

## APPENDIX B: Community Corrections Assessment Information

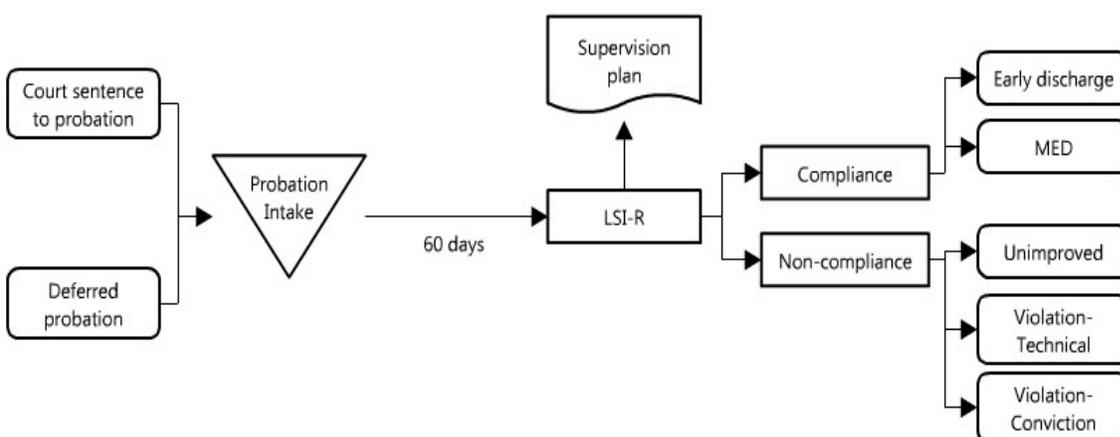
This appendix summarizes information on which Vera relied to assess Delaware’s community corrections system. Vera’s system review is based on interviews with stakeholders over the past several months; review of documents including statutes, policies, and procedures; review of aggregate data; a statewide survey of Probation Officers supervising Levels I-III; and focus groups of probation and corrections officers supervising Level IV (upcoming). Analysis of administrative data from the Delaware Department of Correction and the Delaware Justice Information System (DELJIS) is underway, but has not yet been completed. Therefore, this information is not included below.

### I. General Information

This section displays information Vera staff gathered that generally describes Delaware’s probation and parole supervision system, SENTAC Levels I-III.

**Figure 1** shows the flow of probation cases, from the cases origin, to probation intake, displays the time lapse before administration of the LSI-R. The results are used to draft a supervision plan. Based on a supervisee’s compliance or non-compliance, discharge from supervision can fall into one of five categories. DOC’s early discharge policy permits Probation Officers to recommend early discharge from supervision. A supervisor must approve the recommendation, and the sentencing court must confirm it. Based on 2010 DOC aggregate data on individuals released from BCC supervision, 26% of cases (3,627) were released through early discharge. “MED” refers to maximum expiration date, and discharge based on MED occurs when a probationer reaches the end of the sentence as prescribed by the sentencing court. Probationers discharged as “unimproved” are those who are unable to meet one or more conditions of supervision, such as payment of a fine or fee, but for whom revocation is not an appropriate response. Technical and conviction violations are discussed in the body of the memorandum, above.

