



Progress Review of Modernization Plan of Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections Department

July 12, 2011

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*Prepared by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, with the support of Bexar
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Council of State Governments, Justice Center

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Executive Summary

On July 1, 2009, the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments (hereafter referred to as Justice Center) began an assessment of the Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (Bexar CSCD). The Justice Center's goal was to measure the department's operations against an Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) operational model. Bill Fitzgerald, then Director of the Bexar CSCD, requested this assistance in early 2009. The effort was supported by the Department of Criminal Justice, Community Justice Assistance Division (from here on referred to as TDCJ-CJAD).

The results of the assessment and the plan were presented to the department and Bexar County officials in December 2009 in a report entitled ***Organizational Assessment and Modernization Plan of Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections Department***. Following the report, the Commissioner's Court and the judiciary endorsed the recommendations in different resolutions (January 5, 2010 resolution by the District Court Judges; January 5, 2010 resolution by the Commissioner's Court; January 8, 2010 resolution by the County Court at Law judges; and, a January 19, 2010 letter from the Bexar County District Attorney to the Justice Center).

In early 2011, judicial officials in Bexar County approached the Justice Center to conduct a re-assessment of the department to evaluate the progress made over the last year both in addressing the deficiencies of the department and implementing the modernization plan presented in the December 2009 report.

This report presents the results of the re-assessment and is Phase 2 of the Justice Center's work in Bexar County. The Justice Center examined Bexar County CSCD's progress in implementing the recommended changes along eight specific areas:

- *Deployment of a computerized case management system*
- *Re-organization of caseloads from court-based assignments to department risk-based assessments and assignments*
- *Creation of department-wide supervision and sanctioning policies*
- *Provision of more effective services to the courts*
- *Re-organization of the PSI unit into a central diagnosis unit*
- *Re-organization of training and supervision to emphasize evidence-based practices and skills*
- *Re-design of the personnel evaluation and incentives system*
- *Creation of accountability and quality control systems*

Based on the findings above, a Phase II implementation plan is presented identifying an 18 month timeline of tasks and milestones related to areas that still are pending for further improvements.

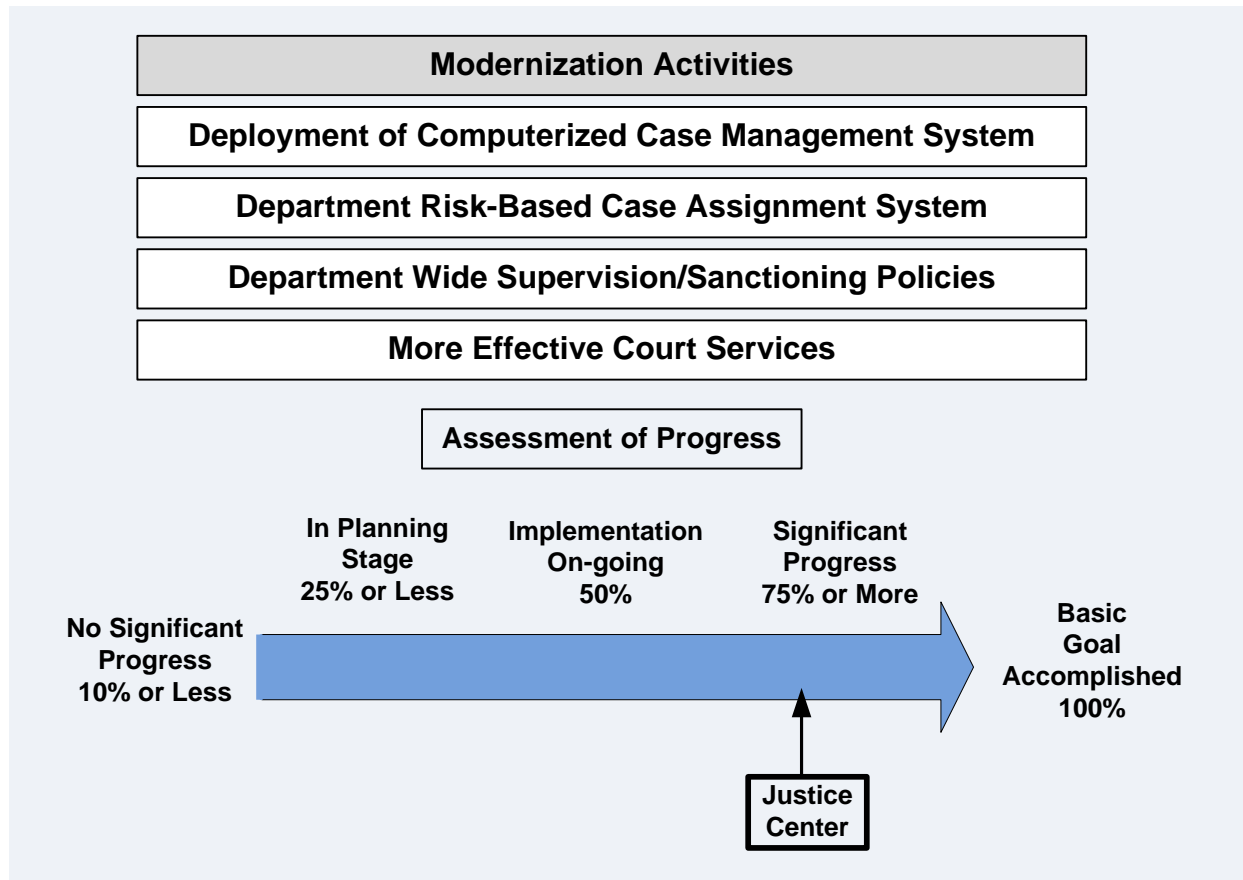
As in the original assessment, this assessment included interviews with line staff, administrators, and key stakeholders. The department director was also asked to submit an extensive self-assessment following the questions presented by the Justice Center.

The details of the assessment are presented in the body of the report. To help conceptualize overall progress in a simple manner, the Justice Center team developed an

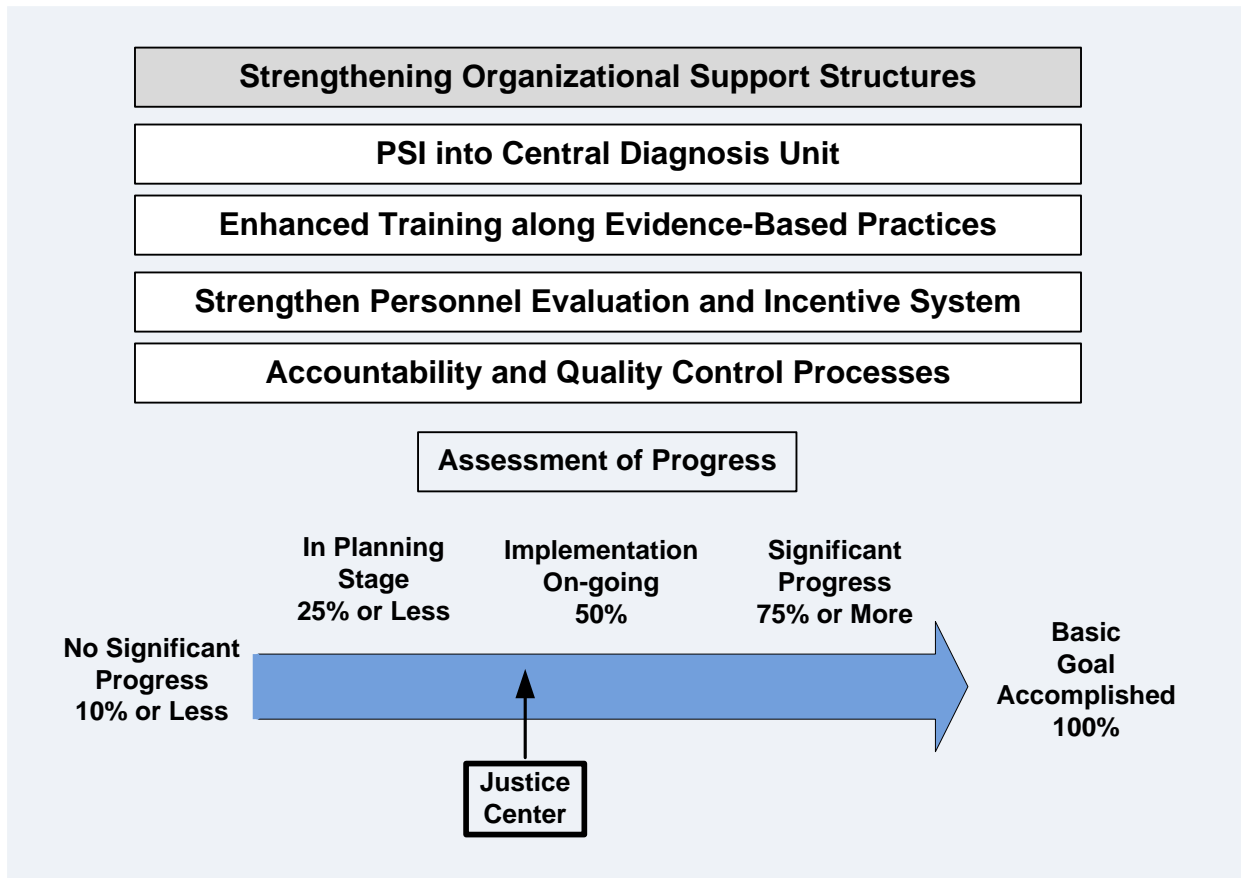
“assessment scale” for each of the areas reviewed. This scale represents the judgment by the Justice Center team of the overall progress made towards implementing the original plan as presented in the December 2009 report and in relation to legitimate implementation challenges faced in accomplishing key goals. In theory, the scale in theory is from zero to 100, with 100 representing all goals accomplished. But it should be noted that there is no precise formula for the “scoring” other than the judgment of the Justice Center team. For example, when the department is closer to accomplishing the basic goals of the December 2009 plan, the “score” is 75% or more (significant progress in accomplishing the goals). When the department is moving forward at the expected pace, based on the three year timeline presented in the December 2009 report, the “score” is in the middle range of 50% (implementation on-going). Finally, when the department has a great number of activities still in need of implementation in order to accomplish the goals for a particular area, the “score” is in the lower range of 25% (in planning stage, or at the far lower end, no significant progress). The Justice Center team “score” for each of the particular areas was discussed with department officials and personnel who felt the “scores” were fair representations of the progress made in the different areas.

