STATUS REPORT: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICER SURVEY

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June, 1998

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Introduction and Background

This *status* report is one in a series of deliverables for our current New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD), Probation and Parole Division (PPD) evaluation of Community Corrections (CC) Programs statewide. Based upon our response to a Request for Proposals we were competitively awarded a contract September 1, 1997 to August 31, 1998 to complete the contracted scope of services. For reasons beyond our control we were informed by NMCD staff in April 1998 our contract would terminate June 30, 1998. This occurs, due to the fact that state regulations prohibit a contract from being granted to us beyond the end of the state fiscal year. For this reason and others, noted in individual reports, we were not able to complete our contracted scope of services.

What follows is those portions of our detailed scope of work that are related to this specific report. Following this is the body of the report.

- Provide some training and technical assistance to regular Probation and Parole offices located throughout the state to help move toward a unified management information system.

During the course of this contract, this task evolved to encompass several other tasks within our scope of services. We discovered very early on in discussions with PPD staff that very little was known about the type of training and technical assistance the PPD required. It was decided to survey all PPD officers and supervisors regarding their jobs in order to gain a fuller understanding of how the staff and Division could be best served. In view of the identification of the validation of the current Division Risk/Needs Assessment instrument as a priority, emphasis was placed on gathering information about the instrument concerning its overall use, its relevance, appropriateness, and usefulness. In addition, some questions were included that are useful for designing a performance based evaluation system. The PPO survey was designed ultimately to collect general information about how PPOs do their job, as a complement to the validation check of the RNA, and to gather some information useful for the design of a performance based evaluation system. With this survey, we attempted to cast a wide net and ascertain the circumstances under which, and the context within which, the Risk/Needs Assessment plays a part in the overall management of the offender population.

Goals and Objectives of Research

As noted above the survey was designed with a number of goals and objectives. These included: gathering general information about how PPO's perceive their job, an emphasis on the RNA instrument, and a limited amount of information useful for designing a performance based evaluation system. The following sections were included in the survey:

- Job Satisfaction
- Job Training
- Computer Information

- Department Forms – Risk
- Department Forms – Needs
- Department Forms – Reassessment
- Scoring Procedures
- Measuring Outcomes
- Overview
- Summary

A total of 58 questions were included in the surveys with many of these questions having multiple parts.

The sections on Job Satisfaction, Job Training, and Computer Training contain questions that are useful in documenting overall how those who responded to the survey view their job, the adequacy of the training they have received, what they view as the mission of the division and their primary goals as PPOs, and how they currently use computers and general knowledge of computers. Questions in the section Measuring Outcomes are designed to collect information useful for designing a performance based evaluation system. This section includes questions about caseloads, measures of client progress, and how officers perceive their role as PPOs.

The sections on Department Forms and Scoring Procedures directly relate to the Divison's RNA instrument. These sections contain the largest number of questions and are designed to elicit information that will allow us to better understand how the instrument is currently used by Officers. As stated in our original proposal, the beneficial outcomes of a validation of the RNA instrument are a "high level of community protection from those individuals who present the greatest risk of committing further law violations; good supervision and resocialization programs; and the ability to use scarce resources most wisely." In constructing the survey on the use of Risk Needs Assessment tools within PPD, ISR took into account the role of the RNA within the overall matrix of responsibilities and procedures carried out by Probation/Parole Officers. In order to elicit a picture of how the RNA fit in with other mechanisms and strategies for assessing risk and needs, we inquired into the officers' perceptions of the forms' usefulness and relevance in providing a foundational basis for carrying out the responsibilities of offender monitoring and service provision. In conjunction with the validation check of the RNA, the data collected through a survey of Probation/Parole officers will allow for the PPD to make informed policy decisions and address inconsistencies in the implementation of the tools which may lead to unreliable data, unrelated to the makeup of the instrument itself. The survey has been attached as an appendix to this report.

The survey conducted by the ISR complements the validation check of the RNA instrument by gathering information on the role of the RNA in the determination of supervision classifications and overall management of offenders, in addition to obtaining data on perceptions of the RNA instrument's reliability and validity. We solicited information from PPOs on their general job satisfaction; adequacy of training; use of computer equipment; specifics of each form and the weighting of scores on the coding sheet. In addition, we included a section on PPO's perceptions of measuring outcomes and the overall assessment or risk and needs within the Department. Through combining the research strategies of validation check and compiling a

descriptive account of the role of the RNA instrument within the larger scheme of completing the daily tasks of a Probation/Parole Officer, ISR may be able to provide suggestions regarding any need for revisions to the current instrument and recommendations for consolidation of paperwork in general.

Finally, the survey contained both an Overview and a Summary section. These two sections served to provide those who responded additional opportunities to elaborate on the use of the RNA instrument, the use of other paperwork, and their job responsibilities.

Research Strategy, Scope and Objectives

The Institute focused on collecting information on how supervision levels and classifications are determined in the Probation and Parole Division; the role of the RNA in informing decisions regarding risk and needs; how PPO training contributes to carrying out the responsibilities of offender surveillance; and the factors considered important in Probation/Parole Officers' level of job satisfaction. The data we collected with this survey instrument has provided us with a comprehensive picture of how the RNA is utilized and how it fits into the overall procedural flow of the Probation and Parole Division. When combined with the findings of the validation check the results of the survey will serve as a basis for providing the PPD with recommendations for revising the instrument to increase its appropriateness for the population of offenders within the State of New Mexico. To this end, ISR placed particular emphasis on gathering information about the indicators PPOs considered significant for predicting offender success versus offender failure at assessment and reassessment, as well as data on any unique characteristics not included in the current RNA tools, that offenders in New Mexico may possess.