**Figure 1. Probation case flow**



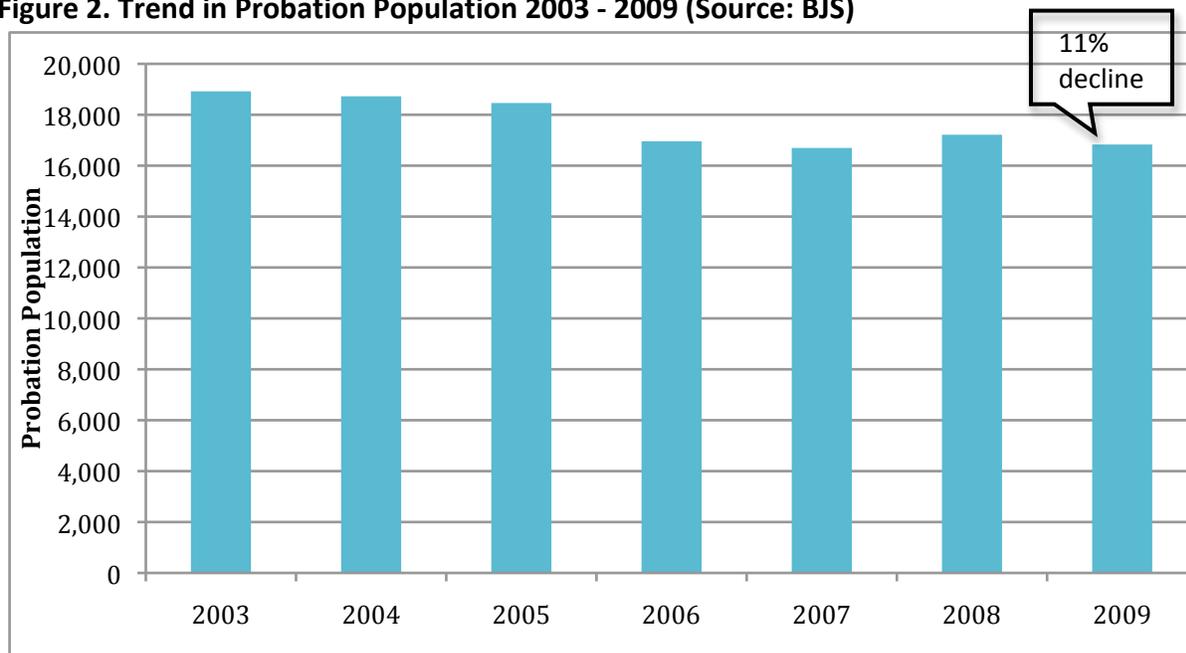
**Table 1** displays the performance measures that the Delaware Department of Correction, Bureau of Community Corrections reports to the Joint Finance Committee.

**Table 1. Delaware DOC, Bureau of Community Corrections Performance Measures**

Number and % of <b>positive curfew checks</b> for offenders in intensive “Safe Streets” program
Number and % <b>discharges</b> in the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum Expiration Date (reached the end of their probation sentence without incident)</li> <li>• Early discharge (discretionary program that allows POs to reduce the length of compliant offenders’ supervision term)</li> <li>• Death</li> <li>• Unimproved (basically compliant but unable to successfully complete because of fines or fees, for example)</li> <li>• Violation of probation, Technical</li> <li>• Violation of probation, Conviction (both Technical VOP and this category represent the recommendations made by the Probation Officer, not the court’s disposition)</li> </ul>
Number and % of supervised offenders who are <b>employed</b>
Number and % of <b>Level I (low risk/administrative supervision) cases closed</b>
Number and % of <b>LSI-Rs<sup>1</sup> completed</b> on eligible population.

**Figure 2** below shows the trend in the population of those supervised on SENTAC Levels I, II and III. Since 2003, the population has declined by 11%. Recent data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics data indicates that this trend continued in 2010.

**Figure 2. Trend in Probation Population 2003 - 2009 (Source: BJS)**



**Tables 2 and 3** report DOC data regarding their probation and parole intakes and releases for 2010. In **Table 2**, which shows intakes for 2010, the category “Probation” includes individuals

<sup>1</sup> “LSI-R” refers to the Level of Service Inventory-Revised, a risk and needs assessment tool.

who are directly sentenced to probation. “Parole” indicates those who are released based on the discretion of the Parole Board. These releases are limited to incarceration sentences that pre-date Delaware’s Truth-in-Sentencing reform, which abolished discretionary parole release in 1990. The categories “Deferred Probation Level V” and “Deferred Probation Level IV” refer to admissions to probation following a period of incarceration at Level V or IV.

