

Status Report: Summary

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Prepared for
Community Corrections
Probation and Parole Division,
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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
SUMMARY	1
Question 49: “Overall, how useful is the paperwork you complete in terms of fulfilling your job duties?” ...	1
Question 50: “How important is the Risk Assessment Form in evaluating the status of your clients?”	1
Question 51: “How important is the Needs Assessment form in providing services to your clients?”	2
Question 52: “How important is the Reassessment Form in helping offenders reach case plan goals?”	3
Question 53: “Of the forms you fill out on a regular basis, which do you consider most useful?”	4
Question 53a: “Why do you consider this form to be the most useful?”	5
Question 54: “Of the forms you fill out on a regular basis, which do you consider least useful?”	5
Question 54a: “Why do you consider this form the least useful?”	6
Question 55: “If the amount of paperwork you were required to complete were reduced, would you increase the amount of contact you have with clients?”	6
Question 56: “Do you believe that increasing the amount of contact you have with offenders and others regarding their progress would result in an overall increase in successful outcomes?”	7
Question 56a: “Why do you believe increasing contact with offenders would increase successful outcomes?”	8
Question 57: “What percentage of time do you spend on completing various job responsibilities?”	9
Question 58: “Please feel free to add any comments here or on the back of the page that you feel would be important for us to know or helpful to us in interpreting your answers to this survey.”	9
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9

List of Tables

Table 1. Q 53: “Of the Forms You Fill Out on a Regular Basis, Which Do You Consider Most Useful?”	4
Table 2. Q 54: “Of the Forms You Fill Out on a Regular Basis, Which Do You Consider Least Useful?” ...	5
Table 3. Q 56a: “Why Do You Believe Increasing Contact With Offenders Would Increase Successful Outcomes?”	8
Table 4. Q 57: “What Percentage of Time Do You Spend on Completing Various Job Responsibilities?”	9
Table 5. Q 58: “Please Feel Free to Add Any Comments Here or on the Back of the Page That You Feel Would be Important For Us to Know or Helpful to us in Interpreting Your Answers to This Survey.”	9

List of Figures

Figure 1. Q 49: “Overall, How Useful is the Paperwork?”	1
Figure 2. Q 50: “How Important is the Risk Assessment Form?”	2
Figure 3. Q 51: “How Important is the Needs Assessment Form?”	3
Figure 4. Q 52: “How Important is the Reassessment Form?”	4
Figure 5. Q 55: “If the Amount of Paperwork Were Reduced, Would You Increase the Amount of Contact You Have With Clients?”	7
Figure 6. Q 56: “Do You Believe That Increasing the Amount of Contact You Have With Offenders Would Result in an Increase in Successful Outcomes?”	8