The composition of the survey was developed to follow a logical flow from general questions about PPO responsibilities to a gradual narrowing of focus. The narrower focus addresses the specific relevance and appropriateness of the Risk/Needs Assessment forms currently in use in terms of fulfilling their stated purpose of accurately determining supervision levels and classifications. The survey began with a section on PPO Job Satisfaction, followed by a second section on Job Training and a third section on the current or proposed use of computers to facilitate the accomplishment of daily tasks. These sections provided uswith a context within which to situate the rest of the survey's focus on the utilization of the RNA. We began this inquiry with a narrative section on the overall usefulness of the RNA for special populations such as Intensive Supervision, Community Corrections and Drug Court and covered each form in detail, requesting information regarding the most relevant aspects of each form and any suggestions for additional categories which would contribute to more effective assessment of risk and needs or reassessment. Coverage of the individual forms in detail is complemented by a section inquiring into the appropriateness of scoring procedures, an area which has provided us with significant data and which supports the need for an inter-rater reliability study. The survey then contains a number of questions requesting PPOs to give us the benefit of their experience in terms of designating significant factors that contribute to offender outcomes. Lastly, the survey asks for an overview of paperwork usefulness and important circumstances affecting offender performance under supervision.
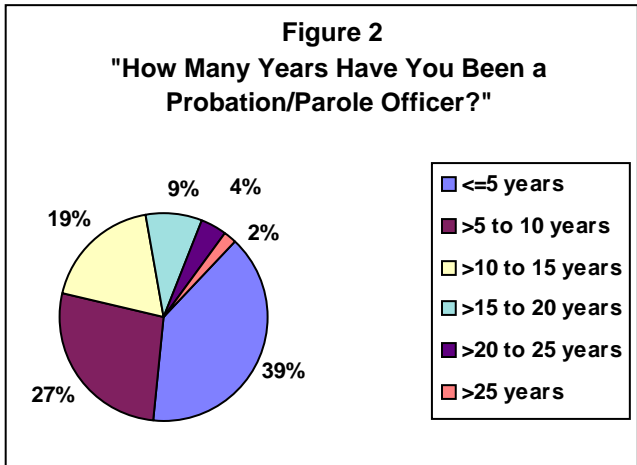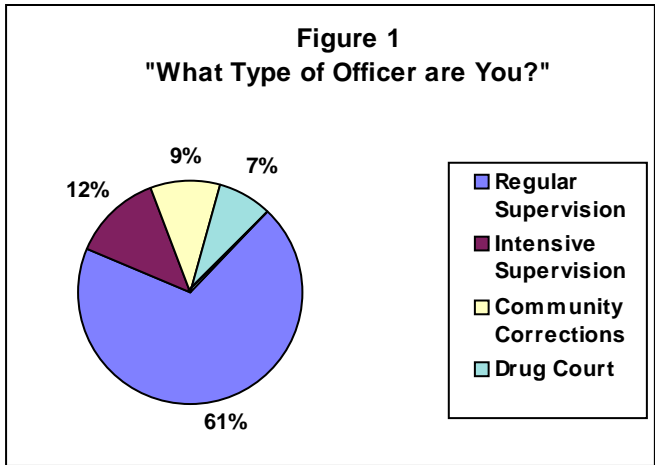
Data Collection, Automation and Analysis Strategies

