



YEAR-IN-REVIEW REPORT

Fiscal Year 2003

United States Probation and Pretrial Services System

Proud to Serve the Court and Protect the Community

United States Probation and Pretrial Services System

Year-in-Review Report

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Prepared by the Office of Probation and Pretrial Services, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, in cooperation with the Chiefs Advisory Group

August 2004

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Introduction

On behalf of the officers and support staff of the United States Probation and Pretrial Services System, we present this report, our third annual overview of national statistics and accomplishments.

Across the country, federal probation and pretrial services officers work in large metropolitan centers serving thousands of people, in small one-person offices covering vast but sparsely populated rural areas, and in many places in between. The system is national, but each officer's focus is local. In carrying out their responsibilities to serve the federal courts and safeguard the public, officers reach out to their communities every day.

Officers reach out when they investigate the backgrounds of people who come before the court, when they seek substance abuse or mental health treatment for them, or when they link them with services they need, including housing, jobs, or training. In doing so, officers form valuable partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, treatment providers, social service agencies, businesses, schools, and vocational training centers.

The community is at the heart of probation and pretrial services system work. The focus is on helping people remain in the community as law-abiding and productive members, while at the same time working to ensure that they do not pose a threat to public safety. Helping them find gainful employment, making sure they stay away from drugs and alcohol, and referring them to counseling if necessary are all part of the probation and pretrial services time-honored goal to make a positive difference in the lives of people under supervision. A letter of appreciation from an ex-offender to his former probation officer in the Eastern District of Michigan aptly illustrates the impact of the attention he received while under supervision:

I will remember you and how you helped me for the rest of my life. . . . I am certain that I am not the first and only person that you have gone overboard to help who [has] made mistakes and made bad choices and poor judgment. I hope they all appreciated your wisdom and caring ability as much as I did.

The efforts of the men and women who comprise the system truly benefit individuals and communities nationwide every day. They do important work, and they do it well. Here are just a few examples of how the hard work yields positive outcomes:

- Ninety-eight percent of the judges surveyed by an independent contractor found the pretrial and presentence reports officers prepare for the courts to be “good” or “very good.”
- Ninety-six percent of pretrial defendants and 92 percent of offenders do not commit new criminal conduct while under supervision.

- Community supervision by probation and pretrial services officers costs taxpayers only 15 percent of what incarceration costs.
- Offenders under supervision whose term expired in 2003 paid \$324 million in fines, restitution, and assessments. They made further contributions to society by paying taxes and child support.

We are proud of the success of the United States Probation and Pretrial Services System. We hope this report contributes to public understanding of the pivotal role the system plays in the federal criminal justice process.

John M. Hughes
Assistant Director
Office of Probation and Pretrial Services
Administrative Office of the United States Courts

Gary G. Howard
Chief Probation Officer
District of Kansas
Chair, Chiefs Advisory Group

About the Probation and Pretrial Services System

Mission and mandate

To assist the federal courts in the fair administration of justice, to protect the community, and to bring about long-term positive change in individuals under supervision.

Who we are

We are the 8,187 employees of the United States Probation and Pretrial Services System, serving the 94 federal judicial districts in more than 500 locations across the country.

What we do

- Investigate the backgrounds of defendants and offenders.
- Provide to the courts information necessary to make informed release and sentencing decisions.
- Supervise defendants and offenders by monitoring their activities in the community and manage any risk these individuals may pose to the public.
- As part of supervision, direct defendants and offenders to court-ordered services, including substance abuse testing and treatment, mental health treatment, training, or employment assistance.

How we are administered

The Judicial Conference of the United States makes policy for the administration of the United States courts. The Criminal Law Committee of the Judicial Conference specifically oversees the federal probation and pretrial services system.

The Administrative Office of the United States Courts, under the leadership of the Judicial Conference, provides service to the courts in three essential areas: administrative support, program management, and policy development. In the Administrative Office, the Office of Probation and Pretrial Services in particular guides and supports federal probation and pretrial services system programs and operations.

The Chiefs Advisory Group, made up of eight probation and pretrial services chiefs elected to represent districts in various regions of the country, provides advice and assistance on matters—including policies, procedures, and programs—that affect the federal probation and pretrial services system as a whole.

Locally, chief probation and pretrial services officers are responsible for fulfilling the federal probation and pretrial services system's mission and mandate. They answer to the courts they serve.

National Statistics

PRETRIAL SERVICES

Pretrial Services Case Activations

Population Size and Composition

There were 95,492 pretrial cases activated during fiscal year 2003. This represents a nearly seven percent increase from the previous year.

