



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of
**CORRECTIONS AND
REHABILITATION**

FACT SHEET
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Excerpts from Reports on Corrections Reform Recommendations on: Parole, Sentence credits, Rehabilitation and Community Supervision

Reforming Corrections – Report of the Independent Review Panel (June 2004)

Background:

The Corrections Independent Review Panel, appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger and chaired by former Governor George Deukmejian, reported that California's correctional system suffers from a "multitude of problems," including "out-of-control costs" and "a recidivism rate far exceeding that of any other state." The Panel presented 239 specific recommendations targeted to every aspect of the state's correctional organization and operations.

Recommendations:

- Give population management recommendations priority. Recommendations affecting institution and parole population management are critical to the success of the organization and are needed now in institutions and parole operations and should be at the forefront of organizational planning.
- Change "the way we manage inmates" so that they are better prepared to reenter the community as productive members of society.
- Pursue a "shift in attitude toward non-violent offenders to allow them to receive community-based alternatives to incarceration." "This is not about coddling criminals — this is about protecting the public by ensuring that offenders do not commit a second crime."
- Eliminate the current time-credit system and instead using a structure that better encourages an inmate to achieve identified goals while in prison.
- Parole should focus the most intensive supervision on parolees who represent the highest risk to society. Low-risk parolees should be assisted at the community level and be discharged from parole more quickly.
- Whenever possible, parole services should be shifted from the state to the county for low-risk offenders. To encourage treatment at the community level, the fee paid by counties to the state for the treatment, training, and supervision of lower-level wards should be modified to more closely reflect the actual costs incurred by the state in providing those services.
- Modify the Penal Code to allow inmates to earn supplemental sentence reduction credits after they complete specified education, vocational, or drug-treatment goals.

- Provide inmate planning and re-entry assessment at the time of initial incarceration.
- Use the needs and risk assessment tool when the inmate first enters prison and design a programming plan that addresses those needs.
- Discharge parolees who are determined to be very low risk from parole three months after they are released from prison.
- Provide funding in each parole region for entry programs, aftercare services, transition programs such as half-way houses, and alternatives to parole revocation. The services should include employment assistance and short-term substance abuse treatment.

In the end, the Panel concluded, “the changes will not only be cost effective, they will also go a long way toward making our communities safer.”

Sources: http://cpr.ca.gov/Review_Panel/Executive_Summary.html and http://cpr.ca.gov/Review_Panel/Introduction.html. For a copy of the full report, see http://cpr.ca.gov/Review_Panel/.

Expert Panel on Adult Offender Recidivism Reduction Programming – Report to the California Legislature (June 2007)

Background:

The Expert Panel report, commissioned by the California State Legislature, provides recommendations for improving the state's rehabilitation model, as well as strategies to significantly reduce recidivism and overcrowding. The report recommends new models for in-prison rehabilitation programs, risk assessment tools for analyzing parole revocation decisions, and other methods to reduce recidivism and end the perpetual overcrowding crisis the state has faced in recent years. Following are several recommendations from the Expert Panel report:

Recommendations:

- Enact legislation to expand positive reinforcements for offenders who complete rehabilitation programs and follow the rules. CDCR must improve on matching offender needs with program objectives.
- Determine offender rehabilitation programming based on the results of assessment tools that identify and measure risks and needs. CDCR should develop and utilize a risk-needs matrix to assign offenders to programming.
- Select and deliver a core set of programs for offenders that cover major offender areas. These include: academic, vocational and financial; alcohol and drugs; anger management; criminal thinking; family; and sex offenses.
- Develop structured guidelines to respond to technical parole violations, based on risk and seriousness. Sanctions and incentives are important tools.

Source: <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/News/ExpertPanel.html> .

Washington State Institute for Public Policy: Evidence-based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates (October 2006)

Background:

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy examined whether there are “evidence-based” options that can reduce the future need for prison beds, save money for state and local taxpayers, and contribute to lower crime rates. It conducted a comprehensive statistical review of 571 program evaluations of adult corrections, juvenile corrections, and prevention programs conducted over the last 40 years in the United States and other English-writing countries

Findings:

- General Education Development (GED) preparation for inmates functioning above a 7.0 grade level can reduce recidivism up to seven percent.
- Vocational programs with current industry-certified and market-driven trades that can be completed in 12 months can reduce recidivism up to 9 percent.
- Drug treatment in the community can reduce recidivism by 9.3 percent.

Source: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/06-10-1201.pdf>. Above statistics are included on page 9.

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