Based on a Probation and Parole Division staff roster supplied by PPD staff, the ISR mailed the Survey on Risk/Needs Assessment Tools to Supervisors at all Probation and Parole Offices statewide in March 1998. We enclosed enough surveys for the number of PPOs assigned to each District Office, including envelopes for return mailing and instructions for PPOs to return completed surveys to their Supervisors for mailing to the Institute. This initial arrangement led to concern on the part of a number of PPOs regarding the confidentiality of their answers and possible retaliation from supervisors or the Central Office. The relevance of this issue has been confirmed by the responses we obtained to our question regarding the least fulfilling aspects of the job when a significant number of respondents referred to a lack of trust between themselves and their superiors, with 26% of responses falling into the category of *Bureaucracy/Lack of Support or Recognition from Administration and Management*. Approximately one month after the original mailing of the surveys, the Institute initiated a second mailing in which we enclosed individual return mail envelopes with a memo addressing concerns regarding confidentiality and inviting respondents to mail the surveys themselves or drop them off to our offices in person. By final count, the Institute received 135 surveys out of 201 sent, comprising a 68% response rate. A database was created in Microsoft Access to accommodate the data, the data has been entered and proofed as of mid June and statistical analyses are currently being performed to ascertain significant patterns in the data. We are performing descriptive analyses of the data, exploring relationships between categorical variables, and developing coding schemes to facilitate analysis of the qualitative data contained in the narrative sections of the survey. By searching for correlations between different aspects of the data, our analysis will be focused on how PPOs view the relationships between daily responsibilities related to caseload management; completion of paperwork; interpersonal and interoffice collaboration; training and equipment provided by the Division; collection and automation of offender data and the manner in which these components contribute to and uphold the overall mission and objectives of PPD as they are perceived by PPOs.
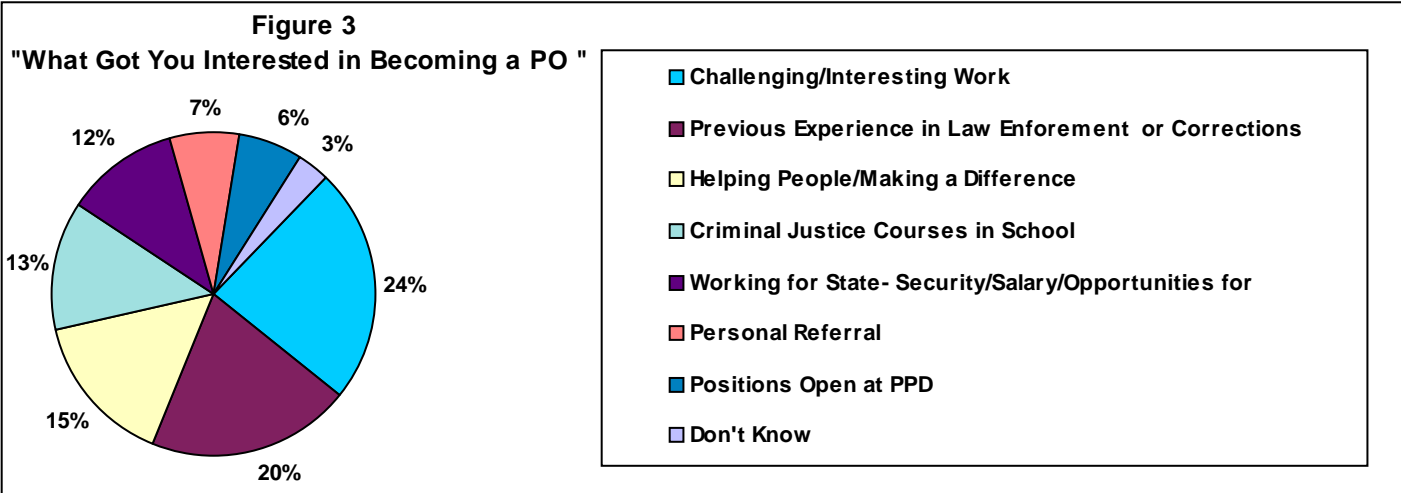
Preliminary Findings and Interpretation of Data

Some preliminary analyses have been completed focusing primarily on the first twelve questions that cover the *Job Satisfaction* section of the questionnaire. Twenty-eight supervisors responded out of a total of 35 presently employed by PPD, meaning approximately 80% of Supervisor opinion is accounted for in our data. Conversely, approximately 60% of Line Staff opinion is accounted for, in that we received 100 surveys from Officers out of a possible 166 potential line staff respondents. Alternately represented, of the 135 respondents who completed the survey 79% were Probation and Parole Officers and 21% were Probation/Parole Office Supervisors.
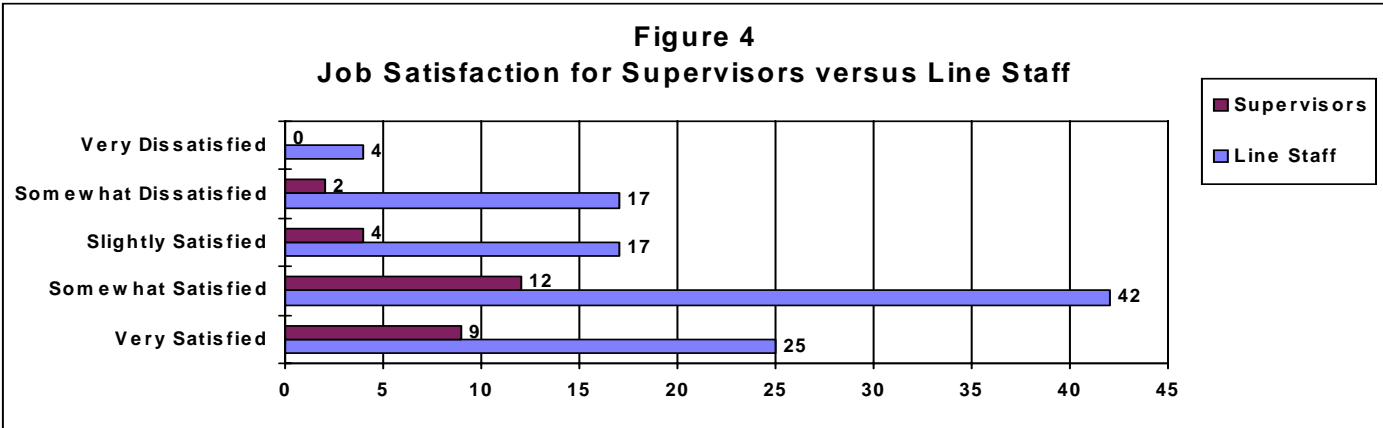
The respondents were further divided by type of program shown in Figure 1. Roughly 3% of respondents stated that they worked with more than one program, such as Regular and Intensive Supervision or Community Corrections and Drug Court, while 6% chose not to answer this question. Figure 2 above presents the length of time in years that PPO's have been with the Division.

Figure 1
"What Type of Officer are You?"

- Regular Supervision — 61%
- Intensive Supervision — 12%
- Community Corrections — 9%
- Drug Court — 7%

Figure 2
"How Many Years Have You Been a Probation/Parole Officer?"

- <=5 years — 39%
- >5 to 10 years — 27%
- >10 to 15 years — 19%
- >15 to 20 years — 9%
- >20 to 25 years — 4%
- >25 years — 2%

Reasons PPOs gave for becoming interested in being a PPO fall into the six categories, represented in Figure 3. While a small percentage (2%) stated they did not know why they had become a PPO, a number cited reasons in two or more of the categories, for a total of 148 responses.