**Table 2. Delaware DOC, Probation and Parole Intakes for 2010**

<b>Type of Intake</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Probation	7,908	58%
Parole	134	1%
Deferred Probation Level V	3,085	23%
Deferred Probation Level IV	2,514	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,641</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3** shows releases for 2010. When an entire term of supervision has been served without reductions, release is mandatory and categorized as “Max. Expiration Date.” DOC’s “early discharge” policy permits Probation Officers to recommend early discharge from supervision. This recommendation must be approved by a supervisor and confirmed by the sentencing court. Probation and parole revocations are distinguished between those that constitute new offenses and those that are technical in nature. These categories refer to probation officer recommendations; the data do not capture whether the court agrees with the recommendation. Release as “unimproved” includes those under supervision who were non-compliant, but for whom revocation was not an appropriate sanction. DOC reports that these individuals typically were unable to complete their supervision because of inability to pay fines or fees.

**Table 3. Delaware DOC, Probation and Parole Releases for 2010**

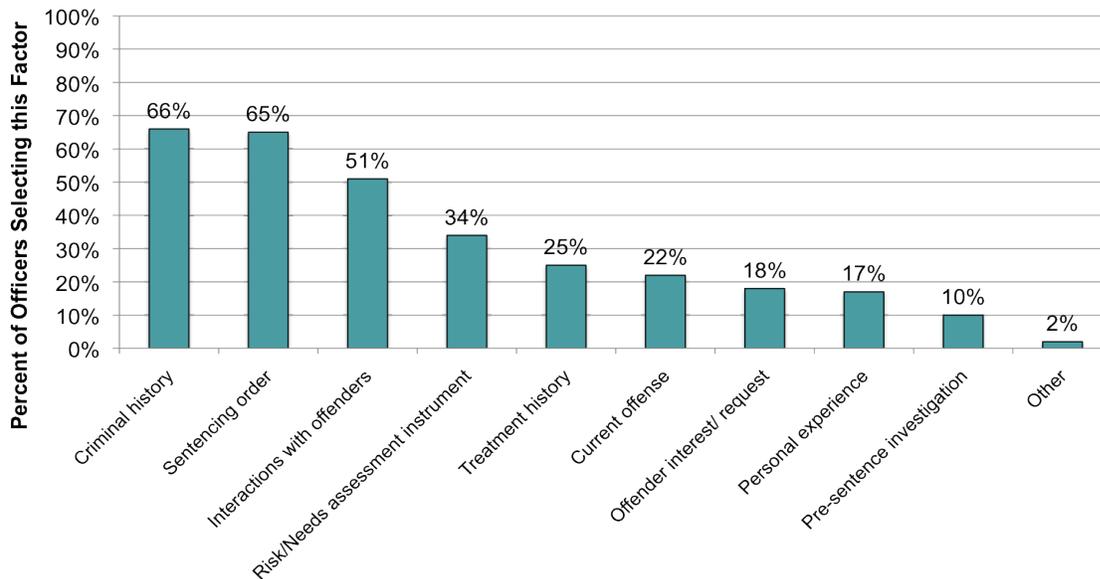
<b>Type of Release</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Max. Expiration Date	3,399	24%
Early Discharge	3,627	26%
Revocation – New Offense	397	3%
Revocation – Technical	2,674	19%
Unimproved	2,670	19%
Other	1,214	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,981</b>	<b>100%</b>

## II. Probation Officer Survey

The Probation Officer survey was sent to 275 potential respondents. We received 111 completed surveys. Of these, 98 respondents were officers and 13 were supervisors. The survey was intended for officers (as opposed to supervisors); it was designed to gather their input and understand their experiences working in community corrections. For this reason the analysis focuses on the officer responses. Among officers there was a 42% response rate (98 responses out of 233 officers). We also assessed the degree to which survey respondents are similar to the overall pool of officers. This ensures it is appropriate to generalize from the survey respondents to the overall pool of Probation Officers. Comparisons of survey respondents to the overall pool of Probation Officers demonstrate that the two groups have comparable levels of experience working in probation and supervise similar types of caseloads.

