

Date: January 8, 2025

To: Members of the Community Supervision Advisory Committee (CSAC)

From: Paul Schnell, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC)

Re: Commissioner's Response to CSAC Recommendations

First, I want to thank all the members of the Community Supervision Advisory Committee (CSAC) for the incredible amount of thought and effort that went into the development of your report and corresponding recommendations. I have no doubt your efforts to date and those going forward will result in improved collaboration in fulfillment of legislative requirements and our shared goals of fairness, public safety, and improved outcomes for individuals under supervision in our State.

As required by [Minnesota Statute 401.17, subdivision 4\(a\)](#), I am submitting my response to the recommendations provided by the Community Supervision Advisory Committee (CSAC). This response affirms that the Department of Corrections (DOC) supports and will adopt the policy recommendations put forth by CSAC with some modifications. In some instances, this response also includes requests for additional recommendations from CSAC. Additionally, this response outlines the timeline for implementing these recommendations and identifies next steps to ensure that policy changes are effectively developed, vetted, and operationalized in collaboration with CSAC and other stakeholders.

The DOC recognizes the vital role of CSAC in shaping a unified and effective framework for community supervision in Minnesota. Your work ensures that policy development and implementation remain collaborative, evidence-based, and responsive to the needs of all three supervision delivery systems.

Pursuant to subdivision 4(b) of the same statute, both CSAC's full report and recommendations along with this response will be submitted to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over public safety finance and policy. This ensures transparency and legislative awareness as we advance this critical work together.

I am grateful for CSAC's dedication to this important work and I look forward to our continued collaboration to strengthen Minnesota's community supervision system.

Commissioner's response by deliverable

This response addresses only the deliverables for which CSAC provided recommendations or progress updates. For deliverables without updates or recommendations, no response is provided or required at this time.

Deliverable 1: Statewide supervision standards

I appreciate CSAC's thorough recommendations for developing statewide supervision standards and definitions. These recommendations represent an important foundation for advancing consistency, fairness, and evidence-based practices across Minnesota's community supervision system.

Policy recommendations and response

Intensive Supervised Release (ISR)

As previously noted in my response to the committee, I fully support and will direct the development and implementation of CSAC's policy recommendations for transforming ISR. These changes focus on creating a person-centered supervision model that balances public safety with flexibility and individualized support. By adopting consistent standards for ISR, we can reduce disparities across jurisdictions, improve client outcomes, maximize public safety, and promote successful reintegration into the community.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Reunification Principles

I fully support CSAC's recommendations and will direct development of policy to implement Interpersonal Personal Violence Reunification Principles. This policy framework prioritizes victim-survivor safety and autonomy while ensuring that reunification efforts are handled with care, consistency, and alignment across all supervision delivery systems. These principles create a standardized, victim-centered approach that maintains public safety while addressing the unique needs of survivors and families.

Ongoing statewide supervision planning

While the Deliverable 1 recommendations focus on ISR and IPV reunification, I recognize that the development of comprehensive statewide supervision standards is and will be an ongoing and evolving process. As such, I support the committee's development approach to supervision standards planning, and I recognize that the work must remain flexible to incorporate emerging research, address system gaps, and respond to the unique and diverse needs of Minnesota's communities.

Next steps – Deliverable 1

I ask CSAC to develop a comprehensive outline for the development of supervision standards. Specifically, the supervision standards should identify the essential components of effective community supervision, and the outline should incorporate the policies recommended in CSAC's most recent report that fit within the standards framework (i.e., use of risk assessment and case planning). Additionally, the supervision standards should include clearly defined definitions of supervision levels based on relevant factors to ensure that supervision is provided consistently across the state. Along with the outline, please propose and submit a prioritization and timeline for development of the remaining supervision standards as determined by CSAC. Understanding the priorities and timeline will help this, and future commissioners/Executive Branch administrations ensure access to needed resources. Further, a shared understanding of priorities and associated timeline will establish a shared understanding that our resources and efforts are directed toward areas with the greatest impact.

Together, we will build on this strong foundation to ensure that supervision practices across the state are equitable, consistent, and firmly rooted in evidence-based principles and practices. I look forward to continued collaboration with CSAC and all our stakeholders to advance these critical objectives.

Deliverable 2: Risk and needs assessment tools

I commend CSAC for its thoughtful recommendations regarding the adoption of consistent risk and needs assessment tools across Minnesota's community supervision systems. The focus on evidence-based tools and the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model is aligned with our shared commitment to improving client outcomes and promoting public safety through the use of targeted interventions.

