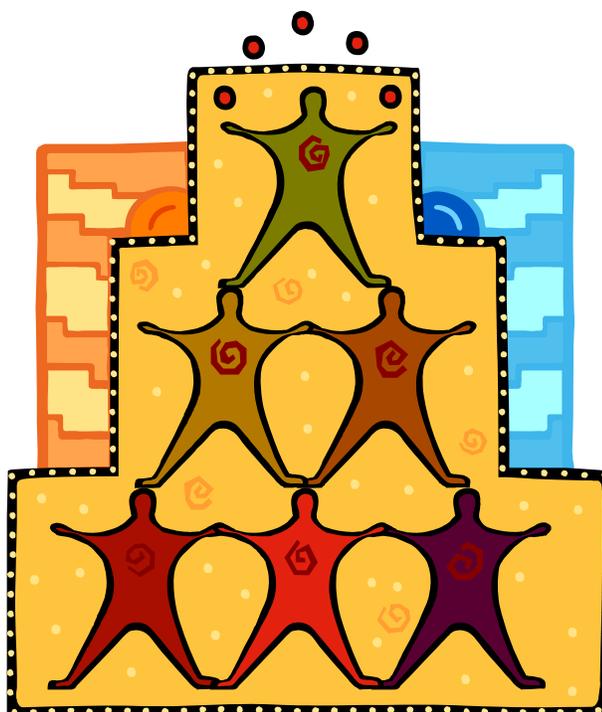




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# Topics in Community Corrections

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**Annual  
Issue  
2005**

**Developing Tomorrow's  
Leaders and Managers**

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**National Institute of Corrections**

Morris L. Thigpen  
Director

George Keiser  
Chief  
Community Corrections/Prisons Division

U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Corrections  
Community Corrections Division  
320 First Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20534  
(800) 995-6423  
(202) 307-3106

NIC Information Center  
1860 Industrial Circle  
Longmont, CO 80501  
(800) 877-1461  
(303) 682-0213  
asknicic@nicic.org

<http://www.nicic.org>

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# Topics in Community Corrections

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## **ANNUAL ISSUE 2005: Developing Tomorrow's Leaders and Managers**

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## Foreword

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**A** pressing issue facing community corrections, and the corrections field as a whole, is the need to attract and retain new staff and help them develop into the managers and leaders of the future. As today's leaders and seasoned field staff retire or leave the profession for other reasons, we are seeing a gap develop. "Baby boomers" are leaving key positions, and the "Generation Xers" and "Millennials" are not fully prepared to assume leadership roles or have not stayed in the field long enough to advance. In 2004, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) embarked on a project to identify practices in recruitment, hiring, and retention of field staff and the development of first line supervisors to help community corrections address this challenge.

By sharing the ideas of the field's best thinkers, consultants, and university faculty, this issue of *Topics in Community Corrections* explores ways to develop tomorrow's leaders. Some of our authors have partnered with NIC on this subject previously, helping for example to develop NIC's new guidebook, *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century: Executive and Senior Levels* (<http://www.nicic.org/Library/020474>). Their articles address topics ranging from leadership development to building a future workforce in community corrections. Authors look at trends, strategies, partnership opportunities, organizational change, and promising practices at local, state, and Federal levels.

We in community corrections bring into our profession the types of individuals who will serve our communities well. We must also recognize the need to help field staff become future leaders. We must encourage our staff, provide them with effective training and skills development, mentor them, share with them a vision for the future, and lead by example in our professionalism, ethics, and integrity.

On behalf of NIC, I would like to thank the writers who contributed to this issue of *Topics in Community Corrections*. Each recognizes the need to bring quality individuals into our profession and to develop these individuals into our future leaders. We hope you find their words and wisdom helpful as you move your own agencies into the 21st century by building a sound workforce for our profession.

In addition, I would like to thank the National Institute of Corrections for allowing me to be part of the agency for the past 2 years and to further develop my own leadership skills. I know of no other organization that exhibits the same degree of professionalism, customer service, concern for the field, ethics, and integrity as the National Institute of Corrections.

*Drew Molloy  
Senior Policy Advisor for Corrections  
Bureau of Justice Assistance*

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# The Future of Community Corrections Leadership: Challenges, Issues, and Strategies

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*"...[W]hen we are called to lead—as all effective leaders are—we are leaders of change, not the protectors and perpetuators of a cherished, honored past. Leading the organization of the future in turbulent, tenuous times makes new demands on leaders: banning the hierarchy, building new and inclusive structures and systems that release the energies of our people, challenging the gospel of the status quo, and finding the leadership language that mobilizes our people around mission, innovation, and diversity."*

*Frances Hesselbein, Hesselbein on  
Leadership*<sup>1</sup>

**F**rances Hesselbein's words on leading in the future summarize the challenges that we will face as well as the strategies that may be employed to ensure success. We are experiencing turbulent times today, which prompts many leaders to feel anxious about what might be involved in leading in the future. Many community corrections leaders are struggling with budget cuts, generational differences, recruitment and retention of qualified employees, regulatory demands, and how to produce outcomes—both intermediate and long-term—that are valued by the public. Given these current challenges, what is the future for community corrections leadership?

As an article in the Spring/Summer 2004 issue of *SMU Magazine* notes, "The leadership buzzword is fast becoming a cliché—from overuse, misuse, and downright lack of definition. Yet, governments, corporations, educational institutions, and every other form of organized societies claim to need it, possess it, or develop it."<sup>2</sup> The field of community corrections is no different. We desperately need individuals who have strong skills and abilities, a commitment to lifelong learning, and the courage to demonstrate leadership.

## **Anticipating Workforce Shifts**

In 2004, RAND's Labor and Population Program reported that annual growth in the nation's workforce is expected to slow to a nearly static level by 2010, and to decline even further between 2020 and 2030. This will impact not only our ability to recruit and retain staff at every level of community corrections organizations, but also our ability to recruit and retain our leaders of the future.<sup>3</sup> Understanding the demographic shifts in the workforce and their impact on the availability of workers will be a major challenge for community corrections organizations. However, with that knowledge we can begin now to implement strategies—such as nonstandard employment relationships, portable and individually-tailored benefits, and learning programs—that will make community corrections organizations more competitive in the employment market and attract more leaders.

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by  
Cheryln K. Townsend,  
Director,  
Clark County Department of  
Juvenile Justice Services, Las  
Vegas, Nevada, and  
President,  
National Association of  
Probation Executives

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## Going Beyond Management

If you ask most leaders in community corrections how they spend their time, you will hear that they answer and write e-mails, take calls, address personnel problems, fight for budgets, attend meetings (and more meetings), react to problems, preserve the status quo, and minimize risk for their agencies/departments, courts, communities, and governing boards. These are just some of the critical management responsibilities of community corrections leaders. Unfortunately, these demands have taken on a life of their own and often pull leaders away from their true leadership responsibilities.

The greatest challenge for the future of community corrections leadership, then, is simply leadership itself. In the words of Kouzes and Posner, “Leadership is not at all about personality; it’s about practice.”<sup>4</sup> The future of community corrections is dependent upon leaders investing their time in not only the management of their organizations but also the practices of leadership. It will also be critical to invest in the development of management skills at all levels of our organizations, so that employees can be empowered to carry out the business of community corrections while leaders engage in leadership responsibilities.

Whether we focus on “The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership” or on the “leaders of change” model described by Hesselbein,<sup>5</sup> it is a challenge to continually focus our time, thoughts, and energies only on leadership. One simple starting strategy is to calculate how much of our time is spent developing and maintaining relationships, building teams, leading (not managing) change, communicating the vision of the organization, and establishing alliances—versus merely managing the organization.

## Committing to Lifelong Learning

Given that the declining growth rate of our workforce will limit our leadership pool and that unique skills are necessary for the practice of leadership, we face the challenge of planning for the future by developing current and new leaders. The strategies that we employ for succession planning and leadership development will need to include an investment in training and development, as well as coaching, at all levels of our organizations. We must be willing to invest in our employees even though they may leave us to become leaders in other organizations. In turn we will, perhaps, benefit from the investment that another organization has made in its employees. In essence, our investment in leadership development is like an investment in a retirement account that can be rolled over to another system.

The strategic investment we must make is in “lifelong learning.” As Kotter notes in *Leading Change*, “Development of leadership potential doesn’t happen in a two-week course or even a four-year college program, although both can help. Most complex skills emerge over decades... Successful organizations in the twenty-first century will have to become more like incubators of leadership.”<sup>6</sup> This concept has existed for many years in the business world, where it is common to provide venture capital, business expertise, and coaching to ensure that

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advances in technology and research have an opportunity to develop and become profitable. We have to do the same with our future leaders. This will not involve simply an investment in training as we know it today. It will require supporting our employees to develop analytical, communication, and relationship-building skills. It will further require that we support risk-taking and teamwork within the organization.

## **Embracing Change**

Given that the rate of change in our society is not going to slow down, we have to be leaders of change. In the future, leaders will need to have data available that will tell them how the organization is performing and the degree to which the organization is delivering what the public values. It will be critical that not only the leader but also everyone in the community corrections organization has access to this data. And it will be essential that this data is consistently used to make decisions and to improve performance. We need to employ strategies today that will ensure that we have the hardware, software, and analytical skills necessary to produce information about our performance measures. We know that what we measure conveys to the public and to employees what we value; we must act now on that knowledge.

Futurists predict that by 2012 knowledge will double every single year. This is unprecedented in our lifetimes. It will present new challenges to community corrections leaders to keep up with new knowledge not only in community corrections but also in technology, workforce development, business, and so forth. One of the strategies for the future is simply to regularly and consistently scan the environment for new knowledge and best practices. Leaders are required to have their eye on the horizon—to have a long-range perspective. They must create and communicate a vision and strategies for implementing change.

Being a leader is like no other position of responsibility. It isn't "just a job." It requires your heart and soul. It requires a commitment, both personal and professional. Ron Corbett observes, "Leadership is poetry where management is prose. Leadership is tomorrow, not today—dreams not realities. 'What if ... ,' not 'yes, but ...' Leadership means risk and danger, not safety and security. It inspires; it does not mollify. It's jazz, not classical—hard rock, not easy listening. Leadership will scare you, worry you sick, infuriate you, make you crazy but never bore you and at the end of the day, take you places management has never visited and is not curious about. It is hell bent, over the top, and in your face. It takes no prisoners. It is all high wire, no net. It is a contact sport and when you win, you win big. It is the big dance."<sup>7</sup> It takes great courage to be a risk-taker, to innovate, to dream, and to challenge the status quo.

Leaders must think today about what might be possible in 2010, 2015, and 2020. Is there an expanded role for technology? Years ago, we thought banking would always rely on tellers and personal bankers, but today many people use only an ATM and on-line banking. In health care, we have seen the introduction of robots not only to transport meals and medicine but also to conduct procedures

that require precision. To what degree will we be able to use kiosks, global positioning systems, on-line cognitive education classes, or robotics in community corrections? Is it possible to identify today which functions in tomorrow's community corrections can be done only by a person or through a relationship with a community corrections professional? Are there business operations we might do through technology or outsourcing?

Technology can also help us provide training, education, and other learning opportunities for all our employees. Technology-mediated learning provides us with new strategies for meeting this challenge as well as new strategies for delivering programming and education to offenders. Technology can help us develop the highly skilled workforce that is needed in community corrections.

The future of community corrections leadership requires that we do not act alone. Leaders have a unique responsibility, but the future of leadership will make teamwork essential. We will develop teams not only within our organizations but also with external organizations. Engaging in collaborative efforts with law enforcement, behavioral health organizations, business and industry, and communities is our single best strategy for delivering the results the public values.

A final strategy for leading change is to develop an organizational culture that rewards risk-taking rather than risk-avoidance, focuses on data-driven decisions without setting limits on interpretation, engages in true dialog and discussion of the possibilities, and rewards people both for contributions that help the organization achieve its overall vision and for those that support day-to-day operations.

### **Fostering High Ethical Standards**

Ethics is the final major challenge to the future of community corrections leadership. In the past, I would not have listed this as a challenge, but there have been too many examples in both the public sector and the business community where the establishment of unspoken rules and "a different set of standards" have resulted in the destruction of trust in our leaders. Our leaders' character and values must be above reproach. Community corrections leaders are stewards of the justice system. If we act in ways that are not trustworthy, how can the public and/or the employees of our organizations trust us to lead?

The strategies for responding to this challenge are straightforward and require great commitment:

- ◆ The first strategy is to establish a code of conduct.
- ◆ The second is to provide training that incorporates true-to-life scenarios.
- ◆ The third is to challenge violations of the code of conduct.
- ◆ Finally, it is imperative that, no matter how bright and "up-and-coming" a star employee may be, ethical violations end his/her possibilities for career

advancement if not his/her employment with the organization. As Michael Josephson comments, "Once we start on the slippery slope of moral compromise, it's hard to resist the slope downward."<sup>8</sup>

Specific responsibilities and strategies for community corrections leaders to promote ethics and values are outlined in NIC's 2005 publication, *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century: Executives and Senior-Level Leaders*.<sup>9</sup> In summary, leaders must ensure that their own behavior is consistent with a code of conduct that inspires trust and that an organizational culture is established and supported in accordance with that same code of conduct.

