs • community service & prescribed treatment 	Yes Yes Yes
5) Verification of residence	Partially
6) Verification of employment	Partially
7) Determination of financial hardship	Yes
8) Referral to vocational, job training, literacy assistance & other social services as needed	Yes
9) Maintain appropriate office hours	Yes
10) Maintain probation officer standards	Yes
11) Prepare & submit quarterly & annual reports	Yes
12) Maintain probation officer case load parity	Yes
13) Annual payment to the County	Yes
14) Maintain certificate of insurance	Yes
15) Assessment, collection, disbursement, & transfer of Monies	Yes
16) Provide operational & financial records when requested	Yes

FINDINGS:

- Pride's policy of having a Probation Officer in every County Criminal Court division ensures immediate contact after disposition between themselves and the offender. Conditions of probation are verbally explained by the Probation Officer and verified by the offender's signature. The probationer is then given a reporting date for their initial Pride office visit, usually within seven days.
- During the initial office visit, a personal history form is completed on every probationer together with a review of the probation requirements, fines, court costs, restitution, treatment and supervision costs. Violations of probation conditions are explained in detail also.
- Pride did a good job of enforcing all court ordered treatment and probation conditions. Non-compliance with probation conditions or re-offending resulted in a violation of probation (VOP) being filed with the court. It was noted the court exercised numerous options including reinstatement of probation or revocation of probation and a sentence to include jail time.
- Pride enforced and verified all community service and restitution conditions. As a matter of Pride program policy, treatment and community service obligations require a letter of completion from the treatment provider or the recipient of the community service.
- Pride was very timely in their quarterly and annual reporting as required by the county professional services contract. Copies of probationer and financial reports are mailed concurrently to the Chief Judge of the 15th Judicial Circuit, the Chair of the Probation Advisory Board and CJC staff assigned to the PAB.
- Pride is currently in compliance with the requirement to maintain a certificate of insurance of general liability and automobile policies with Palm Beach County included as additional insured. The present coverage extends until 7/1/01.
- In the original 1993 Pride – County Professional Services contract, Pride agreed to reimburse the County the sum of five thousand dollars per year (\$5,000), payable in two semi-annual installments, to offset the cost to the County of monitoring the contract. This continues in effect.
- To ensure consistency in the handling of probationers, Pride utilizes a policy and procedures manual and a fourteen-hour curriculum to orient all new hires. All seasoned employees attend periodical in-service re-fresher training on standard policy and the handling of probationer cases in the courtroom.
- Pride, in conjunction with the PAB, created a bilingual “Probation Services Handbook” designed to provide probationers with an explanation of the terms of their probation. The handbook contains all general conditions of probation and allows Probation Officers to enter specific conditions as enumerated by the Court. A social services listing is included complete with location data and contact person.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

✘ General history form data fields are not being completely filled out by Probation Officers. In many instances, the form contained several omissions or in some cases, the majority of the data was missing. In other instances, monthly reporting data was limited to the quotation; “see receipt” with no other reporting data entered. In several instances it appeared that Probation Officers were sending the general history forms home with the probationer to fill out with several being returned incomplete. Sufficient time and emphasis should be allocated during intake to thoroughly complete all data fields. These data omissions will skew final reporting statistics.

✘ Judiciary provided probation timelines would assist Pride in the enforcement of conditions while minimizing the chances of the probationary period expiring without total compliance by the probationer. PAB members and Pride have advocated this practice in the past and have indicated they will continue to address this issue with the Judiciary.

✘ Verification of residence through rent/mortgage receipts or utility bills has been a requirement of the County contract but no substantial proof was visible during the audit that this was occurring. None of the case files had copies of this verification. A Pride checklist notation was the only indicator that residence was verified.

✘ Employment verification has also been a requirement of the County contract but has never been fully enforced by Pride. Pay stub receipts for the probationer have been required for verification but the audit reflects no evidence of this.

✘ As noted during the auditing process, probationers continue to violate terms of their probation at a fairly high rate. This becomes a costly and time consuming process for the criminal justice system and Pride when a VOP has to be filed with the court, a hearing set and attendance in court by Pride staff is required. Pride has been asked to furnish statistics on the number of VOP’s revoked as opposed to reinstated. A recommendation is for the PAB and Pride to jointly review the VOP issue to determine causes, if possible, and to provide suggestions to decrease the rate.