Nature of the Charge

Drug offenses represent the largest single type of charge filed followed by immigration and fraud (see figure 1). With the exception of drug cases (down 2%), immigration cases (up 2%), and weapons/firearms (up 2%), the proportional representation of each charge type is within one percentage point of the charge profile for fiscal year 2002.

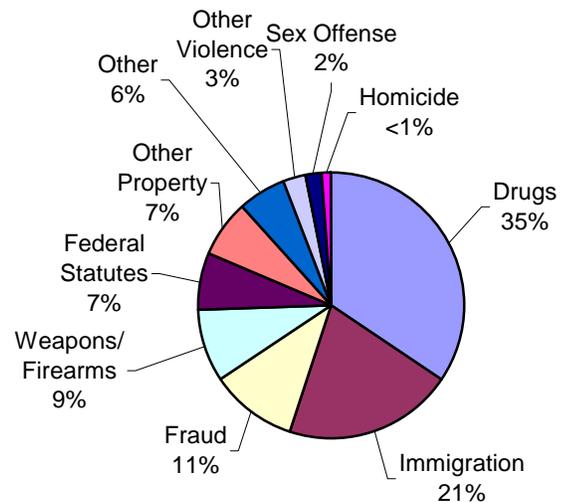


FIGURE 1. NATURE OF THE CHARGE

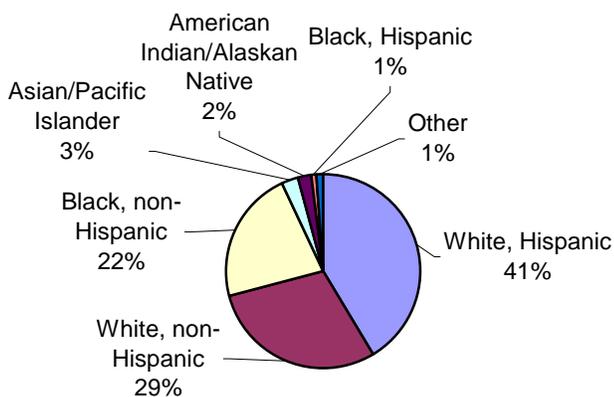


FIGURE 2. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Demographics

The fiscal year 2003 defendant population is 85 percent male—a one percent increase over the gender profile in fiscal years 2001 and 2002. There is also minor change in the population's race and ethnicity, with white Hispanics representing the largest single race/ethnicity category (see figure 2).

The largest percentage of defendants (24 percent) falls into the 18-25-age range, but the defendants over 40 (ages 41-50 and over 50 combined) equal 25 percent (see figure 3). The age profile is similar to those for fiscal years 2001 and 2002.

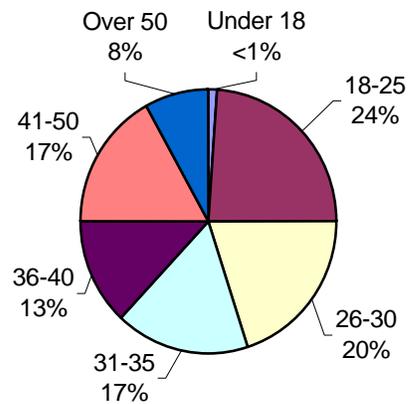


FIGURE 3. AGE

Pretrial Services Supervision

Title 18 § 3142 requires judicial officers to order the release or detention of federal defendants pending trial. If a defendant is released, it is done under conditions determined to be the least restrictive necessary to reasonably assure that the defendant will appear in court for all further proceedings and not endanger the safety of any other person or the community. Among the release conditions that may be imposed is pretrial services supervision.

The Supervision Population

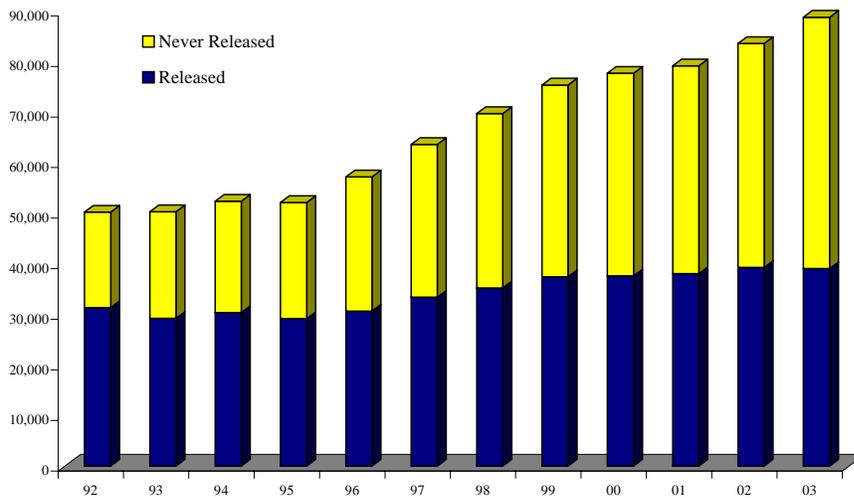
During fiscal year 2003, the number of defendants received for pretrial services supervision was 33,681. An additional 1,843 were placed on pretrial diversion¹ supervision, for a total population of 35,524. This represents a 1.8 percent decrease over the number received for supervision in fiscal year 2002.

