

**Palm Beach County Criminal Justice
Commission
Annual Monitoring Report
Of**



**Pride Misdemeanor
Probation Services**

October 1, 2001 – September 30, 2002

March 20, 2003

INDEX

INDEX.....	2
PROBATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP.....	3
AUDIT STATISTICS ON PRIDE OFFICES.....	4
CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS & COMPLIANCE TABLE.....	5
FINDINGS	6
RECOMMENDATIONS	7
PROBATIONER STATISTICS.....	8 - 9
PROBATIONER DEMOGRAPHICS MEAN	9
PRIDE PROGRESS.....	10 - 11
CONCLUSION.....	11

Data for this report was collected by CJC temporary employees and was collated into report form by Jerry Wardrop, Criminal Justice Manager and presented to the Probation Advisory Board on March 20, 2003.

PURPOSE

To monitor the County professional services contract with Pride Integrated Services, Inc., for the provision of misdemeanor probation services to Palm Beach County.



William Bollinger
Chair

History

In 1993, the Board of County Commissioners, through a Request For Proposal (RFP) process, selected Pride Integrated Services, Inc. as the sole misdemeanor probation service provider.

The County Professional Services contract required the creation of a Probation Advisory Board to monitor and ensure compliance with the terms of the probation contract with Pride and to report to the BCC.

An annual program audit is conducted on all four Pride offices to ensure terms of the contract are being adhered to in the delivery of misdemeanor probation services.

TYPICAL PROFILE MISDEMEANOR OFFENDER ON PROBATION

Male
Caucasian
Age 26 – 35
Single
12th grade education
Prior convictions
Employed
Drugs/Alcohol involvement

MEMBERS

Ted Booras
State Attorney's Office

Steven A. Cohen
Private Defense Attorney

Virginia Cataldo
U.S. Probation

Justine Patterson
Florida Dept. of Corrections

John Rivera
Assistant Public Defender

Linda Rondone
Clerk of Court's Office

2002 ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Conducted a random programmatic audit on 450 terminated probation cases
- ◆ Recommended renewal of the County-Pride Misdemeanor Probation Services contract for another three-year period effective December 6, 2002 through December 5, 2005
- ◆ Completed changes to Scope of Work section of the contract

- ◆ Requested the County Internal Auditor conduct a financial audit on Pride Integrated Services

**PROBATION ADVISORY BOARD
PRIDE MISDEMEANOR PROBATION SERVICES
2002 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 the delivery of misdemeanor probation services for the 15th Judicial Circuit County Court. On December 7, 1993, the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners through a “Request For Proposal” (RFP) process and by resolution selected Pride Integrated Services, Inc., (Pride) as the provider of misdemeanor probation services to County Court. A requirement in the Professional Services contract between the BCC and Pride was the creation of a Probation Advisory Board (PAB) to monitor and report annually to the BCC via the Criminal Justice Commission of their findings. The PAB is required to perform an annual random audit on selected Pride terminated probationer case files as a way of assessing the timeliness, quality and accuracy in the delivery of probation services. The present reporting period for the most recent audit is October 1, 2001, through September 30, 2002. A total of 6022 probation cases were terminated during this period. That represents a 10% decrease in probation terminations over the previous year. A random sampling of approximately 7% of those 6022 case files were audited totaling approximately 400 from all four Pride offices that include West Palm Beach, Delray Beach, Belle Glade and Lake Park. A summary of the office breakdown is as follows:

1) West Palm Beach Office

A total of 3994 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 15th case resulted in 265 cases being audited.

2) Delray Beach Office

A total of 1101 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 14th case resulted in 77 cases being audited.

3) Lake Park Office

A total of 535 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 15th case resulted in 35 cases being audited.

4) Belle Glade Office

A total of 392 cases were terminated at this office during the above period. A random selection of every 17th case resulted in 23 cases being audited.