The two figures below show the overall assessment by the team of progress made on modernization and organizational strengthening activities. The Justice Center team’s overall assessment is that the department is making significant progress in accomplishing the modernization goals stated in the December 2009 report. The modernization goals were to: deploy a computerized case management system; adopt a risk-based case assignment; implement department wide supervision and sanctioning policies and more effective court services. Some progress has been made in strengthening the organizational support structures, but more activities are required to achieve major advancements and accomplish the goals of the December 2009 plan. These areas include: absorbing the Pre-sentencing Investigation (PSI) process into a Central Diagnosis Unit utilizing evidence-based assessment tools; enhance training strategies; strengthen the personnel evaluation and incentives system; and, enhancing accountability and quality control processes.

Justice Center Team Assessment of Overall Progress in Modernization Tasks

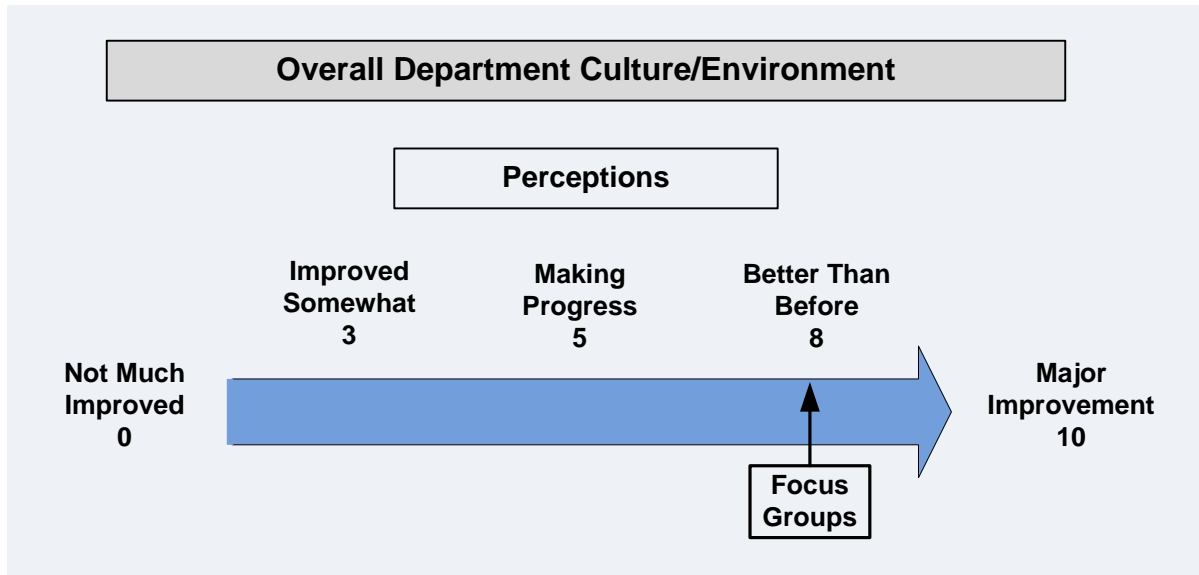


Justice Center Team Assessment of Overall Progress in Strengthening Organizational Support Structures



The figure below shows the assessment by the focus groups made up of department personnel. They were asked about their overall feelings regarding the culture and environment of the department. In general, the department focus groups stated that the environment and culture of the department is much improved. They gave an average score of 7.6 on a 10 point scale, with 10 points being “major improvements” and 8 being “better than before”.

Assessment by Department Focus Groups Regarding Culture and Environment of the Department



The Justice Center team worked with department personnel to develop a Phase II improvement plan. The figure below summarizes the goals and milestones agreed upon for the next set of improvements. These improvements are directed at strengthening the organizational infrastructures and require steady administrative leadership. The areas covered are: expansion of the paperless court project, enhancement in the diagnosis process, improvement and restructuring of the supervision plans, and enhancement in quality control and training. Finally, the Justice Center team recommends the submission of three progress reports to the judges, district attorney, and county commissioners by the director of the probation department. These reports will allow Bexar County officials to have a record to assess progress in the implementation of Phase II and raise questions as needed to maintain accountability.

Summary of Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Phase II Changes

Summary of Phase II Goals and Milestones

Goal: To expand the present “paperless pilot” to all the district courts and evaluate other needs to streamline processes by the computerization of information

Key Milestone: All courts are “paperless” by March 2012

Goal: To streamline PSI process and increase its efficiency and quality

Key Milestones: Computerize present PSI using standard case tracking system format already in the CSS system by December 2011

Validate risk assessment on Bexar County population or determine utilization of CJAD proposed ORAS by June 2012

Develop Phase III plan to adopt a Central Diagnosis Process relying on evidence-based assessment tools and provide judicial officials with better assessment metrics that are consistently applied with high quality controls by December 2012

Goal: To re-design supervision plans to better reflect the supervision requirements under evidence based practices

Key Milestones: Publish new supervision plan structure by January 2012

Computerize and implement new supervision plan and documentation template for chronologies by August 2012

Continue studying feasibility for opening additional reporting location

Goal: To re-design personnel evaluation system to measure performance along case work skills

Key Milestones: Start new evaluation process by October 2012

Goal: To use computerized case management system to generate process and outcome reports and to improve quality of PSI process

Key Milestones: Implementation of PSI/Risk Assessment quality protocols by December 2011

Process and outcome reports for administrators by May 2012

Goal: To improve training and prioritization of training sessions

Key Milestones: Training plans by October 2011 for 2012 and by October 2012 for 2013 to clearly prioritize skill based training sessions related to evidence based practices

I. Introduction

A. Background

On July 1, 2009, the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments (hereafter referred to as Justice Center) began an assessment of the Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (Bexar CSCD). The Justice Center's goal was to measure the department's operations against an Evidence-Based Practice operational (EBP) model. Bill Fitzgerald, then Director of the Bexar CSCD, requested this assistance in early 2009. The effort was supported by the Department of Criminal Justice, Community Justice Assistance Division (from here on referred to as TDCJ-CJAD).

The central goal of EBP is to operate probation departments as "learning organizations" that use strategies proven to be effective to manage the probation population and reduce recidivism. EBP emphasizes differentiated supervision strategies based on a population's risks and needs. The model moves the primary emphasis for supervision strategies from enforcement to one focused on providing the offenders the resources and motivation to effect change by addressing their criminogenic traits. Such traits include: anti-social attitudes, anti-social friends, substance abuse, lack of empathy, and impulsive behavior. Extensive research has shown the success of programs and interventions in addressing these factors directly affects the ability to reduce recidivism. The technical assistance model, and the operational changes needed to improve the effectiveness of probation departments along an EBP model, were tested and developed over a three year period working with the Travis County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (2005-2008). The process and outcomes of this effort were extensively documented and provide the basis for assisting other departments in the state.¹ This effort was sponsored by Travis County and TDCJ-CJAD. In recent years, the Justice Center has also worked in improving probation practices and policies in Arizona, Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, and Kansas as part of the Center's Justice Reinvestment initiative.

The 2009 Bexar County assessment team was headed by Dr. Tony Fabelo, former director of the Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council and Director of Research for the Justice Center. The team included experts in recidivism and risk analysis (Mike Eisenberg), data management (Jason Bryl), probation supervision (Claire Leonhart), and personnel and training (Dawn Heikkila). Mapping analyses were conducted by Eric Cadora, director of the Justice Mapping Systems.

The results of the assessment and the plan were presented to the department and Bexar County officials in December 2009 in a report entitled ***Organizational Assessment and Modernization Plan of Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections Department***. Following the report, the Commissioner's Court and the judiciary endorsed the recommendations in different resolutions (January 5, 2010 resolution by the District Court Judges; January 5, 2010 resolution by the Commissioner's Court; January 8, 2010 resolution by the County Court at Law judges; and, a January 19, 2010 letter from the Bexar County District Attorney to the Justice Center).

¹ Process reports of the Travis project can be found at http://www.co.travis.tx.us/community_supervision/TCIS_Initiative.asp. A report summarizing how to re-align probation departments based on the experience gathered from this model can be acquired from TDCJ-CJAD by requesting a copy of the report entitled Ten Strategies to Sustaining More Effective Practices in a Probation Department, March 2009.