## Focusing on the Future

The future of community corrections leadership presents us with many challenges and many opportunities. In spite of limited resources, our profession has a history of working with more offenders than any other corrections field. It is now time for our leaders to step forward boldly and lead not only community corrections but all justice agencies.

We have an opportunity to create a vision of the future, to develop the capacity to place leadership, people, and programs where they are most needed to realize that vision, and to produce results that are valued and recognized. If we are able to find our voice and communicate the leadership language that, as Hesselbein describes, "mobilizes our people around mission, innovation and diversity," then the public will be well served. ■

## Notes

1. Frances Hesselbein, *Hesselbein on Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 49.
2. Lisa Castello, "Visions of Leadership," *SMU Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2004.
3. Lynn A. Karoly and Constantijn W. A. Panis, *The 21st Century at Work: Forces Shaping the Future Workforce and Workplace in the United States*. (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corp., 2004).
4. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 3d ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 13.
5. Hesselbein, *ibid.*, 7-13.
6. John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1996), 165-166.
7. Ron Corbett, "In Search of Leadership," *Corrections Management Quarterly* 3(1) (1999), vi-vii.
8. Michael Josephson, "The Intimidating Power of Integrity," *Character Counts Essays* 407.3, 2005.
9. Nancy M. Campbell, *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century: Executives and Senior-Level Leaders* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Corrections, 2005), 63-65. Online at <http://www.nicic.org/library/020474>.

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For more information:

Cheryl Townsend  
Director  
Clark County Department of  
Juvenile Justice Services  
601 North Pecos Rd.  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
89101-2408  
702-455-5210  
[ckt@co.clark.nv.us](mailto:ckt@co.clark.nv.us)

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# NIC Surveys Explore Agency Needs for Leadership and Management Training

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by  
Larry Linke,  
Program Manager,  
NIC Information Center,  
Longmont, Colorado

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**T**hrough two recent surveys, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) has addressed the issue of community corrections leadership and management development. The first survey was completed in 2003 to assist the NIC Academy in planning its training activities, and the second was completed in 2005 to support a broader, Institute-wide strategic planning process. The results shed light on the current state of correctional management/leadership development and how community corrections managers prioritize that issue against other needs of their agencies.

## 2003 Leadership Survey

NIC's 2003 survey examined turnover, training, and demographics at four levels of correctional management. The project invited input from prison, jail, and community corrections managers involved with NIC practitioner networks. The networks surveyed include deputy directors of state corrections departments, administrators of large jails, chief state-level jail inspectors, and administrators of state community corrections agencies and urban probation departments. Responses were received from 141 agency leaders, including 46 respondents from agencies delivering community corrections services.

The survey questions were structured around four levels of correctional management defined by the NIC Academy, which is designing training to develop specific competencies at each of those levels. For community corrections agencies, the levels are:

- ◆ **Executives:** Statewide agency directors and deputies and chief probation officers of large jurisdictions.
- ◆ **Senior leaders:** Directors of probation/parole divisions of state agencies and chief probation officers of medium-sized jurisdictions.
- ◆ **Managers:** Community corrections program managers; regional/district managers of larger agencies; training supervisors; and chief probation officers of smaller jurisdictions.
- ◆ **Supervisors:** First-line probation/parole supervisors.

**Management turnover.** Community corrections agencies reported a high turnover rate at the executive level. Forty-one percent (41%) of the executives who responded had been placed in their positions within the 12 months prior to

the survey. Turnover can be expected to continue at a high rate, since more than 40% of these executives reported being eligible for retirement within 5 years.

**Figure 1. Turnover in Community Corrections by Management Level**

	Positions Filled In Past 12 Months	Eligible to Retire Within 5 Years
Executive Level	41%	41%
Senior Leader Level	14%	31%
Manager Level	11%	17%
Supervisor Level	10%	18%

**Management training and development.** Formal classroom training is the most prevalent form of training and development provided for community corrections management staff, followed by informal mentoring and on-the-job-training (OJT).

**Figure 2. Training Opportunities Provided for Community Corrections Leaders**

	Formal Classroom Training Education	Formal Distance Learning	Formal Mentoring/ OJT	Informal Mentoring/ OJT	Other
Executive Level	97%	14%	17%	57%	9%
Senior Leader Level	100%	22%	17%	56%	2%
Manager Level	100%	22%	27%	68%	3%
Supervisory Level	100%	26%	29%	63%	3%

Respondents indicated that the training provided by their agencies for leadership positions was insufficient.

**Figure 3. Sufficiency of Training for Leadership Positions**

	Sufficient	Not Sufficient	Not Sure
Executive Level	29%	59%	12%
Senior Leader Level	32%	58%	10%
Manager Level	43%	49%	8%
Supervisory Level	50%	41%	9%

**Management demographics.** Community corrections agencies responding to the 2003 survey reported that 26% of their management staff were women, 11% were Black, 4% were Hispanic/Latino, 1% were of Asian or Pacific Islander descent, 1% were of Native American or Alaskan descent, and fewer than 1% were of other or multiple demographic backgrounds. Full results of this survey are available on

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the NIC Web site at the location, <http://www.nicic.org/library/018898>.

## **2005 Correctional Needs Assessment**

In 2005, NIC conducted a needs assessment survey to which 357 correctional agencies responded. Agency executives were asked to review 74 specific issues related to agency operations and management and to rate each issue, using a four-point Likert scale, as to whether it was or was not a critical issue to be addressed by the agency in the near future. One hundred and six (106) of the responding agencies provide community corrections services.

Six of the questions posed in the survey focused on leadership and management development. In the final results, two of these questions were ranked among the top 10 priority issues for community corrections respondents: development of managers and supervisors in 7th place, and development of executives and leaders in 10th place.

The top 10 issues identified by community corrections respondents were as follows:

1. Ability to evaluate program impact.
2. Research and evaluation of services and programs.
3. Sufficient program capacity to manage/serve offender caseloads.
4. Ability to identify and implement effective programs.
5. Numeric sufficiency of staff to manage offender caseloads.
6. Responding to needs of specific/special offender populations.
7. Addressing offender mental health needs. (Tie)  
**Training and development of managers and supervisors.**
8. Providing appropriate supervision of offenders at all assessed risk levels.
9. Conducting accurate offender needs assessment.
10. Developing effective offender risk assessment and classification. (Tie)  
**Training and development of executives and leaders.**  
Planning for staffing needs. ■

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*For more information:*

Larry Linke  
Program Manager  
NIC Information Center  
1860 Industrial Circle  
Longmont, Colorado  
80501  
800-877-1461  
303-682-0213  
[lilinke@nicic.org](mailto:lilinke@nicic.org)

*For information about NIC's management and leadership training programs for community corrections, see the NIC FY 2006 Service Plan (online at <http://www.nicic.org/Library/020439>) or visit the NIC Web site at [www.nicic.org](http://www.nicic.org).*

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# Building the Workplace of the Future: 21st Century Challenges for Community Corrections

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**R**ecruiting staff is not as easy as it used to be. There was a time when simple newspaper ads might have attracted many well-qualified candidates eagerly submitting applications in hopeful anticipation of securing employment. But that was then; this is now. Today, a virtual “war for talent” is raging among employers (Partnership for Public Service, 2005: 2), with community corrections agencies caught in the cross-fire.

And bringing good people on board is only the first step. Even among the agencies that are consistently able to attract competent and committed workers, there is still the challenge of engaging and retaining them. In the past, workforce concerns centered on the hiring process. What happened thereafter was largely disregarded as an uncontrollable feature of fate, chance, or circumstance. However, it is now becoming apparent that organizations can, in fact, influence the retention of the current workforce, but only through proactive strategies designed to enhance employees’ professional growth, development, and involvement in the organization.

In other words, competitive survival for community corrections agencies in today’s labor market demands innovative recruitment along with inspirational commitment to improving the workplace. For it is one thing to hire good people—it is another thing to retain them. And it is yet a further challenge to inspire and engage them.

## **The Silent Workforce Crisis**

These issues might not be such a pressing concern if retirements were not forthcoming at unprecedented rates or if replacements were staying longer. For at the same time that corrections agencies are faced with the potential retirement of masses of “baby boomers,” new employees are more likely than ever to leave their jobs well before retirement age. On the one hand, the average state government employee is now over 44 years old (Carroll and Moss, 2002: 2). On the other hand, the typical young worker today averages nearly nine jobs between the ages of 18 and 32 (Arthur, 2001: 15). In fact, turnover is so great that average employee tenure across the country has dropped to an all-time low of 3.6 years (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000).

Within community corrections, this has significant implications. For example, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005) estimates that numerous openings for probation officers will soon be created by “replacement needs,” due to the large numbers of employees presently expected to retire. As a result, community correc-

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tions is predicted to be second (after health care) on the list of occupations that are most likely to be seriously affected by an upcoming shortage of workers (Carroll and Moss, 2002:5).

Nor are such staff shortages occurring at a time of declining caseloads or diminishing public scrutiny. To the contrary, community corrections agencies are already responsible for nearly three out of four offenders under correctional supervision (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003), and probation and parole populations continue to escalate at rates that approach their institutional counterparts (Glaze and Palla, 2004). Moreover, as the movement toward evidence-based practices demonstrates, public accountability has never been more prevalent.

The ultimate question, then, is to what extent community safety can be maintained under the dual pressures of decreasing personnel resources and increasing caseload demands. Despite the silent nature of this pending crisis, when community corrections fails to achieve its public safety mission, media headlines are made. In the subsequent glare of publicity, long-simmering shortcomings become readily apparent, and remedial action is taken. But by then, the damage will have been done. The fact is that the less proactive agencies are today, the more they will need to be reactive tomorrow.

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### **Forthcoming from NIC**

This article is based on information presented in *Future Force: A Guide to Building the 21st Century Community Corrections Workplace*, an NIC publication under development with the assistance of the Center for Innovative Public Policies, Inc.

### **NIC's Response**

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is aware of this “silent crisis” and has engaged in an initiative to encourage community corrections to respond to it. Currently in production, a publication entitled *FutureForce: A Guide to Building the 21st Century Community Corrections Workplace* explores the problem, analyzes its implications, and points leaders toward the changes necessary to address workforce issues ranging from recruitment and retention to succession planning.

The guide is based on the premise that workforce planning is considerably more complex than simply getting competent employees through the door. Recruitment is only a minor victory. Retention, in fact, often proves to be a far greater challenge in the talent war. And the subsequent process of developing first-line supervisors influences both recruitment and retention, since no one wants to work for an incompetent, uncommitted, or uncaring supervisor.

Perhaps most importantly, finding, retaining, and promoting high-quality workers means creating a high-quality workplace—an organizational culture in which people enjoy coming to work and enthusiastically commit to a united endeavor toward personal and professional excellence.

The remainder of this article summarizes highlights from the forthcoming guide. Coupled with NIC's ongoing initiative directed toward effectively managing a multi-generational workforce (see McCampbell, 2004), the new guide provides an additional resource as community corrections leaders work to develop strategic initiatives to proactively address workforce-related issues.

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## Beyond the Numbers

As described previously, there are significant quantitative challenges involved in workforce planning. But in addition to the quantitative pressure to fill vacant positions, the future may hold even greater qualitative challenges. This is because many of those who are poised for retirement are experienced employees who hold supervisory and management positions. Especially while the field is struggling to implement such analytical concepts as evidence-based practices, the departure of seasoned employees is untimely, creating a gap between requisite competencies and available skills (Partnership for Public Service, 2005: 4).

Moreover, just as traditional approaches to the job itself are being revamped, traditional approaches to management require similar reconsideration. Unlike their predecessors, workers entering the labor market today are not as willing to endure the discomfort of functioning in a hierarchical bureaucracy that is managed with a top-down, no-questions-asked, authoritative approach. Without more enlightened leadership, participatory management, and flexible supervision, employee dissatisfaction can be expected to add further fuel to the turnover fire. Employees who do not feel fulfilled in the workplace will almost inevitably look for another place to work. And the best qualified are the most likely to find it.

## Culture Counts

That is why organizational culture is such a critical component of recruitment, retention, and every other aspect of workforce planning. For the deeper issue is not just about the workforce, but also about the workplace. In that regard, one study of correctional recruitment found that “word of mouth” ranked highest by far as the most effective recruitment technique, outdistancing job fairs, the Internet, and radio, TV, and newspaper advertisements (Yearwood, 2003: 10). Quite simply, agencies that enjoy the reputation of having an upbeat, positive culture—characterized by pride, openness, trust, and respect—are more likely to attract and retain well-qualified employees without resorting to fiscal bribes.

An organization’s culture can be its greatest asset or its worst liability. This is because culture prescribes how things are done and what things are valued in the workplace. One agency’s culture, for example, might revolve around “practices,” with top value placed on the bottom line and everyone working independently to achieve rigid productivity standards. Another agency might have a culture that revolves around “people”—placing a premium on caring, fun-loving interpersonal relationships, with everyone collaboratively joining together in pursuit of a common purpose.