**Figure 3** shows the distribution of responses to a question asking probation officers about the top three factors they use to identify offender needs. Officers tend not to rely heavily on the results of the LSI-R to identify offender needs. Vera’s 2011 survey of Probation Officers showed that 34% of respondents selected “Risk/Needs Assessment Instrument” as one of the three factors they rely on most to identify offender needs (see Fig. 2, below). By contrast, 66% of respondents selected “criminal history,” 65% selected “sentencing order,” and 51% selected “interactions with offenders” as factors that they rely on to identify offender needs.

**Figure 3. “What three factors do you rely on most when identifying offender needs?”**



Figures 4 and 5 display information gathered through questions about the most common rewards and sanctions used by probation officers. The three most common rewards that Probation Officers reported using were verbal recognition (70%), reduction of required meetings (65%), and recommendations of early discharge (57%). The three most common sanctions Probation Officers reported using were submitting a violation report (65%), referring the offender to treatment (57%), and giving a verbal warning (38%).

Figure 4. “What are the three most common options you use to reward offenders who comply with their conditions of supervision?”

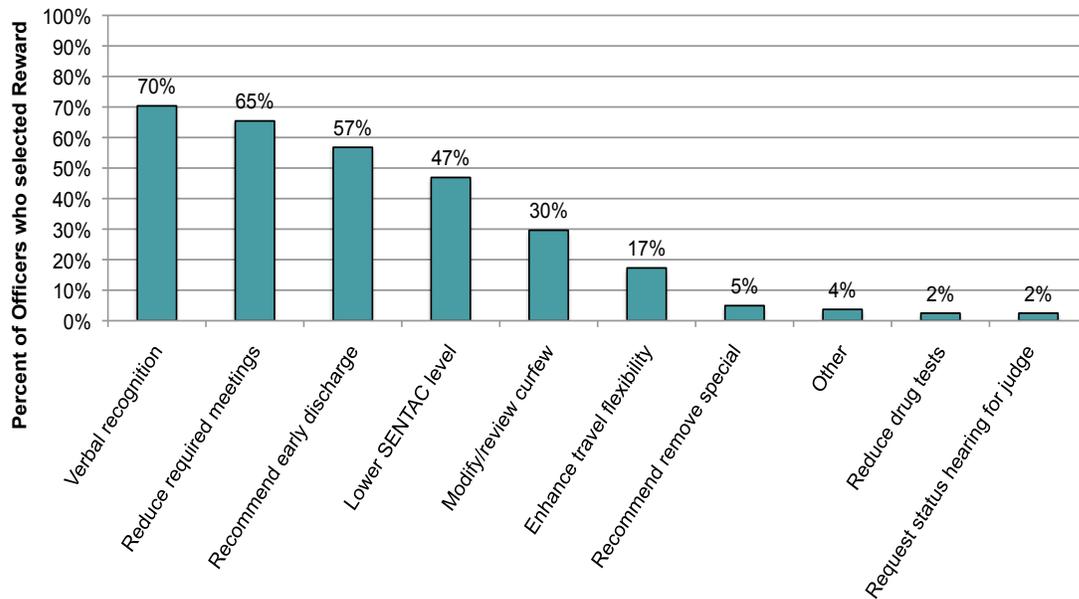
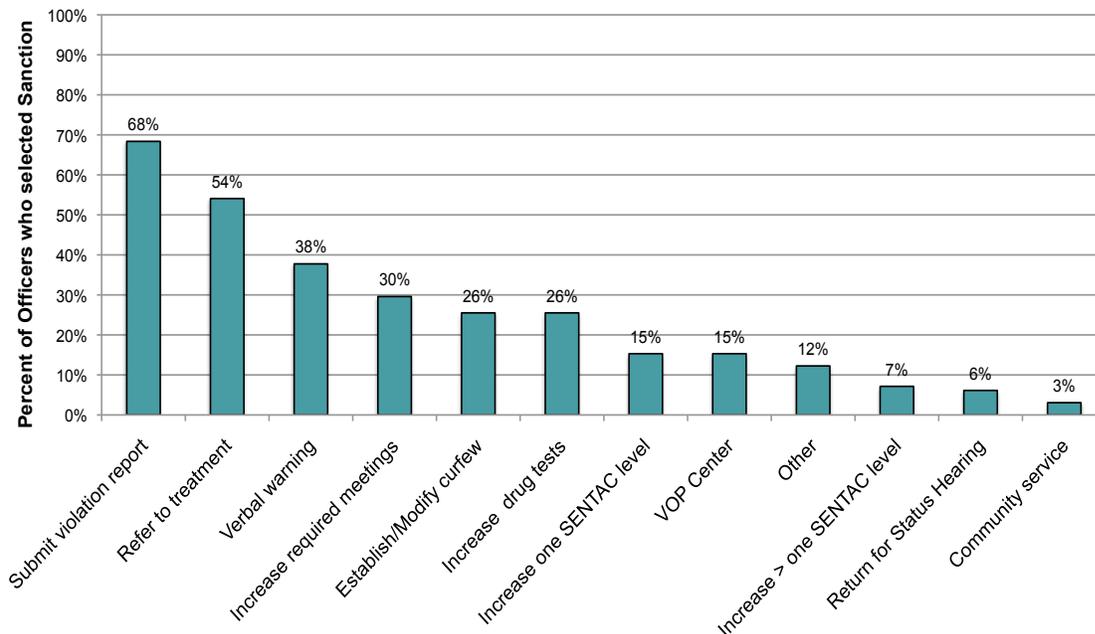