The audit data was collected through the Probation Audit Form adopted by the PAB. The audit criteria were extrapolated from the Contract for Professional Services existing between Pride and Palm Beach County. On December 6, 2002, Pride entered into a three-year contract with the County that remains in effect until December 5, 2005. 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 • Assessment of family and economic problems, alcohol or drug related problems and medical and psychiatric problems 	Yes 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 Yes
4) Enforcement of court ordered conditions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fines, 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	Partially
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:

- The Professional Services Contract with the County requires Pride to maintain a Probation Officer in every County Criminal Court division. This ensures immediate contact after sentencing between a Pride Probation Officer and the offender. Probation conditions are detailed in a Probationer's Handbook and those conditions are explained to the offender during this initial contact 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 general history form is completed on every probationer. The Probation Officer once again provides an explanation of the probation requirements including fines, court costs, restitution, treatment and supervision costs.
- 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 in handling probation violations 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. According to the data collected, approximately 78% of probationers completed their community service hours.
- 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 7/1/03.
- 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.
- Probation violation's remain consistently high and continue to be a 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. The PAB and Pride needs to continue research on the VOP issue in order to identify any remedies that can be implemented to reduce the total number of probation violations being filed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

● Section I, item 22 of the Scope of Work of the Professional Services contract requires Pride to “encourage and assist unemployed probationers in-order to improve their employability through education and training”. According to the data collected during this audit period, 15.7% of the probationer’s reported they were unemployed and another 10.5% failed to respond. While this number may be subjective, the PAB and Pride recognizes the need to provide social service assistance to probationers in addition to ensuring they are meeting court ordered probation conditions.

This past year, the PAB and Pride jointly developed and implemented a “Probationer Needs Assessment Form” to identify those clients in need of services. This self-reporting instrument is provided to probationers at their first meeting with a Probation Officer and depending on the need requested, the client is given a referral to the appropriate service. Currently, probationers citing a need for counseling, job assistance, substance abuse treatment, basic living essentials, etc., are provided the name and phone number where to obtain the desired service. It is then up to the probationer to follow through.

An important component currently missing is a dedicated staff person (social worker) to meet individually with every probationer who expressed a need and having established a direct relationship with all of the social service agencies, would expedite the service to the probationer. This staff person would then be required to maintain data that would provide an outcomes measure. In this manner, this important service would be elevated from being simply a “referral” to practical assistance. Admittedly, the contract implemented ten years ago does not contain this requirement and only refers to assisting probationers in a vague manner. Pride and the PAB recognize that in the modern day era, more needs to be done with probationers in an attempt to minimize recidivism rates.

In terms of these duties, Pride indicated it would not be feasible to burden Probation Officers with the task. Pride reasoned it would be more effective to have a dedicated staff person to perform this duty. To their credit, Pride had submitted grant applications to several agencies including the Community Foundation to fund this position. This report recommends that Pride and the PAB continue to pursue funding of this position.

● Verification of residency through rent/mortgage receipts or utility bills is a requirement of the County contract. In years past, this has not been enforced however, in recent years, Pride has increased their attempt to collect the appropriate information. Data collected for this report indicated that Pride has achieved a 56.5% verification rate.

● Employment verification is also a requirement of the County contract and has improved substantially since it was brought to the attention of Pride. Pay stub receipts are required for verification. While residency and employment verification data may be difficult to obtain, Probation Officers need to reinforce the importance of this information to probationers. Data collected for this report indicated Pride has been able to verify employment in 72.8% of the cases.

PROBATIONER PROFILE: N = 400 (6.7% of total terminated probation cases)

Demographic	Probationers		Percentages
Gender	Male	320	80.0%
	Female	80	20.0
Race	White	301	75.3%
	Black	78	19.6
	Hispanic	18	5.0
	Other	3	.1
Age	18 – 25	101	25.3%
	26 – 35	120	30.0
	36 – 45	100	25.0
	46 – 55	42	10.5
	56 >	31	7.8
	No Response	6	1.4
Marital	No Response	107	26.7%
	Married	73	18.3
	Single	158	39.5
	Divorced	44	11.0
	Widowed	6	1.5
	Separated	12	3.0
Employed	Employed	257	64.3%
	Unemployed	63	15.7
	Other (ret/disabled)	38	9.5
	No response	42	10.5
Employment verified	Yes	187/257	72.8%
Residence verified	Yes	226	56.5%
	No	174	43.5
Education	<12 th grade	105	26.3%
	12 th grade	104	26.0
	12>	134	33.6
	Technical school	12	2.8
	No response	45	11.3
Palms check	Yes	313	78.3%
	No	87	21.7
Early termination		199	49.7%
Regular termination		98	24.5
VOP		103	25.8
Prior convictions	None	236	59.0%
	1	68	17.0
	2 or more	96	24.0
Drugs/Alcohol involved	Yes	171	42.8
	No	229	57.2
Present charge (450 total)	DUI	143	31.8%
	Violence	73	16.2
	Traffic	88	19.6
	Drugs	29	6.4