Figure 3
"What Got You Interested in Becoming a PO "

- Challenging/Interesting Work — 24%
- Previous Experience in Law Enforcement or Corrections — 20%
- Helping People/Making a Difference — 15%
- Criminal Justice Courses in School — 13%
- Working for State- Security/Salary/Opportunities for — 12%
- Personal Referral — 7%
- Positions Open at PPD — 6%
- Don't Know — 3%

When asked about their level of satisfaction with their work on a daily basis, 75% of Supervisors were very or somewhat satisfied, while 64% of Line Staff reported very or somewhat satisfied. 36% of Line Staff were marginally satisfied or dissatisfied, while 21% of Supervisors were marginally satisfied or dissatisfied and 4% of supervisor respondents did not answer this question. (See Figure 4 below)

Figure 4
Job Satisfaction for Supervisors versus Line Staff

	Supervisors	Line Staff
Very Dissatisfied	0	4
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2	17
Slightly Satisfied	4	17
Somewhat Satisfied	12	42
Very Satisfied	9	25

It would appear that Supervisors experience a higher level of satisfaction than their line staff counterparts. When crosstabulating number of years as a PPO with level of satisfaction, we found that level of satisfaction rises with the number of years an Officer has been in the PPD, with all officers above 20 years stating they are very or somewhat satisfied, 66% of officers in the Division 15 to 20 years are very or somewhat satisfied; over 50% of officers with a 5 to 15 year career are very or somewhat satisfied and 77% with less than 5 years as a PPO are very or somewhat satisfied. (See Table 1 next page)

Table 1
Years as a PPO by Satisfaction Level

Years of Service	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
> 25 years	2	0	0	0	0
>20 to 25 years	0	5	0	0	0
>15 to 20 years	4	4	3	0	0
>10 to 15 years	6	7	7	6	0
>5 to 10 years	5	15	6	8	2
<= 5 years	18	23	5	5	2

When asked about the most fulfilling aspects of being a PPO, respondents cited the following categories in figure 6: five PPO's chose not to answer this question and four responded with "Don't Know." (Table 2 below) The total number of responses was 325, with an average of 2.4 responses out of a requested 3 per person. When asked about what aspects of their jobs were least fulfilling there were 328 responses. (Table 3 next page) They averaged 2.4 responses per person out of a requested 3 and again 5 PPO's did not respond. When comparing most and least fulfilling aspects, "Making a Difference" ranks second in Most Fulfilling and fourth in Least Fulfilling. "Inter/Intra Agency collaboration vs. conflict" rank third and fifth respectively. Supervisory Aspects rank fifth in Most Fulfilling and seventh in Least Fulfilling.

Table 2
Aspects of Work PPOs Find Most Fulfilling

ASPECTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Helping and Working with People / Counseling / Communication	75	24 %
Successful Outcomes / Making a Difference / Positive Change	56	18 %
Intra-Office / Inter- Agency Collaboration	55	17 %
Protecting the Community / Law Enforcement / Public Safety	42	13 %
Supervisory Aspects (i.e. writing reports; clarifying obligations; court appearances)	27	9 %
Job Stability / Satisfaction with Work Performance / Salary	24	8 %
Service Provision / Victim Services	17	5 %
Staff Development (for Supervisors)	11	3 %
Challenging / Interesting Work	9	3 %

Table 3
Aspects of Work PPOs Find Least Fulfilling

ASPECTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Paperwork	85	26 %
Bureaucracy / No Support or Recognition from Administration; CO; Management	85	26 %
Resources: Equipment, Training and Services for Clients	34	11 %
Noncompliant Offenders / No positive Change / Not Making a Difference	26	8 %
Lack of Cooperation from Other Agencies or Law Enforcement	24	8 %
Excessive Caseload / Too Much Work	22	7 %
Supervisory Aspects – Monitoring / Court Appearances / Counseling	15	5 %
Salary / Opportunities for Advancement	14	4 %
Urine Analysis	10	3 %
Personal Safety Issues	4	1 %
Unmotivated / Cynical Staff (Supervisors Only)	4	1 %

We then referenced the crosstabulation of satisfaction levels and number of years as a PPO, with the aspects of being a PPO that respondents found most and least fulfilling and developed and developed some correlational patterns. The trend then appears to be one of mid-career dissatisfaction, after enough investment of time in the profession where PPOs may be suffering burnout from what they consider to be an excessive workload or a lack of support and recognition from their superiors. They cite having worked for a number of years and becoming disillusioned after feeling they have not been able to make as much of a difference in people's lives as they had hoped. Many perceive a lack of cooperation from other agencies or a negative environment within their own office. Some simply dislike the responsibilities associated with monitoring offenders. Others feel they have been provided with inadequate resources, equipment or training. PPO's may not have reached the salary level they desire or they are looking to climb the career ladder but no opportunities for advancement have arisen. A small percentage report they are tired of collecting urine samples for drug testing or feeling their personal safety under threat.