Policy recommendations and response

Use of the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) as primary general risk and needs assessment tool

I fully support the recommendation to adopt the LS/CMI as the primary risk and needs assessment tool for probation supervision across all three delivery systems and will direct development of policy accordingly. Standardizing this assessment approach will create consistency, fairness, and alignment with evidence-based practices, ensuring that resources are focused on those at greatest risk of reoffending.

While I recognize the value of the LS/CMI, the DOC currently uses the Minnesota Screening Tool Assessing Recidivism Risk (MNSTARR 3.0) for individuals committed to the custody of the DOC. For those at the point of release, the MNSTARR 3.0 is integrated into release planning efforts,

and in certain circumstances the tool may help inform the establishment of certain release conditions I ask that CSAC study and make recommendations for formally integrating the MSTARR 3.0 into the initial assignment of supervision level and case planning for those subject to supervised release or intensive supervised release.

Pre-screeners and standards for misdemeanors not being assessed

I fully support the recommendation for the required use of pre-screeners or the LS/CMI for post-conviction adults with felony, gross misdemeanor, and targeted misdemeanor sentences, and I will direct development of policy to support this decision. Recognizing that there are other categories of misdemeanors that will not be assessed under this policy, I ask that CSAC to provide additional recommendations to clarify appropriate supervision standards for these cases to ensure statewide consistency in practice and alignment with evidence-based practices.

Validation and revalidation of tools

I support this recommendation and will direct the development of policy to validate and revalidate the primary risk and needs assessment tool and pre-screener (once identified) every five years. This process will maintain tool accuracy and relevance while ensuring their continued applicability to Minnesota’s community supervision population. I commit the DOC to managing validation and revalidation efforts in collaboration with CSAC and impacted agencies.

Next steps – Deliverable 2

I unequivocally support and encourage CSAC to continue its work on identifying a statewide pre-screener for probation clients. I support the proposed timeline of January 2026 for delivering recommendations and look forward to CSAC's insights on how a pre-screener can further align supervision practices with evidence-based principles. Additionally, I support continued consideration of and recommendations relating to other tools or supplemental assessments for special populations or case types (i.e., for sex offender and DWI cases). As work continues regarding these unique assessments, I request that CSAC provide corresponding recommendations regarding their initial and ongoing validations.

These recommendations represent a significant advancement in creating a unified, fair, and effective system for risk and needs assessment across Minnesota. I look forward to the continuing collaboration to ensure that our policies reflect the best available research and support positive outcomes for all Minnesotans under supervision.

Deliverable 3: Assessment-driven, collaborative case planning

I appreciate CSAC's thoughtful and comprehensive recommendations for advancing assessment-driven, collaborative case planning. These recommendations align with our shared goals of prioritizing evidence-based practices, fostering positive behavior change, and targeting the specific criminogenic and behavioral health needs of individuals under supervision.

Policy recommendations and response

Evidence-based case planning for moderate-and-high-risk clients

I fully support and will direct development of policy requiring evidence-based case planning for high-risk clients initially. I am pleased to see that CSAC intends to extend the case planning requirement to moderate-risk clients as capacity allows. In support of your recommendation, I plan to direct immediate inclusion of moderate-risk clients in the policy, but with delayed implementation. To that end, I will establish a two-year deadline from the effective date the case planning requirement for high-risk clients for full implementation of the policy. I ask that CSAC submit a progress report, within one year of full implementation evaluating readiness and identifying gaps.

Integration with CSTS

I strongly endorse and will direct development of policy in support of the recommendation for an automated case plan template in the CSTS database. This integration will provide systemwide consistency, streamline data management, and support more efficient case planning across jurisdictions. In accordance with this recommendation, I expect all agencies to utilize the collaboratively developed CSTS-based case plan to ensure alignment and compliance with statewide supervision standards.

Alignment with the RNR model

I am fully supportive of this CSAC recommendation, and I will direct development of policy to formalize an evidence-based case planning process that aligns with the RNR model. This approach will redefine the role of supervision agents, positioning them as active "change agents" who directly support sustainable behavior change through individualized and targeted interventions.

Next steps

To ensure that the recommended initiatives are effective, I request that CSAC prioritize the development of metrics to assess the fidelity with evidence-based practices and the associated outcomes of case planning processes and goals. Metrics should minimally include indicators of case plan development, client engagement in the planning process, assessment of progress toward criminogenic goals, and recidivism outcomes. These metrics will help us evaluate the

success of implementation efforts, identify areas for continuous improvement, and inform policy makers and other stakeholders.

I am confident that by advancing the recommended policies and continuing our collaboration, Minnesota will have a more consistent, equitable, and effective supervision system that supports positive outcomes for individuals under supervision and enhances public safety.

