



PROBATION



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The Massachusetts Probation Service

Massachusetts Probation Supervision Month

87,251 Probation Cases Are Supervised Across the Commonwealth



New Probation Officers Erin Hudd and Joshua Garcia of Chelsea District Court maintain visibility in this city north of Boston.

The Massachusetts Probation Service has launched its observance of Probation Supervision Month 2015 across the state where approximately 800 line probation officers supervise 87,251 cases.

There are approximately 86,000 individuals under supervision. Eighty percent of high level probationers are men and 20 percent are women.

“Probation Officers work with defendants to help them address their challenges by encouraging them to get to the root of their problems, working with them to create a plan to address their issues, directing them to rehabilitative and therapeutic services all while holding them accountable,” said Probation Commissioner Edward J. Dolan.

Dolan added, “Public safety is paramount and Probation Officers work diligently to ensure safety in the community.”

A statistical glance at Massachusetts probationers—compiled by the agency’s Research Department—reveals a profile of the men and women under adult Risk/Need Probation supervision and the issues they deal with each day. Risk/Need is the highest level of supervision.

The following statistical overview represents individuals who were assessed using the Ohio Risk Assessment System’s (ORAS) Community Supervision Tool.

According to June 2015 statistics, 44.7 percent have criminal histories that date back to childhood. Of the 44.7 percent, 23.3 percent were charged with a misdemeanor offense while 21.4 percent had felony charges as juveniles.

Nearly 50 percent of offenders currently on probation have spent time in jail or a secure correctional facility. Substance abuse, lack of an education, as well as unemployment and under-employment are major challenges for the court-involved.

Seventy-six percent of offenders report that they have used illegal drugs. Forty-six percent did not graduate from high school. Fifty-five percent report current financial problems.

Probation Officers help to address offenders’ challenges by directing them to Probation and court-established programs such as specialty courts, Prisoner Re-Entry Programs, Parenting initiatives such as Mothers’, Womens’, and Fatherhood Programs.

Offenders with extensive criminal and or substance abuse backgrounds may be sentenced to one of 18 community corrections centers which offer intermediate sanctions such as education, drug testing and treatment.

GPS Monitoring: A Tool In the Supervision Tool Box

Everyday, judges across the state sentence probationers to wear a GPS monitoring device, one of the Massachusetts Probation Service’s supervision tools.

There are 3,000 individuals—offenders and alleged offenders—being monitored statewide seven days a week 24 hours a day by Probation.

“We are in the rehabilitation and the risk management business. Probation works with offenders to change the trajectory of their lives, enforce the orders of the court, and to enhance public safety in the community,” said Commissioner Edward J. Dolan. “The device is a tool that works in the context of a larger supervision plan.”

This supervision plan may include Probation Officers’ face to face contact with clients in the office and home visits, some unannounced. The plan is a collaboration between Probation Officer and defendant who identify

challenges and develop goals.

Coupled with the supervision plan, now referred to as Probationer Individual Change Agreement (PICA), is a protocol that governs the management of the bracelet and issuance of warrants.

“In an average day, the monitoring center handles 1,800 alerts with the vast majority resolved by staff. Of the 1,800 alerts, only 18-20 warrants are issued daily. This accounts for only 1% of alerts resulting in warrants,” said Thomas Pasquarello, Probation’s Electronic Monitoring Manager.

GPS MONITORING EQUIPMENT

Probation has a **Three-Check** process when distributing equipment.

- 1) Equipment is checked before it is delivered to the court.
- 2) When placed on defendant.
- 3) Before defendant leaves the court.

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School's Out: Probation Officers Work Hard To Steer Juveniles Away from Trouble

National statistics show that the summer months—with hours of idle time, the lack of structure school provides, and hours without adult supervision—are especially challenging for juveniles who are court-involved or under probation supervision.

Massachusetts Juvenile Court Probation Officers across the state have designed a number of programs and initiatives, partnered with local law enforcement agencies to provide activities, or have created a list of resources to keep juveniles on the right track.

