



MISSION

The Georgia Department of Corrections protects the public by operating safe and secure facilities through the development of professional staff and effective offender management.

Timothy C. Ward, Commissioner

GOALS

- Address growth of state’s prison populations, contain corrections’ costs and increase efficiencies and effectiveness that result in better offender management.
- Improve public safety by reinvesting a portion of the savings into strategies that reduce crime and recidivism.
- Hold offenders accountable by strengthening community-based supervision, sanctions and services.

OVERVIEW

MODEL: DEPARTMENT’S STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF HB 1176

- Analyze criminal justice trends to understand factors driving jail, prison and probation populations
- Develop and implement policy options to generate savings and increase public safety
- Quantify costs and potential savings
- Reinvest in select, high risk communities and other prevention-oriented strategies
- Assess impact of reinvestment strategies and enhance the accountability of criminal justice system actors and policies

TARGET AREAS INFLUENCING PRISON POPULATIONS AND COST SAVING MEASURES

- Admissions to prison
- Length of stay in jail
- Length of stay in diagnostics
- Length of stay in state prison

Justice Reinvestment

According to a Pew Study in 2009, one in 13 Georgians are under some form of correctional supervision. The study ranked Georgia ninth in the overall population, having the fifth largest prison population in the United States. There are approximately 50,000 offenders in GDC facilities and over 160,000 people on probation. Despite the prison population’s growth, the Georgia recidivism rate has remained unchanged at around 30% throughout the past decade. Without reviewing and updating current policies, analysis indicates that prison population rates can increase by eight percent.

BACKGROUND

- Georgia House Bill (HB) 265 established the 2011 Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform.
- Council tasked to seek new ways to protect public safety while controlling the growth of prison cost.

GEORGIA HOUSE BILL 1176 PROVISIONS ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM IN THREE AREAS

- Sentencing and prison admissions
- Prison length-of-stay and parole
- Community supervision

INFORMATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Targets of Influence

- Any case that has not yet been sentenced to serve time in the prison system
- Invest in community supervision and thus reduce number of cases revoked to prison by probation and parole each year
- 10 Step Framework
- Developed March 2009
- Framework steps:
 1. Sort offenders by risk
 2. Community Impact Programs (CIP)
 3. Evidence-based programming
 4. Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) sentencing model/specialty courts
 5. Utilize technology to improve efficiencies and enhance supervision
 6. Impose swift, certain and proportionate sanctions
 7. Provide awards for probation officers and incentives for offenders
 8. Seamless transition from incarceration to probation (Reentry)
 9. Probation Accountability Report/COMPSTAT
 10. Probation Legislation

Community and Secure Alternatives for Substance use and Mental Health Resources

Day Reporting Centers

- 15 currently

Day Reporting Center Lite Program

- 17 circuits

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Centers (RSAT)

- 5 Probation RSATs
- 2 Integrated Treatment (dual diagnosis mental health) RSATs

Length of Stay

COUNTY JAILS

- Shorten length of time offenders spend in county jails before entering the state prison system by improving current practices by implementing: standardized sentences, electronic packets and proactive assessments.

STATE PRISONS

- Reduce the time offenders remain in custody without compromising public safety
- Sentencing Practices – suggest sentencing in months rather than years
- Coastal Category II – abbreviate intake process and design for offenders who will be in the system for less than two years and have very specific needs such as substance abuse
- Strategic Intervention Program - RSAT (6 months) - Intensive Reentry Program (IRP- 90 days, target non-violent offenders with a history of substance abuse); and Faith and Character Based Program (2 years)
- Other areas targeted for improvement and cost savings
 - Aging population
 - Mental health population
 - Faith-based dorms
 - Private providers
 - Parole collaboration
 - Tentative parole month
 - Performance Incentive Credit Program
 - Commuting certain sentences to probation

DIAGNOSTICS

- Quicker determination of offender's needs and risks to place them in the proper institution and programming
- **Logistics/Infrastructure** – Redesign locations for diagnostics and classification entry and flow be co-located together to increase efficiency and create a time and money savings
- **Paperwork/Communications** - forms and communication are now entered into the computerized system, SCRIBE
- **Shortened Diagnostic** – offenders who serve short sentences or have been out of the system for less than a year and meet the criteria can be processed for intake at Coastal State Prison. Diagnostics shortened from 30 to 10 days which resulted in 100 offenders being processed per day versus 100 per week
- **Transportation Hubs** – regional hubs established so local sheriff's offices could transport offenders entering the system to a central location. GDC would transport offender remainder of the way to diagnostic facilities. Results in monetary savings, as well as reduction of jail backlog and associated cost

House Bill 349

House Bill 349 was signed into law by Governor Deal on April 25, 2013, which followed up legislation to HB 1176.

MANDATORY MINIMUM SAFETY VALUE

DRUG TRAFFICKING

Can reduce sentence/fine by up to 50 percent, if offender was not the leader, did not possess or use a weapon, no death or serious injury occurred, no prior felony convictions, interest of justice will not be served by mandatory sentence

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

- Prosecution and Defense must agree
- Not eligible for earned time, early release or other sentence reduction measures
- Eligible for Transitional Centers during last year of sentence

CREATED GEORGIA COUNCIL ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- 15 member panel
- Requirements: must meet twice a year, four year terms, report every two years to the Governor, Office of Planning and Budget, Chair of House and Senate Appropriation, and Chair of House and Senate Judiciary

MEDICAL REPRIEVES

Board of Pardons and Paroles may issue a medical reprieve to an entirely incapacitated person suffering a progressively debilitating terminal illness

OTHER AREAS

- Hope Voucher (\$500 available for offenders receive their GED while incarcerated)
- Offender Pay Drug Screens (researching best practices on how to implement effectively)
- Limited Driving Permits for Accountability Courts (Allows permits for participants to attend treatment)

Senate Bill 365

- Governor Deal signed into law 2014; effective July 1, 2014; follow up legislation to HB1176 and HB349
- Focused on post-incarceration reforms suggested by the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform
- Developed and implement programs to assist adult offenders with reentry
- Provided liability protection to employers who hire former offenders who successfully completed GDC pre-release programs
- Created a Program Treatment Completion certificate, which went into effect February 2015