The point is that without addressing the core issues of a negative internal culture, efforts to attract and retain qualified personnel are likely to be futile. Additionally, without a clear understanding of the effects of internal culture, many of an organization’s problems may be blamed on everything from poor communication to workforce diversity, multi-generational differences, or any number of other superficial symptoms of more fundamental issues related to organizational culture (Stinchcomb, 2004).

To encourage the critical review of organizational culture as a prelude to planning and problem solving, the FutureForce guide includes a cultural assessment instrument. Designed for internal self-administration, this instrument analyzes the organizational climate, ranging from the nature of its leadership to its level of professionalism, quality of work life, daily operations, personnel development, and internal communications. With accurate insights into organizational culture, administrators can assess any gaps between the way things are being done and the way they should be done according to the organization's mission (Burrell, 2000: 54). Then, of course, the leadership challenge becomes changing the culture to align operational practices with administrative priorities—keeping everyone moving together toward the same overall vision.

### **Recruiting “Outside the Box”**

As this discussion of organizational culture demonstrates, recruiting “outside the box” will only be successful for agencies that are also operating “outside the box.” And just as management practices need to match employee motivations, recruitment techniques need to match their intended targets. The incentives that were attractive to “Baby Boomers” and the vehicles that were most likely to reach them will not attract and reach the “Generation Xers” or “Millennials” who are today's new recruits.

For example, some of the less-traditional recruitment approaches suggested in the guide include:

- ◆ **The Internet**—Prime recruiting space because that's where young people are going for information, news, and social interaction.
- ◆ **Colleges and universities**—An obvious recruiting target, since most positions in community corrections require a Bachelor's degree.
- ◆ **Internships**—Among the best ways to recruit college-educated workers, but only if properly supervised and structured as a learning experience.
- ◆ **Military separation centers**—A key point of connection as the tours of duty for those serving in Iraq begin to wind down.
- ◆ **State retirement systems**—Though seemingly the last place to look for new talent, early retirement ages prevalent in public safety occupations can create a wealth of untapped resources.
- ◆ **Intergovernmental partnerships**—Collaborative arrangements whereby government agencies share access to potential recruits.
- ◆ **Higher education partnerships**—Collaborative arrangements whereby schools prepare college graduates who have the core competencies required for immediate employment in community corrections. (See also Stinchcomb, in press).

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## Retaining the Best and the Brightest

Getting the right people in the right places doing the right things is the first task (Collins, 2001: 41). Then the job of leadership becomes retaining them. Agencies that want to keep the best and the brightest on board realize that to do so, they must actively engage in career planning and development. That means helping employees envision a future beyond their present job—one that ultimately inspires them to higher levels of personal achievement, while at the same time intensively engaging them in a higher level of professional accomplishment.

Additionally, it means learning why some people are leaving and, just as important, why others are staying. This requires conducting both exit and retention interviews. Asking employees why they are leaving provides valuable information about what can be corrected to improve the workplace. Asking employees why they stay can provide equally valuable information about what should be continued, or—in the case of staff who have no other options—perhaps what should be corrected as well. The guide provides sample questionnaires for conducting exit and retention interviews.

The critical ingredient, however, is not what is asked in these studies, but how the results are used. Failing to act on the feedback not only limits future input, but also diminishes the opportunity to make the organizational improvements that would attract and retain the best and brightest workers.

## Succession Planning

Retaining talented employees is one thing; preparing them for positions of greater responsibility is another. This means planning for succession, grooming employees for upward mobility, and “packaging” promotional opportunities in a manner designed to appeal to the current workforce.

Effective practices today cannot reflect yesterday’s perspectives, inaccurately assuming that people will be enticed toward promotion for reasons we used to take for granted, such as:

- ◆ Increased salary (but forgetting the loss of overtime pay);
- ◆ Increased responsibility (but forgetting how little management support workers believe they will receive);
- ◆ Increased prestige (but forgetting that upward promotion is not an important goal for many new employees).

Regardless of whether today’s staff can be induced to seek promotion, long-term succession planning is essential to their organizations’ long-term success. Community corrections agencies do not always realize that their future capabilities are dependent on their current employees. Yet “the most significant key to the quality of future correctional services . . . will be the quality of future personnel” (Stinchcomb, 2005: 592).

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## The Overall Message

Essentially, NIC's forthcoming FutureForce guide hopes to communicate three messages.

- ◆ First, it is necessary for community corrections leaders to understand—and be motivated to act upon—the “silent crisis” that is depleting agencies of valuable workers.
- ◆ Then, it is essential to comprehend how organizational culture can inhibit or promote efforts directed toward recruiting and retaining their replacements.
- ◆ Most significantly of all, it means diagnosing where your organization is today, determining where you want it to be tomorrow, and deciding what action is necessary to make that vision a reality. ■

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For more information:

Jeanne Stinchcomb, Ph.D.  
Department of Criminology  
and Criminal Justice  
Florida Atlantic University  
111 East Las Olas Blvd.  
HEC 1009  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301  
954-762-5138  
stincho@fau.edu

Susan McCampbell  
President, Center for Innovative  
Public Policies, Inc.  
1880 Crestview Way  
Naples, FL 34119-3306  
239-597-5906  
cippinc@aol.com

Elizabeth P. Layman  
President, Price Layman, Inc.  
1779 Hammock Drive  
Amelia Island, Florida 32034  
(904) 491-0423  
eplayman@bellsouth.net

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# Bridging the Great Divide: Educational Partnerships to Prepare Students for Careers in Community Corrections

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*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.  
Ancient proverb*

**A**re there many children growing up today who aspire to a career as a probation or parole officer? Probably not. Eventually, kids mature and develop clearly focused career objectives, but a career in community corrections is not often among them. Even after they enter college, ask some justice-related majors about their career ambitions. Apart from the hefty contingent of “undecideds,” you will hear a litany of conventional options—ranging from law school to a variety of federal agency acronyms and such media-glamorized positions as crime scene investigator or criminal profiler. A few mavericks may cite local or state law enforcement agencies, largely as stepping-stones to what they view as more prestigious federal employment. But rarely will there be any mention of corrections—despite the fact that a bachelor’s degree is a nearly universal requirement for probation and parole officer positions (American Correctional Association, 2000: 161).

There are many reasons for the absence of community corrections from the career plans of today’s undergraduates. The situation can be remedied; however, the deep divide between corrections and the academic community does not make doing so an effortless task. This is not meant to imply that the two are adversaries, but they do not tend to associate in a mutually collaborative manner. To develop a productive association, someone has to venture across the “great divide.” Particularly in light of current workforce-related challenges, it may be in the best interests of community corrections to take the first step.

## **Capitalizing on Educational Requirements**

With the impending retirement of a massive cohort of “baby boomers,” it has been predicted that both public and private agencies will be engaged in a heated “talent war” during the coming years (Partnership for Public Service: 2005: 2). The average state government employee is now over age 44, and estimates are that state government agencies can expect to lose more than one-third of their workforce by 2006 (Carroll and Moss, 2002: 1-2). Without the benefit of either lucrative salaries or prime-time TV visibility, how can community corrections compete effectively in this seller’s market? The answer is both decidedly complex and deceptively simple. Just as Willie Sutton is said to have robbed banks because, quite obviously, “that’s where the money is,” an agency interested in recruiting the best and the brightest bachelor’s degree graduates would be well-advised to go where they are found—i.e., to colleges and universities.

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*by*  
*Jeanne B. Stinchcomb, Ph.D.,*  
*Department of Criminology and*  
*Criminal Justice,*  
*Florida Atlantic University,*  
*Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

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This does not mean an agency should blindly head to college campuses with a truckload of recruitment brochures destined for mass distribution at a job fair booth—with the hope that some attendees will apply . . . and that some of those applicants will be eligible . . . and that some percentage of those eligible will be selected. That is quite a long shot. Yes, some students will politely pick up the brochures and perhaps even engage in a brief conversation with the recruiter. But is the agency likely to hear from them again? And even if it did, is this the best way to attract the most promising college graduates? The answer to both questions is obviously “no.”

From the student’s perspective, it makes little sense to spend the time, money, and effort to achieve the long-sought goal of a bachelor’s degree, only to settle for a job that requires no credential beyond a high school diploma. Most college students are determined that they will not have pursued their education in vain. Having worked hard for the credits contributing to their degree, they want to fully exploit it in terms of employment. Thus, they are not likely to be jubilant if relegated to a position that they could have obtained with only a high school diploma. Nevertheless, that is often their destination—sometimes simply because they are unaware of the opportunities available in the low-profile field of community corrections.

From an employer’s perspective, the challenge is not as simple as establishing higher education requirements for entry-level jobs and then sitting back to collect an avalanche of applications. That may have been past protocol, and it might even have worked. But that was then—this is now. Today, attracting qualified college graduates demands that an agency address comprehensive workforce-related issues, ranging from restructuring and enriching existing jobs (Stinchcomb, 2004: 92) to realigning administrative practices and refining organizational culture (Burrell, 2000; Stinchcomb, McCampbell, and Layman, forthcoming).

For example, it does little good to mandate a college degree if eager, bright-eyed graduates are immediately confronted by a negative organizational culture, a “gotcha” administrative orientation, or a highly structured, micro-managing work environment. It is one thing to maintain the close control and careful scrutiny of a “sanctions orientation” for offenders (Nidorf, 1990: 70). But it is quite another thing to treat employees with the same level of cautious oversight, especially when the employees are college graduates who have ample opportunities for employment elsewhere.

Community corrections agencies may be ahead of other justice-related organizations in terms of their higher entry-level educational requirements. But merely mandating a degree does not automatically attract college graduates. To the contrary, many probation and parole agencies have a long way to go in terms of matching the workplace environment with workforce requirements. (See, for example, Burrell, 2000; Domurad, 2000; Farrow, 2004; Martin, 1999). Significant internal organizational development therefore may be necessary before an agency can successfully embark on developing partnerships with higher education.

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## Capitalizing on Faculty Job Requirements

Just as the community corrections field can do more to enhance its appeal to college graduates, it can also take greater advantage of the job demands of college educators. University faculty are generally evaluated, tenured, and considered for promotion on the basis of their performance in three categories: teaching, service, and research. In each of these areas, community corrections can engage faculty in mutually beneficial collaboration, as illustrated in the examples below.

**Teaching.** Classroom teaching may be the academic endeavor in which there is the least potential for outside influence. This is so in part because criminal justice is not a discipline that maintains highly prescriptive course descriptions. Courses are often described in ambiguous, open-ended terms, providing faculty with substantial freedom to develop content as they see fit. As a result, what is actually taught in the classroom can vary considerably from one professor to another. On the one hand, this means there is not much standardization. But on the other hand, it establishes the flexibility for faculty to make subtle changes without becoming entangled in reams of bureaucratic red tape.

The key for community corrections is convincing faculty to incorporate certain material in their courses. Undoubtedly, this micro-level approach to change can be frustratingly slow. But when it works, courses can be geared to embrace contemporary concepts such as evidence-based practices and motivational interviewing. Students will not complete their degrees fully capable of implementing these techniques, since there is undoubtedly a difference between the conceptual focus of education and the more pragmatic orientation of training. But most professors want to know that what they are teaching reflects current knowledge and practice in the field. Especially if practitioners can provide examples, classroom exercises, videos, or other instructional supplements, they may well find a receptive audience.

Inasmuch as college courses are not skills-based training classes, practitioners must be realistic about what can be accomplished in the university classroom. Nevertheless, the teaching component of faculty jobs offers considerable potential for mutually beneficial outcomes—providing faculty with access to contemporary developments in the field, and providing community corrections with access to students capable of performing effectively in probation and parole positions.

**Service.** Another component of university faculty job descriptions is a commitment to uncompensated service. This obligation can be fulfilled in a number of ways, ranging from appointments on university committees to service on professional boards.

For faculty, providing service outside of the university virtually mandates some level of interaction with practitioners. For community corrections, an agency may find that appointing educators to an advisory committee, board, or commission both helps the faculty member fulfill university-mandated service obligations and

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helps the agency establish relationships with higher education. Including a university representative in such a capacity is therefore mutually beneficial. Faculty obtain valuable insights into current correctional practices as well as “credit” toward university-mandated service obligations. At the same time, practitioners gain a valuable opportunity to influence classroom teaching, as well as objective, analytical perspectives on the challenges faculty members face.

**Research.** Conducting research is not only a primary responsibility of faculty in higher education but also a means of keeping current with developments in the field—and thereby enhancing the relevance of classroom instruction. It is here where the greatest potential exists for building partnerships between professors and practitioners. It also is an arena where faculty often experience considerable frustration, since practitioners are “gatekeepers” of the data, subjects, and permissions needed to conduct empirical research.