PPOs cited the following seven forms as the most useful forms for Monitoring Offender Behavior, reported in descending order of frequency (Table 4, next page)

Table 4
Most Useful Form for Monitoring Offender Behavior

FORM	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Case Notes / Daily Ledgers / Chronological Log	70	48%
Urine Analysis / Lab Forms	15	10%
Service Provider Monthly Progress Reports	14	10%
Supervision and Treatment Plan / Compliance Sheet	10	7%
Risk / Needs Assessment	9	6%
Personal Contact with Clients, Family, Friends	9	6%
Pre/Post Sentence Reports and Probation Violation Reports	8	5%
None	7	5%
Arrest Blotter / Police Reports	4	3%

The chronological log/case notes were cited overwhelmingly as the most relevant and important source of information for determining risk status, providing services and providing public safety. Importantly, monthly progress reports from service providers were also mentioned frequently by PPOs as useful for monitoring offenders, their use of referred services and for tracking changes in risk classification. The most useful forms for Referral of Services reported by PPOs are as follows, reported in descending order of frequency and percentage. (Table 5)

Table 5
Most Useful Forms for Service Provision

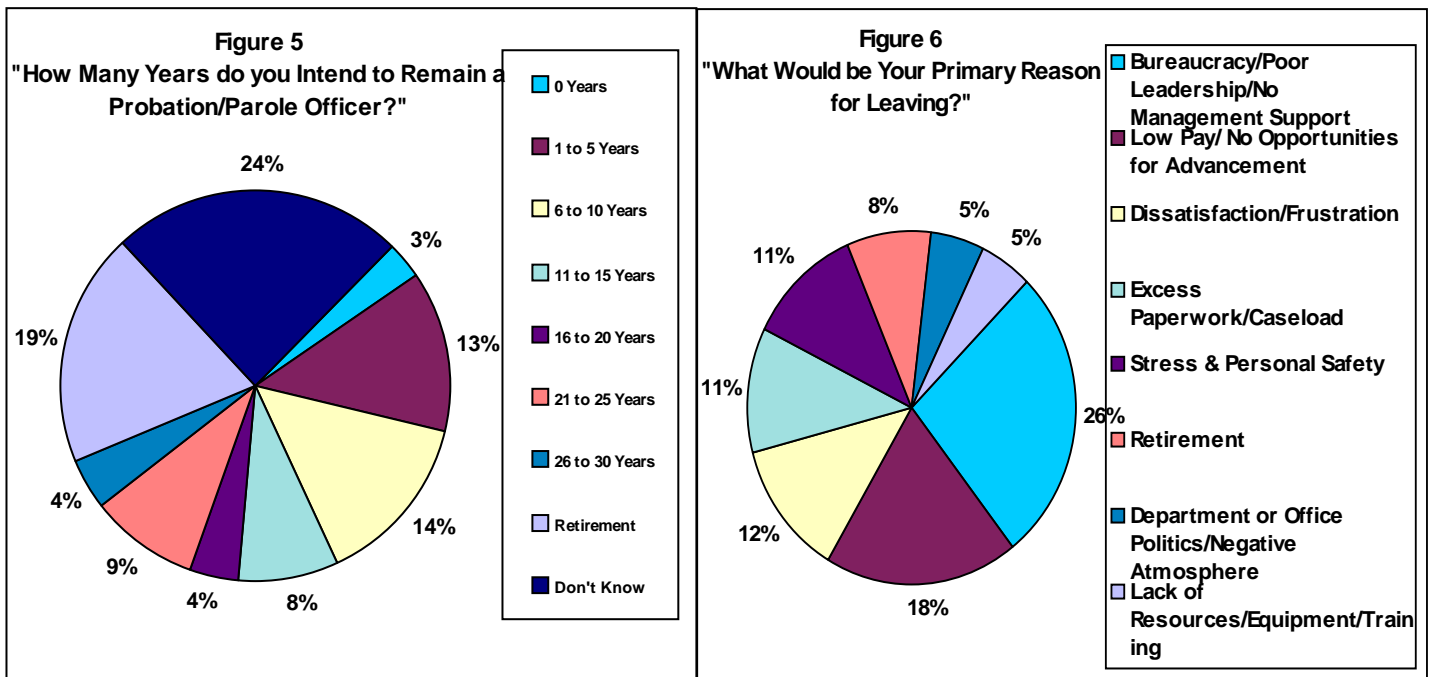| FORM	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Case Notes / Daily Ledgers / Chronological Log	88	60 %
Service Provider Monthly Progress Reports	28	19 %
Supervision Plan / Compliance Sheet / Contact Log	8	6 %
Referral Forms	6	4 %
Pre/Post Sentence Reports and Probation Violation Reports	5	3 %
Risk / Needs Assessment	4	3 %
None	4	3 %
Don't Know	3	2 %

Although many PPOs have cited Urinalysis as one of the least fulfilling aspects of their job, they do find the results of the lab tests useful for monitoring offender behavior and for ensuring public safety by tracking any fluctuation in alcohol and drug use. Supervision Plans and Compliance Sheets were reported as useful for purposes of monitoring offender behavior and service referral. but not nearly as useful for protecting the community. (Table 6 below)

Table 6
Most Useful Forms for Ensuring Public Safety

FORM	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Arrest Orders / Police Blotter/ Jail Reports / FBI Record	35	27 %
Ledger Notes / Chronological Logs / Contact Sheets	24	19 %
Pre/Post Sentence Reports and Probation Violation Reports	18	14 %
None	12	9 %
Monthly Agency Progress Reports	10	8 %
Urine Analysis	9	7 %
Contracts / Supervision Plans / Court Orders	8	6 %
Personal Contacts / Interagency Communications	5	4 %
Don't Know	4	3 %
Risk Needs Assessment	3	3 %

Responses related to the most useful form for Ensuring Public Safety show that PPOs feel that tracking substance use through lab results provides the best information on offender risk. In addition, Pre/Post Sentence Reports and Parole Violation reports are considered extremely useful for ensuring public safety, but got only a few cites in the other two categories. "None" was also a popular response to the question regarding useful forms for ensuring public safety. This may be due to the wording of the question , as we received a number of narrative responses in subsequent portions of the survey stating that forms cannot perform the activity of community protection.