The number of defendants under pretrial services supervision is considerably lower than the number of pretrial case activations because approximately 20 percent of the defendants are released on their own recognizance (without a condition of pretrial services supervision) and the others are detained in custody.

Of the 88,735 cases closed during the year, 56 percent were never released at any time between arrest and the conclusion of their cases. The detention rate was the highest in 12 years, as there has been a small but steady increase since fiscal year 1992 when the rate was 38 percent (see figure 4).

¹ Pretrial diversion is an alternative to prosecution that seeks to divert certain candidates from traditional criminal justice processing into a program of community supervision administered by the pretrial services or probation office.

FIGURE 4. DEFENDANTS RELEASED



Other Alternatives to Detention

In addition to or in lieu of pretrial services supervision, the court may order other release conditions. By far the most common of these is testing for the use of drugs or alcohol, a condition imposed on 19,608 defendants. Further, this year 6,188 defendants received substance abuse treatment from local providers under contract to federal probation and pretrial services offices. Fewer defendants (1,599) received mental health treatment, but the number represents a 10 percent increase from fiscal year 2002. Other types of additional release conditions implemented by pretrial services this year included the electronic monitoring of home confinement restrictions imposed on 4,016 defendants and the placement of 1,501 defendants in shelter facilities.

Pretrial Release Outcomes

In fiscal year 2003, pretrial services closed 38,871 cases of defendants who had been released to the community and their cases reached final adjudication. Of the defendants released pending trial in fiscal year 2003, the large majority appeared in court as required and were not rearrested (see figure 5). Eighty percent of those released to the community satisfactorily completed their term of supervision. Only two percent failed to appear (FTA) for a court proceeding and two percent each were revoked because they were (a) rearrested for a new felony charge or (b) rearrested for a new misdemeanor. The release of 14 percent of defendants was revoked for “technical” violations of their release conditions. In these cases, the pretrial services officer reported to the court violations of conditions such as home confinement, refraining from drug or alcohol use, or travel conditions.

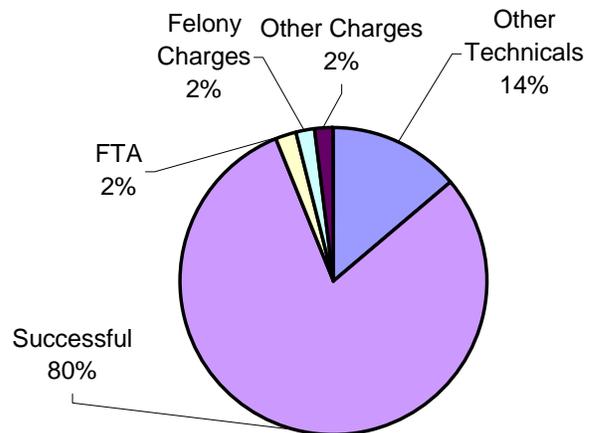


FIGURE 5. PRETRIAL RELEASE OUTCOMES

PROBATION

Presentence Investigations

Selection of an appropriate sentence is one of the most important decisions made in the criminal justice system. The primary tool for helping the court fulfill this responsibility is the presentence investigation report. The Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure assign the task of conducting presentence investigations to United States probation officers. During fiscal year 2003, probation officers completed 67,513 presentence investigations for the courts, an increase of seven percent from fiscal year 2002.