Most university faculty are required to pursue a research agenda and publish their findings in peer-reviewed journals. Likewise, most community corrections practitioners are mandated to determine how well their initiatives are working, particularly in this era of attention to evidence-based practices. In essence, each needs what the other can provide. Practitioners can offer academicians access to data they need in the pursuit of their research agendas. Academicians can offer practitioners the research findings they need for agency accountability. The challenge is bridging the “great divide” to create a collaborative partnership. Evaluation research may be the ideal building material for constructing such a bridge. Because it represents an area of mutual concern, research has the potential to forge stronger relationships between administrators and educators (Baro and Burlingame, 1999: 68). In community corrections, evidence-based practices may be the most promising opportunity for bridging the divide.

### **Focusing on Students**

Mutual interest in evidence-based practices can serve as a powerful catalyst for bringing academicians and practitioners together. But they share an even more fundamental area of compatible concern—i.e., the college students who represent both the current clients of higher education and the future client supervisors of community corrections. Just as the behaviors of ex-offenders reflect positively or negatively on probation and parole agencies, the future employment potential of students reflects on colleges and universities.

Students want jobs—jobs they could not have obtained without a postsecondary degree, and preferably jobs that pay well. But in reality, students majoring in criminal justice-related disciplines do not expect to get rich. Because salaries are not the primary recruitment attraction, the agency must have something else of value to offer—such as its reputation as a “good place to work,” where employees are treated with dignity, trusted with autonomy, and tended with empathy. As noted previously, this means paying serious attention to internal organizational development before embarking on external partnerships.

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In that regard, there is work to be done on both sides of the “great divide” to more effectively address employment readiness. Even if community corrections represented an ideal workplace where bright college graduates were eager to seek employment, exactly what types of graduates are agencies seeking? From the academic perspective, it is in the best interest of colleges and universities to produce students who possess marketable job skills. From the practitioner perspective, it is in the best interest of community corrections to employ graduates who possess necessary core competencies. Again, each has a vested interest in a mutually beneficial outcome. The only question is how to achieve it.

### **Nationally Leveraging the Degree Requirement**

The suggestions advanced thus far in terms of potential collaboration around teaching, service, and research largely reflect micro-level efforts that can be implemented at the level of individual communities throughout the country. While such initiatives may be beneficial to practitioners, academicians, and students in those particular locations, change at this level is inherently slow, inconsistent, and piecemeal. From a macro-level perspective, it would be far more advantageous to embark on a broader endeavor to establish a partnership between corrections and higher education that is directed toward curriculum development at the national level.

Though it is widely recognized that probation and parole work requires a 4-year degree, little effort has been made to determine how a college education is expected to prepare entry-level employees. As a result, colleges and universities are left to their own devices to develop curriculum requirements—without either input from or involvement of agencies who will ultimately be hiring their graduates (Stinchcomb, McCampbell, and Layman, in press). Yet, as the one component of the justice system that almost universally maintains a degree requirement for new officers, community corrections is uniquely positioned to enter into a collaborative partnership with higher education.

Probation and parole agencies in many locations already have established internships, practicums, co-op education, and similar linkages with nearby colleges and universities. But these are isolated, “ad hoc” endeavors that are rarely, if ever, part of a comprehensive curriculum plan. In contrast, a truly systematic, nationally focused curriculum initiative would:

- ◆ Identify the essential competencies necessary for entry-level jobs in community corrections;
- ◆ Determine the extent to which such competencies can be incorporated into an undergraduate education program;
- ◆ Define discipline-specific courses (on topics such as community-based corrections, research methods, and correctional counseling and treatment) in a manner that would address the essential skill demands of the community corrections workforce;

- ◆ Identify relevant supplemental courses (addressing, for example, interpersonal communications, English composition, developmental psychology, and social casework) that are directly related to the needs of those working in probation and parole agencies;
- ◆ Design structured field experiences (such as internships and practicums) to integrate classroom concepts with operational practice; and
- ◆ Ultimately, produce graduates who are qualified for and eager to pursue careers in community corrections.

In fact, with enough joint planning and united commitment, it would even be possible to integrate certain aspects of the educational experience with agency training requirements, so that some of the cognitive components of entry-level training might be fulfilled in the college classroom. (Additionally, many colleges and universities represent ideal partners for providing in-service training programs in such areas as supervisory techniques, middle management, leadership development, program evaluation, and financial administration.)

As noted previously, however, embarking on such an ambitious agenda at the local level is not likely to be the best approach. But if the American Probation and Parole Association were to join forces with the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences to develop a model undergraduate curriculum and marketing plan, the initiative would benefit from the enhanced credibility and vitality of national leadership.

In that regard, perhaps a strategy similar to the Police Corps could be pursued, whereby federal funding supports educational scholarships and subsequent training stipends, in exchange for the student's commitment to work for a designated agency for at least 4 years after graduation (Office of the Police Corps, 2005). Moreover, the 2005 renewal of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 includes a provision that would authorize job training grants to colleges and universities in an effort to address the needs of "high-growth, high-skill fields that are suffering shortages of workers" (Field, 2005). These are but a few examples of the initiatives that could be explored by practitioners and academicians working together.

### **Acting on Today's Opportunities**

The scenarios described here may appear to be somewhat idealistic. Bridging the "great divide" undoubtedly will require a dedicated effort on the part of both agencies and academic institutions—beginning with a delineation of mutual challenges and ending with a destination of mutual achievements. The question is not whether academicians and practitioners should develop such collaborative partnerships, but rather how best to go about doing so. After all, professionals in these fields are "mutually dependent on—and potentially mutually beneficial to—one another" (Petersilia, 1996: 230).

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In the midst of more immediate day-to-day crises, it may be difficult to divert attention to such long-term issues as developing future workers and improving the future workplace. Likewise, it may seem that confronting internal challenges usurps all of the time and energy needed to forge external alliances. But in the long run, community corrections will be judged not by what obstacles have or have not been faced today, but by what opportunities have or have not been seized today “to shape tomorrow’s destiny. For destiny is not a result of chance, but a reflection of choice” (Stinchcomb, 2005: 591).

**T**he choice for today’s educators and practitioners is either to stay on their respective sides of the “great divide” or to venture forth to bridge the gap between them. The journey will undoubtedly be long. But someone has to take the first step. ■

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For more information:

Jeanne Stinchcomb, Ph.D.  
Department of Criminology  
and Criminal Justice  
Florida Atlantic University  
111 East Las Olas Blvd.  
HEC 1009  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301  
954-762-5138  
[stincho@fau.edu](mailto:stincho@fau.edu)

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# Developing Leadership One Step at a Time: The Oklahoma Experience

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*If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door.*

*Milton Berle*

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by  
*J'me Overstreet,  
Associate Director,  
Administrative Services*

and

*Justin Jones,  
Director,  
Oklahoma Department of  
Corrections,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

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The role of a community corrections leader requires a talent for multi-tasking, a commitment to continuing education and training, flexibility, vision, and the ability to answer to many diverse stakeholders, as well as many other characteristics. Traditionally, leaders in probation and parole, and in community corrections generally, have been chosen for their excellent public service, whether it included direct offender supervision experience or not. However, excelling at the role of probation or parole officer does not always predict success at the next level in the chain of command, especially if that next level is management.

Developing talent to fill key management positions ensures that future leaders will be available to meet an organization's needs. At bottom, a system for training managers is key to organizational survival, so it is important to develop a process to identify and cultivate future leaders. Otherwise, a cadre of successors who are able to meet future challenges may not be available.

A number of factors limit community corrections agencies' ability to develop leadership-related training.

- ◆ One problem is that agencies must respond to a variety of mandates for other types of annual training. A plethora of training requirements already exists, and organizations have long understood that it is unwise to reduce or eliminate training related to offender supervision or to public and employee safety. Such resource and time conflicts are often involved in providing leadership training and succession planning. For agencies that are required to maintain a balance of law enforcement and social services, the difficulty of providing leadership training is magnified.
- ◆ The corrections business is unique in that the offender is our product, and stakeholders within the criminal justice system determine supply and demand. Accelerated growth in offender populations in the past 2 decades meant that community corrections did not have the resources to address offender needs, much less agency management needs. Agencies were forced to make concessions in their budgets by forgoing advances in technology, training, treatment, and other important aspects of our business. Years of operating in this fashion placed agencies in training and leadership develop-

ment deficits as the new millennium approached. The situation continues today, as there are even fewer resources than we had over the previous 10 years.

- ◆ In Oklahoma, moreover, while our leadership training was being developed, there was an added disincentive to joining the upper management. Officers had the benefit of a straight 20-year retirement; being promoted beyond middle management transferred that 20-year retirement to an 80-point retirement plan.

Community corrections agencies' succession planning and leadership training can clearly be inhibited by such factors. Nevertheless, it is important to develop a system to provide leadership training to meet succession-planning needs. It is also crucial for the new training to meet the self-improvement needs of individual employees who are not interested in a promotion. Public agencies are not unlike private businesses in that a failure to provide for the future needs of the business—both in terms of product delivery and internal leadership quality—results in antiquation and, potentially, extinction of the organization. As has been often stated, “The problem with doing nothing is you don’t know when to stop.”

### **Developing the Oklahoma Plan**

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections began to operationalize the buzzword “succession planning” in the year 2000. By calculating when employees in key leadership roles would be eligible for retirement, the agency realized the gravity of the need for succession planning. About 50% of the organization’s leadership would become eligible for retirement within 5 years, and six out of seven community corrections district supervisors could retire in less than 4 years. Extrapolating projections to 10 years revealed an acceleration of possible retirements well beyond 50%. These findings created anxiety among the management ranks and governing board, leading to creation of a business plan to address the situation.

Before we could deploy the plan, however, we also had to consider changes in our profession, including “what works” and evidenced-based practices, because the organizational changes they suggest affect more than officer/offender interactions. Certain aspects of these evidence-based practices should also be incorporated into leadership development and training, such as motivational interviewing, case planning, conducting risk assessments, and addressing offenders’ criminogenic needs.

A review of the current literature on best practices in succession planning and leadership identifies innovative and evidence-based strategies that prominent companies across several industries are using to prepare future leaders and to ensure that resources are available in the future. The Oklahoma succession and leadership process incorporates these proven methodologies.

An effective succession effort must focus on methods to unlock talent from within the organization, on preparing an agency’s own staff for more responsi-

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bility. Organizations must expose themselves to an unbiased, honest, and comprehensive assessment of rules, policy, procedure, culture, and external expectations that may be creating obstacles to developing and promoting staff.

With the disheartening knowledge that limited fiscal resources for implementation meant that we could not outsource our efforts, we initiated a lengthy evaluation of internal leadership talents. The existing leadership talent in the agency became vital to our plans to prepare future leaders. Through this process, we outlined a system of six graduated levels of leadership, which are continuously refined. Our program began with only one full-time and one part-time staff person without clerical or administrative support.

### **Six Principles**

Oklahoma uses six key principles to prepare staff to be leaders and to generate opportunity:

**1) Focus on the long term.** Historically, our organization’s succession planning was more of an “event” than a journey. We were focused primarily on identifying a slate of candidates for positions that were vacant or would become vacant within a few months. We began to realize the consequences of this type of short-term, reactive approach, as it resulted in quick fixes based on no vision. As we implemented a competency-based, progressive curriculum to develop leaders, our process began to incorporate succession planning into the organizational culture.

It was clear that training alone would not completely address all the issues. We looked at the obstacles that had been created throughout history and the doors traditionally closed to identify how they limited certain competencies from developing or talents from rising to the top. The process showed that if an organization’s leaders do an honest, comprehensive assessment, they are likely to experience a painful but beneficial process. In fact, for some tenured leaders, removing obstacles may be construed as a loss of power and influence.

**2) Focus on current as well as future job competencies.** As part of our leadership development training program, we realized that we needed to focus both on the present and the future. Recognizing the importance of maintaining involvement in all aspects of the organization’s operations, we developed methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the current curriculum and the level of learning transfer that was occurring. We also conducted annual needs assessments.

**3) Focus on leadership requirements.** Typically, organizations have viewed training programs as vehicles for addressing the “nuts and bolts,” the technical competencies of jobs. An effective succession process, however, requires an emphasis on leadership competencies in addition to technical ones. Leaders must be coaches, visionaries, and strategic thinkers, as well as

technically competent. Contrary to past beliefs, such skills can be learned and developed.

**4) Use objective assessments rather than intuitive judgments to determine an individual manager's leadership abilities.** Far too often, organizations rely on "gut feelings" and individual intuitive judgments of a potential manager's leadership abilities. Prior to implementing our leadership development program, our organization relied heavily on such judgments as well as an individual's correctional technical competence. Now we complement our own opinions about a manager's abilities, technical competence, and experience with some objective assessment tools, such as 360-degree evaluations.

**5) Add value to the leadership team, not just to the individual.** Leadership development and succession planning can't overlook the need to add value and strength to the team at the same time it remains focused on individuals. We know, and research has validated, that climate drives performance, so if performance is the bottom line, one must be concerned with climate. We also know that climate is affected by the leader's ability to work well with others. Simply stated, if a leader has a dreadful attitude, employees will emulate that attitude. Perhaps even more important, a leader's attitude can even create a cultural microcosm. This phenomenon is sometimes evident when an agency explores why a particular office is consistently performing below standards.