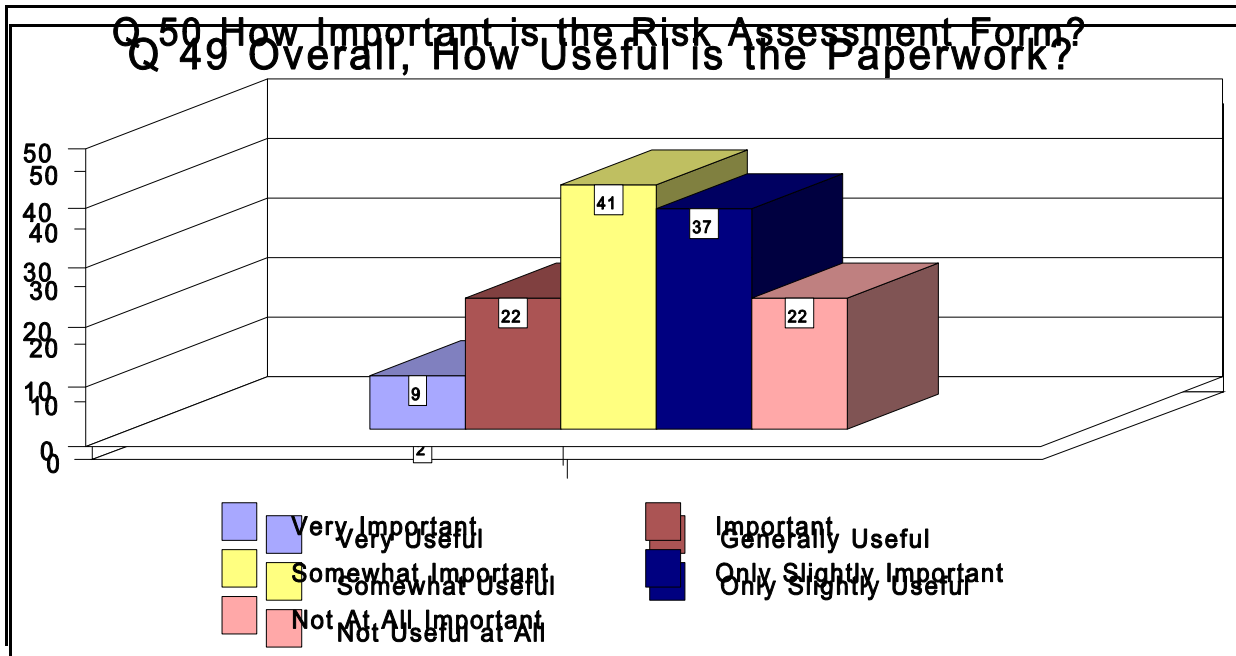
INTRODUCTION

The previous status report covered those criteria, falling outside of the parameters of the current RNA, that officers use to determine offender risk, referral strategies and other service provision. It also focused on ascertaining any characteristics officers feel are unique to the New Mexico offender population that may influence the development or effectiveness of supervision strategies. Officers told us that knowledge gained from personal contact with the client and their impression of the client's attitude or receptivity to supervision are some of the most valuable sources of information available to them. Officers also suggested this information is not adequately reflected on the current RNA. It may be useful to further explore this issue in order to make the revised RNA more useful and gain buy in from the officers. This eighth and final status report summarizes the usefulness of the RNA instrument and other forms regularly used by PPOs. We also asked officers if paperwork interfered with the amount of time they spent on supervision, why they feel this affects rates of successful completion of probation and parole, and how they currently distribute their time at work in fulfilling their regular responsibilities. PPO responses are discussed in detail below.

SUMMARY REPORT

Question 49: "Overall, how useful is the paperwork you complete in terms of fulfilling your job duties?"