Here are examples of how three county Juvenile Court Probation Departments—Berkshire, Middlesex, and Worcester—help steer youths in the right direction.

Berkshire County Juvenile Probation keeps court-involved youths busy with programs which capitalize on the rich arts and cultural scene of the area. One initiative is the Kinetic In the Courts Program, a pilot mentoring initiative, which pairs Williams College students with juveniles. The two college students and four juveniles select a community issue to brainstorm causes and solutions. The group chose bullying.

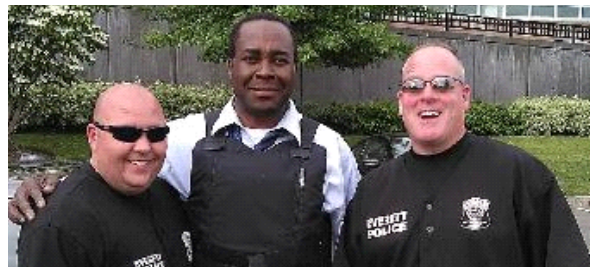
As part of their research, they met with the local school superintendent and teacher. Meetings are scheduled with the school committee and police. "They identified the problem, brainstormed on what needs to be changed and who has the power to change it," said Probation Officer Nancy Macauley.

The group will present their findings at the first Kinetic in the Courts graduation on August 13th at the Berkshire Juvenile Court.

"This is a great program that really engages our youth in problem solving," said Berkshire Juvenile Chief Probation Officer William Gale.

In another part of the state, Middlesex Juvenile Probation Officer II Paul Nwokeji works with the North Shore Gang Task Force to keep gang-affiliated youth on track. Nwokeji refers youths to summer employment offered by the City of Everett, volunteer opportunities for the Special Olympics, as well as summer camp activities at the local recreation center.

Worcester County Juvenile Probation Officer II Candido Diaz, assigned to the Dudley office, works with Southbridge Police's 20-year-old Cops N Kids summer program which features arts & crafts, physical activity, gardening, classes on nutrition and free breakfast and lunch. The program boasts an 85 percent reduction in juvenile delinquency in the last several years.



Left to right: Everett Police Officer Patrick Cassidy, Middlesex Juvenile POII Paul Nwokeji, and Police Officer Jeffrey Gilmore.

Legal Department Conducts Statewide Training on Probation Violations

Nearly 1,000 Probation Officers participated in one of 22 individual Violation of Probation statewide trainings which took place from June 2nd—July 17th.

The training was offered to Probation Officers in four court departments: Superior, District, Juvenile, and Boston Municipal Court (BMC). The sessions featured skill building, a review of legal concepts, improved court to court communication, a review of Probation's discretionary authority, cross-court department issues, practical tips, and a review of the new District Court/BMC rules which will become effective September 8th.

"Violations of probation are such a big part of our daily work and are such a crucial point of intervention in a probationer's life and term of probation. Our Probation Officers are most effective when we provide them with up-to-date training on the law, decision-making, and advocacy tools," Birnbaum said. "The ideas and energy generated from these trainings has been rewarding in formulating a training plan for future related trainings."

Trainers for the sessions included Probation Legal Unit staff: Legal Counsel Crispin Birnbaum, Deputy Legal Counsel Sarah Joss, and Administrative Attorney Natalie Lorenti.

The training was a collaborative effort with 21 Chief Probation Officers from across the state. The 21 Chiefs, who volunteered their time, included Stephen Ashe, Chicopee District; Carole Bambrick, Plymouth District; Roland Buoncuore, Waltham District; Maureen Chamberlain, Worcester District; Donald Chausse, New Bedford District; June Cotter, Attleboro District; William Gale, Berkshire Juvenile; Michael Greenleaf, Milford District; Dolores Gormley, Salem District; Richard Guzzi, Newton District; Steven Mastandrea, Lowell District; Sean McBride, Holyoke District; Michael Norton, Peabody District; Jane Pendergast, Northampton District; Mark Prisco, Norfolk Juvenile; John Salmon, Gloucester District; Geoffrey Shooshan, Marlboro District; Steven Siciliano, BMC-South Boston; Nilza Sylvestre, Dudley District; John Turner, BMC-Central; and Michelle Williams, BMC-Charlestown.