Supervision

Population Size and Composition

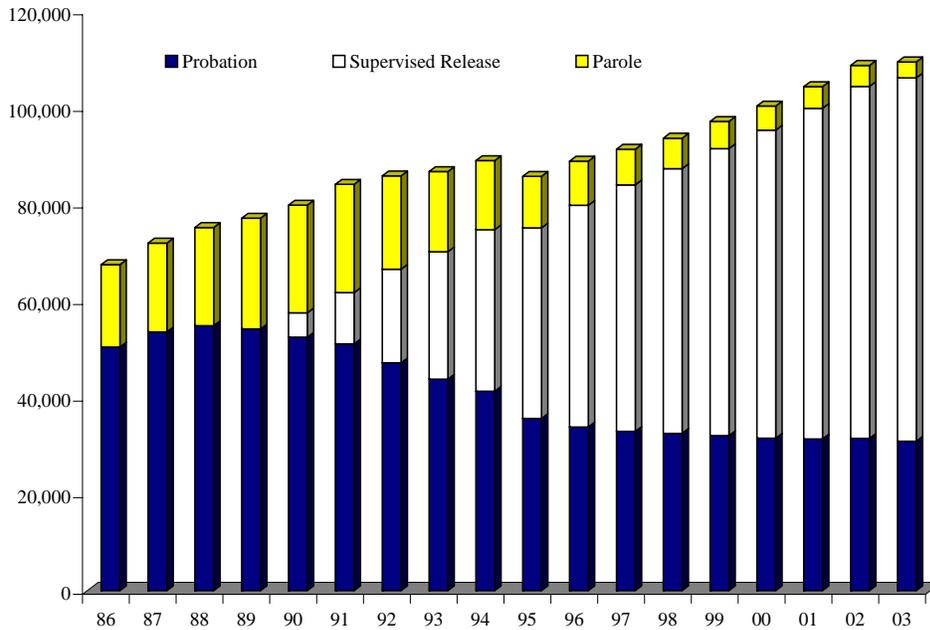
Federal probation officers had a total of 164,435 offenders under supervision during the fiscal year. As of September 30, 2003, the population stood at 110,621, an increase of two percent over the end-of-year count in fiscal year 2002.

Type of Supervision

When compared to last year, the number of supervised releasees—offenders sentenced to a term of supervision to follow a determinate sentence to imprisonment—grew at a rate of five percent. The parole population declined by 9 percent, and the number of probationers increased by one percent.

Of the offenders under supervision on the last day of the fiscal year, 68 percent were serving terms of supervised release, 28 percent were sentenced to probation, and 3 percent were on parole. Over the years, the proportion of offenders under supervision who had served time in prison increased from less than one-third in 1986 to two-thirds of the population in 2003 (see figure 6).

FIGURE 6. TYPE OF SUPERVISION



This long-standing trend in the changing nature of the supervision population reflects a combination of full implementation of the Sentencing Reform Act (effective November 1, 1987) and legislation in the mid-1980s that established mandatory minimum prison terms for many drug offenses.²

Nature of the Offense

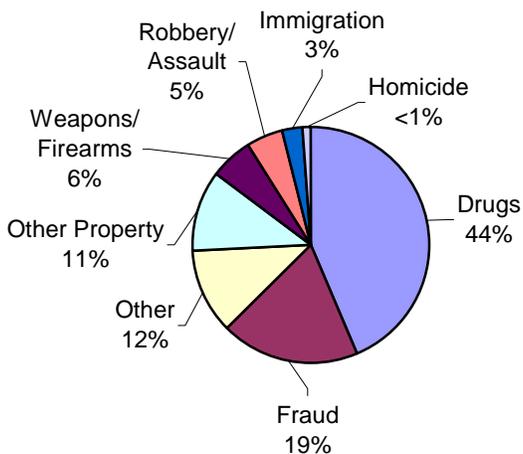


FIGURE 7. NATURE OF THE OFFENSE

The distribution of offense types in fiscal year 2003 was nearly the same as that in 2001 and 2002. The largest percentage of offenders committed drug offenses and just under one-third were convicted of fraud or other property crimes (see figure 7). Immigration cases comprise a significantly smaller proportion of the post-conviction population than the pretrial services population—3 versus 21 percent—because many immigration defendants are deported rather than released to post-conviction supervision.

² The Sentencing Reform Act (Pub. L. 95-536) created a guidelines-based determinate sentencing system, abolished parole, made probation a sentence in its own right, and created terms of supervised release that could be imposed to follow imprisonment.

Demographics

The demographic distribution of offenders under supervision on the last day of fiscal year 2003 is essentially the same as last year's profile.

The offender supervision population is 79 percent male and 66 percent white (see figure 8). Hispanic offenders represent a considerably smaller proportion of this population than of pretrial defendants because they are more likely than non-Hispanics to be charged with immigration offenses and thus more likely to be deported than released to supervision.

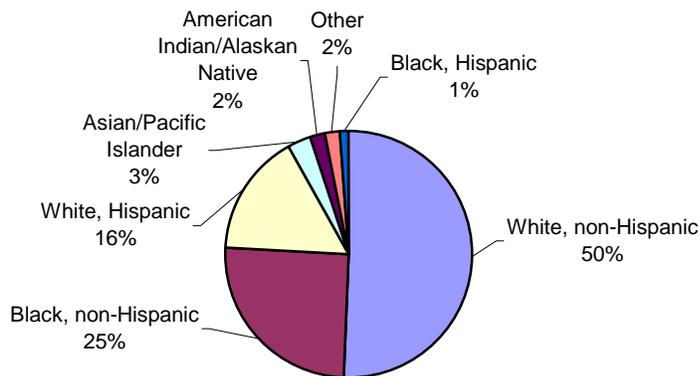


FIGURE 8. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Over 45 percent of the offenders under supervision—for the last three years--are over the age of 40 (see figure 9).