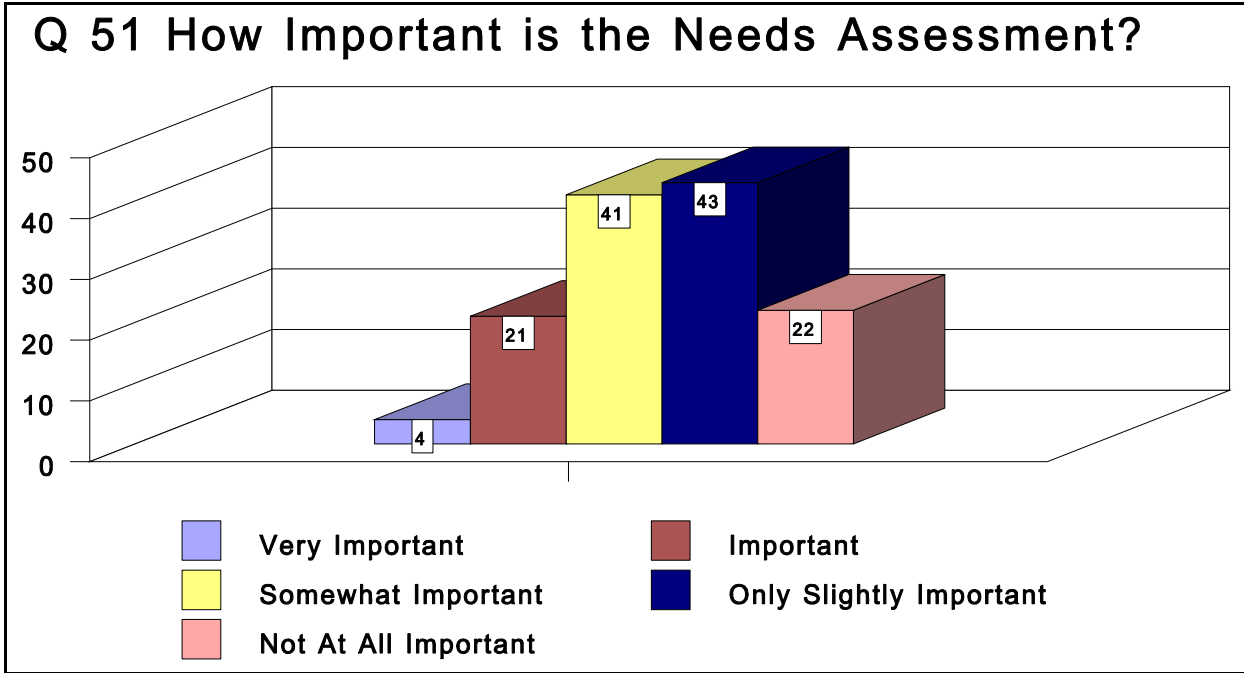
While 50 (37%) of the officers responding to this question told us that the paperwork they complete is *Somewhat Useful*, another 45 (34%) told us that, in general, the paperwork they complete is *Only Slightly Useful* to them. Another 29 (22%) stated that the paperwork they complete on a regular basis is *Generally Useful*, 6% told us the paperwork was *Not Useful At All* and only 2 officers (1%) felt the paperwork was *Very Useful*. These answers demonstrate that the majority of officers (77%) feel the paperwork is only *Somewhat* or *Less than Somewhat Useful* in terms of fulfilling their job duties. The next several questions ask about specific sections of the RNA in particular, in order to determine if some portions possess more relevance in officers' minds than others. Two officers did not answer this question.



Question 50: “How important is the Risk Assessment Form in evaluating the status of your clients?”

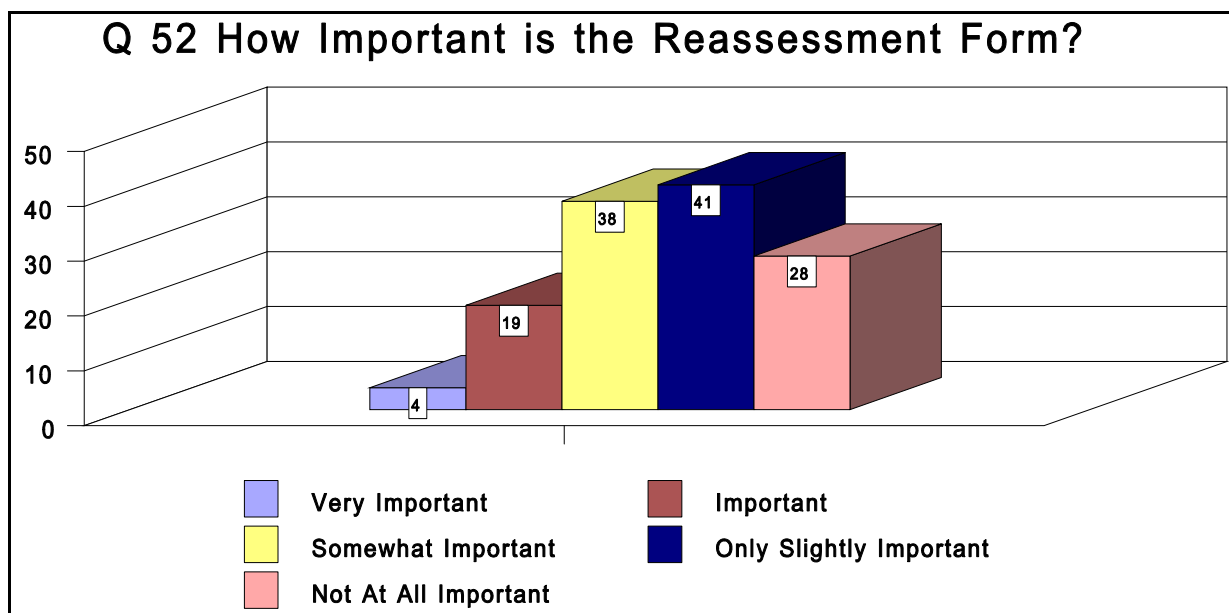
In this question, we asked officers to give us their impressions of the usefulness of just the initial Assessment portion of the RNA, exclusive of the Needs portion. Forty one (31%) officers told us that the risk assessment portion of the RNA is *Somewhat Important* in evaluating the risk status of their clients while 28% stated that the role of the risk assessment is *Only Slightly Important*. An equal number of officers (17% each) said the risk portion of the RNA was either *Important* or *Not At All Important* in determining risk status and a mere 7% said the risk form was *Very Important* in assessing client risk. Again, a majority (76%) of respondents told us that the risk form was only somewhat or less than somewhat important in determining risk status. These responses support the need for revision to the form to increase its utility and relevance in the eyes of PPOs which will encourage accurate completion of the form and use of its scoring measures. Some of the disillusionment about the utility of the form may stem from the fact that it is implemented after a determination of risk status and program placement has already been made. This is a flaw in the protocol for administration of the RNA which should be addressed. Five officers did not answer this question.