	Misc	117	26.0
Community service Ordered	Yes	258/400	64.5%
	No	142	35.5
Community service completed	Yes	201/258	77.9%
Treatment ordered	Yes	355/400	88.7%
	No	45	11.3
Treatment completed	Yes	264/355	74.3%
	No	91	25.7
Treatment type (502 total tx)	DUI/ Driving school	206	41.0%
	Substance abuse tx	95	18.9
	Domestic violence & anger mgt	60	12.0
	Miscellaneous inc jail tour/morgue tour/aids awareness	141	28.1
Supervision type	Minimum	392	98.0%
	Administrative	1	
	Maximum	2	
	Unknown	5	
Restitution ordered	Yes	56	14.0%
	No	344	86.0
COS Waived	Yes	30	7.5%
	No	370	92.5

PROBATIONER DEMOGRAPHICS MEAN

N = 400

Gender	Male	80.0%
Race	White	75.3%
Age	26 – 35	30.0%
Marital	Single	39.5%
Employment	257 out of 400	64.3%
Education	12 th grade or higher	33.6%
Prior convictions	Convictions 1 or more	41.0%
Drugs/Alcohol	Involved in present charges	42.8%

PRIDE PROGRESS

Advisory Board

The PAB and CJC commends Pride on creating a Probation Services Community Advisory Board that meets quarterly to enhance communications with all public and private sector agencies that refer clients to them. Agencies participating in quarterly meetings include 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 meetings are a forum for Pride to discuss the quality of misdemeanor Probation Services, the needs of probation clients and the needs of the community as a whole. The agencies involved provide feedback to Pride that allows them to constantly evaluate how they do business and what can be done to improve misdemeanor probation services to Palm Beach County.

Office Relocation

Pride has maintained their present Delray Beach office location since 1986 however they were informed that when their present lease expires, their rent would be doubled. Ms. Ferrill cited the primary reason for the substantial rent increase was their office location being in close proximity to the Atlantic Avenue corridor that is enjoying a tremendous surge in popularity.

Ms. Ferrill stated Pride has identified a new location and has signed a lease. Pride's new Delray Beach office address is: Bank of America/Linton Building, 1801 S. Federal Highway, Suite 246, Delray Beach. Pride is expected to relocate on April 25th and be open for business at their new location effective Monday, April 28.

Assignment of Probation Times

Ms. Ferrill stated that Pride has recently implemented assigned reporting dates and times for their probation clients countywide. She explained that in order to even out the daily probation caseload and to ensure sufficient staffing is available to meet with probation clients, it was necessary to implement specific reporting dates and times. The schedule was arrived at after consultation between the clients and probation staff.

Ms. Ferrill commented that with the contract requirement that Pride staff each of the County trial court divisions, at times it produced a backlog of clients waiting to report for probation. She also stated that when a random "Client Satisfaction Survey" was conducted in 2001, one issue that surfaced was that clients desired a more expedient reporting period. Assigning dates and times serves the benefit of both clients and Pride.

CONCLUSION

This audit finds that Pride is in compliance with a majority of the provisions of the probation services contract with Palm Beach County. Audit recommendations are cited under the “Recommendation” section and include:

1) Assigning a “dedicated” staff person to providing job training/placement and other social service needs as may be identified through the assessment instrument and conducting follow up of those referrals.

While the Professional Services contract, implemented ten years ago does not specifically require Pride to dedicate a staff person to these duties, the PAB and Pride recognize that for efficiency purposes, the ideal method to provide these services is through a dedicated staff person to implement this program.

It is recommended that the PAB and Pride continue to pursue a funding source that would allow implementation of this program.

- 2) Continued emphasis on verification of residency.
- 3) Continued emphasis on verification employment.