In early 2011, judicial officials in Bexar County approached the Justice Center to conduct a re-assessment of the department to evaluate the progress made over the last year both in addressing the deficiencies of the department and implementing the modernization plan presented in the December 2009 report.

This report presents the results of the re-assessment and is Phase 2 of the Justice Center's work in Bexar County. The Justice Center examined Bexar County CSCD's progress in implementing the recommended changes along eight specific areas:

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Based on the findings above, a Phase II implementation plan is presented identifying an 18 month timeline of tasks and milestones related to areas that still are pending for further improvements.

As in the original assessment, this assessment included interviews with line staff, administrators, and key stakeholders. The department director was also asked to submit an extensive self-assessment following the questions presented by the Justice Center.²

As part of the interview protocol, persons interviewed were asked to sign a confidentiality form stating that: (a) participation in the interview was voluntary; (b) persons participating could refuse to answer any question at any time during the interview; and, (c) the assessment team would not quote or refer to any person interviewed specifically, although the results of the interviews will be reported as part of the assessment. In focus groups, the persons participating were advised that although the assessment team would maintain confidentiality, peers in attendance were not subject to the same confidentiality requirements. Interviews were conducted individually or as part of focus groups.

The details of the assessment are presented in the body of the report. To help conceptualize overall progress in a simple manner, the Justice Center team developed an "assessment scale" for each of the areas reviewed. This scale represents the judgment by the Justice Center team of the overall progress made towards implanting the original plan as presented in the December 2009 report and in relation to legitimate implementation challenges faced in accomplishing key goals. In theory, the scale in theory is from zero to 100, with 100 representing all goals accomplished. But it should be noted that there is no precise formula for the "scoring" other than the judgment of the Justice Center team. For example, when the department is closer to accomplishing the basic goals of the December 2009 plan, the "score" is 75% or more (significant progress in accomplishing the goals). When the department is moving forward at the expected pace, based on the three year timeline presented in the December

² March 15, 2011, *Self-Assessment Report*

2009 report, the “score” is in the middle range of 50% (implementation on-going). Finally, when the department has a great number of activities still in need of implementation in order to accomplish the goals for a particular area, the “score” is in the lower range of 25% (in planning stage, or at the far lower end, no significant progress). The Justice Center team “score” for each of the particular areas was discussed with department officials and personnel who felt the “scores” were fair representations of the progress made in the different areas.

II. Findings and Modernization Plan of December 2009 Report

A. Elements of the Evidence-Based Practices or EBP Model

The December 2009 report detailed how increasing demands for services and expectations that probation should more effectively reduce recidivism and crime are challenging probation departments across the country to produce better outcomes. To address these demands, departments have moved towards adopting EBP models that orient supervision to recidivism reduction. This entail probation departments to operationally shift from a narrow focus on monitoring compliance with court imposed conditions of supervision to implementing a broader set of strategies that address individual risk factors related to criminal behavior.

The EBP model was detailed in the December 2009 report. The main elements of the model are presented again here to provide the context by which the department has been evaluated. These include:

- Adoption and use of assessment tools to identify the probation population risk and criminogenic characteristics
 - A risk assessment is needed to identify the probability that offenders who share certain characteristics will recidivate and present a public safety threat while under supervision. A needs assessment identifies criminogenic factors that must be considered in addressing the supervision and programmatic needs of offenders. These assessments can be done using various tools and should be part of a Pre-Sentence Investigation (PSI) or diagnosis process. These tools should be “evidence based” meaning that they should have been validated as effective assessment tools based on research.
- Effective use of the assessment tools to recommend to judges the appropriate conditions of supervision and treatment
 - The assessments should provide court and probation officials with a “diagnosis” differentiating the risk and programmatic needs of probationers and should be used to provide appropriate interventions based on these distinctions.
- Development of differentiated supervision strategies based on diagnosis classifications.
 - Probation officers need to engage in the design of a supervision plan with offenders through “motivational interviewing”. This involves more than a traditional interview by the probation officer. The officer has to provide the right context and questions to identify the offender’s own strengths and weaknesses and get “buy in” from the offender for his supervision plan. The supervision plan

should address not only the conditions of probation imposed by the courts, but also move beyond that to identify specific objectives related to addressing behavioral changes (like cognitive skill development), providing treatment (for substance abuse or mental health), and assisting the offender (by connecting the offender with community services and support systems). In developing a supervision plan, the officer should consider the motivation, learning styles, gender, age, and culture of the offenders (the so-called “responsivity” principle).

- Integration of effective programs into supervision strategies by targeting appropriate populations
 - The probation department should provide programming based on cognitive-behavioral strategies. These programs have to be implemented with “fidelity” to the model; otherwise, the programs will address the problems in name only and not in practice. Probation officers should provide positive reinforcement and encourage offenders to seek community support or services as a regular part of their supervision approach. As programs are limited, probation departments should establish effective collaboration approaches to take advantage of community and neighborhood resources, and, if possible, maximize them in geographical areas where a high concentration of offenders reside.
- Develop progressive sanctioning for violations and incentive strategies for successful completion of probation
 - Supervision and program resources should be delivered in a way to match as closely as possible the needs and risk of the population. The judiciary must agree to adapt the conditions of supervision to support the supervision strategies. A progressive system of incentives and sanctions for violations that match the diagnosis of the offenders should be adopted. For example, instead of a list of standard conditions of supervision given to all offenders, apply fewer conditions to offenders at lower risk and need levels to reflect the research findings that the least intrusive intervention may be the most effective strategy with low risk offenders. On the other hand, supervision conditions supporting treatment or behavioral changes can be more precisely targeted to the population that needs it the most.

The model components above must be well integrated and supported by a strong organizational structure. In particular, for a department to effectively implement an EBP model, it should:

- Control the deployment of probation officers and caseloads to match the risk and needs of the population as defined by the diagnostic protocols and special considerations imposed by the judiciary
 - Departments need to be able to have consistent strategies and use resources effectively by controlling the deployment of cases along risk and/or specialized supervision. The department should target supervision to areas with high concentrations of probationers. These “neighborhood based strategies” better utilize resources and allow for officers to become familiar with the places that influence the probationers’ daily lives, too. Alliances with faith-based and

neighborhood based non-profit groups, as well as with police, make for more effective supervision.

- Administer an effective computerized case management system that facilitates the use of information among different divisions of the department and allows more efficient business processes
 - Computerized information systems are critical to effectively integrate all the elements supporting the model. The automation of assessment and supervision plans should allow for the smooth transfer of information among court personnel, officers, and administrators.
- Measure outcomes like recidivism, improved family relations, and/or lower substance abuse to provide accountability for achieving results to judicial and department administrators
 - A case management system, if properly designed, should allow for easy access to case information, program participation, and program outcome data. It should also allow research, assessments, and/or audits to be effectively conducted and monitoring reports to be routinely generated as part of a management feedback system.
- Develop organizational strategies to maintain the integrity of programs and integrate training and personnel evaluations to support the overall mission
 - The model has to be supported by a strong training program. Staff need the proper skills to utilize assessments, engage in motivational interviewing, and develop appropriate supervision plans, which includes a fair and appropriate shift in personnel performance evaluations and program expectations. The training has to be institutionalized and be “active” training, e.g. engaging the personnel in exercises supporting the new skills. Personnel evaluations should be oriented at measuring how staff are utilizing these skills in practice.

B. Overview of Findings in December 2009 Report

The December 2009 assessment showed Bexar CSCD was an organization in need of modernization. The department operated in an environment more reminiscent of how probation departments functioned two decades ago than today. This was reflected, among other indicators, in the obsolete “court assignment probation structure” in which each court controls their own officers and managers; offenders placed on probation in a court are only supervised by the probation officers assigned to that court. As a result of this form of organization, the department was not able to effectively deploy caseloads based on consistent risk and criminogenic needs assessments and department-wide policies.

Other areas of inefficiencies included: a) a fragmented assessment process; b) lack of a unified court policy related to supervision and sanctioning strategies; c) lack of outcome measures to guide policies; d) lack of a computerized case management system; and, e) poor training and personnel evaluation policies.

The assessment was not intended to uncover “savings”; however, a cursory examination of costs showed that over \$1 million could have been “saved” or redirected by reforming the department along EBP. Making better use of managers and officers assigned to each court, eliminating the practice of supervising the same person on both felony and misdemeanor probation using two different officers, re-designing the PSI process to reduce duplication, reducing turnover of probation officers by having an effective career ladder system, and improving processes and accountability with a case management system should generate those savings. Additional savings could have been generated by having better outcomes. For example, reducing revocations reduces the number of jail bed days used for this population, which reduces jail costs. Finally, improving reporting of workload information to the state would have generated close to \$250,000 in additional yearly state revenue that was lost in previous years due to misreporting of this information.

The December 2009 assessment showed line probation officers were generally aware of the EBP model and favored the adoption of some of these practices if the organization would support them. The issues mentioned above created overwhelming barriers for the officers. At the time of the assessment, most District Court judges were eager to move forward by modernizing the department and willing to change the “court assignment probation system” in which each court essentially ran its own probation department. However, some judges, particularly in the County Courts, were not as supportive and debated the need for this re-organization. During briefings conducted in November 2009, there appeared to be a general understanding that the department needed modernization. Bexar was the only large county in Texas operating under this “court assignment system” and the judges realized negative probation outcomes indicated it was not the most effective way to organize a contemporary probation department. Moreover, the judges were increasingly aware that under the present organizational structure, they were exposed to claims of administrative acts that expose them to personal liabilities.