Question 51: “How important is the Needs Assessment form in providing services to your clients?”



When we asked officers about the utility of the Needs portion of the RNA, their responses were similar to the risk assessment form for determining risk. Forty-three officers (33%) told us that they saw the Needs form as *Only Slightly Important* and forty-one officers(31%) deemed the form *Somewhat Important* for service provision. Seventeen percent told us that they considered the form to be *Not At All Important* while 16% considered the form *Important* for service provision and only 3% saw the form as *Very Important*. All in all, the needs portion as indicated by the responses is slightly less useful than the risk portion with 81% of respondents telling us that the form was somewhat or less than *Somewhat Important* for the process of service provision to their clients. Five officers chose not to answer this question.

Question 52: “How important is the Reassessment Form in helping offenders reach case plan goals?”



We then asked officers to give us their opinions regarding the utility of the Reassessment portion of the RNA and 31.5% told us that they believed the reassessment form to be *Only Slightly Important* in assisting offenders to reach goals outlined in their case plans although another 29% of respondents considered the form to be *Somewhat Important*. In asking this question, our intent was to ascertain how integral a role the reassessment form played in tracking offender progress and informing officers’ revisions to supervision strategies and case management. Twenty-one percent of respondents told us that they feel the Reassessment form is *Not At All Important* in helping offenders reach case plan goals while 15% told us that they consider the form *Important* and only 3% reported that they consider the form *Very Important*. Of the three portions of the form, the largest percentage of PPOs (82%) consider the Reassessment to be only somewhat or less than somewhat useful. This confirms what we have found in the rest of the survey regarding officers tendency to disregard the role of this portion of the RNA and perhaps not fill it out at all. It may be useful for the Division to reformulate their policy on follow-ups and reiterate to staff why it is useful to track offenders after they have completed supervision. As is stated in the Risk/Needs Validation report, it would also be extremely useful to automate not simply the most recent Reassessment, as is currently done, but to keep computerized copies of all Reassessment forms so that client progress can be tracked over time, providing the opportunity to discern trends in the New Mexico population.

Question 53: “Of the forms you fill out on a regular basis, which do you consider most useful?” and Question 53a: “Why do you consider this form to be the most useful?”

Because the majority of officers have told us that all portions of the RNA are only somewhat or less than somewhat important in determining risk, providing services or tracking offender progress, we asked officers which forms they did consider most useful overall and why. The largest number of officers (26%) told us that they deem their Chronological Notes or Daily Ledger to be the most useful form overall. When asked why officers considered their chronological notes to be the most