Deliverable 5: Gender-responsive, culturally appropriate, and trauma-informed services

I want to thank CSAC and the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Statewide Advisory Committee for your diligent and ongoing efforts work in addressing this critical area of community supervision. I appreciate the progress made thus far and the recognized need to establish foundational training and create a statewide framework to ensure that gender-responsiveness, cultural competency, and trauma-informed approaches are implemented equitably across all jurisdictions.

While I understand that further refinement of the policy recommendations is underway, I want to underscore the critical importance of maintaining momentum on this deliverable. These approaches are essential to creating a supervision system that not only supports rehabilitation and positive behavior change but also recognizes the unique and diverse needs of individuals under supervision.

Next steps

I ask that CSAC and the EBP Statewide Advisory Committee continue their efforts to develop a comprehensive and actionable set of recommendations by July 2025, as planned. As you know, this work is an important foundation for advancing equity and effectiveness within Minnesota's community supervision system. I look forward to reviewing the updated recommendations and remain committed to supporting the implementation of policies to ensure that all individuals under correctional supervision have access to responsive practices and services that reflects their unique needs, fosters successful outcome, and advances public safety.

Deliverable 6: Statewide incentives and sanctions grid

I want to thank CSAC and the Justice Reinvestment - Phase II Working Group for the thoughtful approach to this important deliverable.

Policy recommendations and response

CSAC's recommendation to pursue a legislative amendment to shift the terminology from "incentives and sanctions grid" to "behavior response grid" aligns with national best practices

and reflects a more balanced approach to guiding behavior change in community supervision. I fully support this proposed shift in language and its underlying emphasis on fostering sustainable, positive outcomes through structured and equitable responses to client behavior. Even if the language is not changed in statute, I support utilizing the recommended language for any grid that is proposed and/or adopted along with the accompanying policy.

Next steps

While I agree with the recommendations as presented, I believe that additional work is required to finalize a comprehensive statewide behavior response grid that is viable and effective for all supervision entities. I support the timeline proposed by CSAC and request that by July 2025 you advance your findings and recommendations based off your collaboration with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center and learnings from preliminary implementation of the Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act (MRRRA).. In furtherance of the recommendations you propose, I would ask that you consider the following:

- **Collaboration with stakeholders:** Engage with representatives from all three delivery systems and local agencies currently utilizing or developing behavior response grids to ensure statewide consistency while allowing for flexibility to address local needs.
- **Practical implementation strategies:** Include specific guidance on how agencies can integrate the behavior response grid into existing workflows and data systems, with clear steps to track and document responses uniformly across jurisdictions.
- **Alignment with best practices:** Ensure that the behavior response grid incorporates evidence-based principles that balance accountability with positive reinforcement, focusing on reducing recidivism and supporting long-term behavior change.

This work represents a critical opportunity to create a unified framework for behavior response in Minnesota's community supervision system. I look forward to continuing to work alongside CSAC to implement a tool that promotes fairness, equity, and meaningful behavior change for all individuals under supervision.

Deliverable 7: Performance indicators for supervision success

I appreciate the thorough work CSAC has done in partnership with the CSTS Executive Committee and Data Committee to identify and interpret performance indicators for Minnesota's community supervision system. Your recommendations provide a solid foundation for understanding key metrics and ensuring decisions are informed by robust, evidence-based data.

The DOC is already taking steps to produce the first report based on the metrics outlined in statute and your recommendations. This is an important milestone, but it is only the beginning.

Performance indicators are dynamic and must evolve alongside our practices and policies. CSAC will have an important ongoing role in refining and expanding these supervision metrics to ensure we continue to capture the data necessary to understand what is working and where improvements are needed.

Deliverable 8: Statewide training, coaching, and quality assurance system

I commend CSAC and the EBP Statewide Advisory Committee for their thoughtful recommendations on developing a statewide training, coaching, and quality assurance (QA) system for evidence-based practices. These recommendations highlight the critical need for a consistent framework to equip community supervision staff with the tools necessary to implement EBPs effectively, promote behavior change, and improve client outcomes.

Policy recommendations and response

Comprehensive training, coaching, and quality assurance for core evidence based practices

I fully support and will direct the development of policy to support the recommendation that all Minnesota community supervision agencies provide training, coaching, and quality assurance review in the five identified skill areas: motivational interviewing, core correctional skills, the use of risk and needs assessment tools, cognitive behavioral interventions, and case planning processes. These skill areas are critical for ensuring that supervision agents have the skills, support, and supervision to be effective “change agents” who guide individuals toward positive behavioral outcomes while promoting public safety.