**6) Focus on making the process more open.** An open process enables managers to take more responsibility for their own professional growth and career. The organization's succession planning and development initiatives must never be a mystery. Keeping such information a secret reflects an organization that values a paternalistic, closed, top-down management style. No cost is associated with allowing staff access to information on career development opportunities or creating an organizational culture structure that embraces mentoring.

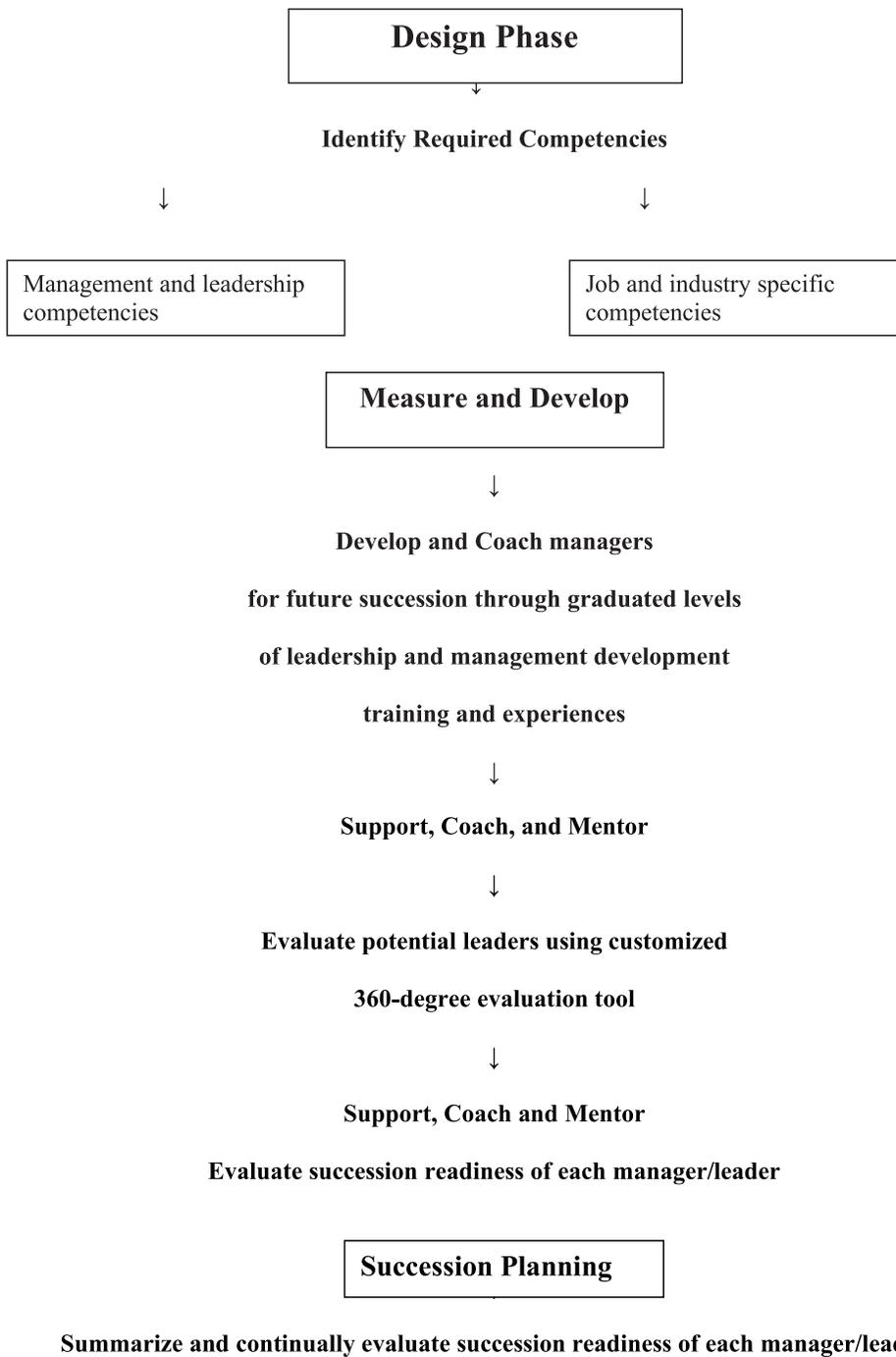
## Results

What are the measurable outcomes of our leadership training? Since its inception, 75% of the persons promoted to management positions in community corrections have been graduates of the program.

A suggested flowchart for succession planning is presented on page 28, followed by a summary of Oklahoma's six-stage curriculum for management and leadership development. ■

## Executive Succession Planning Flowchart

For any organization wishing to start this journey, we recommend an executive succession-planning flowchart such as the following:



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**OVERVIEW:**  
**Oklahoma's Six-Stage Curriculum for Correctional Management  
and Leadership Development**

**STAGE I. Introduction to Correctional Leadership Development**

*Designed for pre-supervisory staff.*

This block of training provides opportunities for those new to skill development to generate a dialog with their supervisors that initiates an education process about the organization's unwritten rules (its culture) and keys to success. This phase focuses on competencies such as communication, interviewing skills, and preparing for supervisory roles; it allows participants to initiate a self-development plan that they can discuss with their supervisors. Participants learn about the different leadership styles and what makes some effective and others ineffective.

After completing this block of training, participants understand that if they become supervisors, they can distinguish themselves and earn their employees' respect by fostering and maintaining professional relationships with each employee. They also understand the impact a good mentor can have on their development as a future leader.

**STAGE II. Correctional Leadership Development I**

*Designed for first-line supervisory staff.*

The focus is on basics such as performance reviews and the employee disciplinary process. Segments also address conflict resolution, delegation, follow-through, and transitioning skills. Participants in this phase learn to focus on priorities, step out of their comfort zone, evaluate and gain knowledge from their work experiences, seek advice and input from others, and plan for continued professional development.

Participants also complete a self-assessment inventory to assist them in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. This assessment allows participants to develop a plan of action for improvement in areas in which they may not be particularly strong. Such honest self-assessment can be uncomfortable for new supervisors, but this process is critical as it allows participants to realize that all managers, regardless of title or years of experience, need improvement in some areas. Participants learn that leaders must continuously do honest self-assessments if they are to reach their full potential.

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### **STAGE III. Correctional Leadership Development II**

*For those in middle management positions.*

The curriculum is built on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a personality inventory that illustrates an individual's natural preferences. The focus is on preferences that impact how we respond as a leader. Participants are not required to be supervisors, but supervisory experience does enrich the learning. By examining the results of the MBTI, participants in this phase learn how they view and decide issues. By learning about their own and others' preferences, they gain a better understanding of themselves as well as a greater tolerance for the views of others. The end result is that many participants learn to value differences instead of making judgments. This phase also examines power and influence and their effects on the health of the workplace. Participants learn that they get their authority from their positions, but that true power is gained from their people skills.

### **STAGE IV. Correctional Leadership Development III**

*Targets experienced, mid-level managers who are supervising staff and who are preparing for a position of responsibility in the upper management levels (district supervisors, operation and program managers, etc).*

The curriculum uses the MBTI-Step II and also involves a group project. MBTI-Step II helps participants determine their personality preferences and allows them to understand that we have different ways of gaining energy (extroversion or introversion), gathering or becoming aware of information (sensing or intuiting), deciding or coming to a conclusion about that information (thinking or feeling), and dealing with the world around us (judging or perceiving). This instrument clearly demonstrates that by seeing oneself and others in the context of personality type, a manager can gain an appreciation for the legitimacy of others' viewpoints.

The group project requires participants to work with peers over whom they have no formal authority to accomplish an organizational project. Learning how to navigate through an organization and be responsible without formal authority are the primary objectives. For participants who usually prefer to work alone, this project can prove challenging and require some adjustment; however, at the conclusion of the assignment, these participants generally leave with greater confidence as well as a greater appreciation for the benefits of working as a team on a project.

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## V. Correctional Leadership Development IV

*Approximately half of the participants from the CLD III group each year are selected to proceed to CLD IV.*

CLD IV participants do a 360-degree evaluation, are assigned a mentor from upper management, and develop a learning agenda. They work with their mentors for approximately 1 year. This group is also assigned a group project that is similar to CLD III but with higher stakes, which must be presented to the upper and executive level staff. Emphasis is placed on feedback from evaluations, exposure through mentoring experience, and learning to prepare for and deliver a high-level oral presentation.

The 360-degree evaluation involves feedback from the participant's supervisor, peers, and the employees they supervise. This type of honest feedback can prove stressful to some participants, particularly when they discover that how they see themselves may not match how others see them. The way they react to this feedback is critical. Trainers stress that participants must seize this opportunity to talk to their staff about the evaluation results and be open to constructive criticism. This honest dialog can benefit the future relationship of participants and their staff.

The assignment of a mentor in this phase has proven invaluable to many participants, in that the mentor is generally from a different division or facility of the agency. Additionally, the participant may be given the opportunity to gain experience or cross-train at a different location within the agency.

### STAGE VI. Discovery Training

*Targets upper-mid managers who are preparing for upper management roles, as well as newly promoted upper managers (such as new district supervisors).*

The curriculum is built around the Leadership Styles Inventory (LSI) and the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI). Participants are also introduced to the basic principles of emotional intelligence theories. Participants identify an area within the organizational culture that should be strengthened and work on teams to address it. The teams then present their recommendations to executive and upper management staff. The focus is on identifying and taking responsibility for improving organizational culture. ■

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*For more information:*

*J'me Overstreet  
Associate Director  
Administrative Services  
Oklahoma Department of  
Corrections  
3700 N. Classen Blvd., Ste 110  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118  
405-523-3075  
jme.overstreet@doc.state.ok.us*

*or*

*Justin Jones  
Director  
Oklahoma Department of  
Corrections  
justin.jones@doc.state.ok.us*

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# Leadership Training at the Federal Judicial Center's Professional Education Institute

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by  
*David Leathery,*  
*Assistant Division Director for*  
*Probation and Pretrial*  
*Programs,*  
*Education Division*

and

*Mark Sherman,*  
*Senior Education Attorney,*  
*Federal Judicial Center,*  
*Washington, D.C.*

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The Federal Judicial Center has been providing leadership and management education to federal probation and pretrial services staff for more than 30 years. A significant number of federal probation and pretrial services chiefs, deputy chiefs, and supervisors are graduates of the Center's Leadership Development Program for Probation and Pretrial Services Officers—a 3-year course of study that the Center has offered since 1991 that uses a combination of formal instruction, project-based learning, and one-on-one interaction with faculty mentors. Over the years, the Center also has regularly hosted executive institutes for chief probation and pretrial services officers and other federal court executives, biennial national conferences for chiefs, web conferences and audio conferences for new chiefs, distance education programs for court employees serving in supervisory capacities, and ad hoc regional seminars for probation and pretrial services supervisors.

With all of that leadership and management training already occurring, one might think it is more than enough. Not so. The reality is that the nature of federal probation and pretrial services work—that of both line staff and management—has changed dramatically. Officers must manage increasing caseloads with a wide array of defendants and offenders, from individuals who have difficulty meeting their own basic needs to sophisticated white-collar offenders and corporations. Managers are operating district court units with budgets in the millions of dollars within a highly decentralized system. On a daily basis they must oversee complex pretrial and presentence investigations and post-sentence supervision, approve vendor contracts, integrate new technologies, and deal with human resource issues. Of course, they must do all this in an era of seemingly ever-dwindling resources. Chiefs and their deputies must manage relationships with their chief judges and clerks of court, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and their counterparts in executive branch agencies. Chiefs must even, occasionally, deal with the media.

On top of all of this, the federal system is beginning to feel the effects of mass leadership and management turnover related to “baby boomer” retirements. This is exacerbated by mandatory retirements at age 57. As of the 2004 National Conference of Chief U.S. Probation Officers, approximately 40 chiefs had less than 2 years' experience in their current jobs. By the next national chiefs' conference in June 2006, the federal system may be hiring up to 50 more new chief probation and pretrial services officers. That's a total of 90 out of about 130 positions—not to mention all the new deputy chiefs and supervisors.

In addition, the system must adjust to the expectations of new officers entering the federal system. These young people—few of whom are probably planning to spend 20 or 30 years with the federal courts—demand high-quality, continuing professional education that they will be able to use for career advancement.

To meet these challenges, the Federal Judicial Center has recently developed the Professional Education Institute. The philosophy of the Institute is simple:

- ◆ For leaders and managers, provide competency-based self-study, face-to-face, and distance education;
- ◆ For experienced officers, provide high-quality continuing education in the targeted performance areas of policy and procedure, investigation and supervision practices, professional responsibility, safety, communication, professional and personal growth, and technology;

—And do all of this in a way that provides clear pathways to professional excellence. Many of the Center’s current programs will be incorporated into the Institute, and several new programs, emphasizing management training, will be launched in FY 2006.

The remainder of this article will describe the work that led to the creation of the Institute, key components guiding development of Institute programs, and the leadership and management curricula that the Center will offer through the Institute.