One issue highlighted to depict this ineffective deployment of supervision resources was that Bexar County had only one reporting location for probationers, the main building located in downtown San Antonio. This did not facilitate effective supervision practices and deployment of personnel. The probation population in Bexar County is spread over a significant geographical area. Over 350 probationers reside in each of the 14 ZIP codes, some a significant distance from the main probation office. Harris, Dallas, and Travis County all provide probationers with multiple locations to report across the respective county.

The deployment of cases along each court “probation system” led to inefficient and ineffective use of supervision resources, particularly with only one reporting location. For example, as was shown in the December 2009 report in an extensive geographical mapping analysis, 595 probationers were being supervised by 113 different probation officers responding to 22 different courts in a single neighborhood (defined as a ZIP code). It was shown that given the size of the caseloads in the department at the time, these same probationers could have been supervised by six officers dedicated to that neighborhood. This would maximize the use of resources and allow for better supervision. Officers can learn the neighborhood, the resources available there to assist the probationers and the areas criminogenic forces likely to negatively impact the success of the supervision practices.

These inefficiencies harmfully affected probation outcomes. Bexar County had the largest increase in felony revocations (79%) and the largest increase in misdemeanor revocations (25%) among the five most populous counties in Texas between FY 2005 and FY

2008. In FY 2008, Bexar County had 3,445 misdemeanor revocations. This was 1,401 more misdemeanor revocations than Harris County and nearly twice as many misdemeanor revocations as Dallas County.

Between FY 2007 and FY 2009 these trends did not change significantly. In FY 2009, Bexar County had the highest number of misdemeanor revocations with 2,918, though it was a 3.9 percent decrease for the three year period. Bexar County had almost 40 percent more misdemeanor revocations than Dallas County, which had the second highest amount for FY 2009.

The organizational assessment in December 2009 both presented recommendations and provided general timelines to implement the proposals, which were agreed upon by the department's prior administrator. The department administration changed in January 2010 when the judges in Bexar County hired Jarvis Anderson as the new executive director. Mr. Anderson worked for the department before becoming director and was familiar with the assessment, recommendations, and timelines. Mr. Anderson made significant administrative changes a few months into his administration and promised to implement the plan, particularly in light of the resolutions from the District and County Judges, from Commissioners Court, and the District Attorney.

In March 2010, CJAD send a letter to Mr. Anderson requesting corrective actions to bring the department to EBP as recommended by the December 2009 assessment. Specifically, CJAD demanded a detailed plan for improving the outcomes of the department by: reducing technical revocations; better documenting expenditures of funding to reflect legislative intent; and, addressing issues raised in the December 2009 assessment. The letter emphasized the need to: a) change the structure of the department to allow for risk-based assignments/supervision and geographic case management to "promote both EBP as well as efficiency of government;" b) implement a progressive sanctions and incentives model supported by judicial officials "along with a department-based Policy and Procedural Manual that provides consistent application of policy and procedures;" and, c) implement a "unified case management data system compliant with requirements of the Community Supervision Tracking System." CJAD stated FY 2011's funding "may be jeopardized" unless the corrective action was taken.

Since issuance of this letter, CJAD has done three follow-up visits to Bexar County CSCD, but has not issued a report or performed an audit. On February 24, 2011, the Justice Center met with representatives from CJAD to discuss Bexar County's progress since December 2009. CJAD representatives noted Bexar County has made substantial progress in the implementation of the December 2009 report's recommendations.

Figure 1 below summarizes the recommendations and implementation strategies and timeline presented in the December 2009 report. The overarching recommendation of the report was to modernize the department to allow the structure to support evidence-based practices. To accomplish this, it was necessary to modernize key aspects of the organization first, then strengthen key support structures, as summarized below.

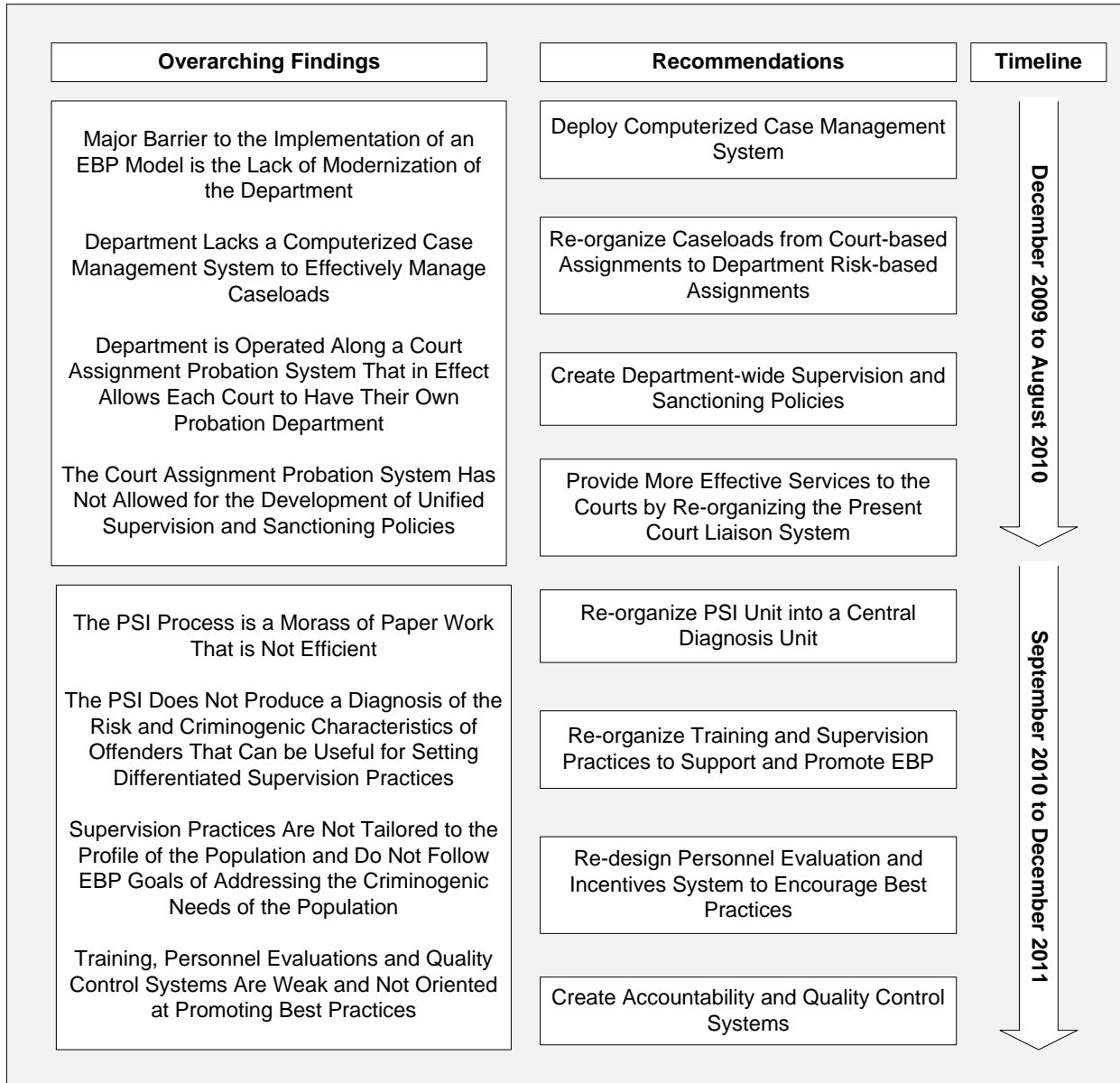
The prior administration agreed that key modernization activities could be done between December 2009 and August 2010, assuming the continuation of the re-organization effort started as part of this assessment. Once the department completed the modernization process, it could focus on strengthening key support structures, as summarized in Figure 1 below. The

prior administration agreed this phase could be accomplished from September 2010 to December 2011.

In November 2009, prior departmental leadership moved to contract with Corrections Software Solutions (CSS) of Austin, Texas for implementation of the case management system. Over 160 Texas probation departments, or 75 percent of the state's probation departments, use the CSS case management software. This system was to be operational by mid-2010, which would eliminate a major obstacle in the modernization of other components of the department, as recommended.

As discussed above, this report reviews each of the main areas in which improvements were recommended in the December 2009 to provide a "progress report" on the accomplishments and challenges of the department since the report was issued.

Figure 1: Overview of Main Findings, Recommendations and Implementation Timeline



III. Case Management System

A. December 2009 Report Findings

The departmental assessment in December 2009 found the department's computerized infrastructure deficient to support all the organizational changes needed for an effective EBP model. Specifically:

- The department lacked a modern case management system.
- Since the early 1980s, the department used the Bexar County Information System (BCIS) operated by the county to store its records electronically. This system relied on a mainframe computer that allowed the department to input basic information about a case, e.g. identifiers, offense, sentence, fines and fees, and was part of the larger system storing court information; however, the system had significant limitations related to the information that could be produced for the benefit of the department.
- In general, the department had “dumb” connections to the Bexar County mainframe, i.e. it was hard to retrieve data “live” as needed. For example, the department, at the time of the assessment, got a printed monthly report from BCIS with tabulated cases by probation officer plus some key data points for each case. A clerk in the department manually sorted these printouts and made them available to over 200 probation officers by internal agency mail. Probation officers did not have the ability to access the computer at will to check their total caseloads or tap on specific records, or generate useful tracking reports.
- Probation officers had computers, but these computers were used mainly for routine office tasks, like word processing and email. Officers typed their case chronologies in a word processing template, but this template was not a database that stored the chronologies (chronologies or “chronos” are important to document the behavior of the probationer and the actions taken to address these behaviors by the officer). The probation officer mainly used the computer in lieu of handwriting. Once typed, the chronologies were printed and placed in the probationer's paper file.