Materials from the trainings are available on the Probation Legal Unit Bulletin Board. A version of this training is also featured in the agency's orientation for new Probation Officers.

Suffolk Superior Chief Is Appointed To Probation Advisory Board

Suffolk Superior Court Chief Probation Officer Erie Cabral Contreras was recently appointed to a three-year term on the Probation Advisory Board by Chief Justice Ralph D. Gants.

The nine-member Board is charged with making recommendations on the management of the Massachusetts Probation Service, advising the Commissioner of Probation, and the Court Administration on all matters of probation reform, according to General Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 276, Section 98A.

Contreras' fellow board members include Essex County Sheriff Frank Cousins, District Court Chief Justice Paul C. Dawley; Superior Court Judge Kenneth V. Desmond; Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) Attorney Joshua M. Dohan; Superior Court Judge Bertha D. Josephson; Attorney David Meier of Todd & Weld; Suffolk University Professor Brenda Bond; Christine Cole of Community Resources for Justice; Probation Commissioner Edward J. Dolan; and Court Administrator Harry Spence.

Essex Superior Job Club Prepares Defendants To Enter Job Market

Probationers are receiving help as they prepare to enter the work-force with the added challenge of having a criminal background.

The Making Real Changes Job Club is a collaboration between Essex Superior Court and the North Shore Employment Center and the brainchild of Essex Superior Court Todd Angilly who started a similar program when he was a Probation Officer at Malden District Court. This three-year-old club has graduated 35 men and women.

The eight-week program entails job interview role play, resume writing, and job search skills. Job Club Alumnus Michael Boucher, who spoke at a Job Club graduation earlier this month, credits the club for helping him land a job as a cement truck driver. The Job Club, on summer hiatus, will start again in September.



PO Todd Angilly, center in purple shirt, speaks with probationers about searching for employment. Career Center employee, left, Deborah Barnes. Right of Angilly are Probationers Jorge Rivera and Nate Osborne.

Juvenile Probation Officer Spearheads Battery Give-Away

During visits to the homes of individuals who are subjects of Care & Protection cases, one of the key things that a Probation Officer checks for is a functional smoke detector.

Care & Protection cases are petitions that are filed when child abuse or neglect are alleged.

Middlesex Juvenile Probation Officer Timothy Carey found that the majority of homes he visits do not have working detectors due to the absence of batteries. A non-functioning smoke detector may result in Probation notifying the Department of Children and Families (DCF) because of concerns of an unsafe home environment. Carey said he came up with the idea to supply batteries to these families after watching a news story about a Brooklyn, New York family who perished in a fire due to a non-functioning smoke detector.

He contacted battery companies to get donations but was unsuccessful. Carey then called the Cambridge Fire Department and learned about a program that provides batteries.

Cambridge Fire Department provided Carey with a carton of batteries.

Carey shared the bounty with his colleagues who now supply families with this simple but necessary item.

“Many of these families are struggling and do not have an extra \$10 to purchase batteries,” said Carey.



PO Carey hands out batteries for smoke detectors in Cambridge.

Newton District Associate Probation Officer Is Named Ovation Award Winner



Left to right: Newton District Chief Probation Officer Richard Guzzi, APO Donna Moore, and Region 4 Supervisor Brian Murphy.

Newton District Court Associate Probation Officer (APO) Donna Moore was recently recognized with a Massachusetts Probation Service Ovation Award.

Moore, an employee with more than 25 years experience, was honored for going above and beyond her duties, including organizing a vendor open house with more than 60 providers and clinicians. She is known by staff and clients for providing information and direction to “those in need,” said Newton District Court Chief Probation Officer Richard Guzzi.