### **Defining a “Charter for Excellence” for Educating Leaders and Managers**

The roots of the Professional Education Institute are found in the federal probation and pretrial system’s “Charter for Excellence,” created by chiefs and the Center in 2002. The Charter articulates common attributes, goals, and values; it recognizes that probation and pretrial services officers are members of “a unique profession,” largely resolves the age-old debate about whether officers engage in law enforcement or social work, and provides a framework that enables officers to understand the types of knowledge and skills they will need to do their job well.

After creation and initial implementation of the Charter, the Center in 2003 convened an advisory group consisting of managers and officers to begin developing an approach to continuing education that would help managers and officers systematically put the Charter into daily practice. The group examined continuing education programs in other professions and best practices in public and private organizations.

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## Professional Education Institute

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# Competencies for Outstanding Leaders

*in probation/pretrial offices*



*This competency model assumes that all leaders have basic supervisory skills. These skills are addressed in two FJC courses: Foundations of Management and New Supervisors Program. The Probation and Pretrial Services Charter for Excellence forms the basis of this model.*

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From this process, we identified the following key components for professional education.

- ◆ **Invest resources in groups of learners that will create the highest return.** Supervisors, chiefs, and deputy chiefs are prime candidates. Each of these groups of managers has a wide span of control and influence within the organization. They set the tone, determine whether the mission and vision become a reality, and initiate planning and implementation efforts. As in other professions, supervisors, chiefs, and deputy chiefs often provide coaching and mentoring to employees. Supervisors, in particular, provide supervisees with feedback while assessing their progress and training needs.
- ◆ **Develop a profile of outstanding performance.** A complete list of competencies for most jobs in our field could be so extensive as to become overwhelming. Therefore, for managers, we focused on leadership competencies exemplified by our outstanding performers (see figure, page 34). For officers, we focused on “targeted performance areas.”
- ◆ **Use personalized learning plans.** The higher an individual moves in an organization, the greater his or her need for a professional development plan. One size doesn’t fit all, particularly after someone has been on the job for a while. Individuals have different goals, strengths, weaknesses, interests, responsibilities, educational backgrounds, and life experiences. Personalized learning plans are developed by the individual, preferably in collaboration with a supervisor or mentor. The learning plan format can be simple, covering what competency or performance area needs to be addressed, how, and by when. The plan targets available resources, ranging from formal courses to self-study to action learning, and maps out sequence and timing. The Internet has made the search for training resources much easier. Follow-up by the individual is essential to ensure progress toward defined goals. In a professional environment, each individual is responsible for his or her own development.
- ◆ **Create an integrated curriculum.** Professionals don’t learn everything they need for their career in a single seminar or even periodic conferences. Continuing education must be just that: continuing. While face-to-face educational experiences remain essential, the pace of change is too fast and the volume of information that managers and officers must process too vast to rely on that format alone. Thus, distance education technologies must be integrated with face-to-face training to fill the gap.

### **The Institute’s Course of Study for Leaders and Managers**

The Professional Education Institute devotes substantial resources to programming for chiefs, deputies, and supervisors; targets competencies and performance areas essential to leadership and management excellence; offers leaders and managers the opportunity to plan their career development; and provides integrated curricula. Existing programs, such as the biennial National Conference for Chief U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Officers and the Leadership

Development Program for Probation and Pretrial Services Officers, will be integrated into the Institute.

Three new courses for leaders and managers have been designed specifically with Institute principles and leadership competencies in mind.

**1) Executive Team Seminar for Probation and Pretrial Services Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs.** This is a 2-½ day workshop with web-enabled follow-up activities in which executive teams from each district create and implement a plan to shape the culture of their districts. The goals are for participants to:

- ◆ Analyze district dynamics and culture and their impacts on productivity;
- ◆ Reflect on values by examining constitutional mandates of the federal judiciary and the criminal justice system while exploring how these influence day-to-day work;
- ◆ Define the mission-critical operations, core values, and staff behaviors that teams want to see in their districts;
- ◆ Develop a long-range plan for achieving the culture that teams desire; and
- ◆ Make a commitment for implementing that plan.

Participants work with an experienced consultant in the community corrections field plus several experienced chiefs and Center staff. Pre-seminar work includes advance reading and a district self-assessment completed by staff of each participating district. Teams also discuss the rule of law, the role of officers in its maintenance, and the consequences of system failure. These discussions occur at the U.S. Supreme Court and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Each team is expected to spend after-hours time during the seminar preparing for the next day's activities, to participate in post-seminar activities to implement their plans, to monitor their progress over time, and to share results at future Center programs. Faculty members are available for ongoing consultation throughout the implementation process.

**2) Regional Symposium for Experienced Supervising U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Officers.** This 3-day, face-to-face seminar focuses on four competencies selected by practitioners as hallmarks of outstanding supervisors:

- ◆ Leading with maturity and passion;
- ◆ Fostering collaboration and teamwork;
- ◆ Developing people; and
- ◆ Championing and managing change.

Personalized learning plans are developed during the seminar for follow-up back home. These seminars are offered in a 3-year cycle.

**3) New Supervisors Program.** Building on its highly successful Leadership Development Program, the Center has developed the three-phase, 2-year New Supervisors Program. It spans 2 years because experience shows that it takes a high-performing officer about that long to become a fully functioning supervisor.

- ◆ During the first phase, participants complete a transition plan, participate in the Foundations of Management self-study course (sidebar), and enroll in three synchronous web conferences. The web conferences enable participants from across the nation to apply principles from Foundations to case scenarios involving motivation and performance management.
- ◆ In the second phase, participants meet their classmates in a face-to-face seminar. They receive instruction on key competencies and develop a personalized learning plan using input provided by their supervisor/coach.
- ◆ The third phase entails following through on the learning plan and undertaking an in-district, action learning project where participants must demonstrate key skills.

Once the Center, coach, and the participant's chief probation or pretrial services officer are satisfied that the participant has satisfactorily completed the program requirements, the Center issues a certificate.

Beyond formal programs, the Center is offering an Institute Web site that provides a portal for accessing all Institute-related information. Additional information available on the site includes on-the-job learning activities, readings, a self-assessment, and other Center resources categorized by competency.

**T**he importance of continuing professional education has been reinforced by leadership and management expert Marcus Buckingham and Gallup Organization researcher Curt Coffman in their book, *First, Break All the Rules* (Simon and Schuster, 1999). It presents the results of their in-depth study of great managers. Their survey of 80,000 managers indicated that continuing education is a critical element in attracting, motivating, and retaining top performers.

With mass retirements looming in the managerial ranks, plus new workplace and workforce demands, it is time to rethink the role of training and education for community corrections. It must be more than the traditional seminar or course. Our professionals—officers and managers—need continuing education that is readily available and individualized. Our organizations and, most importantly, our clients stand to benefit if our staff are fully prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead. ■

### About Foundations of Management

Foundations of Management is a self-study course that the Federal Judicial Center has tailored for the federal court environment in collaboration with the National Independent Study Center (NISC), a government training supplier. The program has been offered on a stand-alone basis for several years, and feedback from the nearly 1,000 officers who have taken the course has been extremely positive. There is a per-head cost for the course because materials, administration, and individualized testing are provided by NISC.

*For more information:*

*David Leathery  
Chief, Probation and Pretrial  
Programs  
Federal Judicial Center  
One Columbus Circle, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002-8003  
202-502-4115  
dleather@fjc.gov*

*Mark Sherman  
Senior Education Attorney  
Education Division  
Federal Judicial Center  
202-502-4119  
msherman@fjc.gov*

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# Leading Change in Community Corrections: Embracing Transformational Leadership

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by  
Judith Sachwald,  
Director,  
Maryland Division of Parole  
and Probation,  
Baltimore, Maryland

and

Paul Tesluk,  
Associate Professor,  
Smith School of Business,  
University of Maryland,  
College Park

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Community corrections agencies are at a critical juncture, as their leaders increasingly find they have to rethink traditional methods of offender supervision and agency operations. Many agencies have focused their sights on adopting evidence-based principles or practices that have been scientifically determined to reduce offender recidivism. Successfully implementing such evidence-based practices requires significant change at many levels. It necessitates a greater degree of collaboration than has been typical among organizations and community stakeholder groups in, for instance, shifting resources between high- and low-risk offender populations.

Adopting evidence-based practices also requires the development of new skill sets and knowledge bases and adjusting—sometimes dramatically—organizational structures, policies, procedures, and work practices to enable effective implementation of new methods of supervising offenders. These changes also involve establishing new cultural values that support innovation, learning, and empowerment.

In short, as the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) has so well highlighted in its integrated model for transforming community corrections, agency administrators must simultaneously concentrate on introducing evidence-based practices, facilitating collaborations among different stakeholders' interests, and developing organizational capabilities. This is a daunting task, and navigating through this critical juncture in the history of community corrections agencies requires sophisticated, altruistic, and, above all, change-oriented leadership.

The community corrections field has engaged in developing effective models for offender supervision and, more recently, agency transformation (e.g., the NIC model mentioned above). However, less attention has been devoted to specifying how to lead these transformations and the equally important question of where to find and how to develop the leaders needed to do so. In other words, as a field we are developing a good understanding of *what* to do to create meaningful and lasting organizational change, but we are less knowledgeable regarding *how* our leaders should orchestrate and manage the change process. In this article we attempt to articulate the important principles of effective transformational leadership identified in the organizational leadership literature and point to ways to translate those principles into action.

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1. National Institute of Corrections and the Crime & Justice Institute, *Implementing Effective Correctional Management of Offenders in the Community: An Integrated Model* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Corrections, 2004.) Online at [www.nicic.org/library/019341](http://www.nicic.org/library/019341).

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## Transformational Leadership

There are dozens, if not hundreds, of leadership theories and perspectives. We draw primarily from transformational leadership theory and related perspectives that focus on the types of leadership required during times of comprehensive organizational change.<sup>2</sup> As leadership expert John Kotter has noted, leadership is ultimately about preparing organizations for change and helping people cope with the hard realities that accompany the change process.<sup>3</sup>

The six elements of transformational leadership that we outline in this article are particularly important for administrators who are leading community corrections agencies through the change process.

### COMPELLING VISION

### HUMOR AND OPTIMISM

### AGENCY STRUCTURAL ENHANCEMENTS

### NEW APPROACHES THAT DRIVE INNOVATION

### GUIDE BY EXAMPLE

### ESTABLISH TRUST

**Compelling vision.** If leadership is about producing change, then that process must begin with leaders who articulate a compelling and inspiring sense of direction through a clear vision of what the transformation process is intended to produce. Effective visions have three important qualities.

- ◆ *First*, visions that create change in community corrections are those that serve the interests of multiple constituencies—the public, offenders, community groups, employees, other agencies, and the judiciary. For instance, a vision organized around introducing science-based practices fails to align a critical constituency if the leader highlights the benefits to public safety and recidivism reduction, but speaks little to how employees benefit by making more meaningful contributions to offender change and community vitality.
- ◆ *Second*, leaders must translate the vision into a realistic and clear direction for change. When articulating the importance of collaboration as an aspect of the agency’s vision, for example, the leader must be ready to answer questions such as: Collaboration with whom? On what types of issues? What form should the collaboration take? and What are the expected benefits of these collaborations? These elements of vision provide a roadmap that can mobilize action and help people believe that change is achievable.
- ◆ *Third*, the vision and its direction must be communicated to key stakeholders at every opportunity and delivered with credibility. This means that when sharing the vision with employees, peers, bosses, staff of other agencies, community groups, and so forth, leaders must take great care to demonstrate consistency between their words and actions. They can do this by highlighting early accomplishments and the steps that have been taken toward

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2. See for instance, B. Bass, “From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision.” *Organizational Dynamics*, Winter 1990, 628-657.

3. J. Kotter, “What Leaders Really Do.” *Harvard Business Review*, December 2001, 85-96.

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achieving the vision. Deeds that illustrate the attainability of lofty visions combat cynicism and build trust.

If you put these three elements together—a vision that ties together multiple constituencies, provides a clear direction, and is communicated consistently and with integrity—what you have is a vision that unites, provides a pathway that focuses effort and attention, and is understood and believed.

**Humor and optimism.** Humor and optimism instill confidence in leaders when things appear most bleak. Change is a process fraught with conflicting and heightened emotions, uncertainty, and tension. Daniel Goleman’s work on emotional intelligence<sup>4</sup> demonstrates that leaders who are more aware of and skillfully manage their own emotions and who display greater empathy are better able to help others who are wrestling with change. In doing so, they focus people’s efforts on the critical tasks that need to be accomplished and help them maintain their efforts during trying times. Effectively managing the emotions that accompany the change process can take many forms, including injecting humor into tense situations, conveying a sense of optimism when things look bleak, and publicly and repeatedly letting others know that you have confidence in their capabilities.