The Risk/Needs Assessment Instrument received less than ten responses in all three areas and in the cases of Service Provision and Public Safety, less than 5 PPOs felt the form was useful to fulfill either goal. We received a significant amount of missing data for each of the questions on the usefulness of forms: 13% of the total responses for forms to monitor offender behavior; 14% for service referral; and 19% missing data, almost one fifth of all respondents, for the question on ensuring public safety. Once again, this amount of missing data may further confirm PPOs ambivalent feelings towards the relevance and significance of paperwork in general for fulfilling daily responsibilities related to monitoring offenders.

Figure 5
"How Many Years do you Intend to Remain a Probation/Parole Officer?"

Legend:
- 0 Years
- 1 to 5 Years
- 6 to 10 Years
- 11 to 15 Years
- 16 to 20 Years
- 21 to 25 Years
- 26 to 30 Years
- Retirement
- Don't Know

Figure 6
"What Would be Your Primary Reason for Leaving?"

Legend:
- Bureaucracy/Poor Leadership/No Management Support
- Low Pay/ No Opportunities for Advancement
- Dissatisfaction/Frustration
- Excess Paperwork/Caseload
- Stress & Personal Safety
- Retirement
- Department or Office Politics/Negative Atmosphere
- Lack of Resources/Equipment/Training

When asked How Many Years they intended to remain a PPO and why they might leave their positions, respondents' answers were distributed across the categories in Fig 5 and 6. Nearly one quarter of the respondents stated they did not know how long they would remain a PPO. This statistic points to the presence of an ambivalent attitude towards their job for a significant number of PPO's. However, another 20% state they will stay until retirement. Over a fourth of

the population (27%) jobs they will stay less than ten years, a sign that PPO's may be looking to switch careers due to dissatisfaction. Three PPO's did not answer this question about how long they would stay at their job, while five PPO's who stated they would not stay for the long term did not provide a reason for why they would leave.

Again, the issue of lack of support and positive relationships between PPOs and their Supervisors or the Central Office administration wins out as the most significant factor for why officers would leave their jobs, this reflects the data we obtained for least fulfilling aspects of the job. PPOs cited frustration with salaries and feeling like they did not have access to advancing up the career ladder. In addition, they fear for their safety and experience high levels of stress, due either to responsibilities related to monitoring offenders of an overall negative work environment. Lack of resources shows up again and confirms the significant number of responses this category received under Least Fulfilling Aspects of the job.

Although PPOs cited poor leadership and lack of support from management as the primary reason they would leave their positions and as one of the top two least fulfilling aspects of their jobs, they nevertheless state that the majority of their Supervisors (56%) have Excellent or Very Good leadership skills. (See Figure 7) This potentially conflicting data can be interpreted as reflecting a situation in which PPOs have good relationships and rapport with their immediate supervisors for the most part, yet feel a distinct lack of support from the Central Office and resent the manner in which they feel Division policy and procedure interferes with their ability to fulfill their daily responsibilities of monitoring offenders and protecting the community. Further analysis of data from the rest of the survey should provide us with the context to discuss this discrepancy further.

Figure 7
"How Would you Rate the Leadership Skills of your Supervisor?"

