

Key Points from "Conversation on the Future of Community Corrections"

2020 Adult Redeploy Illinois All-Sites Summit, June 17-18
"A Conversation on the Future of Community Corrections"



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During the 2020 Adult Redeploy Illinois All-Sites Summit, Veronica Cunningham moderated a discussion with Brian Lovins, Ph.D., and Dan Hunt about the future of community corrections nationally and in Illinois. Key points from the panel align with expert guidance in the field as presented in the recent Pew report "Policy Reforms Can Strengthen Community Supervision" (2020).



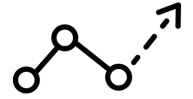
Shift focus from surveillance and sanctions to support

- Community corrections (probation, parole, pre-trial supervision) needs to **move away from the punitive approach** that leads to sanctions and incarceration.
- Surveillance and sanction-oriented supervision catches people breaking rules; change-oriented supervision **teaches people to succeed** and avoid trouble.
- Conditions should be designed to **help people change**, not be obstacles to progress.
- People on supervision **respond better to positive reinforcement** than punishment (Pew). Individuals do best when services include **cognitive behavioral therapy**.
- Non-compliance should be addressed with service responses and **therapeutic adjustments** whenever possible.
- Jail sanctions are expensive, harmful, and should be limited to **community safety violations**.
- **Alternatives to incarceration** from pre-arrest to post-conviction need to be expanded and designed to work in the least restrictive way possible.
- Research shows that individuals are most likely to reoffend in the first 10 to 18 months of their supervision. **Positive behavior change is a function of effective service linkages**, and not length of stay (Pew).



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Invest in human capital to promote individual progress



- Community corrections staff should see themselves foremost as **agents of change**.
- Probation officers should be trained and evaluated as "**coaches**" who help people succeed, rather than as "referees" who punish people for non-compliance.
- Staff need tools to understand people's **risk, needs and strengths**, and have sufficient resources to address them.
- Probation departments need to be **adequately funded, staffed, trained, and equipped** to manage caseloads and effectively inspire behavior change.

“If we are able to demonstrate our worth by taking someone who would have failed without us and improving their status in life, giving them an opportunity to succeed and finding ways to be innovative and engaged to help that person get better, that's a significant different investment opportunity for legislatures than tripwires into prison.”

- Brian Lovins



Re-examine policies and practices to improve equity and inclusion

- Community corrections must ensure **equal access to services**, regardless of race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability.
- To be effective, community corrections programs should address client **responsivity factors** (demographic, geographic, socio-economic and health status) and incorporate **cultural competency and procedural justice**.
- Services should be targeted to **those who can benefit the most**, not excluding those with charges classified as violent.
- Legal financial obligations must take into account the **ability to pay**, and fees should be eliminated that create barriers to success, extend lengths of supervision, and disproportionately burden the poor.
- Conversations about racial injustice and inequity in these systems need to be **urgent, inclusive, ongoing, and solution-oriented**.

“We can't be agents of change for only a portion of the population. We need to be agents of change for our entire population, and that's saying that we have to look at each population uniquely and what we do in efforts to help them get better.”

- Brian Lovins

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Collaborate to compile better data

- The community corrections field needs to invest in **advanced data collection and analysis**.
- Better-quality data will help agencies to follow **evidence-based practices**.
- Technology should be used to more effectively **measure change and improvements in people's behavior**.
- Government should be analyzing and operating with **consistent, quality data**.



"When we have gaps in data, we have gaps in assumptions... We need accurate, thorough, verified data that all branches of government can use so we're operating from the same dataset so we can make strategic decisions, all branches together."

- Dan Hunt

Pew's Policy Recommendations for Community Supervision

1. Enact alternatives to arrest, incarceration, and supervision.
2. Implement evidence-based policies centered on risk and needs.
3. Adopt shorter supervision sentences and focus on goals and incentives.
4. Establish effective and appropriate supervision conditions.
5. Develop individualized conditions for payment of legal financial obligations.
6. Reduce use of and pathways to incarceration.
7. Support community supervision agencies.

The Pew Charitable Trusts, "Policy Reforms Can Strengthen Community Supervision" (2020)



Leverage lessons learned during pandemic and expand virtual connections

- Community corrections should **increase the use of technology** in client contact and treatment, and data collection.
- Anecdotal reports suggest that virtual connections work, with **higher engagement rates and fewer missed appointments**.
- **Virtual services and check-ins** reduce the need for people on supervision to take time off work, find transportation, pay for childcare, and travel long distances in rural areas in order to access services.
- Telehealth expands the **range and quality of services** readily available for clients.



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2020 ARI All-Sites Summit: Marquee Plenary with Veronica Cunningham, Dan Hunt, and Brian Lovins, Ph.D. (2020)
The Pew Charitable Trusts, "Policy Reforms Can Strengthen Community Supervision" (2020)
(https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/04/policyreform_communitysupervision_report_final.pdf)
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EXiT: Executives Transforming Probation & Parole, "Statement on the Future of Probation & Parole in the United States" (2019)
The Council of State Governments Justice Center, "Confined and Costly" (2019)
Jacobson, M., Schiraldi, V., Daly, R., Hotez, E., "Less is More: How Reducing Probation Populations Can Improve Outcomes" (2017)
American Probation and Parole Association, "Leveraging the Power of Smartphone Applications to Enhance Community Supervision" (2020)