There are any number of creative ways to encourage hopefulness and confidence in the agency and its direction. For the past five years, the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation (MDPP) has undertaken a variety of efforts to recognize its employees and express appreciation for their commitment and dedication. One of those efforts is an annual Employee Development Day, which combines captivating speakers, time for employees to renew professional relationships and establish new ones, and the presentation of employee service and performance awards. A new category, the Director’s Award, was created to recognize individuals or teams of employees who have transformed an entire unit or function from ordinary to extraordinary. Speakers have ranged from former supervisors who talk about how Parole and Probation Agents saved their lives to a nurse who effectively uses humor to promote her ideas on sustaining a positive attitude and healthy balance between one’s work and personal life. MDPP has also enhanced graduation ceremonies for its entry-level training academies and encouraged new employees to invite family and friends to attend the celebration.

**Agency structural enhancements that reduce hierarchy.** Critical elements of organizational change—such as empowerment, learning, experimentation, and creativity—are difficult, if not impossible, to instill when an agency is haunted by status differences and hierarchy. After years of focusing on the management and supervision of offenders, community corrections agencies have become too comfortable with structures, policies, procedures, and cultural elements that accentuate hierarchy and discourage individual problem-solving and creative thinking. Leaders need to actively seek out aspects of the agency that highlight

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4. Much of his work on emotional intelligence is summarized in D. Goleman, R. Boyatzis, and A. McKee, “Primal Leadership: The Hidden Driver of Great Performance” (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, 2002).

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status differences and do their best to eliminate them, instead reinforcing the message that a collegial, learning environment is essential for a vibrant and effective 21st century community corrections agency.

One way to focus such an effort is to improve the agency's structure by, for example, reducing levels within the reporting structure and expanding job descriptions, particularly for employees in the field. MDPP issued a new chain of command policy several years ago in order to foster more open communication among employees. The new policy eliminated the words "superior" and "subordinate." Under the best of circumstances, these two words send the wrong message about how people at different leadership levels (note: we consider all employees potential leaders) are to interact, and consequently they stifle group problem-solving. In the worst scenario, they discourage employees from exercising any independence or initiative and encourage them to await instructions or direct orders. This is one example of how leaders can identify and eliminate symbols in their agency's culture that reinforce status and hierarchy.

Another example, and one delivered in dramatic fashion, occurred when Continental Airlines CEO Gordon Bethune publicly burned the company's 1,000-page employee manual. The act signified that employees were no longer burdened by having to follow overly restrictive procedures and, instead, needed to rely on their own good judgment and ingenuity. Actions like this can be powerful first steps in moving to a culture that emphasizes front-line proactivity and initiative.

In the community corrections environment, another way to cultivate responsible experimentation based on evidence-based principles is to eliminate procedures and policies that demand the counting of contacts between supervision staff and offenders and move towards the thoughtful implementation of individualized case plans based on each offender's assessed risk and needs.<sup>5</sup>

**New approaches that drive innovation.** Transformational leaders expose their organizations to new ways of thinking and, more importantly, stimulate others to create new ideas, encourage them to develop and pursue innovations, and help them overcome resistance to change. One way leaders do this is by getting staff to question existing assumptions that hamper the development of new ideas.

Stimulating new ideas is also more likely to occur when leaders re-frame problems (such as reduced staffing levels or budget cuts) as challenges to be overcome through ingenuity and creativity rather than as barriers or obstacles that simply have to be accepted as harsh realities facing the agency. In re-framing such issues, leaders need to directly appeal to employees, peers, community groups, and others by requesting their help and explaining why it is needed. People are more willing to share ideas and engage in change if they feel that they can play an essential role. Finally, the best ideas and innovations develop in an environment where people

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5. Faye S. Taxman, Eric S. Shepardson, James M. Byrne, et al., *Tools of the Trade: A Guide to Incorporating Science into Practice*. (Washington D.C.: National Institute of Corrections, 2004). Online at [www.nicic.org/library/020095](http://www.nicic.org/library/020095).

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feel comfortable debating the merits of alternative courses of action, pointing out flaws in existing practices, and so forth. Leaders who welcome constructive debate and discussion build a climate of intellectual safety that facilitates the open exchange of ideas and helps create meaningful change.

Astute transformational leaders also provide their organizations with the tools and mechanisms that drive innovation. One innovation driver might come in the form of cross-functional, interagency teams of individuals with unique sources of expertise and viewpoints—teams charged with addressing weighty problems or introducing the agency to new ideas. MDPP created a “What Works” committee charged with “ensuring that the Division develop and implement research-based practices that lead to more effective supervision/monitoring, reduced recidivism and increased public safety.” Committee members were advised that they must “think creatively and openly about how promising and best practices might be implemented locally, regionally or statewide.” Because senior managers already have many opportunities to discuss policy and practice, all committee members are field staff. The intention is to inspire field staff to seek out landmark research and share that knowledge with their peers. The committee’s first such effort was a 1-day seminar for 150 field staff on evidence-based practice.

Agencies can also foster innovation by enabling employees to gain new skills and knowledge and to develop professional networks that can be used as sources for learning new ideas or receiving assistance. With a grant from the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention and in collaboration with the University of Maryland Robert H. Smith School of Business, MDPP established a Leadership Development Program for all its first- and mid-level supervisors. The 6-month program was designed to teach state-of-the-art leadership and management concepts and provide opportunities for the participants to begin incorporating these skills into their daily routines. They also were required to tackle group problem-solving projects on crucial issues that MDPP needs to address.

To ensure that the benefits of this program are not fleeting, MDPP must now build on this foundation. One way MDPP plans to do so is by setting up a reverse internship that will allow some supervisors to be loaned to an allied agency (such as a drug treatment or mental health program or a job service office) for 2 to 3 months. Once on the job, MDPP staff will learn more about these agencies’ operations, services, and problem-solving models as well as helping their employees understand the challenges facing community corrections agencies and the offenders under supervision. In this way, the reverse internship will simultaneously provide community corrections with professional and intellectual growth opportunities and build bridges that have the potential to blossom into significant collaborations with allied agencies.

**Guide by example.** Senior administrators often seem mystified that, despite their repeated overtures to employees about the importance of taking on new challenges, being proactive, and learning new skills, so few employees actually act on their appeals. But leadership is more than setting expectations. It also requires

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demonstrating the new behaviors, assignments, and challenges you are asking staff to undertake.

A powerful method is by role modeling.<sup>6</sup> For instance, a leader who goes through extensive training to learn skills critical for a new way to supervise offenders is much more likely to have enthusiastic and committed participation from field staff who are later asked to have the same training. Modeling is important for two reasons: One, it helps staff build feelings of self-efficacy to see a leader complete the same challenging task he or she is asking others to take on. Two, it shows that, as a leader, you are not asking others to do anything that you yourself are unwilling to do.

**Establish trust.** Change requires venturing into the unknown, and that produces fear. For leaders to overcome others' fears, they must be able to engender trust. One of the best strategies for instilling trust is to ensure that leaders and the rest of their organization abide by a fair process when making decisions during the change process.<sup>7</sup> This first requires engagement, which means involving others (e.g., employees, members of community groups, and other agencies) in decisions that affect them by requesting their input and providing genuine opportunities to challenge ideas and question assumptions. Active engagement, in which individuals have a voice, builds commitment to decisions and, ultimately, loyalty to the agency even if people do not necessarily agree with the outcome, because their input was energetically encouraged, genuinely welcomed, and thoughtfully considered.

Leaders also need to ensure that others understand why specific decisions have been made. Explaining the rationale for decisions is important because it helps clarify that others' interests and input were thoughtfully considered, and that the decision was made impartially. This provides transparency to the decision-making process that builds trust and provides a feedback loop that supports learning and improves the quality of future feedback.

Finally, leaders need to clarify expectations that define the new rules of the game. Clarity of expectations promotes fairness and builds trust because it helps clarify people's responsibilities, the standards on which they will be judged, the new targets and milestones, and the repercussions for failure. When people understand what is expected of them, they are better able to focus on excelling at their new tasks and less likely to feel the need to employ political means or favoritism to have influence.

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6. This is best represented in the application of social cognitive theory to organizational leadership; see, for instance, R. Wood and A. Bandura, "Social Cognitive Theory of Organizational Management," *Academy of Management Review* 14(3), 361-383.

7. W. C. Kim and R. Mauborgne, "Fair Process: Managing in the Knowledge Economy," *Harvard Business Review*, January 2003, 3-11.

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## Harnessing Transformational Leadership Talent

Where can community corrections agencies find the talent that practices these transformational leadership behaviors? They must begin by recognizing that leadership potential is not found by relying on how well an individual knows his/her job or on how long one has been in the field of community corrections. Certainly, job skills and community corrections experience are invaluable, but they are not sufficient to prepare leaders to initiate and manage successful change using the transformational leadership approaches outlined here.

One thing that public and private sector organizations with strong cultures of leadership do is actively recruit people with leadership potential. Spotting such potential is not easy, but good indicators are the types of leadership roles and responsibilities candidates have occupied in the past and what they were able to accomplish while in those roles. Have they been in situations that required them to initiate change? How did they respond, what did they accomplish, what did they learn from these experiences, and how might those experiences transfer to our agency? Research has shown that the types of leadership skills we have identified here can transfer across organizational and even industry settings. Moreover, those recruited from outside the field of community corrections are likely to have ideas, experience, and perspectives that can invigorate and enrich agencies. The current Director of the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation had more than 2 decades' experience in state government prior to her appointment, with just 5 years spent in the public safety arena. Most of her experience was in public education and workforce development policy and advocacy. During her tenure, MDPP has taken significant strides in introducing the use of research-based practices and stimulating affirmative changes in agency culture.

Organizations that prize effective leadership also invest in developing the leadership skills of their managers and future managers through a combination of development methods, including stand-alone leadership development/training programs, intensive experiences such as 360-degree assessment feedback, leadership skills coaching and mentoring, on-the-job assignments that are specifically designed to stretch and develop specific leadership skills, and team-based projects that involve repeated "learn-do" action cycles. To be successful in building leadership capabilities, these efforts need to involve feedback to help emerging leaders understand their strengths and professional development needs. They also need to provide challenges in the form of introducing and coaching new skills and ways of thinking, and they need to provide developing leaders with the support necessary to feel comfortable taking risks and developing their careers.

Finally, these development efforts must be reinforced by an agency culture that values transformational leadership skills and actively encourages its leaders and future leaders at all levels to practice them. In this way, community corrections agencies will successfully traverse today's critical juncture and be adequately nimble to survive the next generation of challenges. ■

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*For more information:*

*Judith Sachwald  
Director*

*Maryland Division of  
Parole and Probation  
6776 Reisterstown Road, Ste. 305  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
410-585-3525  
jsachwald@dpscs.state.md.us*

*Paul Tesluk*

*Associate Professor and  
Co-Director, Center for Human  
Capital, Innovation and  
Technology  
Robert H. Smith School of  
Business  
4542 Van Munching Hall  
University of Maryland  
College Park, Maryland  
20742  
301-405-4968  
ptesluk@rhsmith.umd.edu*

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# Developing Community Corrections Leaders Who Can Step Up to the Plate

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**W**e are facing a leadership crisis in community corrections. Scholars such as Warren Bennis have been calling attention to a leadership crisis in business and government for more than 2 decades,<sup>1</sup> but the crisis today is more real and packs more potential for incurring significant, negative impacts than at any time in the past. While our immediate concern is for community corrections, this leadership crisis is being felt throughout the public and private institutions of our society. Why is this so?

We find ourselves at the intersection of two powerful forces: shifting demographics, and long term “reforms” in government that are combining in new and troubling ways. Demographics are interrupting the “normal” flow of people out of our agencies by increasing retirements. Meanwhile, the cumulative impact of more than 30 years of powerful and wide-reaching political changes in government has redefined the size and nature of government, public and political expectations, and available resources.

It is not too extreme a statement to say that “all bets are off” when we talk about the future of leadership in community corrections. Traditional approaches to identifying leaders are no longer adequate to the task. Our environment has changed in fundamental ways, and we need to devise new and better methods for developing the leaders of the future.

**Demographic shifts.** Most of us have heard and probably use the terminology of the demographic component of this crisis. The “baby boom generation” and “Generation X” are common phrases for most of us. But do we understand the implications of those terms?

The “baby boom” generation is the birth cohort born from 1946 to 1964. This cohort was the largest ever, and its sheer size gave it the power to forcefully shape, and even dominate, American society as its members grew up. The same cohort that drove the expansion of public schools in the 1950s and 1960s is now nearing retirement age. Just as they have dominated so many aspects of society throughout their lives, their retirement is having a powerful impact on society, and on government in particular. A recent report by the National Association of State Personnel Executives<sup>2</sup> showed that 30% of the state government workforce will be eligible to retire by 2006! Similar portions of the county and local workforces will also be eligible to retire. One county probation department in California found itself facing the retirement of 80% of its management and administrative staff within 4 years.<sup>3</sup>

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by  
*William D. Burrell*  
*Associate Professor,*  
*Temple University,*  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

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This exodus of senior staff will have a disproportionate impact at the leadership level. These employees have earned leadership positions, gained huge amounts of experience and knowledge, and hold much of the organizational memory for their agencies. If we don't do anything, that experience, knowledge, and organizational memory will just walk out the door in a very short time.