Figure 8
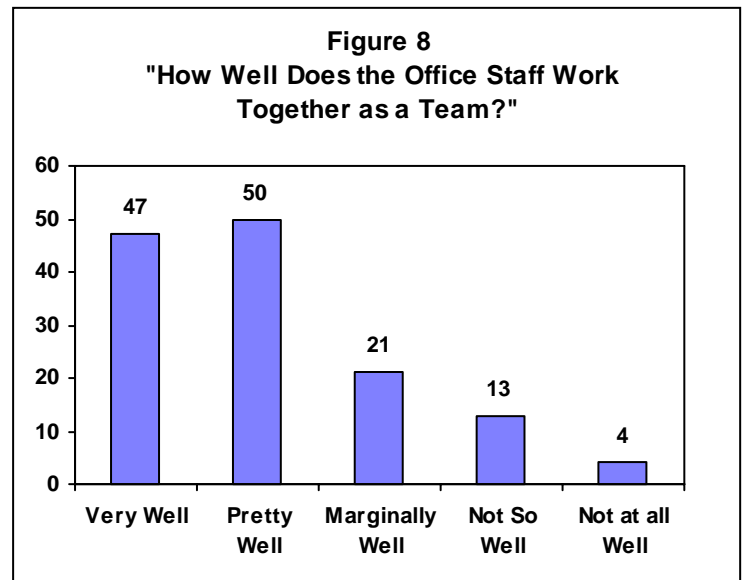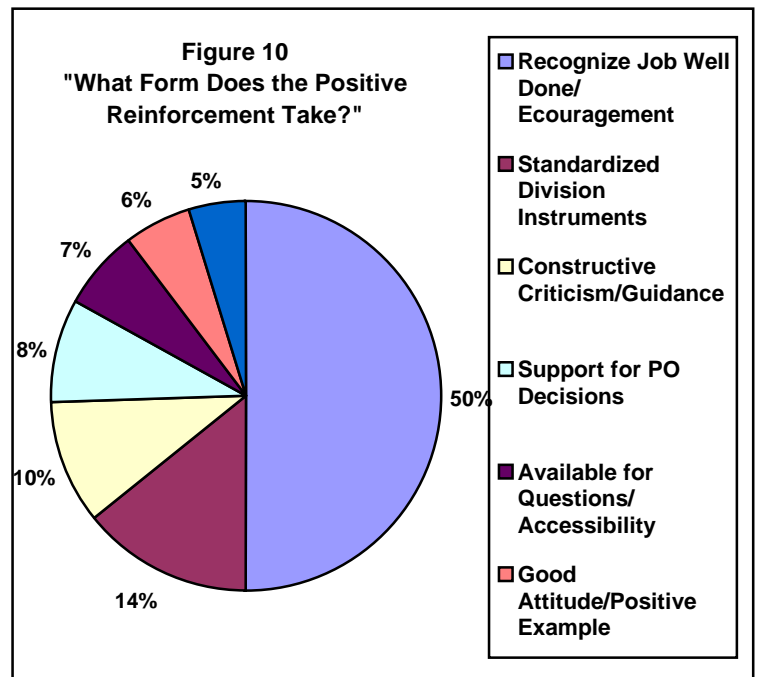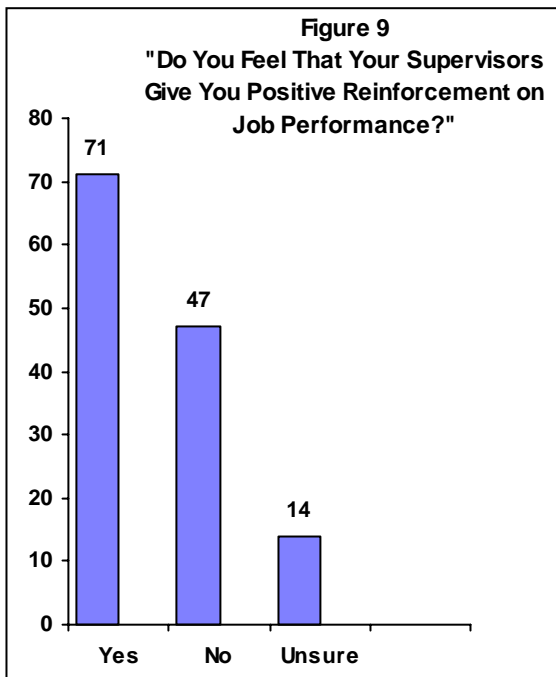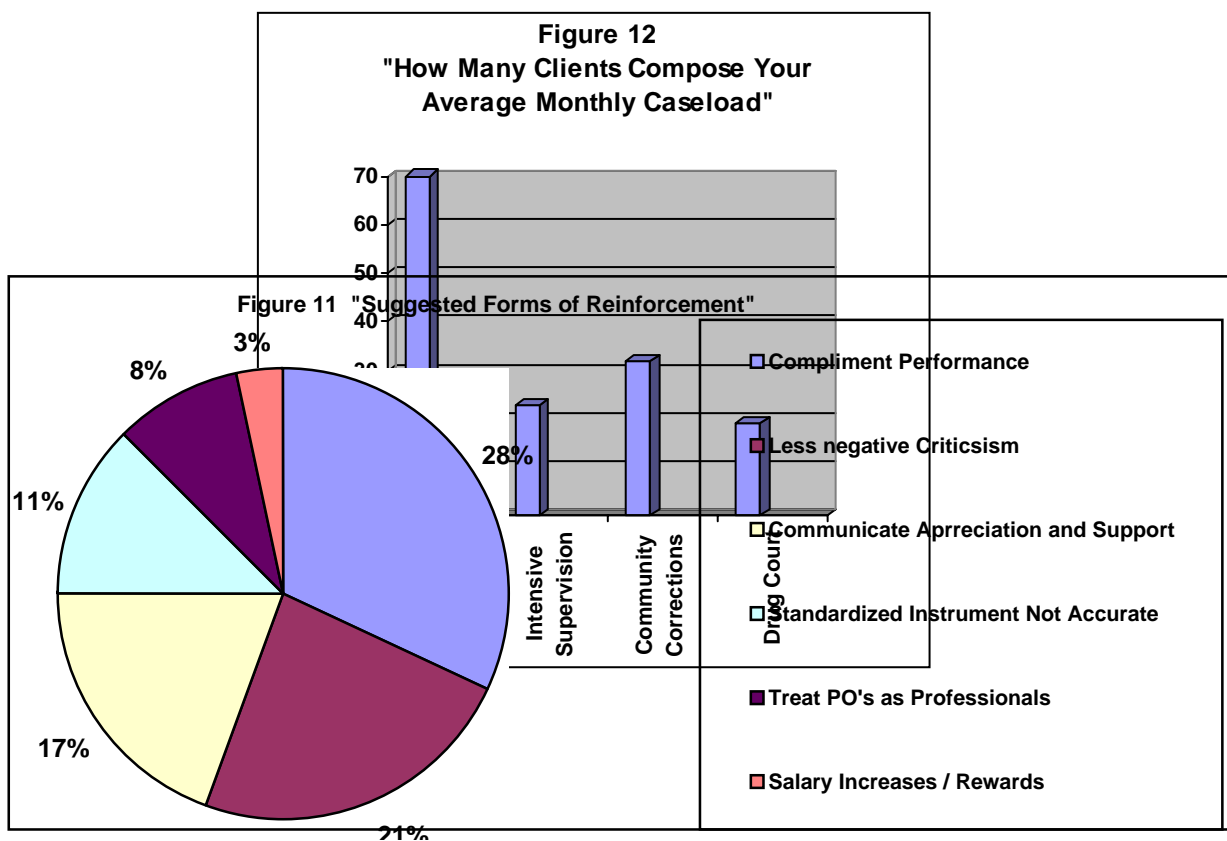"How Well Does the Office Staff Work Together as a Team?"

