

**Palm Beach County Criminal Justice
Commission**

**Annual Monitoring Report
of**



**Pride Misdemeanor
Probation Services**

October 1, 2000 – September 30, 2001

February 27, 2002

INDEX

INDEX.....2

PROBATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP.....3

AUDIT STATISTICS ON PRIDE OFFICES.....4

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS & COMPLIANCE TABLE..... 5

FINDINGS6

RECOMMENDATIONS.....7

PROBATIONER STATISTICS.....8 - 9

PROBATIONER DEMOGRAPHICS MEAN9

PRIDE STATUS.....10 - 11

CONCLUSION.....11

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 employees supervised by Jenise Gibson, CJC Crime Analyst. The information was collated into report form by Jerry Wardrop, Criminal Justice Manager and presented to the Probation Advisory Board on February 27, 2002.

PROBATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Chairman

Honorable William A. Bollinger



County Court Judge
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. Justine Patterson

Correctional Probation Supervisor
Department of Corrections

Mr. John Rivera

Assistant Public Defender
15th Judicial Circuit

Ms. Linda Rondone

Director, Criminal Court Services
Clerk of Courts Office

PROBATION ADVISORY BOARD
PRIDE MISDEMEANOR PROBATION SERVICES
2001 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 a BCC agenda item on December 7, 1993 when County Probation Services was closed and the County Probation Services were contracted with Pride Integrated Services, Inc. The PAB is 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, 2000, through September 30, 2001. A total of 6608 case files were terminated during this period that represents a 12% increase in probation terminations over the previous year. A random sampling of 6.7% of the total closed case files were audited totaling approximately 441 from all four Pride offices that include West Palm Beach, Delray Beach, Belle Glade and Lake Park.

1) West Palm Beach Office

A total of 3970 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 14th case resulted in 280 cases being audited.

2) Delray Beach Office

A total of 1603 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 19th case resulted in 86 cases being audited.

3) Lake Park Office

A total of 622 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 14th case resulted in 44 cases being audited.

4) Belle Glade Office

A total of 413 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 13th case resulted in 31 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 entered into a Microsoft Access database.

The audit criteria was extrapolated from the Contract for Professional Services existing between Pride and Palm Beach County. 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 with

Pride that allowed Pride to purchase an automated records keeping system for better case tracking and reporting. 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 local criminal history checks (AKA Palms) • 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 monitoring 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 7/1/02.
- 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 periodic in-service training.
- 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

✘ Probation violation's remain consistently high and have been the source of collaborative research between Pride and the PAB. Research has indicated that re-arrests and failure to report as ordered for treatment/ probation are the primary causes of violations being filed. Research needs to continue in order to identify remedies that can be implemented to reduce this.

✘ Verification of residence through rent/mortgage receipts or utility bills has been a requirement of the County contract. In years past, this has not been enforced however, once brought to Pride's attention, has improved.

✘ Employment verification has also been a requirement of the County contract and has improved since it was brought to the attention of Pride. Pay stub receipts are required for verification.

✘ The Professional Services contract between the County and Pride requires Pride to conduct an overview of the probationer's life style to create a risk/needs assessment. This assessment should be completed during the initial reporting visit and will identify areas of risk that when addressed, may reduce recidivism rates. The assessment is to include:

- Assessment of family and economic problems
- Assessment of alcohol or drug related problems
- Assessment of medical and psychiatric problems

✘ A Client Satisfaction Survey was conducted by Pride during this past audit year and while Pride received a very satisfactory and positive response, two issues emerged that Pride indicated they intend to review:

- Amount of time a probationer waits to see a Probation Officer
- Issue of referrals made to ancillary services

✘ Pride chose to complete a Quality of Service survey to elicit responses from the County Court Criminal division, State and Public Defender's Office and the Criminal Defense Lawyers Association for the purpose of evaluating their delivery of Probation Services to the County. The survey reflected overall satisfaction with Pride's services. To better define and understand each other's role in the courtroom, the Office of Public Defender offered to do joint training with Pride Probation Officers.

PROBATIONER PROFILE:N = 441 (6.7% of total terminated probation cases)

Demographic	Probationers		Percentages
Gender	Male	341	77.3%
	Female	100	22.7
Race	White	312	70.8%
	Black	85	19.3
	Hispanic	31	7.0
	Other	5	1.1
	No response	8	1.8
Age	18 – 25	109	24.7%
	26 – 35	128	29.2
	36 – 45	126	28.7
	46 – 55	46	10.4
	56 >	23	5.0
	No Response	9	2.0
Marital	No Response	60	13.6%
	Married	87	19.7
	Single	221	50.0
	Divorced	17	4.0
	Separated	56	12.7
Employed	Employed	312	70.7%
	Unemployed	73	16.6
	Other (ret/disabled)	22	5.0
	No response	34	7.7
Employment verified	Yes	239	54.2%
	No	202	45.8
Residence verified	Yes	343	77.8
	No	98	22.2
Education	<12 th grade	125	28.4%
	12 th grade	142	32.2
	12>	113	25.6
	No response	61	13.8
Palms check	Yes	434	98.4%
	No	7	1.6
Early termination		128	29.0%
Regular termination		198	44.9
VOP		115	26.1
Prior convictions	None	282	63.9.0%
	1	72	16.3
	2 or more	87	19.8
Drugs/alcohol in relation to total charges filed	584 total charges filed on 441 offenders	314 charges involved drugs or alcohol out of 584 total charges	53.8%

