

Caseload/Workload Reduction

2001 Report to the Legislature

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Introduction

The caseload/workload reduction (CL/WL) initiative began in fiscal year 1996 with funds appropriated by the legislature during the 1995 legislative session. Recommendations and support for this initiative came out of the 1994 Probation Standards Report. This report indicated a need for 564 probation officers statewide at an estimated cost of \$41 million. The stated goal for the use of this funding was: The money appropriated under this provision is intended to reduce state and county probation officer caseload and workload overcrowding and to increase supervision of individuals sentenced to probation at the county level.

Subsequent to this initiative, statewide outcome measures were developed by a committee made up of correction professionals from all three delivery systems. This resulted in a report to the legislature in 1998. The committee and resulting report did not delineate CL/WL reduction funding from the rest of the probation system when considering the recommended outcome measures. Therefore, the Department of Corrections (DOC) did not develop a separate process linking the spending of CL/WL dollars to the 1998 outcome measures report. However, there has been some limited progress toward the legislature's stated goals (Appendix A) of reduced caseloads and enhanced supervision. This report will concentrate on those goals and progress towards them.

The 1998 Statewide Outcome Measures Report outlined the following four goals and outcome measures:

1. **Community safety:** The goal is to employ supervision techniques that will reduce recidivism. This is essentially a recidivism study of offenders while they are under supervision. It would not be extended to post-supervision behavior.
2. **Restore the crime victim:** The goal is for the victim to gain a sense of satisfaction that their needs were addressed and that they were financially restored whenever possible. This is a measurement of restitution ordered and restitution collected, and it calls for a victim satisfaction survey.
3. **Community restoration:** To ensure that the offender participates in appropriate programs that restore the harm done to the community through community-based programs, such as Sentencing to Service (STS).
4. **Develop offender competencies and assist the offender to change:** The goal is to provide opportunities for the offender to become law-abiding. Providing services that address factors relating to criminal behaviors, such as risk assessments, will do this.

While CL/WL reduction funds were never previously linked to these outcome measures, it is clear that lower caseloads would play a significant role in meeting the goals.

Background

Each year the probation population increases as well as the duties of the probation officer. In the early 1980s a probation officer had ten separate and distinct activities that might be considered core to job expectations. In the 1990s the number of core activities increased to nearly 40. Some of the reasons for these increased duties were:

- Greater use of probation for all ages and offenses
- Sentencing guidelines
- Demand for greater accountability
- Legislative mandates
- Increased expectations of the judiciary
- Increased involvement in the development of and participation in programming

As stated above, it has been a goal of the CL/WL initiative to lower caseloads to a manageable level and enhance probation services and objectives. This has been accomplished to a limited degree, but not to the extent anticipated by the 1994 Probation Standards Report. This has been due to two reasons. First, due to other legislative priorities the actual appropriations have been closer to \$17 million, considerably less than the needed \$41 million. Secondly, probation caseloads have continued to grow at a rapid pace.

Figure 1 and Table 1 illustrate the increasing probation populations. As the data shows, additional funding has been necessary just to keep up with the increase. Table 1 breaks down the growing populations by offense type.

Figure 1:

