ID # 12-S-04-GA  
State: GEORGIA  
Assign Program Category: CORRECTIONS—COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS AND/OR CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
Program Name: PROBATION OPERATIONS  
PROBATION REPORTING CONTACT CENTER  
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
Administering Agency: GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
Contact (Name and Title): STAN COOPER, DIRECTOR  
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1. How long has this program operated (month and year)?  
The PROBATION REPORTING CONTACT CENTER began operation February 1, 2010.

2. Describe the program:  
Please read the document below—written in support of the Awards Application.

3. Did this program originate in your state?  
YES—Innovator: Probation Director, Stan Cooper  
Mr. Cooper’s contact information may be found above.

4. Are you aware of similar programs in other states?  
No, not aware of any similar PROBATION REPORTING CONTACT CENTER

5. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program? None

Provided funding for technology applications, information technology support (I.T.) and staff with appropriate skill-sets to work as Contact Center Customer Service Representatives (a.k.a.: call handlers) is available.

The business process of this initiative is easily understood and easily implemented. Technology must be allocated, supported and maintained. Work-station automation and the ability of staff to work from an alternate work-site (e.g., their residence) greatly enhances staff willingness, recruitment and retention.

The document below was written to support this Awards Application. Please read it thoroughly for a full description of the Probation Reporting Contact Center, to include:

- Why it was created.
- Why it is a new and creative approach and method.
- What were the specific activities and operations of the program, chronological order.
- How effective it is, including tangible results and examples.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY FOR THIS AWARD!
Georgia Department of Corrections
Probation Operations

INNOVATIONS: THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

PROBATION REPORTING CONTACT CENTER

Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC), Probation Operations Unit, in collaboration with the Governor’s Office of Customer Service (OCS), and supported by GDC Operations Planning and Training Division, initiated operations of the Probation Reporting Contact Center (PRCC) February 1, 2010:

1. To achieve highest efficiency in receiving scheduled reports from probationers assigned to the STANDARD risk level, and, as a result of gained efficiencies—

2. To increase resources available for reassignment to manage higher risk level probationers—thereby, providing an increased level of public safety.

OPERATIONS

The PRCC initiative is unique to Georgia, and perhaps the Nation, in that it is a dual-featured “contact center”—not a center that any individual can call to request general information or call to be routed to a source of information. Instead, it is a contact center dedicated to receiving monthly compliance reports from lowest risk (a.k.a. standard risk) convicted felons who have been ordered by the Court to report to their Probation Officer—“as directed”.

- In this instance the “as directed” equates to using telephone “touch-tone” technology (fully automated reporting, via Interactive Voice Response Technology—IVR) and/or the services of a dedicated Customer Service Representative, when assisted reporting is necessary.
  - These Customer Service Representatives are also referred to as PRCC “call-handlers” and are all probation staff members.

- Probationers being supervised at the standard risk level (a level objectively determined by Probation Operations’ automated risk assessment instrument) are “screened” and must be approved by the respective Chief Probation Officer to begin reporting to the PRCC.

Research has been conducted to determine if similar statewide contact center initiatives are in existence—none were found.

In the beginning (February, 2010), the PRCC initiative engaged 9 of the State’s 49 probation circuits in a “pilot program” intended to examine the feasibility of launching the PRCC initiative statewide.

The pilot proved successful and the PRCC has been implemented statewide. At this time, the 49 circuits collectively contribute over 23,000 low risk probationers to be monitored monthly through the PRCC.
Goals of the Probation Reporting Contact Center to:
1. Most efficiently serve greater than 40,000 probationers, and their respective Probation Officers, thereby,
2. Through gained offender supervision efficiencies and supervision resource redirection, enable for heightened levels of public safety to be achieved.

The PRCC uses:
- Interactive Voice Response technology (IVR) provided by AT&T (“AT&T VoiceTone”),
- Call routing/distribution provided by AVAYA Inc.,
- Customer Relationship Management technology (CRM) provided by Oracle,
- GDC’s data management system (SCRIBE) and Virtual Private Network (VPN), and
- A corps of Customer Service Representatives (10 + 1 supervisor).