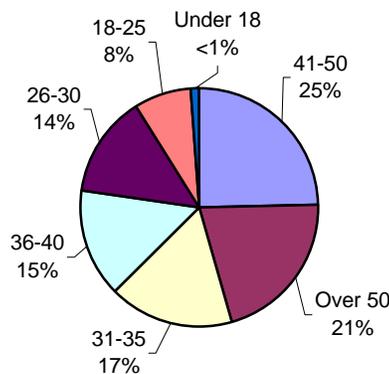


FIGURE 9. AGE

Treatment Services

In 2003, the Administrative Office refined methodologies for differentiating between substance abuse testing and treatment cases. The refined methodologies have been applied back to 1999 in figure 10 below. Comparisons with past years should use the more refined numbers.

Substance Abuse: This year, 32,419 offenders—29 percent of the supervision population—received substance abuse treatment from local providers under contract to federal probation offices. Over the last year, the substance abuse treatment population increased by two 2 percent.

Mental Health: A total of 9,905 offenders—nine percent of the supervision population—received mental health contract services during the year. Over the last year, the mental health treatment population increased by eight percent.

Description	Fiscal Year 1999	Fiscal Year 2000	Fiscal Year 2001	Fiscal Year 2002	Fiscal Year 2003
Substance Abuse Offenders Treated	23,458	26,387	28,312	31,839	32,419
Substance Abuse Offenders Tested	26,946	31,053	34,533	39,076	40,678
Mental Health Offenders Treated	5,301	6,148	7,597	9,340	9,905
Alternatives to Detention (ATD)					
ATD/Substance Abuse Treated	5,376	5,327	5,816	6,626	6,188
ATD/Substance Abuse Tested	6,112	6,932	8,463	9,905	9,359
ATD/Mental Health Treated	724	861	1,116	1,454	1,599
	12,212	13,120	15,395	17,985	17,146

FIGURE 10. NUMBER OF OFFENDERS RECEIVING TREATMENT

Supervision Outcomes³

In fiscal year 2003, 50,677 offenders were terminated from supervision, up 7 percent from the number removed in fiscal year 2002. Of these, 77 percent successfully terminated supervision (a 1 percent decrease over last year), 8 percent were terminated from active supervision or revoked due to a new offense,⁴ and 15 percent were revoked for a “technical violation” of release conditions such as remain on home confinement, refrain from use of drugs or alcohol, or participate in substance abuse or mental health treatment (see figure 11).



FIGURE 11. SUPERVISION OUTCOMES

³ Previous *Year-in-Review Reports* based supervision outcomes on removals. This year’s report more accurately presents outcomes based on cases that were terminated from supervision.

⁴ “Minor” offenses represent convictions for offenses for which the sentence is 90 days or less imprisonment, one year or less probation, or a fine. “Major” offenses are violations that include involvement in or conviction of serious offenses (including absconding from custody), arrest on another charge, or convicted and sentenced to more than 90 days imprisonment or more than one year probation.

National Initiatives

During fiscal year 2003, the United States Probation and Pretrial Services System took major steps to ensure continuous improvement of programs, systems, and services. Cutting costs, enhancing performance, and making workable plans for the future were among many important objectives for the year. Progress in several essential areas is briefly described below.

Stretching Tight Resources

Severe budget constraints posed the biggest challenge of the year: how to do more with less and still carry out the mission. Serious limits on spending compelled the system to rethink strategies and approaches to the work. The system responded by adopting measures to help ensure that scarce funds were spent wisely. In a memorandum dated January 26, 2004, Leonidas Ralph Mecham, Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, expressed his gratitude for the system's efforts to identify and adopt cost-saving initiatives:

The steps you have taken to date to lower costs while still fulfilling your responsibilities to the court and to the community have been most impressive. In particular, I applaud your efforts to increase significantly the number of early terminations of lower-risk, compliant supervision cases. . . .

As the result of implementing new policy, the rate of early terminations increased by more than 50 percent. Another initiative to use less expensive drug-testing methods and treatment approaches slowed workload growth and reduced costs for these services. Also, many districts adopted a modified--and less labor-intensive--presentence report for use in cases in which more comprehensive investigations and reports are not necessary.

The tight budget will continue to be a fact of life for the foreseeable future. As the system continues to strive to live within its means, it also must continue to keep its all-important mission in focus.

