

Alternatives to Incarceration  
2018 Report for the Legislature



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## **BACKGROUND**

The Alternative to Incarceration grant is designed to assist a county recipient within the State of Minnesota, who have supervised release and probation agents working with “nonviolent controlled substance offenders.” Prior to an offender’s probation or supervised release being revoked, these funds were used to identify community options to address and correct the violation.

The funds made available to the Department of Corrections (DOC) in the amount of \$160,000. The grant is funded under the HF470, Article 1, Section 14, Sub.16.22. The grant began immediately upon execution starting in the fiscal year 2018. The recipient of this grant provided required data to demonstrate programming and outcomes, which are contained within this report that has been generated for the legislature by January 15, 2019.

The legislature required the study to include the number of grants that were awarded; the average amount of each grant; the community services provided; the type of supervision participants were under; the number completed; those who were successful; those who failed; the programs accessed; and the number who violated terms of release following participation in the program.

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE GRANTEE: (ANOKA COUNTY)**

The Alternatives to Incarcerations (ATI) is a grant funded program with Anoka County, being the only recipient of the total grant. The Grant was awarded on October 12, 2017 and began January of 2018.

The objective of the program is to divert non-violent offenders with substance use disorders from returning/entering prison on technical violations. The program provides services to supervised release clients facing revocation due to technical violations. Services have also been provided to probationers who fit grant characteristics and would likely receive a recommendation of commitment to the commissioner of corrections if not for the Alternatives to Incarceration program.

Thus far, there have been 21 supervised releasees and probationers who have participated in the program. Of those participating in the program 13 have been supervised releasees and eight have been probationers. Of the 21 participants, only eight have had a violation that resulted in a prison commitment. Seven of those eight were supervised releasees, with only one probationer’s violation resulting in a prison commit.

One of the major objectives of the program is to expedite the process of completing a chemical health assessment and coordinating treatment in a timely manner. This objective is met through participants working with a case manager assigned to them for their specific case. The case manager position for the program works collaboratively with the client's existing probation officer. The case manager is a Rule 25 assessor who can expedite the assessment process, facilitate treatment intake and continues to be engaged with the client during treatment and upon discharge.

The case manager meets with participants frequently, providing assignment, reviewing homework, collaborating on case plan goals and reviewing progress. During these visits the case manager is working with the participant to determine criminogenic factors, responsivity factors, and resources needed. The case manager’s role is also to identify skills deficits, provide opportunities to build skill, assess progress and increase skill practice when appropriate. The case manager coordinates

initial/discharge staffing and broker needed services. Brokered services may include mental and physical health services, cognitive programming, housing, home electronic monitoring, frequent urine analysis (UA) testing and chemical health services.

Of those in the program, three clients received mental health services while in the program and three were recommended to treatment centers with a mental health component. One client was referred to Anoka County's Enhanced Treatment Program (ETP) for substance abusing women with children. Of those utilizing housing support, six used the Vail housing, one utilized the sober house, and seven were housed in the workhouse. Ten participants were referred to inpatient treatment, and nine for outpatient, with two clients receiving the mental health services in place of treatment.

Referral to resources both in the community and on the Rum River Human Service campus include: aftercare treatment, sober support groups, housing, mental health, health insurance, identification, employment, education-GED, technical training, job fairs, medical assisted treatment, home electronic monitoring, both male and female cognitive programming, child support informational sessions, religious services/spiritual counseling, the Department of Public Safety for driver's license reinstatement, and Lutheran Social Services for help with IRS and tax collection.

Participants can be at the workhouse or in the community. Clients in the workhouse meet with the case manager two to three times a week depending on their risks and needs. Clients outside of the workhouse meet with the case manager once a week. The case manager assigns individualized assignments based on assessment and client-centered goals. These assignments include evidenced based assignments from the Carey guides and additional assignments from the Core Correctional Practices.

Participants that have been recommended for outpatient treatment have entered, on average, 16 days after entering ATI. Those entering inpatient treatment entered, on average, 22 days after entering ATI. Prior to this grant, agents had been working for months to address client use and attempting to get them into treatment. Speeding up the process of getting clients into treatment reduces the risk that they may do harm to themselves, create additional consequences, or victimize others.

Ninety-seven percent of urine analysis collected on clients waiting to enter treatment have been negative. Many clients referred to the program have had opportunities to seek treatment on their own but, due to continued use and other barriers they have failed to start treatment. The ATI program provides clients a stable environment where they can remain safe and sober while treatment is arranged.

For participants that have either completed programming or been terminated, the average number of days they received case management services is 60. Supervised release cases spend an average of 42 days residing in housing provided by the program.

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

This is a population that historically has exhibited a pattern of not following their conditions of supervision whether it be on probation or supervised release. This results in many returning

Based on a review of the program through year one, there have been 13 supervised releasees and 8 probationers who have participated in the program for a total of 21. Of the 21 participants, eight have had a violation resulting in a prison commitment. Seven were supervised releases and one probationer. Thus the program had a 62% success rate, whereas in the past it would have been likely that all 100% of clients may have had a violation that resulted in being sent back to prison.

Based on the characteristics of this initial population and assessment of outcomes, there are some identified fundamental program elements necessary to increase positive outcomes. Such elements include, but are not limited to: stable housing, expedited assessment and treatment intake process, and transitional planning. Of these, expediting the assessment and treatment intake has provided the most positive impact in helping the clients with an alternative in the community.

The DOC is recommending this grant to continue for another year, yet are requesting that Anoka County increase the number of participants. An additional year will allow the DOC to re-review to see if positive outcomes continue and the number of participants' increases. With another year of funding the DOC will have additional data and more participants to review. The DOC will continue to evaluate the program for success.