The PRCC has proven to be a most efficient business process leading to an enhanced public safety environment, throughout Georgia. By taking reports from low risk probationers, via automated technology, this innovation allows for caseloads of lowest risk offenders (at +200 each) from several officers, to be consolidated into single-officer managed caseloads, exceeding 500 each. With this consolidation of lowest-risk probationer caseloads Probation Operations is enabled to “free-up” numerous case managing officers to be redirected to manage lower volume caseloads of higher risk probationers, thereby effectively enhancing the public’s safety.

RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR PROCESS IMPROVEMENT
August, 2009—GDC was responsible for the active supervision of 103,065 probationers, 81,280 were assessed and supervised at the lowest risk level of active supervision (standard level). Offenders at this level require only minimal Probation Officer monitoring and supervision. The remaining 21,785 offenders were assessed and supervised at a high risk level. Offenders at the high level require a much greater level of commitment and control from the State’s Probation Officer corps—in order to minimize and/or eliminate the risk(s) they present to public safety.

Currently—April, 2012:
The are 103,720 probationers actively supervised by GDC Probation Operations:
- 83,189 are managed at Standard (lowest) risk level
- 20,531 are managed at a High Risk level.

2009-2010, in light of the Department’s increasing caseload/probationer management responsibility(ies), and the austere economic environment, Probation Operations endeavored to improve the process of managing the standard (lowest risk) probation population in a manner that would result in:
- Maximizing case supervision efficiencies without negatively impacting public safety,
- Create an environment wherein a significant number of the Department’s certified Probation Officers could be redirected to manage the burgeoning high risk probationer population, and/or engage in other high priority tasks.

Process Improvement Concept:
Out of the compelling need to achieve maximum case management efficiency and a heightened level of public safety, a process improvement was envisioned and subsequently developed to
become the Probation Reporting Contact Center. Specifically, the PRCC was developed to be a contact center used to offer relief and to supplement the offender supervision duties and responsibilities of State’s Probation Officers (see Offender Supervision Teamwork—PRCC chart).

The Probation Reporting Contact Center was developed to provide an opportunity for probationers to meet strict criteria-based selection standards and; thereafter, to be authorized to participate in a program that would allow them to complete their monthly required probation report (i.e., compliance status) via telephonic interaction—in lieu of reporting directly to their Probation Officer. The PRCC process requires the IVR and, as needed a PRCC call handler, to thoroughly document into the Department’s secured offender management data base ("SCRIBE") all information presented by the probationer. The information is then electronically and instantaneously available to Probation Officers, statewide, for offender supervision and case management purposes. Additionally, the program is designed/enabled to ensure that the caller is immediately put in touch (via telephone) with their respective Probation Officer—should the dynamics of the call evolve from routine compliance monitoring into requiring that case supervision decisions be made.

**NOTE:** Internal system availability of live call-handlers to assist calling probationers and provide the supervising Probation Officers with notification and immediate connection to probationers that are having difficulty reporting or have non-compliant behaviors to report is an ESSENTIAL AND CRITICAL FEATURE for telephone reporting to be successful!

**AUTHORIZATION TO REPORT / BENEFITS OF PRCC REPORTING**

Authorization for the probationer to report to the PRCC is earned (specific selection criteria is used—see PRCC Selection Chart).

The PRCC provides an efficient, alternative method for selected lowest risk, stable probationers to report their current residence, current employment, self-improvement program participation, and continuing compliance with Court ordered conditions of probation, by telephone—in lieu of being required to personally visit with or directly contact their assigned probation officer, at a probation office.

Probationer eligibility for PRCC reporting was designed to be a useful supervision tool for the Probation Officer to use, in as much as it presents a positive sanction.

Eligibility has proven to incentivize probationer supervision compliance and, as a by-product, to provide for a safer, more positive probation office and local community environment locally, e.g.:

—**For probationers**, in comparison to being required to report in-person to a probation office, the PRCC eliminates:
  - transportation and time expense(s) in getting to the probation office,
  - parking fees,
  - lost time on the job/in school,
  - possible child care expenses when reporting in person,
  - wait-times in the probation lobby, etc.
In probation offices it allows for the avoidance of:
- probation office lobby overcrowding,
- victim’s being confronted by offenders,
- rival gangs encountering one another, etc.