useful form overall, they responded by saying this form provides them with the most specific, detailed information on their clients daily activities. PPOs told us because these notes are based on personal contact with the offender and are kept in chronological order, they help provide continuity between contacts and demonstrate patterns or changes exhibited by the client, which may help to predict success or failure. Basically, the consensus was these notes provide the who, what, where, when and why of the case and a daily running account of client behavior. The Pre/Post Sentence Report Forms were cited as most useful by 19% of respondents and officers told us they find the PSRs useful because they give an overall review of the case and provide the most comprehensive information on a case. PPOs stated the PSRs contain all relevant information on the client's background, criminal history, family history, substance abuse issues, social situation and previous compliance. Sixteen percent cited the Risk/Needs in spite of the criticism leveled at it in responses to other survey questions. These officers told us they considered the RNA instrument to be useful because it shows the direction the client is going and can help gauge success or failure on probation and parole. PPOs also state the form outlines offender needs, helps them to structure goal development and objectives, and provides general guidance for the development of the supervision plan. These comments echo what has been determined about the RNA in the validation, that because it is administered after offenders are assigned to a program, it does not play a significant role in assessing risk but that other aspects of the form may be useful in determining needs or in creating a relevant supervision plan and outlining client goals and objectives. Twenty officers did not tell us why they consider these forms to be useful.

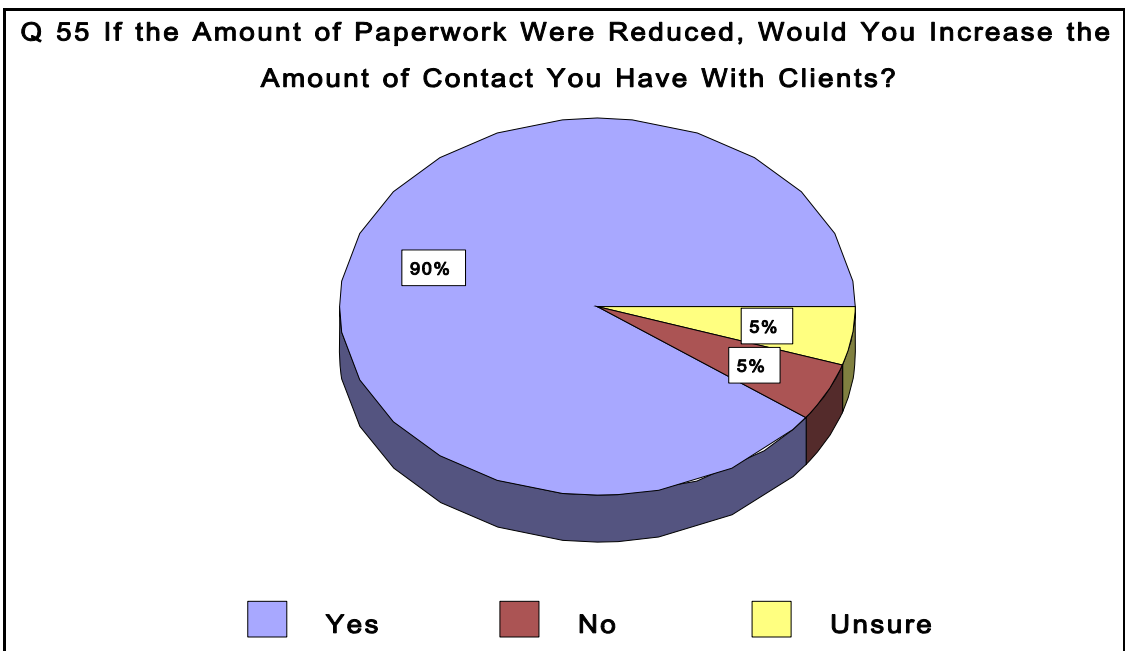
Q 53 What Form Do You Consider Most Useful?		
	Frequency (112)	Percent
Chronological Notes/Daily Log/Ledger	29	26%
Pre- and/or Post Sentence Report	21	19%
Risk/Needs Assessment	18	16%
Order of Probation	8	7%
Offender Profile/Face Sheet	8	7%
Other Forms	8	7%
None of the Forms	6	5%
Arrest Order/Discharge Forms	4	3.5%
Violation Reports	4	3.5%
Monthly Progress Reports	3	3%
Contract Compliance Verification	3	3%

Table 1

Question 54: “Of the forms you fill out on a regular basis, which do you consider least useful?” Question 54a: “Why do you consider this form the least useful?”