Figure 5. “What are the three most common options you use to sanction offenders who violate their conditions of supervision?”



**Tables 4 and 5** refer to data collected about probation officers’ opinions about the effectiveness of programs to which they refer offenders. **Table 4** lists the criminogenic need areas<sup>2</sup> for which programs were most often rated as highly or moderately effective: life skills, education, family/marital dysfunction, substance abuse, and decision making. **Table 5** lists the criminogenic need areas for which programs were most often rated as not effective: anger management, criminal thinking, employment, job skills, and housing. Please note the questions regarding program effectiveness capture opinions only, and cannot substitute for formal program evaluations.

**Table 4. Criminogenic need areas with programs most frequently rated “Highly Effective” or “Moderately Effective”**

<b>Need Area</b>	<b>% Officers Rating Highly/ Moderately Effective</b>	<b>Number of Ratings</b>
Life Skills	95%	57
Education	94%	142
Family/Marital Dysfunction	93%	45
Substance Abuse	93%	177
Decision Making	89%	28

**Table 5. Criminogenic need areas with programs most frequently rated “Not Effective”**

<b>Need Area</b>	<b>% rating “Not Effective”</b>	<b>Number of Officers Rating</b>
Anger Management	28%	43
Criminal Thinking	26%	31
Employment	25%	170
Job Skills	21%	127
Housing	21%	83

<sup>2</sup> Because of the large numbers of programs, some were rated only a small number of times. This table is limited to those types of programs with a sufficient number of ratings to evaluate them.

**Table 6** summarizes probation officer responses to a question asking about their three most important job duties, other than appearing in court. 93% of probation officers selected conducting home visits as one of their most important job duties and indicated they spent the most time per month on this task, suggesting officers recognize the importance of being in the community. The next two most commonly selected job duties were conducting interviews and writing reports.

**Table 6. Three most important job duties, other than appearing in court**

<b>Work Task</b>	<b>Percent of Officers who selected task</b>	<b>Average Hours per Month</b>
Conducting Home Visits	93%	21
Conducting Interviews	76%	20
Writing Reports	48%	16