For business or residential communities, adjacent to probation offices:
- it reduces the occurrence of offenders visiting these areas,
- alleviates traffic and parking congestion on designated probationer “report” days,
- eliminates loitering by offenders and those who may accompany them to report.

As stated above—the IVR and/or PRCC Customer Service Representatives perform the essential monitoring functions of receiving and documenting (to the Department’s data management system) information provided by the calling probation population. These actions serve to “free up” certified officers (from taking routine calls, or routinely/personally meeting with probationers), in order for the officers to focus more of their time, training and experience, most effectively, on managing and controlling high risk probationers, assessing probationer need(s) and assisting probationers to become more productive and responsible, within the community.

Concentrating (“funneling”) probationer call-in reports and supportive documentation through the PRCC, in lieu of having officers perform low-risk offender monitoring, results in the ability of PRCC supported officers to manage larger caseloads and permits local probation offices to reorganize and consolidate caseloads; thereby, achieving “freed-up” Probation Officer positions (resources) that can be redirected to manage higher risk, higher need probationers and to engage in other critical priorities. This concept provides for the “right” resources to be applied to the “right” functions/tasks—thereby, efficiently and effectively utilizing State assets and providing for a greater focus and quantity of resource(s) to manage higher risk offenders.

The PRCC process improvement/innovation continues to positively impact GDC’s ability to:
1. Meet offender supervision/caseload management goals,
2. Achieve heightened levels of public safety within Georgia’s communities, and,
3. Support the Department in meeting its State resource stewardship goals.

OUTCOMES
PRCC operations began February, 2010. The IVR technology was added February, 2011. The Probation Reporting Contact Center innovation and its continuing and expanding operations and use have proven to be remarkably successful.

Since beginning operations, the PRCC has received and documented to Scribe (probation case management system) 343,325 called-in reports from low risk probationers.
- Approximately 62% of these calls have been fully processed and documented to Scribe by the IVR application
- The remaining 38% have required the services of a PRCC call handler.

Tangible results and examples—a sampling from several Chief Probation Officers:
Augusta Circuit, Augusta, Georgia:
- We have created 3 high risk managing officers.
We had 800 less probationers reporting into the office in February which has allowed PRCC officers to concentrate on other issues (preparing for Court, risk assessments completions, probation behavior monitoring, etc) with "uninterrupted time," and, this also provided some relief for duty officers and secretarial staff.

Gwinnett Circuit, Lawrenceville, Georgia:
- We have used the extra resources to cover vacant positions when we have had them and have added two more high risk managing officers.

Ocmulgee Circuit, Milledgeville, Georgia:
- In the Milledgeville Probation Office we were able to form a high risk management team.

Piedmont Circuit, Winder, Georgia:
- The PRCC allowed for 400 standard cases to be reassigned to one PRCC Officer and reduced the (standard risk level) caseloads of the other 3 officers to 275 cases each.
- We can now focus on the high risk cases and be proactive in dealing with the noncompliant low risk cases.
- PRCC serves as a screening tool to reward performance for probationers.
- In my circuit, it is over an hour drive one way for some probationers to report to us. PRCC provides an incentive to perform and move to this level of supervision.

Southwestern Circuit, Americas, Georgia:
- In February 2010 we were short staffed 3 Officer positions in the Southwestern Circuit.
- I was able to divert over 400 standard level cases from the six remaining officers of the Americus Office to the PRCC caseload, thereby significantly reducing case sizes to a more manageable ratio of cases-to-officer.

And… a probationer:
- “Love the fact that I do not have to come into the office to report. Save time and money. Don’t have to take off work”

Were it not for the enablement and abilities of the PRCC:
- Numerous Probation Officers would have continued using valuable (and scarce) caseload management and offender supervision time to transcribe routine low risk probationer reports (made by telephone or probationer in-person walk-in visits to the probation office) into the offender database.
- Probation Officers’ available time to work with problematic offenders and on other priority tasks would have continued to be limited—because probationer call-in and walk-in volumes that officers would have had to process.
- Probation Operations would not have had the opportunity (now continuing) to re-direct resources to more urgent/emergent supervision and public safety needs.
- Businesses (including probation offices) and neighborhoods would not be realizing a reduction in the frequency of probationers entering into their environment/community (with potential negative impact), for the purpose of reporting to the probation office, and,
- Probation Officers would not have the PRCC reporting option/alternative to use as a positive sanction to incentivize probationer compliance with probation conditions—conditions which have been ordered by the Court in an effort to allow the offender to serve their sentence in the community, rather than the State having to pay the expense of their incarceration (a cost approaching $50.00 per offender, per day).
  - In this regard evidence-based research indicates that:
Positive sanctions (incentives) stimulate behavioral compliance—thereby, diminishing potential risks to the public’s safety, and