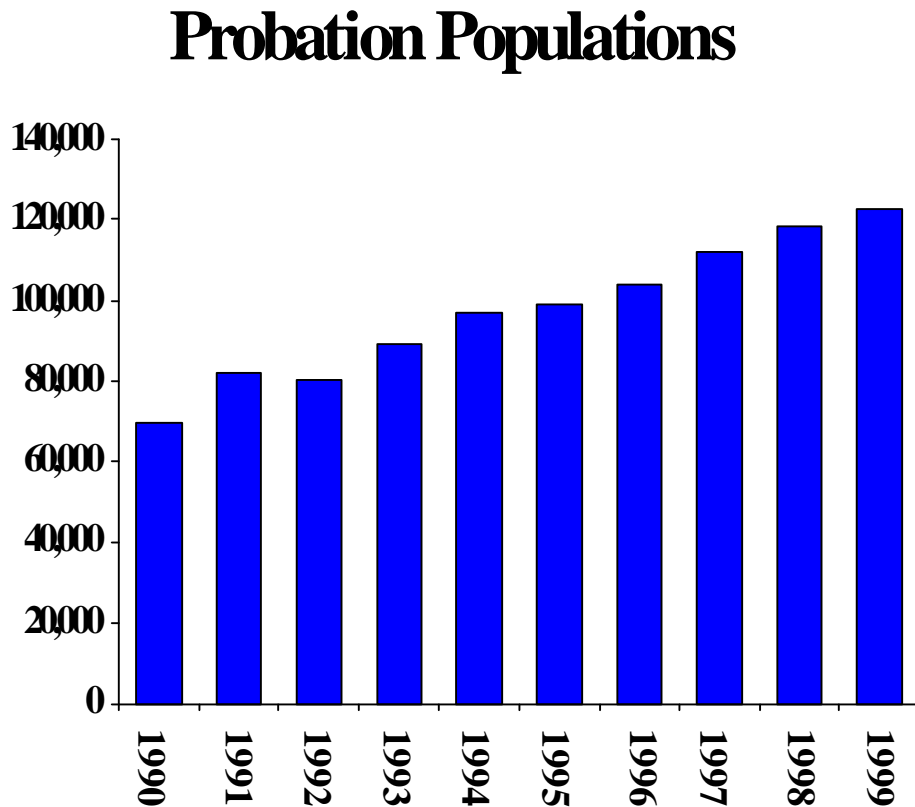
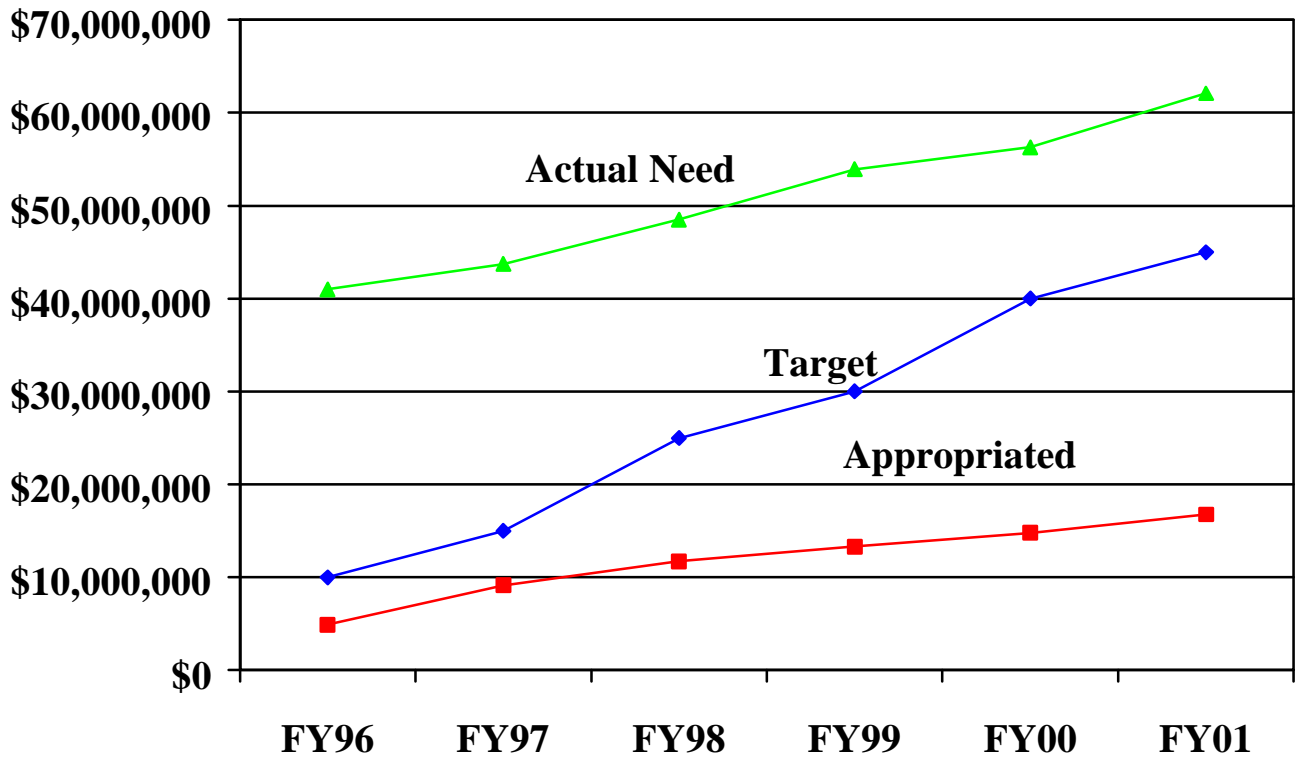


Table 1 - Population by Offense Type

Release Year	Felony	Gross Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	All Adults	Juvenile	All Probationers
1990	21,395	11,540	26,851	59,786	9,715	69,501
1991	23,300	14,782	33,325	71,407	10,544	81,951
1992	24,233	15,054	30,001	69,288	11,360	80,648
1993	24,667	17,265	32,254	74,186	14,822	89,008
1994	25,874	19,345	36,753	81,972	15,346	97,318
1995	26,114	19,966	37,698	83,778	15,655	99,433
1996	27,373	20,736	39,930	88,039	15,835	103,874
1997	29,694	22,120	43,106	94,920	17,144	112,064
1998	33,829	24,732	42,257	100,818	17,774	118,592
1999	33,896	26,797	43,922	104,615	18,000	122,615

Figure 2 illustrates the widening gap between the funds appropriated and the actual need to attain the recommended caseload size. As noted earlier, the original target appropriation was \$41 million in 1994; the actual base appropriations after three biennia have been approximately \$17 million. With the growth in the probation population during this same three biennia time frame, the need has grown to over \$60 million.