One of the most important steps in the modernization of the department, therefore, was to acquire a computerized case management system. In re-assessing this area, the following issues were reviewed: (a) strategy to implement a computerized case management system with the private vendor; (b) timing of contract and deliverables; (c) hardware and software infrastructure implementation; (d) process re-organization to support new system effectively; (e) training strategies; (f) development of manuals and standard operating procedures; and, (g) strategy for effective utilization of reports.

B. Progress Report

The computerized case management system became operational in May 2010. This accomplished one of the critical steps in the modernization of the department. In January 2010, a contract was executed by the department with Corrections Software Solutions (CSS) for the

implementation of this system. As stated above, CSS manages many of the probation case management systems in Texas. The contractor, working with department staff, worked to incorporate real-time information from several databases into the system and the systems were tested and verified during that time. Probation staff re-designed standard forms used to send reports to the courts, referral agencies, and departmental managers to a single format and those forms were loaded into the system.

The software is accessed by users through an internal web-based interface and all necessary browser settings are maintained through group policies. The CSS system assists case management officers to create timely chronological entries of the defendants' office visits. The system allows for creation of forms, letters, and court documents simply with automatic data population within the system without going between multiple computer programs.

CSS provided training to the department upon implementation. A follow up training was held six months later. The department designated a person as Case Management System Coordinator which acts as a help-desk point of contact to assist officers in utilizing the system and provide for additional on-demand training assistance. The Coordinator is chairing a committee of administrators, managers, officers, and support staff to determine the success of the functionality of the system, training needs, and future modifications needed for the system.

Among the direct benefits of having an operational case management system are:

- *Elimination or reduction of time spent printing and sorting out documents*

The process of printing and sorting printouts each month and distributing them to employees (that had been in effect since the early 1980's) has been eliminated. Paper usage has also been reduced and the update has allowed for an employee to transfer into a security monitor position.

- *Elimination of redundant internal databases and their related maintenance costs*

The stand-alone Microsoft Access database utilized by the Intake section to produce documents for orientation has been eliminated. These documents are produced by the CSS system and no longer result in duplicative data entry processes.

- *Efficient scheduling strategies freeing up personnel capacity*

Felons and misdemeanants are assigned an appointment with their probation officer at intake and this appointment is scheduled in the CSS System calendar system. The use of Microsoft Word and Excel programs to schedule defendants for Pre-Sentence Investigations (PSI) and Treatment Alternative to Incarceration Program (TAIP) evaluations has also been eliminated.

- *Reduction of paperwork required to maintain a case file*

The process of printing out chronological entries by each officer and placing them in a paper file has been eliminated. The chronological entries are typed directly into the case management system and are not printed. The department has replaced the heavy-duty file folders with medium-grade file folders at one-

half the cost due to the reduced amount of paper stored in filing cabinets in each office.

- *Pre-populated forms maintain data integrity*

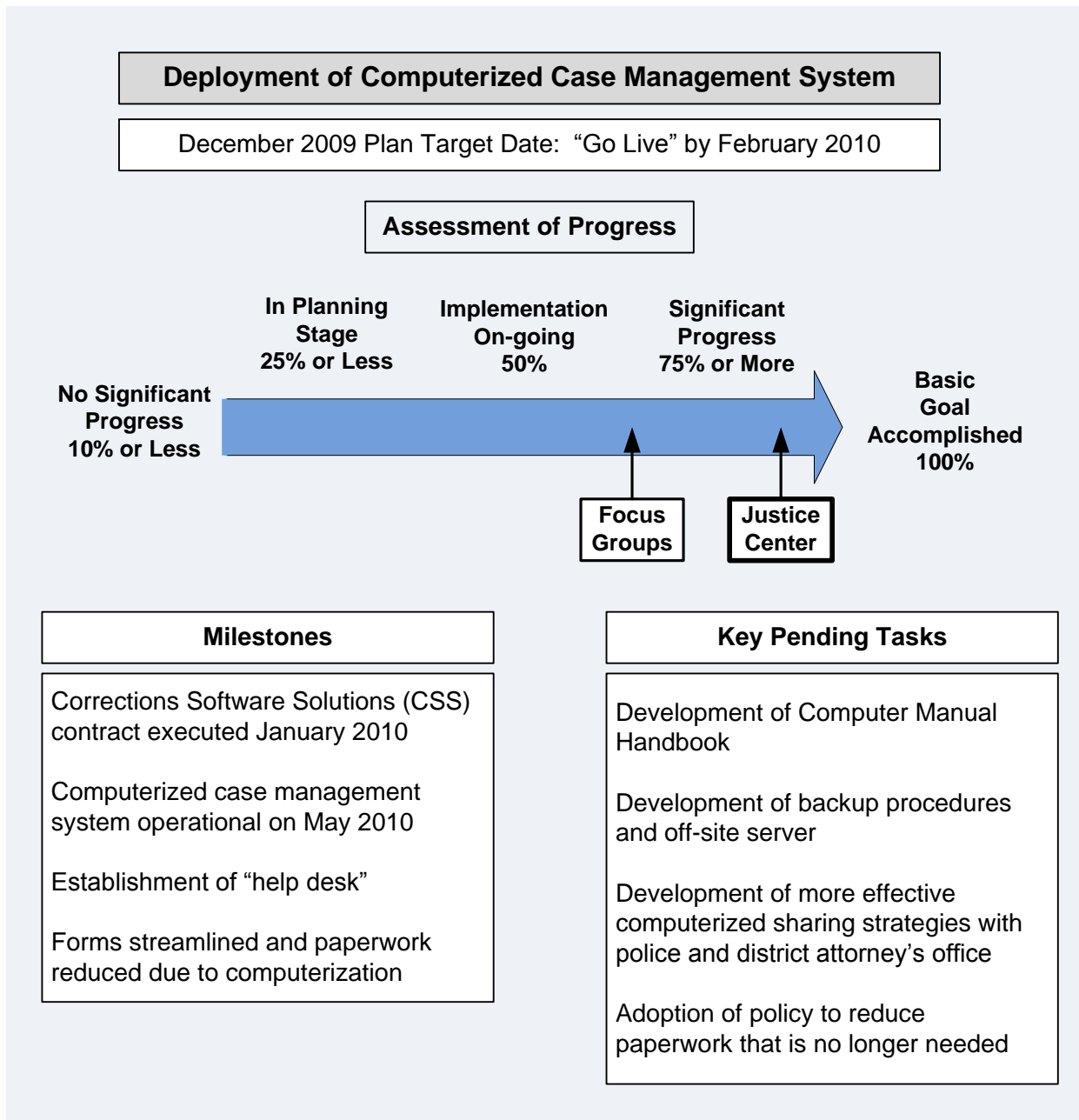
Many forms now reside on the database in electronic formats. When opened, they are pre-populated with an offender's name, identification information, address, and other standard information previously manually entered. Not only does this save significant time in locating information and reduce duplicative data entry, but it also inevitably reduces opportunity for data entry error.

C. Assessment of Overall Progress and Pending Tasks

Figure 2 below shows the team's assessment of overall progress and some of the pending tasks. The team assessment determined that the basic goal of computerizing the case management process of the department has been accomplished. The Justice Center team assessed the progress made at "80%" accomplished. Focus groups rated CSS at a lower level, because the system does not contain older records. The Justice Center team considered this a normal issue with the first implementation of a case management system that will disappear in about two years as older cases with no electronic records terminate probation. The case files do not include supervision history prior to the system's implementation. As the department adds information to the files, they will have greater efficacy in all aspects of supervision. Additionally, they will support court processes such as motions to revoke and reviewing past supervision history for violations.

The probation department needs to develop a user "handbook" for the system and continue to provide training. There is a need to provide a backup for the system in an off-site location and the department is working at the present time to accomplish that. Finally, the old paper culture still exists. Officers continue to generate paper for their files though it is unnecessary. The department should consider setting a stronger policy against the use of paper when is not absolutely necessary or demanded by court processes.

Figure 2: Justice Center Team and Focus Group Assessment of Progress in the Deployment of Computerized Case Management System



IV. Re-organization of Caseloads Assignments

A. December 2009 Report Findings

The assessment of the department, as reported in December 2009, found the department operating under a “court assignment probation structure,” which was no longer operating in any other major metropolitan area probation department in Texas. Under this structure, each court controls its own officers and managers; offenders placed on probation in specific courts are only supervised by the probation officers assigned to that court. Negative implications included:

- The department could not effectively deploy caseloads based on consistent risk and criminogenic needs policies.
- The organization created numerous inefficiencies, such as: a) a fragmented assessment process; b) lack of a unified court policy related to supervision and sanctioning strategies; c) lack of outcome measures to guide policies; d) lack of a computerized case management system; and, e) poor training and personnel evaluation policies.
- The average caseloads for officers supervising felons and misdemeanants were about the same, over 120 cases supervised by each probation officer. Bexar was the only large county in the state in which felony and misdemeanor probationers were not supervised in mixed caseloads. A snapshot study of the population under supervision conducted in October 2009 showed 536 probationers were being supervised by both a felony officer and a misdemeanor officer. If these offenders were supervised on a mixed caseload, six officers could have been freed up to have their own caseloads, effectively reducing the department’s overall caseloads. This was an ineffective utilization of resources and may have contributed to increased recidivism.
- All probationers in Bexar County reported to the department’s main office located in downtown San Antonio. Harris County, in contrast, has seven reporting locations spread throughout the county. The judiciary initially opposed a plan for deploying caseload supervision along geographical areas in the county, because this plan was impossible to implement as it had to account for all the variations in court policies. The document proposing the plan was over 1,300 pages long. Without changing the courts probation assignment system, this type of approach was unworkable.
- The deployment of cases without consideration of the concentration of probation population in neighborhoods was found to be inefficient and ineffective in improving supervision practices.
- Operations were conducted without an Administrative Manual to document unifying policies for the department.