Maximizing Supervision Policy and Practice

The Judicial Conference approved the publication of two monographs that guide officers who supervise individuals released by the court to the community. The new monographs are the product of a three-year project focused on updating and improving policy and practice for both pretrial and post-conviction supervision. A work group--which included representatives from the Administrative Office, the Federal Judicial Center, and courts nationwide--was appointed by the Director of the Administrative Office to study the supervision function. The group examined factors that have influenced supervision (such as changes in the law and in the supervision population) and approaches that have been effective. The result of their efforts is policy that clearly defines the role of the officer in supervision, as well as the desired outcomes of supervision. Administrative Office and Federal Judicial Center staff collaborated on a Federal Judiciary Television Network broadcast and supervisor training sessions held in each circuit to help implement the new policy.

Continuing to Put Safety First

It is important that officers obtain the skills necessary to perform their jobs safely and learn how to handle the serious threats that may arise when they are working in the community. For that reason, officer safety training continued to be a priority in fiscal year 2003 as it has the past several years. The effort to develop and deliver a comprehensive safety program nationwide continued. The goal of the program is to provide uniform safety training so that all officers are equipped with strategies for staying safe while on the job. The training is delivered by officers appointed to serve as safety instructors in their districts. This year the Administrative Office completed the initial training to prepare these safety instructors to provide the comprehensive officer safety program in their respective districts. Also, the Administrative Office issued the handy reference tool *The Officer Safety Handbook*, which contains a wealth of information on topics including mental and physical conditioning and safety awareness.

Bringing Treatment Experts Together

A select group of probation and pretrial services managers, officers, and specialists was brought together this year to form the National Expert Panel. The panel members' mandate is to lend their expertise and experience to the task of developing national policies, procedures, and practices in the area of treatment services. The panel will focus on substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, alternatives to detention, and contract and non-contract services. The panel members—one from each circuit—have agreed to keep abreast of the treatment services needs of the probation and pretrial services offices in their circuits and to communicate with them. Among the group's goals are to put in place better practices, develop community resources, save treatment dollars, and, in general, share information and ideas.

Enhancing Officers' Access to Information

PACTS^{ECM} (Probation and Pretrial Services Automated Case Tracking System-Electronic Case Management), the user-friendly data system introduced in fiscal year 2001, continued to evolve as a valuable case tracking and case management tool for officers. By the end of fiscal year 2003, 59 districts had completed their implementation of PACTS^{ECM}. To expand PACTS^{ECM} capabilities further, the Community Corrections Technology Project was launched to provide an interface between PACTS^{ECM} and personal digital assistants (PDAs). The goal was to allow officers the same access to information in the field that they have at their desks and thus improve their ability to carry out their field responsibilities. The PDAs have yielded many benefits, including that they eliminate the need for officers to carry a cumbersome field book, make it possible for officers to add chronological entries while they are out working in the community, and give officers quick access to helpful information, including phone numbers for emergency contacts and treatment providers.

Assessing the System to Plan for the Future

The Administrative Office undertook a strategic assessment of the probation and pretrial services system in 2000 to assess the future mission and needs of the system. The study, conducted by an independent consultant, considered all aspects of the system's operations—organizational,

administrative, managerial, and programmatic. This year the contractor submitted its findings and recommendations, which were based on information including interviews with key stakeholders in all three branches of government; surveys of district judges, magistrate judges, and chief probation and pretrial services officers; and site visits involving 170 staff from 20 districts. The Administrative Office is reviewing the recommendations, which will be a critical tool in identifying system goals, formulating strategies to reach those goals, and, in general, planning for the future.

Pausing to Reflect on the Officer's Many Roles

In July, the American Probation and Parole Association celebrated "Probation, Parole & Community Supervision Officers' Week" to honor probation and parole officers and the important work they carry out on behalf of their communities. The event focused on the "many hats" officers wear in fulfilling their responsibilities. Federal probation and pretrial services officers joined in the celebration by sharing their thoughts about the important roles they play. The following are excerpts from short pieces written for the occasion:

It is essential to help the offender understand the rewards and personal satisfaction of consistent, law-abiding conduct that goes beyond basic compliance with court-ordered requirements. That gives him or her hope and something realistic for which to strive.

–U.S. Probation Officer Geneviève V. DeBlois (New York Northern)

No matter how abominable the crime or how wicked the offender's behavior, the probation officer's mission is to address the needs and problems of the offender. Probation officers need to be undaunted by offenders' poverty, poor education, mental illnesses, addictions, violence, victimizations, abuses, infirmities, and disabilities. . . . [Offenders] need skilled probation officers who are dedicated to them and concerned about them.

–Deputy Chief Probation Officer Gary Zilli (Michigan Eastern)

We are an impartial, objective, and reliable source of information and feedback. Helping offenders make sensible and well thought-out, life-altering decisions not only makes them productive members of the community, but helps them learn to become more self-reliant and trusting of their own good judgment.