Systemwide base-level training requirements and annual ongoing development

I strongly agree with the requirement that all supervision entities provide initial base-level training for new supervision agents within the first year of employment and ongoing annual training of at least sixteen hours for all staff, and I will direct development of policy in support of this recommendation. This consistent approach to professional development, builds staff capacity, addresses current disparities in training and coaching availability across jurisdictions, and comports with training requirements of other client-serving professions.

Shifting oversight to the EBP Statewide Advisory Committee

I support CSAC’s recommendation to amend statutory language to allow the EBP Statewide Advisory Committee to advise and guide this work rather than relying on a single coordinator. Even if the language is not changed in statute, I support the shift in operational policy and practice. The recommended committee approach fosters collaborative leadership, leverages the committee’s collective expertise, and aligns with Minnesota’s commitment to equitable and representative governance. I value the role of the EBP Statewide Advisory Committee in guiding implementation and providing ongoing recommendations to ensure that EBPs are consistently and effectively utilized across the state.

Next steps

By county choice, the DOC is one of Minnesota's community supervision delivery systems. While the commissioner oversees the DOC, I recognize that the primary obligation of the commissioner is to provide support and collaboration, ensure fulfillment of the corrections systems statutory obligations and reporting. I believe that delivery system leaders, practitioners, and partners must collectively lead successful implementation of efforts. I remain committed to facilitating statewide consistency of practice and standards and ensuring that all systems have access to the resources needed to implement these recommendations in accordance with available resources.

This training, coaching, and quality assurance focus represents a significant step forward in strengthening the competency and effectiveness of Minnesota's community supervision professionals. I am confident that the collaborative leadership of CSAC, delivery system leaders and practitioners, and the EBP Statewide Advisory Committee will ensure the use of consistent, high-quality supervision practices across all jurisdictions. I look forward to continued updates and progress reports as this recommendation moves toward full implementation.

Deliverable 10: Plan to eliminate financial penalty for early discharge

I appreciate CSAC's dedication to addressing the financial disincentives for early discharge, as this issue directly impacts the fairness and effectiveness of Minnesota's community supervision funding model. Encouraging early discharge practices when appropriate are critical strategy elements for supporting positive client outcomes, promoting efficient supervision systems, and responsible stewardship of limited resources in accordance with the correctional risk principle.

Next steps

The DOC will ensure that this issue is comprehensively assessed as part of the forthcoming workload study. The launch of this study is appropriate and ideal time for analyzing the financial and operational impacts of early discharge, as well as identifying equitable solutions to account for differences in jurisdictional resources, practices, or needs. I look forward to the insights generated by the workload study and to continuing our collaborative efforts to advance effective, equitable practices across Minnesota's community supervision system.

Deliverable 11a: Proposed state-level Community Supervision Advisory Board (CSAB)

The recommendations put forth by CSAC to expand and revise CSAC membership to include judicial representatives, and a prosecutor and defense bar representatives are wholly supported. I also stand in support of the proposed membership language revision that exists in

the current iteration of statute. While the commissioner does not have the authority to effect these structural changes, the report submitted by CSAC will be provided to the ranking members of the legislature in full. I will direct the development of policy that formalizes the requirement that going forward CSAC's full report and recommendations be included with the commissioner's response to CSAC in legislative reporting.

DOC remains committed to a collaborative process of engagement with CSAC on its recommendations. But as it relates to the state-level board recommendation, I believe it is necessary for the DOC to continue with the current structure. Given the DOC's role as the executive branch agency tasked with oversight for the state's supervision system, the commissioner must maintain sole discretion on whether to incorporate those recommendations into DOC policy. The DOC's role includes not only the allocation of financial resources but also the responsibility through the comprehensive plan process to ensure compliance with the supervision standards that are enacted into policy. The commissioner is also responsible for providing the legislature with regular reporting and identifying system outcomes. DOC will continue to collaborate on the development of these processes, but there may be times when this accountability role will require a decision that differs from CSAC's recommendation.