✘ The Quality of Service survey used to elicit responses from the County Court Criminal division, State and Public Defender’s Office and the Criminal Defense Lawyers Association while expressing overall satisfaction with Pride’s services, reflect however, the need for joint training. This training would help each office understand the role the other plays in the administration of justice.

PROBATIONER PROFILE:

N = 387

Demographic	Probationers		Percentages
Gender	Male	307	79.3%
	Female	80	20.7
Race	White	284	73.4%
	Black	74	19.1
	Other	29	7.5
Age	18 – 25	95	25.0%
	26 – 35	112	29.0
	36 – 45	102	26.0
	46 – 55	46	12.0
	56 >	16	4.0
	No Response	16	4.0
Marital	No Response	7	1.8%
	Married	114	29.5
	Single	195	50.4
	Divorced	39	10.0
	Other	32	8.3
Employed	Yes	295	76.2%
	Unemployed	82	21.2
	Other	10	2.6
Employment verified	Yes	179	46.3%
	No	208	53.7
Income	< \$2,500	178	45.0%
	5,000 – 10,000	26	7.0
	10,000 -20,000	63	16.0
	20,000 –30,000	46	12.0
	30,000 >	41	11.0
	No Response	33	9.0
Education	<12 th grade	157	40.0%
	12 th grade	131	34.0
	12>	99	26.0
Residence	Own	97	25.0%
	Rent	290	75.0
Residence type	House	216	55.8%
	Apt	109	28.2
	Other	62	16.0
Palms check	Yes	346	89.4%
	No	41	10.6
Early termination	143	143	37.0%
Regular termination	160	160	41.3
VOP	84	84	21.7
Prior convictions	None	170	44.0%
	1	142	37.0
	2 or more	75	19.0
Drugs/alcohol in	Yes	190	49.0%

present charge	No	197	51.0
Present charge	DUI	128	33.0%
	Violence	88	23.0
	Traffic	41	11.0
	Drugs	46	10.0
Community service Ordered	Yes	166	42.9%
	No	221	57.1
Community service completed	Yes	157	94.6%
	No	9	5.4
Treatment ordered	Yes	337	87.0%
	No	50	13.0
Treatment completed	Yes	290	86.0%
	No	47	14.0
Treatment type	DUI School	141	36.0%
	DOV Counsel	28	7.0
	BIP	43	11.0
	VIP	138	36.0
	Misc Counseling	113	29.0

PROBATIONER DEMOGRAPHICS MEAN

N = 387

Gender	Male	79.0%
Race	White	73.4%
Age	26 - 35	28.9%
Marital	Single	50.4%
Income	Less than \$2,500	46.0%
% of probationers employed	295 out of 387	76.2%
Education	Less than 12 th grade	40.5%
Prior convictions	1 or more convictions 217 out of 387	56.0%
Drugs/Alcohol	190 out of 387	49.0%

Pride Status

North County Probation Office

Pride's fourth Probation office, located at 524 Northlake Boulevard, is doing well and as designed, providing services primarily to North County residents. This North County location is also designed to take some of the burden off the West Palm Beach office. Pride reports the caseload has been climbing steadily since opening and they have recently added a third Probation Officer to their staff, in addition to a clerical person.

West Palm Beach Office

Pride CEO Maureen Ferrill reported they are relocating their West Palm Beach probation office to 1310 South Congress Avenue. She explained their present location at 2711 Exchange Court has been outgrown due to facility age, space and configuration. In addition, the facility does not meet federal ADA standards. Pride has experienced an increased probation caseload at the West Palm Beach office. They also consolidated their administrative functions there, thus additional space is needed. Ms. Ferrill stated they have entered into a ten-year lease, and pending construction build-out delays, have targeted November for the move. The larger space has been projected to account for additional future staffing and client increase concerns.