The second most important step in the modernization of the department, therefore, was to move away from the “court assignment system” to a modern probation department structure.

Under the modern structure the department would control the deployment of caseloads based on risk and needs with unifying policies in place dictating the operations of the department. This re-organization required the re-design of the department's intake office to be able to conduct interim risk and needs assessments pending the PSI Unit's restructuring. Risk information was needed to make caseload assignments to the department's unit.

In re-assessing this area the following issues were reviewed: (a) plans for re-structuring the department as a modern probation organization; (b) steps to develop a case intake process to support new organization; (c) steps to re-deploy caseloads and probation officers assigned to each court; (d) elimination of dual supervision for probationers under felony and misdemeanor supervision; and, (e) strategies to change the operational culture from one viewing a probation officer as working for each court to one seeing the probation officer as working for the department.

B. Progress Report

The court assignment system was essentially abolished between March and April of 2010 accomplishing another key aspect of the modernization of the department. The department now deploys cases along risk and residence of the probationers along six geographical zones regardless of the court in which the person received probation. The department also eliminated the dual supervision of felony and misdemeanor offenders.

In March 2010 managers deployed their supervision officers into Medium/High Risk caseload offices or as Low Risk caseload officers. The existing caseloads were also re-distributed, based upon risk assessment. In March 2010, staff was instructed to assign "dual supervision" cases to the primary risk level officer. In April 2010, the department's Intake Unit began utilizing the Wisconsin Risk and Needs Assessment tool during the orientation/intake process in order to determine an offender's risk level. In December 2010, a computerized Intake Assignment Program (IAP) was implemented to assign cases to officers within a specific region based on risk level and geographic residency of the offender without regard for court of origin. The county was then divided into six regions (North West, North Central, North East, South West, South Central, and South East) and cases distributed geographically.

Among the direct benefits of having abolished the court assignment systems are:

- *Culture of fragmentation slowly receding into a department-wide culture*

According to administrators and focus groups, with the implementation of risk-based and regional-based assignment of cases, the "court-lines" are slowly beginning to dissipate. The managers and probation officers are changing their mindset from one of them working for "my judge" to working for the department as required by state law.

- *Standardization of forms and processes increasing efficiencies*

The need for maximizing standardization of court-related policies/procedure has become essential. Court documents have been standardized already, so all officers can send reports to any court instead of having different processes and forms for twenty-three different courts as in the past.

For example, the department has standardized the judicial review form for offenders seeking or qualifying for early termination and for extension of probation supervision. Standardizing how cases are brought forward for early termination consideration has assisted officers in managing their caseloads regardless of the court of origination. The form provides the court with information vital to making an informed decision. Areas of compliance and non-compliance are presented uniformly to the courts. The form is stored in CSS and is user friendly in that many of the required fields are auto-populated from the data in the system. As offenders meet the early termination criteria cited in Article 42.12 section 20, officers bring these cases forward to the court for early termination consideration. All cases being submitted to court for early termination review must be approved by unit managers to ensure eligibility criteria have been met. Early termination (for offenders who qualify) is part of the department's Incentives Model. In May 2010, all officers received training on this model and were educated on how and when to use this incentive to achieve maximum compliance to supervision conditions.

- *Elimination of dual supervision cases*

Department used to have two officers supervising same person when person had a felony and misdemeanor probation case ("Dual Supervision"). Presently, 2,510 cases would have been in "dual supervision" with two officers but this is no longer the case.

C. Assessment of Overall Progress and Pending Tasks

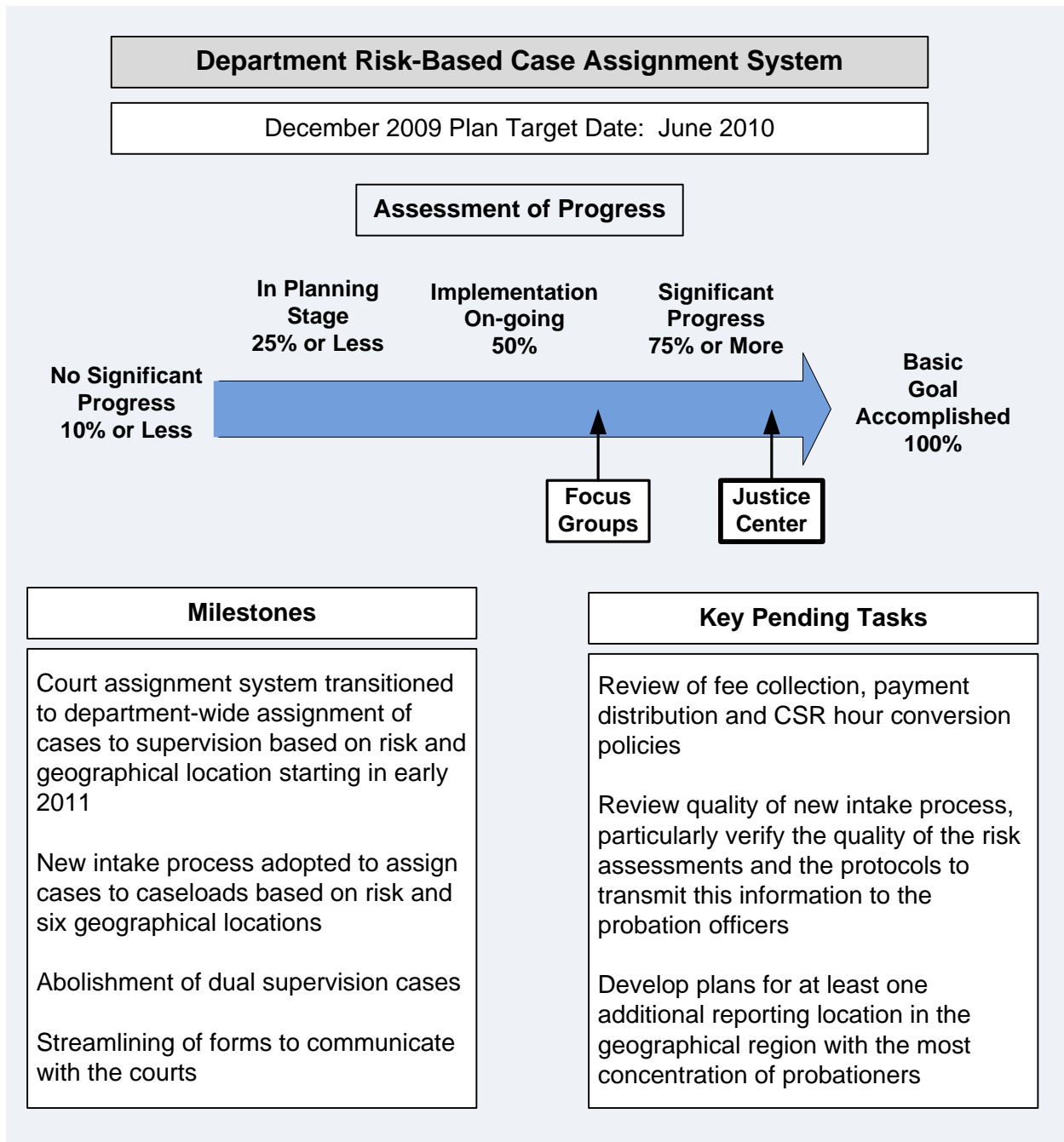
Figure 3 below shows the team's assessment of overall progress and some of the pending tasks. The figure also shows the focus groups' assessment of departmental progress in this area. The Justice Center team gauged the progress made at "90%" accomplished. The team assessment concluded the basic goal of abolishing the court assignment system and having department-wide assignment of caseloads based on uniform policies has been accomplished. Departmental focus groups appraised the improvements at a lower level, because personnel is getting used to the new policies. After years of "working for my judge" and "figuring out what my judge wanted" the contemporary system imposes new challenges on probation officers. Namely, trying to follow a set of uniform policies and supervising offenders that are now assigned to them according to risk levels from different judges.

The probation department needs to continue to develop more uniform policies and procedures in areas in which the courts have not been able to agree. For example, there remains no standardized fee collection policy. The department has raised this with county court judges and there was no consensus reached in this area. Different courts continue to give different priority to different fee categories. District courts also continue to place varying degrees of emphasis on different fee categories. Each offender's payment distribution is, therefore, manually calculated to reflect that court's particular priority of payments.