Additionally, the commissioner has specific delineated responsibilities as it relates to individuals who are subject to supervised release and limiting the commissioner's ability to decline a particular CSAC recommendation could be a direct conflict with the commissioner's responsibilities. It is important to recognize that while probation and supervised release may resemble one another, they are legally distinct. *See Kachina v. State*, 744 N.W.2d 407, 409 (Minn. Ct. App. 2008). Courts impose conditions of probation and may revoke probation if those conditions are violated. *See* Minn. Stat. §§ 609.135, subd. 1(a)(2), and 609.14, subd. 1; Minn. R. Crim. P. 27.04, subd. 3. Supervised releasees are under the legal custody and control of the commissioner of corrections (DOC), which is responsible for setting conditions of release and revoking release for violations. *See* Minn. Stat. § 241.01, subd. 3a(b); Minn. Stat. § 243.05, subds. 1(b) & 2; Minn. Stat. § 244.049, subd. 4(1); Minn. Stat. § 244.05, subds. 2–3, 6; Minn. R. 2940.0300, .0400, .2300, .2500, .3600–.3800, & .4300. Further, while courts set conditions of probation and determine whether probation should be revoked, only the commissioner (DOC) sets conditions of supervised release and can revoke supervised release if the offender violates those conditions. *Kachina*, 744 N.W.2d at 409. Accordingly, under the Community Corrections Act (CCA), counties and tribal nations may be granted authority and funding to provide community supervision to supervised releasees in place of the DOC. Minn. Stat. § 401.01–.02. When supervising individuals committed to the DOC, CCA counties and tribal nations “must comply with the policies prescribed by the commissioner [DOC]” and applicable DOC rules. Minn. Stat. §§ 401.025, subd. 3, and 401.03. And finally, CCA counties and tribal nations that fail to comply with DOC policies governing supervised release may lose some of their funding and be placed on a corrective action plan at the DOC's discretion. Minn. Stat. § 401.06, subds. 3 & 5.

Given these critical responsibilities, I find it essential that the final authority and decision-making regarding community supervision remain within the DOC's authority. I reiterate, however, that the DOC remains committed to a collaborative process of engagement with CSAC. The existing requirement that the commissioner provide a response to CSAC recommendations, including a rationale for any recommendation that is not accepted or adopted, comports with legislative intent while meeting the sought after objectives of balance and transparency.

Deliverable 11b: Review and reassess the Workload Study

I want to express my appreciation to CSAC for its diligent efforts in developing and successfully posting the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Workload Study. This is a critical step toward ensuring that Minnesota's community supervision systems are supported by a funding model that reflects equitable workloads and evidence-based practices.

The collaborative approach taken by CSAC, particularly through its subcommittee, has been instrumental in shaping this process. By thoroughly reviewing the responses to the RFP, CSAC is demonstrating a commitment to collaboration, inclusivity, and representation of all three delivery systems. This partnership is a testament to the importance of working together to achieve shared goals.

Next steps

The DOC fully supports and plans to fund this recommendation, which includes working with CSAC to select a vendor to conduct the Workload Study. Once a vendor is selected the DOC commits to complete the contracting process as quickly as possible. We recognize that this process will take place over the coming months, and we will continue to rely on CSAC's expertise and input to ensure the selected vendor aligns with the goals and objectives outlined in the RFP. I look forward to the continued collaboration between DOC and CSAC as we advance this critical effort to better inform practice and the resource needs of Minnesota's correctional supervision system .

Timeline

To ensure timely progress on the development and implementation of statewide supervision standards, I request the following actions from CSAC:

Policy drafting and subcommittee assignments (within six months)

I ask that CSAC assign the appropriate subcommittees and working groups to draft detailed policy language for each of the above policy areas. These subcommittees should focus on creating clear, actionable language that aligns with evidence-based practices and promotes consistency across Minnesota's community supervision systems. The draft policy language

should be brought back to CSAC for review and approval by July 1, 2025. While I suggest the six-month timeline; CSAC is free to move this step forward on a faster timeline.

Final policy recommendations to DOC (within twelve months)

Once the policy language has been vetted and approved by CSAC, I request that the final recommendations be submitted to my office no later than September 30, 2025. This is a suggested timeline; CSAC is free to submit policy language on a faster timeline. Upon submission, I will direct the necessary internal reviews (i.e., legal, policy formatting) with the intention of finalizing and issuing these policies by the end of 2025.

The proposed timeline allows us to maintain momentum on this critical work and ensure that Minnesota’s supervision standards advance public safety, equity, and positive outcomes for individuals under supervision. I look forward to receiving these recommendations and working collaboratively with CSAC and delivery system leaders to implement them effectively.

Closing

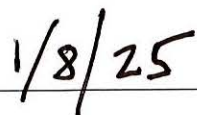
The DOC has confirmed that CSAC will continue as a standing committee, ensuring that this critical work remains ongoing. I am grateful for the dedication and expertise that CSAC has brought to these recommendations, and I look forward to continued collaboration as we address the evolving needs of Minnesota’s community supervision system.

While many recommendations have already been thoughtfully developed, there is still important work ahead. I am eager to receive further recommendations from CSAC, particularly on the deliverables that are still in progress.

Thank you for your continued commitment and partnership in this essential work. Please let me know if you have any questions.



Paul P. Schnell, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Corrections



Date