Automation

Pride reported that automation of their records system is complete with Probation Officers now able to "real time" their client reporting data. Client data can be queried for tracking purposes and case information has already been accessed by the Judiciary for their use. The financial component has been completed and installed in the West Palm Beach office and will be extended to the satellite offices shortly. Monies collected by Pride for cost of supervision, restitution payments, fines and court costs will be documented electronically with the Clerk's Office. Per request of the judiciary, Pride has been accessing their informational system via lap top computer to print out court orders in the courtroom in one division. Ms. Ferrill pointed out that in requesting a 3-year contract from the county in 1999, Pride made a commitment to automate their records management system by June 2001. She stated this task was completed six months earlier than originally projected since Pride went on-line January 1, 2001. Pride is now in the second of a three-year contract that expires December 5, 2002.

Quality Assurance Program

Pride instituted an organization wide Quality Assurance Program (QAP) this year. It is internally focused and designed to assess the operational aspect of Pride and how they deliver probation services. The QAP is the result of management and staff working together to strive for efficiency and increased quality of service. According to Ms. Ferrill, the program has received enthusiastic commitment and ownership from Pride employees and has resulted in dramatic improvements. QAP meetings continue on a regular basis with all internal systems under review. Wanda Joiner has been named the Quality Assurance Coordinator and her duties include monitoring to ensure compliance with departmental procedures, internal auditing of present probation programs and acting as a liaison with all outside agencies as needed. Ms. Joiner stated

she works closely with the training coordinator in developing and assessing training programs for all Pride employees.

Probation Training Coordinator

This is another newly created position responsible for the coordination of training for all new probation officers as well as seasoned employees. New officers will be trained in all aspects of probation services including their court role, client reporting and computer operations to ensure uniformity of policy and procedures in the handling of probationers. The training coordinator is responsible for conducting training and maintaining the Probation Service Manual that is the textbook for all Pride employees. All new employees are subject to a 90-day probationary period and an employment evaluation.

Quality of Service Survey

The Criminal Justice Commission, Probation Advisory Board and Pride agreed to survey representatives of the criminal justice system who had direct contact with Pride Probation Officers and support personnel. The purpose of the survey was to gain input on the perception of the quality of misdemeanor probation services Pride was delivering to the 15th Judicial Circuit. It was agreed the survey results would be used by Pride as an internal quality control measurement and would enable them to address any identified concerns.

The four criminal justice agencies surveyed include the County Criminal Court Judiciary, State Attorney and Public Defender's Office and the Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. The CJC received 50 survey responses from the four entities with each survey containing twelve questions and a copy of Pride's Mission statement.

The survey results express an overall satisfaction with Pride's performance and role they play in the criminal justice system. Many return surveys contained extraneous comments that will benefit Pride in assessing not only their role but how they can continue to improve in providing the highest level of service to the 15th Judicial Circuit as well as the many thousands of probationers they handle annually.

Client Satisfaction Survey

Pride, at the recommendation of the PAB, reported they are developing a survey intended to assess probationers' satisfaction with the quality of probation services provided them. These surveys will be randomly distributed and collected in an anonymous fashion to ensure objectivity on the part of the respondent. Survey results will be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Coordinator for assessment. Pride hopes to complete the survey development and begin distribution by this summer.

CONCLUSION

The current audit period is October 1, 1999 through September 30, 2000. CJC staff randomly selected files from the master client list for review. The audits were conducted at three of the four Pride offices. (North County records are maintained at the West Palm Beach office) The physical facilities were adequate, geographically located in proximity to their client base, and appeared to have sufficient space to meet the needs of probationers. It was also noted that aside from providing probation services to Palm Beach County, Pride provides DUI and Traffic schools for offenders sentenced by the court.

The audit results indicated that Pride is doing a good job of enforcing the conditions of probation. Unfortunately, one concern of the auditing team, though not assessed as a fault of Pride, is the consistently high percentage of probation violations that are filed annually. This year, as in the past, the VOP rate appears fairly high. VOP is costly not only to the criminal justice system but Pride as well. As noted in the recommendation portion of this report, this issue should be reviewed by the PAB and Pride to determine causes and what can be done, if anything, to lower the rate of violations.

Pride has attended all PAB meetings and is receptive to input to increase efficiency in the delivery of probation services. This partnership has allowed both entities to constructively work together to provide efficient service to Palm Beach County while serving the needs of a diverse clientele. This audit finds that Pride is in satisfactory compliance with the provisions of the professional probation services contract with Palm Beach County.