Present charge (584 total)	DUI	224	38.4%
	Violence	80	13.7
	Traffic	82	14.0
	Drugs	72	12.3
	Misc	126	21.6
Community service Ordered	Yes	310/441	70.3%
	No	131	29.7
Community service completed	Yes	251/310	81.0%
	No	59	19.0
Treatment ordered	Yes	390/441	88.4%
	No	51	11.6
Treatment completed	Yes	320/390	82.0%
	No	70	18.0
Treatment type (502 total tx)	DUI/ Driving school	206	41.0%
	Substance abuse tx	95	19.0
	Domestic violence & anger mgt	60	12.0
	Miscellaneous inc jail tour/morgue tour/aids awareness	141	28.0
Supervision type	Minimum	424	96.1%
	Administrative	11	2.5
	Maximum	6	1.4
Restitution ordered	Yes	70	15.9%
	No	371	84.1
Claimed financial hardship	Yes	73	16.6%
	No	368	83.4

PROBATIONER DEMOGRAPHICS MEAN

N = 441

Gender	Male	77.3%
Race	White	70.8%
Age	26 – 35	29.2%
Marital	Single	50.0%
% of probationers employed	312 out of 441	70.7%
Education	12 th grade	32.2%
Prior convictions	1 or more convictions 159 out of 441	36.1%
Drugs/Alcohol	299 charges out of a total of 584	51.2%

Pride Status

Lake Park Probation Office

The Lake Park Probation office located at 524 Northlake Boulevard has experienced a steady increase in caseload since they opened in 1999. This location was designed to take some of the burden off the West Palm Beach office by providing services primarily to North County residents. The audit reveals a 58% increase in the caseload from last year and they have recently added a third Probation Officer to their staff in addition to a clerical person to handle the increase.

West Palm Beach Office

Pride CEO Maureen Ferrill reported they have relocated their West Palm Beach probation office to 1310 North Congress Avenue effective January 28, 2002. She explained their prior location at 2711 Exchange Court had been outgrown due to facility age, space and configuration. In addition, the facility did not meet federal ADA standards. Pride also consolidated their administrative functions under the same location. Ms. Ferrill stated they have entered into a ten-year lease, and the larger space has been projected to account for additional future staffing and/or client increase concerns.

Client Satisfaction Survey

We commend Pride for conducting a Client Satisfaction Survey from August 1 through September 5, 2001 to assess probationers' satisfaction with the quality of probation services provided them. The surveys were randomly distributed and collected in an anonymous fashion to ensure objectivity on the part of the respondent. Pride reported a forty nine percent return on the surveys that consisted of eight multiple part questions. Two issues emerged from the survey including the amount of time waiting to see a Probation Officer and the issue of referrals made to ancillary services. Overall, probationers expressed satisfaction with services they are receiving.

Violation of Probation Research

The PAB and Pride conducted research on the causes of probation violations being filed recognizing they are costly not only to the criminal justice system but to Pride as well. The research involved surveying ten local treatment vendors to determine if any process or procedural changes could reduce the number of violations being filed. Survey results indicated little variance between vendors that could alter the number of probation violations filed.

As part of the research, Pride began compiling quarterly VOP reports to the PAB to identify the causes of probation violations. According to the summary, three particular reasons were cited:

- Client failure to report to the probation office
- Client failure to enroll or comply for treatment
- Client committing new offenses

The PAB recognized that these types of offenses including new arrests did not provide Pride any other recourse than to violate the offender since the offenses were in direct violation of the court-ordered probation conditions. This issue remains under review by the PAB and Pride who will continue to research the issue in 2002.

Probation Services Community Advisory Board

The CJC also commends Pride on creating a Probation Services Community Advisory Board to enhance communications with all public and private sector agencies that refer clients to them. Pride reported they have commitments to participate from agencies such as the State and Public Defender offices, Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, Clerk's Office, DOC probation, Community Court, the Drug Abuse Foundation, Urban League, Fern House and Workforce Development Board.

The Mission of the Board will be to discuss Pride's delivery of Misdemeanor Probation Services, the needs of probation clients and the needs of the community as a whole. The first meeting has been scheduled for February 19th at 12:00 pm at their new West Palm location at 1310 North Congress Avenue.

CONCLUSION

The current audit period is October 1, 2000 through September 30, 2001. CJC staff randomly selected files from the master client list for review. The audits were conducted at all four Pride offices. 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 under County contract, Pride provides DUI and Traffic schools for court sentenced offenders, they participate in the Sheriff's Office Substance Abuse Awareness Program (SAAP) and they have been a key partner in the 15th Judicial Circuit Drug Court program research, implementation, and operation since 1999.

Pride regularly attends 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 probation service to Palm Beach County while serving the needs of a diverse clientele.

In summary, this audit finds that Pride is in satisfactory compliance with the provisions of the professional probation services contract with Palm Beach County and results indicated that Pride is doing a good job of enforcing the court-ordered probation conditions.