“Ms. Moore takes it upon herself to familiarize herself with all policies, procedures and standards and is able to teach and direct support staff sometimes Probation Officers with her knowledge,” Guzzi said. “She is invaluable in the courtroom. The Presiding Justice looks to her for guidance with dispositions but also with programming since she is an expert on providers.”

He added, “She is my right hand in organizing internal controls, time and attendance, identity specialist, and is somewhat of a liaison between departments.”

Moore said she is thrilled to receive the Ovation Award.

“I feel so honored to be recognized. I really enjoy my job and the opportunity to help others,” she said.

DC Corner

A Letter From Dianne Fasano, Deputy Commissioner of Probation-Field Services

Dear Probation Colleagues:

Day in and day out, Probation Officers and support staff work diligently on behalf of the Massachusetts Probation Service. There is no doubt that your work helps make communities safer throughout the Commonwealth and enhances the quality of life for its citizens.

The work that you do is vitally important but not easy.

Doing it well requires great energy, a lot of flexibility and the willingness to take on significant challenges. In the past year, Field Services Administrator Brian Mirasolo and I have made efforts—coordinated through your Regional Supervisor and/or Statewide Supervisor—to visit offices, celebrate your successes and hear about your challenges.

Brian and I often talk about how much we enjoy connecting with you. Our recent travels have included attending the first graduation ceremony of the Womanhood Program at the Eastern Hampshire District Court and a discussion at the Framingham/Natick District Court centered around the creation of a pamphlet that contains helpful information regarding substance abuse treatment and resources.

In our view, it is imperative we stay connected with the field. Staying connected helps us remain informed about what is happening at the local level so we are able to make targeted efforts on behalf of you and the organization. Continuing our field visits and staying connected with you will remain a top priority for us.

Just as you are committed and connected to the communities you serve, Brian and I, along with the Regional Supervisors and Statewide Supervisors, are committed to you and the work you do.

We are looking forward to working as a team, not only to fulfill our mission, but to understand your daily challenges and accomplishments.

Enjoy the summer and hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,

Dianne Fasano, Deputy Commissioner-Field Services

THE PROBATION UPDATE NEWSLETTER

Probation Update is an internal publication featuring the current news of The Massachusetts Probation Service.

Please forward newsletter story suggestions or comments to:

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Probation Photo Gallery

Recent Retirements



Thelma Jones, Probation Case Coordinator, recently retired from the Suffolk Superior Court Probation Office after 30 years. Jones, on left, poses with Chief Erie Cabral Contreras.



Clinton District Court Chief Probation Officer Bernard O'Donnell (peach colored shirt to the left), surrounded by Worcester County Chiefs, retired after 30 years of service. Featured in photo left to right are Chief Probation Officers Sandra McNabb, Westboro District; Maureen Chamberlain, Worcester District; Paul Simone, East Brookfield District; O'Donnell, Edward Sullivan, Leominster District; Region 5 Regional Supervisor Elizabeth Daignault; Diane Massouh, Gardner/Winchendon District; Daisy Bacener, Fitchburg District; Nilza Sylvestre, Dudley District; Geoffrey Shooshan, Marlboro District; Patrick Foley, Uxbridge District; and Michael Greenleaf, Milford District.



Massachusetts Probation Service employees Edward Johnson, Assistant to the Commissioner-Financial Affairs, 38 years; Mimi Gonsalves, Probation Office Manager, 40 years; and Beverly Rizzo, Administrative Secretary, 16 years; retire at the end of the month. Long-time employees in the Commissioner's Office, collectively they have 94 years of on the job experience with Probation.

SHARE A STORY

Story Submission and Event Calendar forms are available through your Regional and Statewide Supervisors or go to the Probation Bulletin Board:

bb.jud.state.ma.us.

The submission deadline is the 20th of the month prior to publication.