When we asked officers which forms they considered least useful, they responded overwhelmingly at 36% of the total responses, that the Risk/Needs Assessment was they least useful form they fill out on a regular basis. They cite the RNA instrument’s lack of relevance and redundancy as the primary features that compromise its usefulness. They state that the form is outdated, its categories are ill-defined and unrealistic, the information is primarily client self report, and the scoring system is skewed and inaccurate. Six percent of officers also cite the Assessment Coding Sheet, part of the RNA, as the least useful form they use. This may partially reflect the fact that the risk assessment is completed after program assignment, meaning it is just a formality to code the offender’s risk when it has been essentially predetermined. Sixteen percent of respondents chose the Violation Reports as the least useful form they fill out on a regular basis. Officers told us this form is not used in their job but is required by the state for statistical purposes. Seventy four officers did not answer the portion of the question that asked them to explain why the forms were not considered useful, so we have obtained only partial information on this subject.

Q 54 What Forms Do You Consider Least Useful?		
	Frequency (86)	Percent
Risk/Needs Assessment	31	36%
Violation Reports	14	16%
Assessment Coding Sheet	5	6%
Absconder Form	5	6%
Monthly/Annual Progress Reports	5	6%
Most or All Forms	5	6%
Other Forms	5	6%
None of the Forms	4	5%
Chronological Notes/Follow-up	3	3.5%
Pre- or Post Sentence Reports	3	3.5%
Individual Program Plan	2	2%



Special Program Referrals	2	2%
Don't Know	2	2%

Table 2

Question 55: “If the amount of paperwork you were required to complete were reduced, would you increase the amount of contact you have with clients?”

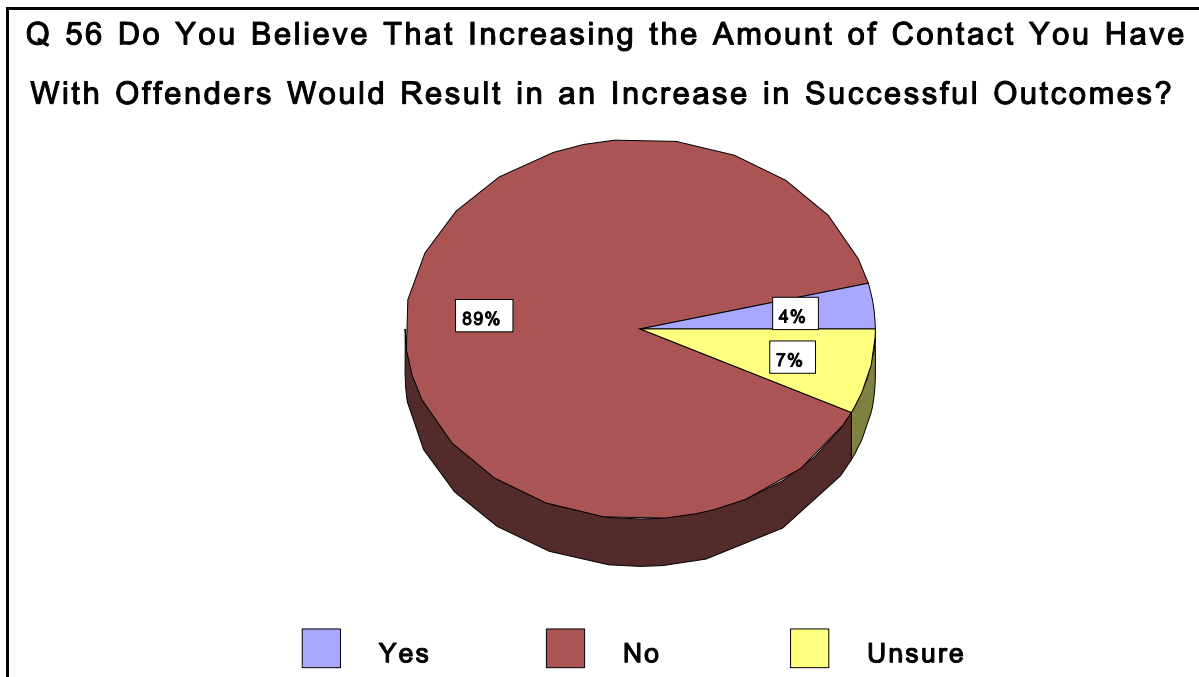
Due to the fact that paperwork load was cited as interfering with client supervision throughout the pilot survey, we followed up on this line of inquiry by asking whether officers would spend more time with clients if their paperwork load were reduced. Ninety percent of respondents told us they would increase their contact time with offenders if they were required to complete less paperwork, while 5% said No and 5% told us they were *Unsure*.