The “over-supervision” of low-risk probationers can actually be counter-productive to their compliance and rehabilitation—negatively impacting public safety

**SUMMARY**

- *This GDC Probation Operations’ PRCC Process Innovation* has provided for previously unachievable efficiencies and effective strategies to be realized and brought to fruition
- As a direct result of the achieved efficiencies, this initiative has simultaneously provided for heightened levels of public safety through greater resource conservation, flexibility and focused application. Each of these factors continues to significantly benefit the citizens of Georgia.
- The future of the Probation Reporting Contact Center, and the technologies it utilizes, is extremely bright, and has the potential to serve the State for years as a functioning arm of Probation Operations and an example of an innovative process improvement for others to model.
- At the present time this initiative is swiftly moving toward its goal of achieving 40,000+ low-risk probationers reporting monthly.
  - Each month Probation Operations is realizing and increase in officer resources being redirected to manage higher risk probationers. Thereby, achieving heightened levels of community public safety.
  - Full implementation, to the level of 40,000+ probationers reporting through the PRCC, will allow for the re-direction of numerous Probation Officers for use in managing highest risk offenders and supporting other essential, high priority tasks.

PRCC call handlers (10) and supervisor (1) currently participate in Georgia’s *Work Away* program, with full confidence that their knowledge, skills and the “portable” technologies (soft-voice over internet phones, wireless headsets, VPN access to servers, wireless internet connectivity, real-time system monitoring, etc.) will fully support PRCC operations, from their chosen remote work sites—predominately their homes.

- Allowing call handlers to work productively from their homes ("alternate work site") has proven to be a major recruitment and retention incentive for PRCC staff.
- The PRCC Supervisor (a veteran Probation Officer and Probation Officer Supervisor) is enabled with appropriate technologies to allow her to effectively monitor PRCC and individual call handler productivity and performance remotely—from her home, also.

**FINAL NOTE**

The PRCC, is an alternative to probationers directly reporting to their officer and as such allows for compliance *monitoring* and documentation to be achieved through telephone contact with the PRCC IVR and/or call handler.

Being authorized to report through the PRCC DOES NOT, nor is it intended to, replace or circumvent, the responsibility for probationer case management and offender supervision to be performed **by the offender’s assigned, certified Probation Officer**.

The PRCC is an officer “tool” which allows for routine probationer compliance reports to be received and documented most efficiently.
OFFENDER SUPERVISION TEAMWORK—PRCC

This chart depicts the call “flow” when a call to the PRCC is received from a probationer. The probationer (upper left) places the call and subsequently interacts with the IVR once he/she successfully inputs their Georgia Department of Corrections identification number and their unique personal identification number (PIN).

Thereafter, depending on the content of the caller’s information, the call may:
- Be completed entirely through interaction with the Interactive Voice Response technology (IVR), or
- Be completed by transfer to a PRCC call handler, or
- Be completed upon the call handler’s immediate “warm call transfer” to the probationer’s respective Probation Officer.

In all instances, call information is documented to the offender’s electronic case management file (data base) and is immediately viewable by the supervising Probation Officer.
Probationers who are being supervised at the standard risk level (a level determined by Probation Operations’ automated risk assessment instrument) are “screened” for reporting assignment to the PRCC. If a probationer meets the criteria and is approved for PRCC reporting, by the respective Chief Probation Officer (or designee), he/she is issued a PIN, provided with information and PRCC reporting instructions and directed to begin reporting through the PRCC.

The chart above depicts the inclusion/exclusion selection process for PRCC authorized reporting.

Being authorized to report through the PRCC DOES NOT, nor is it intended to, replace or circumvent, the responsibility for probationer case management and offender supervision to be performed by the offender’s assigned certified Probation Officer.

The PRCC is an officer’s “tool”. It allows routine probationer compliance reports to be received and documented most efficiency.