In the area of CSR conversion, however, there has been significant progress made toward standardization. Recently, all county court judges agreed to a buy-out rate of \$7.00 per hour of CSR assessed. In accordance to Article 42.12 section 16 (subsection f), all county court

CSR buy-outs must be made to a local food bank or food pantry. On the district court side, this issue has yet to be addressed by department officials working with the district judges as part of the continuing improvement process.

Figure 3: Justice Center Team and Focus Group Assessment of Progress in the Reorganization of Caseload Assignments



V. Department-wide Supervision and Sanctioning Policies

A. December 2009 Report Findings

The assessment of the department, as discussed in the December 2009 report, found that the department lacked both a department-wide supervision manual and department-wide sanctioning policy. The assessment documented how each court had its “own” supervision policies and “own” sanctioning policies. More specifically:

- The supervision plan structure was not oriented to promote EBP by the supervising officers.
- The supervision plan was seen as an item rarely used once completed or simply an item to check off from the required procedural list required by CJAD.
- The supervision plan developed by the PSI unit was simply a sheet listing programs an officer checked off as deemed appropriate. It was not based on any assessment of criminogenic needs nor on systematic evaluation of factors impacting the defendant’s criminality using evidence-based tools.
- There was no official Progressive Sanctions Model as a reference guide for officers to use on technical violations. In the FY 2010 – 2011 Community Justice Plan for Bexar County CSCD, a Progressive Sanctions and Incentives Supervision Model was drafted laying out a mission, overview, requirements for three different levels of supervision (maximum, medium and minimum), and graduated sanctions strategies for both regular caseloads and specialized caseloads (sex offender and gang), but this was not used in practice.
- Also in the FY 2010 – 2011 Community Justice Plan for Bexar County CSCD, a section addressing graduated incentives discussed the importance of positive reinforcements for effective supervision but there were no departmental guidelines to determine when a probationer was eligible for each of the incentives to maintain consistency amongst the officers.

In re-assessing this area the following issues were reviewed: (a) adoption of a department-wide supervision strategy; (b) adoption of a department-wide graduated sanction and incentive system in conjunction with the District Attorney’s Office; (c) adoption of supervision plans and protocols to promote the use of EBP by supervising officers; (d) adoption of department-wide program referral protocols; and, (e) completion of a manual codifying supervision and sanction policies to be used department-wide.

B. Progress Report

The department has begun implementing department-wide supervision strategies and work is in progress in this area. Department administrators have met with the District Attorney, judges and have met the Community Justice Task Force to present the Community Justice Plan. On March 11, 2011, there was a public hearing on the plan and the Community Justice Council approved a “progressive sanction model” for use by the department on March 17, 2011.

The department has provided all managers with Bexar County Community resource books that list all current community resources with the services provided, addresses, contact persons, and contact numbers. The department created a uniform program referral form in CSS. A new release of information form was created for the department to assist officers in obtaining and sharing of information with community agencies, providers, and social service agencies. The probation department webpage provides officers with an approved listing of current community providers and resources.

The department is now operating with an Administrative Manual. This manual was not in place during the original assessment of the department and is required by law, Title 37, Part 6, Chapter 163, 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 163.21.

Among the direct benefits of having department wide policies are:

- *Streamlining of administrative complexity*

The December 2009 assessment showed that significant inefficiencies were created by the fragmented operational culture of the department. This is slowly changing as the department develops documented standardized operating procedures. In doing this, there have already been reductions in the number of duplicative forms and processes.

- *Increased agreement on supervision and sanctioning practices*

The adoption of a Progressive Sanctions Model, even if not fully followed by judges, provides the structure to start getting agreement on effective sanctioning practices that will lead to better practices.

- *More targeted program referrals*

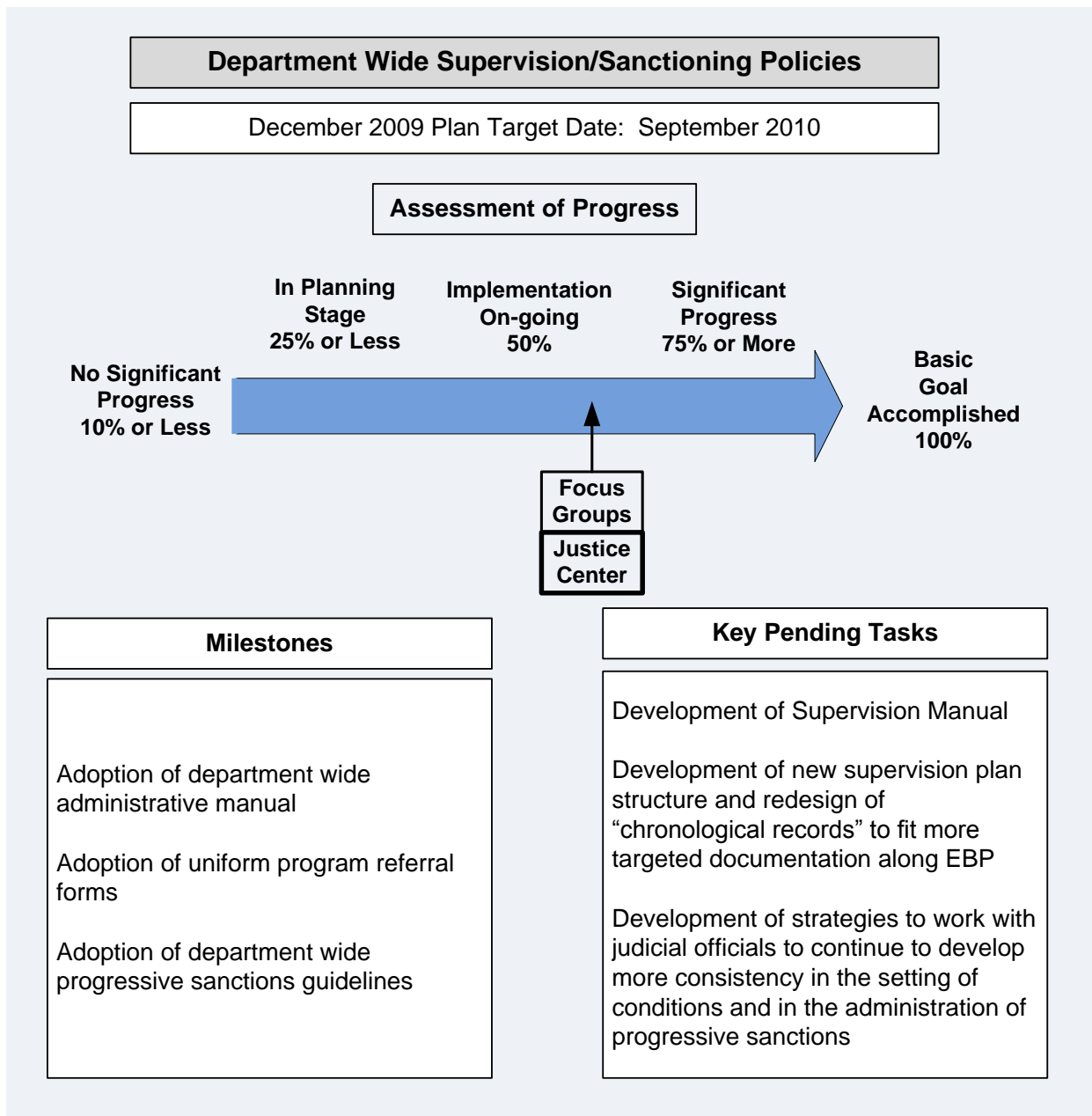
Programs are limited and tend to be the most expensive option to manage and improve the behaviors of people under supervision in the arsenal of alternatives available to judicial officials and probation officers. A department-wide protocol for referring persons to programs should allow for more effective targeting of the programs and their more efficient utilization.

C. Assessment of Overall Progress and Pending Tasks

Figure 4 below shows the team's assessment of overall progress and some of the pending tasks. The figure also shows how the focus groups assessed the progress of the department in this area. The Justice Center team assessed the progress made at "60%" accomplished. Departmental focus groups had similar scores. The team assessment found that the department is making progress to accomplish the goals stated in the December 2009 assessment, but critical work is still pending. In particular there is the need to: (a) develop a Supervision Manual that clearly defines a variety of supervision strategies for addressing different risk and criminogenic needs; (b) create a new "supervision plan" template that encourages or requires officers to concentrate on addressing the top criminogenic needs of the probationer; and, (c) adapt the case chronologies to reflect the new supervision plan.

The department and judges now have a common framework for moving toward more uniform supervision and sanctioning policies. With the dissolution of court based assignment, the department and judges must continue to focus on the transition toward EBP supervision and sanctioning policies that focuses on the risk and criminogenic needs of the population and not on the idiosyncratic policies of particular courts.

Figure 4: Justice Center Team and Focus Group Assessment of Progress in the Development of Department Wide Supervision and Sanctioning Policies



VI. Services to the Court

A. December 2009 Report Findings

The assessment of the department, as discussed in the December 2009 report, found the creation of a “centralized court services” division would support the movement away from a “court assignment” structure. This division would provide the judiciary with personnel to support their work related to setting conditions of supervision and review cases for sanctioning or revocations. This was needed to move probation officers assigned to each court to work on caseloads assigned by the department. More specifically the present court support structure created the following problems:

- Judges directed or dictated some administrative aspects of the department, ignoring state law provisions prohibiting these activities, and exposing themselves to personal liability.
- Employees continued to refer to “their court” and “their judge,” as opposed to their department, due to the deployment of personnel to assist the courts, undermining efforts by the department to institute evidence-based practices.
- There was an overall perception that employees worked for a judge and not the department. Judges formed relationships with the officers assigned to their court and, as a result of these relationships, employees took their issues (including personnel matters) to their judge and not their manager (promoting the “jumping of the chain of command” syndrome).
- There was a great deal of confusion and frustration for officers regarding daily management. Officers routinely juggled receiving instructions or directions from a judge while trying to follow departmentally established policies, procedures, and chain of command.
- Offender files were kept manually, transported to court manually, and returned to the CSO managing the case manually.