–U.S. Probation Officer Kit Lemon (Nebraska)

District Highlights

At the local level during fiscal year 2003, probation and pretrial services offices across the country launched innovative programs and projects and sought viable solutions to problems. Their goals were impressive. They sought knowledge so that they could do a better job. They found ways to boost their efficiency and save time and money. They took steps to make a difference in people's lives. They saw a need and addressed it with energy and creativity. Described below are just a few of these efforts.

Learning How to Supervise Corporate Defendants in the Cruise Ship Industry

The probation office in the Southern District of Florida organized and trained a team of officers from across the nation in how to handle the supervision of a rather specialized corporate defendant, the cruise ship industry. Spurred by an increase in the number of cruise ship industry defendants received for supervision--usually for breaking environmental laws--Florida Southern decided to learn more about the industry and then to share its knowledge. Florida Southern brought together experts from the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Attorney's Office to conduct the training, which included both classroom and shipboard instruction. As a result, officers from California, New York, Texas, and Florida were trained in how to conduct shipboard inspections, which are the means to ensure that the ships are complying with environmental requirements. The training created a team of officers who now are considerably more informed about the cruise ship industry and much better equipped to supervise cruise ships docked in ports across the country.

Saving Time and Money Through Videoconferencing

The pretrial services office in the Western District of Texas--in collaboration with the magistrate judge, other district court staff, and the U.S. Marshals Service--put videoconferencing technology to work to improve the process of conducting initial appearance hearings at Fort Hood, the largest military base in the United States. Before videoconferencing was put in place, the number of cases that originated at Fort Hood--typically 50 a month--required the magistrate judge and the pretrial services officer frequently to make the 130-mile round trip from Waco, Texas, to the military base. Videoconferencing, which allows hearing participants who are miles apart to see and communicate with each other as though they are at the same location, has saved the pretrial services office time and money--an estimated \$40,000 during fiscal year 2003 in travel expenses and non-productive work time. The Texas Western probation office also uses videoconferencing, and soon the equipment will be available to the Federal Public Defender and appointed counsel to use in interviewing their clients.

Planning Ahead to Handle Critical Incidents

The pretrial services office in the Central District of California established its own Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team. Six officers and one support staff member make up the team, and the deputy chief pretrial services officer serves as adviser. The purpose of the team is to develop a strategy to prepare for, respond to, and recover from critical incidents. The pretrial services office defines critical incidents as events such as death, serious injuries, and hostage or threat situations that may happen to any of the pretrial services staff (or even court staff) while in the office, in the field, or at home. These incidents may impact one person, a

group, or a whole community (such as an earthquake or riots). In June the pretrial services office hosted the Ninth Circuit Critical Incident Stress Management Training Program. The four-day training, conducted by an expert in CISM from the Federal Judicial Center, brought together 50 probation and pretrial services staff members from districts throughout the circuit. The California Central pretrial services team coordinates with CISM teams in nearby districts to share information.

Making the Transition From Prison to the Community Smoother

How do you help offenders handle the enormous challenges they face when they reenter society after serving a prison term, especially the challenge of finding a job? The Employment Team in the Eastern District of Missouri probation office saw better collaboration between agencies as the first step in improving the quality and scope of assistance to offenders in their efforts to get and keep jobs. The team brought together representatives from the Federal Bureau of Prisons and area halfway houses to address concerns, share perspectives, and brainstorm on how to make the prison-to-community transition smoother. In addition to establishing regular meetings and ways to share information, the new partners pooled their expertise and knowledge to train probation staff in helping offenders find employment and to plan and carry out several offender job fairs. Several hundred offenders were hired as a result of the fairs.

The Employment Team worked with one of the local halfway houses to convince UPS and other companies that offer high-paying jobs to create opportunities for offenders who apply for positions. The team also established relationships with several nonprofit agencies, including faith-based organizations. Several of these organizations focus on helping women get hired, one organization that received a grant to place female offenders in nontraditional jobs and another that launched a pilot project to provide job readiness training to women in prison.

Sharing ideas, points of view, and resources has reaped benefits for everyone involved. The efforts of the Employment Team and its partner agencies have increased offenders' job opportunities and therefore their chance for success. A point worth noting is that the Employment Team made these impressive strides to help more offenders become productive, tax-paying citizens at a time when the district's supervision caseload was growing.