Figure 2 – CL/WL Funding



Outcomes

The original initiative for funding CL/WL reduction was based on the need for an additional 564 officers to supervise approximately 90,000 offenders on probation and supervised release. With the funding provided during the past three biennia, approximately 300 probation officers have been added statewide along with additional support staff. Another 100 probation officers have been added through other funding methods. At the same time the total number of offenders under supervision has increased to 122,000. CL/WL reductions have made progress in lowering total caseload client numbers. The ultimate goal is to reach a caseload of 70 clients per probation agent, with a recommended legislative goal of 35 clients for specialized agents. The average caseload has been reduced from 111 to 108. If the same standards are used that were used in the 1994 Probation Standards Report, there is now a need of 653 additional probation officers. Considering the continued increase in offenders, there is still a long way to go before caseload targets are reached.

Table 2 shows the actual number of agents, support staff and other positions hired through the CL/WL reduction initiative through fiscal year 2000.

Table 2: Staff Hired

Funding Year	Probation Officers	Support Staff	Other Professional
1996	97.65	9.8	3.0
1997	71.7	11.3	3.7
1998	42.7	14.8	8.5
1999	19.95	7.95	0
2000	23.57	7.38	0.67
Total	255.57	51.23	15.87

The 1996 initiative also authorized the use for funding to be allocated toward: 1) traditional probation program services; 2) innovative technology services; 3) intergovernmental cooperation agreements between local governments and local resources; and 4) prevention and diversion programs. The following table reflects the actual total annual expenditures by legislative categories.

Table 3: Caseload/Workload Expenditures by Category

Funding Year	Traditional Probation	Technology	Contracting	Prevention/ Diversion	Total Appropriations
1996	\$ 3,625,072	\$1,040,537	\$174,401	\$0	\$ 4,840,010
1997	\$ 5,916,491	\$ 989,201	\$640,089	\$126,617	\$ 7,672,398
1998	\$10,407,100	\$ 325,075	\$775,903	\$225,922	\$11,734,000
1999	\$11,336,163	\$ 774,890	\$863,067	\$734,880	\$13,709,000
2000	\$13,013,399	\$ 318,187	\$914,986	\$535,424	\$14,781,996
2001	\$14,878,160 *	\$ 426,733 *	\$993,455 *	\$608,652 *	\$16,907,000 *

* Estimated

Appendix A
1999 Rider Language Relative to
Caseload/Workload Funding and Required Report

Subd. 4. Community Services

\$1,500,000 the first year and \$3,500,000 the second year are for a statewide probation and supervised release caseload and workload reduction grant program. Counties that deliver correctional services through Minnesota Statutes, chapter 244, and that qualify for new probation officers under this program shall receive full reimbursement for the officers' salaries and reimbursement for the officers' benefits and support as set forth in the probations standards task force report, not to exceed \$70,000 per officer annually. Positions funded by this appropriation may not supplant existing services. Position control numbers for these positions must be annually reported to the commissioner of corrections. The commissioner shall distribute money appropriated for state and county probation officer caseload and workload reduction, increased supervised release and probation services, and county probation officer reimbursement according to the formula contained in Minnesota Statutes, section 401.10.

These appropriations may not be used to supplant existing state or county probation officer positions or existing correctional services or programs. The money appropriated under this provision is intended to reduce state and county probation officer caseload and workload overcrowding and to increase

supervision of individuals sentenced to probation at the county level. This increased supervision may be accomplished through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to:

- (1) innovative technology services, such as automated probation reporting systems and electronic monitoring;
- (2) prevention and diversion programs;
- (3) intergovernmental cooperation agreements between local governments and appropriate community resources; and
- (4) traditional probation program services.

By January 15, 2001, the commissioner of corrections shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the senate and house committees and divisions having jurisdiction over criminal justice funding on the outcomes achieved through the use of state probation caseload reduction appropriations made since 1995. The commissioner shall, to the extent possible, include an analysis of the ongoing results relating to the measures described in the uniform statewide probation outcome measures workgroup's 1998 report to the legislature.