Figure 8 also appears somewhat contradictory in that officers have stated that intra-agency conflict is a problematic aspect of their jobs and that office politics and a negative work

environment would be a factor in their decision to leave their positions. Again, this may be due to positive relationship with coworkers with whom they work closely and conflict with others with whom they do not interact on a daily basis. This contradictory data is further reflected in the fact that collaborating internally is one of the most fulfilling aspects of their job. Analysis of subsequent sections of the survey may serve to shed light on where these distinctions lie.

The majority of officers (53%) state that their Supervisors do provide them with positive reinforcement, regardless of the fact that they cite a lack of support and recognition from management as one of the least fulfilling aspects of their job and their primary reason for leaving their position. Conversely, a full 50% of PPOs responded that they do feel their job performance is positively recognized by supervisors. Patterns in the data would make it reasonable to assume that this discrepancy reflects positive relationships with immediate supervisors for some and a possible sense of alienation from Division management at large. As can be seen in the narrative sections on suggested forms of positive reinforcement, many PPOs do not feel that they are receiving recognition for quality job performance, while stating that they feel they receive an inordinate amount of negative feedback from Supervisors. The data also show that a significant number of PPOs have negative perceptions of some of the standardized mechanisms for evaluating officer performance. Others say they suffer from micro-management, lack of support for their decisions or generally not being adequately rewarded for their efforts. (Figures 9,10 and 11 next page)

Figure 9
"Do You Feel That Your Supervisors Give You Positive Reinforcement on Job Performance?"

Figure 10
"What Form Does the Positive Reinforcement Take?"

Legend:
- Recognize Job Well Done/ Ecouragement
- Standardized Division Instruments
- Constructive Criticism/Guidance
- Support for PO Decisions
- Available for Questions/ Accessibility
- Good Attitude/Positive Example

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When asked the size of their average monthly caseload, the average of all respondents' answers was 44 cases, with a range from 15 to 120. These numbers did not include Supervisors who cited an average caseload anywhere between zero and 280, including those who do not monitor any offenders and those who counted all offenders monitored by PPOs under their supervision. The responses for average monthly caseload become more significant when crosstabulated by type of PPO. The range for Regular Supervision is broadest, between 25 and 120 cases; the range for ISP is much smaller, between 15 and 38; Community Corrections PPOs cite a slightly larger caseload than ISP, between 23 – 50; and the average caseload range for Drug Court PPOs is very close to that of their ISP counterparts, between 15 – 30. Figure 12 represents the average monthly caseload by type of PPO:

Figure 12
"How Many Clients Compose Your Average Monthly Caseload"

Figure 11 "Suggested Forms of Reinforcement"

- Compliment Performance
- Less negative Criticsism
- Communicate Aprreciation and Support
- Standardized Instrument Not Accurate
- Treat PO's as Professionals
- Salary Increases / Rewards

Discussion/Recommendations

Clearly, morale in the Division of Probation and Parole is not what it could be. The most striking results from preliminary analysis of the first section of the survey on *Job Satisfaction* demonstrates that although officers may experience positive relationships with close co-workers and immediate supervisors, there is an overall distaste for the bureaucratic nature of policy and procedure and a sense of general malaise regarding the role of Central Office management. Further analysis of subsequent sections of the survey may illuminate some of the factors at work

in creating these circumstances. Although it appears clear from even this early stage in the analysis that the RNA is not a widely respected instrument within the Division and its usefulness for fulfilling PPO responsibilities is limited at best, this may be due to a number of issues which will be explored in greater detail as our analysis progresses.

It will be crucial that Probation and Parole invest in the standardization of policy and procedure at a division wide level. The establishment of a clear and accurate protocol for the point of entry into the system at which the RNA instrument is completed and documentation of any intervening mechanisms through which supervision classifications are determined will be crucial to ensuring that a validated RNA is implemented properly. In addition, standardization is critical to confirming or disconfirming whether the RNA serves a pivotal purpose in assessing risk and needs and that PPD staff both understand the purpose of the instrument and feel that it accurately reflects an efficient and effective mechanism for handling their caseloads. PPO investment can be encouraged by a number of factors, including an overall reduction in paperwork, so that they can spend more time monitoring offenders, and providing them with adequate administrative support to allow them to carry out their required responsibilities.

Future Tasks

In depth analysis of the data obtained through the survey of Probation and Parole Officers on use of the current Risk/Needs Assessment tools will continue throughout the next contract period that the ISR has secured with PPD. Every effort will be made to explore connections amongst the various sections of the survey and between the quantitative data and the qualitative data from the narrative sections of the survey. We will be paying special attention to those questions related to the individual Risk/Needs Assessment forms and inquiries regarding the reliability and validity of the instrument. Preliminary interpretation of data gleaned from the initial portion of the survey has provided a rich context within which to situate a detailed and thoroughgoing analysis of protocol and procedures related to assessment of risk, classification of offenders, service provision and reassessment.