The demographics hold another surprise: the "Generation X" cohort (born between 1965 and 1984) that follows the "baby boomers" is significantly smaller in numbers. As a result, there is a smaller labor pool of potential replacements from which to draw. It is not just government that is drawing from this smaller pool. The private sector is there also, with its ability to pay far more attractive salaries. The competition is fierce and will continue to heat up.

**Effects of governmental reforms.** Beginning in the mid-1970s and continuing to today, government at all levels has been subject to great criticism, intense scrutiny, increased pressure, and seemingly endless waves of initiatives, programs, and attempts by executive and legislative branches to reform, reduce, reshape, and ultimately "reinvent" government. While many positive results have come from these efforts, one major impact has been the tightening of budgets and reductions—or at least the slowing of growth—in staff levels.

Meanwhile, caseloads in community corrections and workloads in other government agencies have continued to grow. One report on probation in California referred to the "de facto hiring freeze" in county probation departments resulting from years of fiscal constraint.<sup>4</sup> Many cost reduction efforts took aim at the multiple levels of staff supervision in government, cutting the number of levels and the jobs of middle managers who occupied them. This often was hastened by agencies offering retirement incentive packages to entice senior staff to leave early, so that reductions in force could proceed without layoffs.

The overall effect was to slow the flow of new staff into agencies while hastening the departure of agencies' more senior staff. To use a sports metaphor, this has effectively reduced the size of the "bench" from which we can draw our future managers and leaders. Faced with a lack of depth on our leadership bench, we must, like a good sports team manager would do, find ways to add depth. We must act now, because our "first team" is quickly leaving the game for good!

### **Leadership Skills and Their Development**

The response to this crisis seems obvious: we need to develop leaders who are ready, willing, and able to assume positions of leadership in our organizations. As with many challenges, finding the answer is the easy part, but implementing it is another matter altogether. The Center for Creative Leadership defines leader development as the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes.<sup>5</sup> That is a straightforward definition, but it does not explain how an organization can put it into action.

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Conger and Fulmer suggest a system of succession management, which combines the identification of the skills and abilities necessary for senior management positions with an educational system that helps aspiring managers develop those skills.<sup>6</sup>

**Identifying needed skills.** The first component, the identification of skills and abilities, is critical. Just what is it that the aspiring leaders are expected to learn? What should they focus on? Are there specific skills that are important? How does one evaluate their development and performance?

Leadership itself may be difficult to define, but the skills and abilities required to function as a leader have long been identified. Two recent initiatives provide comprehensive information on what the future leaders of community corrections need to be able to do. These initiatives have identified leadership competencies for corrections and court management. Competencies are defined as human characteristics associated with performance; they are a cluster of attitudes, traits, skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. Competencies can be measured against performance standards.<sup>7</sup> Knowing the competencies required for leadership provides the structure and focus for professional developmental activities.

- ◆ The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Academy has developed two volumes of *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century*,<sup>8</sup> the first for executive and senior levels in corrections and the second for managerial and supervisory levels.
- ◆ The National Association for Court Management (NACM) has developed *Core Competency Curriculum Guidelines*,<sup>9</sup> which represent “what court leaders need to know and be able to do.” These competencies would be of interest to those probation agencies that are housed in the judicial branch.

These documents provide comprehensive information that will be of great use both to those who are developing leaders and to staff who are developing their own portfolio of competencies for the future. At first glance, the amount of material in these documents may seem daunting, but they provide a comprehensive treatment of the content aspect of succession management.

**Taking a broader view of development.** Once we address content, the remaining challenge is how to develop an educational system to impart these competencies to future leaders. I suggest that we need to expand our scope as we think about developing our leaders of the future. Leadership traditionally has been viewed as the province of the top levels of the organization. That perspective is changing, and leadership is no longer considered to be solely the responsibility of agency executives and managers. Increasingly, scholars and practitioners recognize that leadership is being exercised by people at all levels of an organization, whether or not they occupy a position with formal leadership responsibilities.

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Just as important, we need to recognize that developing future leaders can no longer be the responsibility of only those who are currently in leadership positions. While it is true that current leaders are ultimately responsible for ensuring the continuity of organizational leadership, involvement in that development process should not and, indeed, cannot be restricted to the few individuals who occupy the top boxes of the organizational chart. Times and organizations have changed, and the speed, complexity, and demands of contemporary agency life require that a new leader hit the ground running. No longer do we have the luxury of extended periods of on-the-job training or “honeymoon” periods; we need effective leadership right away.

Leader development must become the responsibility of the entire organization. This strategy includes not only involving more managers in the agency’s leader development process, but also providing a vehicle for staff at all levels who aspire to leadership positions. The development process cannot be one in which management provides opportunities, training, and coaching to lower-ranking staff. Those who aspire to leadership positions have a responsibility to prepare themselves for leadership and must actively pursue their own professional development.

### **Dual Perspectives on Leader Development**

To meet the needs of the contemporary organization, an agency needs to accommodate two perspectives on leader development: those of current leaders and of would-be leaders. The first involves the development of others, and the second, the development of self. For both, a commitment is needed to make that avenue of development an organizational and individual priority.

**Agency initiatives for rising leaders.** Legendary CEO Jack Welch of General Electric (GE) provides an excellent role model for current leaders who want to engage in the development of promising staff. He regularly spent substantial time teaching at GE’s executive development program, helping to develop the future leaders of the corporation. Current executives and managers need to make it a significant part of their jobs to develop their own successors.

There are many ways for managers and executives to provide professional development opportunities for staff. Each organization will have its own unique set of circumstances and opportunities from which to develop an approach.

Following are some specific strategies to consider:

- ◆ Mentoring—with experienced leaders within or outside the organization;
- ◆ Coaching—based on developing and implementing employee-specific professional development plans;
- ◆ Job rotation—to expose employees to other parts of the organization;

- ◆ Graduate education—ranging from individual courses to certificate programs to degree programs;
- ◆ Training—to focus on specific skills related to leadership;
- ◆ Job challenges—based on assignments that force employees to stretch their capabilities (see sidebar).

Agency leaders must present these strategies in the proper context of professional development. All too often, a challenging assignment (such as managing a difficult unit) can be seen as a punishment rather than an opportunity. Executives and managers must create a shared understanding of the purpose of these assignments with those who will undertake them.

Since these assignments are, by their very nature, a stretch for the employee, it is important that the employee be supported in the effort. Support can be provided through regular opportunities for stress relief, permission to fail, compensation and recognition, technical assistance and consultation when needed, and the resources needed to succeed.<sup>10</sup>

Whatever strategies are chosen, it is important to capitalize on them to the greatest extent possible. Leadership must help employees learn from these experiences. It is essential to debrief during and after the assignment to process the experiences. Ask the employee, “What happened?” “What did you learn?” and “What, if anything, would you do differently?”

**Self-directed development.** Staff from the “Generation X” and “Millennial” cohorts (born between 1985 and 2004) who will be tomorrow’s leaders view their jobs and careers differently than the “baby boomers” who occupy most of today’s leadership positions. They tend to be impatient, pragmatic, and unwilling to wait around for years or decades to make it to the top. They want to know, “What do I need to do to succeed and advance?” The good news is that there is a great deal that an individual employee can do to enhance her potential for leading and his chances of getting a managerial or leadership position.

Leadership can be learned, but it also must be earned. It is important that aspiring leaders not only acquire the skills and experiences that will enable them to lead; they must also demonstrate by their behaviors that they have integrity and are trustworthy. Leadership is based on trust, and without it, you cannot lead. Preparing for leadership requires conscious effort and hard work. It takes time, may take money, may involve relocation, demands a full engagement of intellect

<b>Examples of Job Challenges</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Assignments to Other Functions
<input type="checkbox"/> Managing in a New Area or Function
<input type="checkbox"/> Shift from Line to Staff Role
<input type="checkbox"/> Launching a New Project or Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Participating on a Reengineering Team
<input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with A Crisis Situation
<input type="checkbox"/> Participating in the Hiring or Promotional Process
<input type="checkbox"/> Representing the Agency to Outside Interests or the Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Managing Multiple Locations
<input type="checkbox"/> Covering for a Colleague During Absence
<input type="checkbox"/> Serving on Cross Functional Teams
<input type="checkbox"/> Participating in Labor Negotiations
<input type="checkbox"/> Managing a Vendor Contract
<input type="checkbox"/> Serving on a Community Task Force
<input type="checkbox"/> Performing Community Outreach
<input type="checkbox"/> Managing a Group with Diverse Ethnicities
<input type="checkbox"/> Managing a Group with Diverse Generations
<input type="checkbox"/> Designing and Conducting Training

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and emotions, and requires a willingness to step outside of one's comfort zone regularly and for extended periods.

Leadership skills and behaviors must be learned, practiced, and mastered. The problem is that opportunities are not always available in every organization. I have often heard the lament from probation and parole staff seeking supervisory positions that they cannot be promoted because they lack supervisory experience. "How," they ask, "can I get supervisory experience when I am not allowed to because I lack that very experience?" A classic Catch-22, but there is an answer.

To get the experience you need but can't get inside your organization, go outside of it. I don't mean leaving the organization but rather looking outside it for leadership development experiences in the community and in professional organizations with which you are involved. The opportunities are there. "(I)n the course of their lives, most people must take on leadership roles and participate in leadership processes to carry out their commitments to larger social entities—the organizations where they work, social or volunteer groups of which they are a part, the neighborhoods where they live, and the professional groups with which they identify. These leadership positions may be formal positions infused with authority ...or they may be informal roles with little official authority."<sup>11</sup>

Your opportunity may be found in faith-based organizations, athletic leagues, first aid squads, volunteer fire companies, non-profit and charitable organizations, food banks, homeless shelters, or community development groups; the list is endless. Few organizations will say that they already have enough help. Further, because many volunteers prefer working in direct services, managerial or leadership positions are often available to others—you. In many ways, managing a volunteer workforce can be more challenging than a paid one!

Professional organizations also provide a wealth of opportunities for leadership. Whether at the local, state, regional, or national level, these associations need dedicated people willing to get the job done, and that means taking on leadership positions. These can include association officer, committee chair, or conference planning positions.

While focusing on outside opportunities can be productive, don't neglect the time you spend at work. Even if you can't gain the position you seek now, there are many things you can do within your agency to enhance your potential.

- ◆ **Volunteer!** Make it known that you are willing to take on assignments to build your portfolio of experience. This might include conducting training, serving on committees, or representing the agency on an inter-agency group. The growth of inter-agency partnerships and collaborations in community corrections provides many such leadership opportunities.

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- ◆ **Ask to be involved.** Let the boss know that you are interested, available, and willing to assist. Even if nothing is available at the moment, you'll be on record when something is. The act of making known your interest in being involved will be a plus in itself.
  - ◆ **Share your knowledge and expertise.** Share information you learn at conferences and workshops. Show interest in helping the organization and other staff. Offer to mentor or coach new employees.
  - ◆ **Seek out in-house transfer opportunities.** Find ways to broaden your exposure to and knowledge of the entire organization. This will also help you work with other supervisors and managers and show them what you can do.
  - ◆ **Consider seeking promotions to other parts of the agency.** Sometimes it's necessary make a leap to a new area or division, one that may not be your top area of interest or expertise. These opportunities can often be the greatest learning experiences.
  - ◆ **Find a mentor.** Seek out someone who can give you honest feedback and help you maximize what you learn from your growth experiences. Mentors can be from inside or outside your agency, but they should know the business, be interested in you and your future, and be people you trust.

Inside and outside of your agency, there are many opportunities for aspiring leaders to gain experience and build their portfolios. The many competencies that have been identified can be daunting. To help keep this all in perspective and manage it well, it is important to develop a personal professional development plan. This will help not only to identify needed competencies, but to document experiences, identify lessons learned, and measure progress toward your leadership development goals. Having such a plan will be a very helpful complement to any coaching or mentoring that you receive.

### **Putting Together a Good Team**

It is possible, and in fact vitally important, for community corrections agencies to begin a process of developing their leaders of the future. The process need not be expensive in terms of financial or staff resources.

A good example of an effective and inexpensive leader development program can be found in the Solano County (California) Probation Department.<sup>12</sup> That agency's effort has produced tangible benefits for both the current and the next generation of leaders, including improved communication, increased collaboration, positive employee perspectives on professional development, and increased numbers of applicants for supervisory positions.

The leader development process takes time to complete; there is no "leader pill" or transformative 2-day course. A commitment by the community corrections organization, starting at the top but involving staff at all levels, is needed to

develop leaders and build that depth and strength on the bench. All the pieces are ready to be put in place. Excellent tools and proven strategies are available. Ambitious people, willing to work and develop themselves, exist in all agencies. Current managers can take the lead in training and coaching the next generation.

**T**he challenge to the top leadership in community corrections is clear. We need to ensure that when the time comes for a leadership transition, there are people with the right skills and experience to step up to the plate and assume the mantle of leadership. ■

### Notes

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For more information:

William Burrell  
Associate Professor  
Temple University  
Gladfelter Hall, 5th Floor  
1115 W. Berks Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19122-6089  
215-204-3051