Question 56: “Do you believe that increasing the amount of contact you have with offenders and others regarding their progress would result in an overall increase in successful outcomes?”

After determining that officers would increase their contact with offenders if provided with time to do so, we pursued the subject to ask whether they felt this increased time with offenders would, in fact, contribute to successful outcomes. Eighty-nine percent of PPOs told us that they did believe increased contact would contribute to successful outcomes, while 4% said No and 7% remained Unsure.

Question 56a: “Why do you believe increasing contact with offenders would increase successful outcomes?”

In order to follow up on how increased contact time would contribute to successful offender outcomes, we asked officers why they felt this would be true. One third of all officers (33%) stated simply that more time with offenders means that PPOs have access to more information about their clients. They told us increased interaction with clients would lead to better supervision, monitoring and tracking. Another 17% of respondents told us they would use the increased time to implement a prevention-oriented focus with clients. In doing so, they would address problems before they got out of hand, catch clients who are in trouble or in jeopardy of violating and utilize more pro-active, rather than responsive, supervision strategies. Other officers were equally divided (14% each) between two other reasons for why increased contact would increase successful outcomes. The first reason was increased contact means an officer can offer guidance and mentorship and demonstrate a more caring relationship, i.e. providing more individual attention leads to greater rapport between officer and client. The second reason was closer monitoring would lead to a better client response, i.e. because they know they are being watched they will become more compliant. Nine officers did not answer this question.



Q56a. Why would increased contact with clients contribute to more successful outcomes?		
	Frequency (149)	Percent
Increased interaction leads to Better Supervision	49	33%
Prevention Oriented Focus/ Proactive Supervision	25	17%
PO can offer individual attention, caring, support	21	14%
Close monitoring leads to better client compliance	21	14%
Gives better sense of client service/treatment needs	14	9.5%
Allows more contacts in field/ with other agencies	14	9.5%
Greater opportunity to protect the community	5	3%

Question 57: “What percentage of time do you spend on completing various job responsibilities?”

In asking this question, the research team intended to get an idea of how officer time is currently distributed in an effort to complete daily tasks and fulfill responsibilities. The question could have been asked in a more systematic way by providing predetermined categories but we did not want to limit officers responses to only those categories of activity of which we were aware. As a result, we began our analysis by which categories had been named first and/ or most frequently, then went on to obtain an average percentage of time spent on each task across all responding officers. The chart displayed below presents a simple count of frequencies and the percentage of total responses accounted for. Average percent of time spent on each activity will be discussed in the text of this report. The activity cited most frequently as taking up the largest percentage of PPO time was *Paperwork*, accounting for 26% of all responses. The activity cited second most frequently by officers was *Supervising Offenders*, at 24% of the total responses and cited third most frequently was the category *Court Time* at 22% of the total. For the first category of paperwork, officers told us that they spend an average of 39% of their total work time completing paperwork. Officers also told us that they spend an average of 21% of their time supervising offenders, nearly half the amount of time spent on paperwork. PPOs also stated that, on average, they spend about 20% of their time in court, almost equal to the time they spend supervising offenders. We also noted that PPOs stated that they spend only about 10% of their time in the field, an area which they have repeatedly stated should be prioritized more strongly to increase the potential of successful offender outcomes.

Q 57 Average Amount of Time Spent on Various Job Responsibilities		
	Frequency (358)	

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