Streamlining the Drug-Testing Process

To cut the costs of testing offenders for drug use, the Northern District of New York designed and built collection/testing rooms in the Syracuse and Albany probation offices. This initiative made it possible to collect urine specimens in house and also to get instant results on drug tests, which allows officers to confront offenders immediately when they test positive. The unique rooms are divided by a windowed wall so that the offender enters on one side to produce the sample and the probation office staff enters on the other side to observe the collection process. The on-site laboratory has provided New York Northern with a safe, sanitary, and convenient environment for urine collection and saved the district the cost of using a contractor to conduct the testing. The money saved has allowed New York Northern to hire technicians to operate the laboratory, schedule tests, and collect and test the specimens. That means officers can spend less time on conducting tests and more time on mission-critical duties.

Starting Supervision on the Right Foot

The probation office in the District of Kansas launched an orientation program that gives offenders a chance to gain a better understanding of supervision at the very start of their term of supervision. The program, piloted in the Wichita office, brings offenders and their families together to meet with probation staff and learn what supervision means and what it requires. It gives offenders and their families a forum to ask the questions that are important to them and also gives officers a chance to establish rapport and present themselves as a source of help and encouragement. The probation staff has received positive feedback from the offenders and families who have participated. Participants note that the program alleviated their anxiety and clarified their misconceptions about supervision. As a result of the program, when offenders meet with their supervising officer for the first time, they come already knowing what they need to do to succeed while under supervision.

Taking an Opportunity to Educate Defendants

The pretrial services office in the Southern District of Alabama found an opportunity to educate defendants when they come to the office to meet with their pretrial services officers. The office mounted a TV and carousel DVD player in the lobby and uses it to show educational programs. Now, defendants use the time constructively by viewing programs that expand their knowledge on topics ranging from drug use to domestic violence to how cases go through the court system.

Giving Defendants the Skills They Need to Cope

The pretrial services office in the District of Nevada revamped its long-standing drug awareness program for defendants and in the process saved money. Three consultants were required to conduct the old program; now, one skilled counselor facilitates a redesigned program that teaches defendants the skills they need to cope with everyday life and overcome their drug or alcohol problems. The program runs for four sessions and costs less than \$100 per defendant. Thirty defendants have successfully completed the program, which has been very well received.

Maximizing Supervision Resources in a New Location

The probation office in the District of Utah boosted the effectiveness of its supervision resources by establishing a new central supervision office. The district closed an office in Murray, Utah, and opened a new office not far from the courthouse in Salt Lake City to accommodate the supervision unit. Staffed by the deputy chief, a supervising probation officer, seven supervision officers, and two support staff members, the new office has given officers better access to many of the people they supervise. It is adjacent to the Federal Bureau of Prisons contract Community Corrections Center (CCC), which houses inmates and pretrial defendants. Locating the supervision unit on CCC property has enabled officers to respond quickly both to the CCC staff and to CCC residents who are under probation office supervision. The new location has allowed officers to increase their contact with the CCC residents and to save travel time to and from the courthouse. An added benefit is that many persons under supervision who are not CCC residents come to the CCC for drug testing, and officers have been able to increase their contacts with these individuals as well. About 80 percent of the district's cases are now supervised from the new location.

Giving Offenders the Incentive to Do Well

The probation office in the District of Massachusetts developed a program expressly for offenders who are reentering the community after serving time in prison. Patterned after a program run by the Boston Police Department and the Suffolk County House of Correction, the probation office program brings offenders before a panel to receive a "carrot and stick" incentive to succeed while under supervision. The panel's message is simple but forceful. They tell the offenders that law enforcement will be watching them closely, that if they return to crime, they very likely will receive further prison time. The panel balances that warning with a reminder to the offenders that if they want help readjusting to life after prison, the community will offer services and support to them.

The panel is made up of state and federal prosecutors, local social service providers, and community mentors. The mentors, some of whom have done prison time themselves and have belonged to street gangs, talk frankly to the offenders, offer them help, and serve as powerful examples that it is possible to rise above a destructive lifestyle. During 2003, 23 offenders, who had been newly released from prison and identified as high risk by the police department for involvement with gangs, drugs, and guns, appeared before three separate panels. The probation office plans to hold future panels at the local Community Sanction Center to reach offenders who still are in Bureau of Prisons custody. The program has received strong support from the court, and a district court judge has observed the panels.

Ensuring the Safety of All Staff

Addressing concern for the welfare of all staff members, the probation office in the Eastern District of California presented a two-day safety academy for support staff. The training featured classroom discussion and safety videos, as well as hands-on participation in basic defensive tactics and in scenarios designed to replicate potential threatening situations in real life. The training emphasized mental conditioning and awareness so that support staff members are prepared in advance to handle incidents that may occur in the office, such as volatile clients, or outside the office. The program, attended by 20 support staff members, was conducted by seven of the district's probation officers, several of whom have been specially trained in defensive tactics. A one-day Advanced Academy was held later in the year as a skills-builder, with about 15 attendees. The program has been exceptionally well-received by the attendees, and the trainers have received a lot of positive feedback.