In re-assessing this area the following issues were reviewed: (a) redeployment of resources to support court services; (b) plans to computerize transfer of information between courts and the department; (c) resolution of “chain of command” theory and practice; and, (d) development of workload monitoring strategies.

B. Progress Report

The department created a Court Liaison Unit and assigned a manager to oversee the unit which streamlines previously inefficient operations. Each court still has one primary person assigned as a Court Liaison Officer (CLO). However, the CLO unit has been divided into five teams, each of which is designated to serve approximately four courts. Each member of a team is cross-trained so any member, at any time, can provide services in any one of their four courts. Standardizing forms, duties, processes and sanctions as well as the implementation of a computerized case management system have allowed CLOs to easily transition in and out of

various court settings without compromising service delivery.

All CLOs now report to the unit manager. The CLO unit is comprised of 22 officers and one manager. In the past they would have reported to each court manager (which no longer exists). This structure allows for a more clearly defined chain of command and greater accountability of a CLO's schedule and greater control over assignment of duties. It also allows CLOs to be utilized interchangeably in different courts as circumstances dictate. The primary responsibilities of the unit manager are to ensure coverage of all court dockets, provide service to the courts on an "as needed" basis and oversee, and to monitor and assess the daily activities of all CLOs.

In March 2011, the department developed a "Paperless Pilot Program" with two County Courts and not this is operational in all county courts. This new process has significantly decreased the amount of paper submitted to these courts and allows CLOs to scan signed documents directly into CSS. This "paperless" process is pending expansion to the district courts.

Among the direct benefits of having the new Court Liaison Unit are:

- *Streamlining of management structure*

The department has reduced the number of managers, at a time of severe budget constraints, without jeopardizing court services.

- *More flexible and capable workforce*

The unit allows for flexibility in deployment of staff, as needed, to meet court dockets. The cross training of staff also allows for a workforce capable of working in many courts and responding to the styles of different judges.

- *Structure to promote further efficiencies*

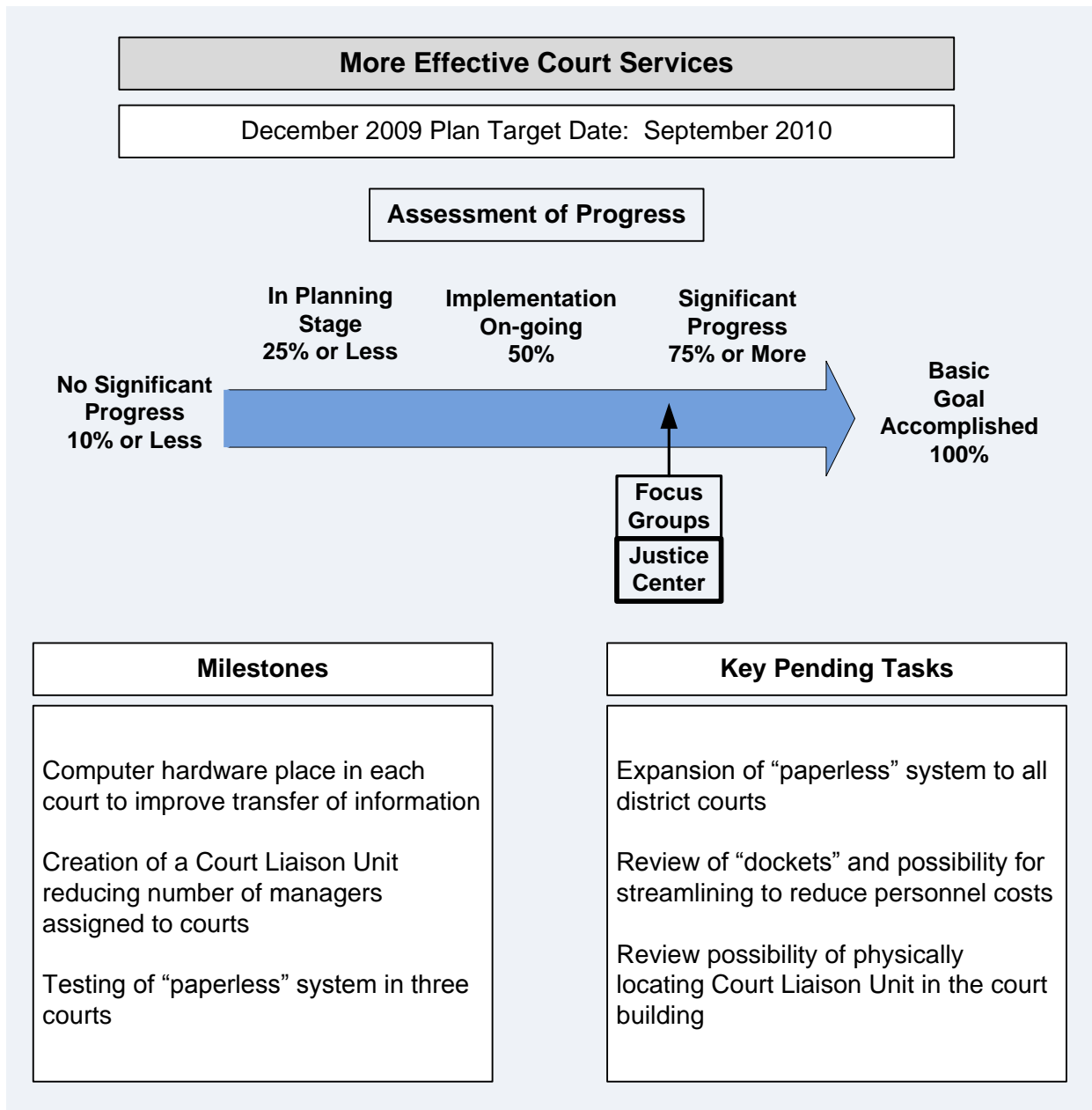
The unit allows for a centralized management structure that can take advantage of further efficiencies, like the expansion of the paperless concept to the unit.

C. Assessment of Overall Progress and Pending Tasks

Figure 5 below shows the team's assessment of overall progress and some of the pending tasks. The figure also shows how the focus groups assessment the progress of the department in this area. The Justice Center team assessed the progress made at "70%" accomplished. The assessment of the focus groups of the department was similar.

The team assessment is that the department has made significant progress in achieving the goals stated in the December 2009 report. The following goals should be accomplished as part of a Phase II plan: a) implementation of the paperless system in all courts; b) give access to CLOs to the electronic police reports; c) consider locating the unit's offices in the court building instead of the probation department office building; and, d) allow for more training options for CLOs.

Figure 5: Justice Center Team and Focus Group Assessment of Progress in Implementing More Effective Court Services



VII. Reorganization of PSI Unit into Central Diagnosis Unit

A. December 2009 Report Findings

The assessment of the department, as discussed in the December 2009 report, found the department's PSI process ineffective, time consuming, and unable to provide the judges with the evidence-based assessment necessary to make effective decisions in imposing conditions of the supervision. Specifically:

- The PSI process was drowning in a morass of paperwork.
- The main content of the PSI was a narrative. This narrative, although presented as answers to a set of general questions, was influenced by the different writing styles and perceptions of the officers. Moreover, the narratives lent themselves to various interpretations by judicial officials who could “see” different “stories” based on their own experiences. Consequently, offenders were required to meet conditions inconsistent with their risk or criminogenic factors. This also promoted dissonant policies regarding the sanctioning of offenders for violating the conditions of supervision.
- PSI officers saw judges as incongruously using PSIs in setting conditions. They perceived work on PSIs as wasted and of little value in developing a real supervision plan or diagnosis.
- PSI officers noted responsibilities other than performing the PSI, such as investigating restitution, which was time consuming due to process issues.

In re-assessing this area the following issues were reviewed: a) use or adoption of evidence-based risk and criminogenic assessment tools; b) redesigned and streamlined processes; c) elimination of duplicative processes, e.g. PSI and TAIP Drug Assessment; d) computerized forms and reports to the courts; and, e) training and quality protocols.

B. Progress Report

The department implemented some minor changes in attempts to improve the efficiency of the PSI process, but it has not moved to change the process to one dependent on a “diagnosis” derived from evidence-based tools instead of the traditional long narrative evaluations. The original plan had an aggressive timeline for these changes, but in fairness to progress the department has made in other areas, this original timeline should be modified to better reflect the challenges of accomplishing the stated goal.

The department continues to use the Wisconsin Risk and Needs Assessment, but this instrument, although validated for the state population, has not been validated for the Bexar County population. This instrument is used to set the risk level for supervision, with risk meaning the likelihood of a probationer being re-arrested. The department has adopted the Texas Christian University Drug Screen (TCUDS) to all offenders applying for supervision for non-drug/alcohol related offenses. This practice was implemented in August of 2010. The purpose of administering the TCUDS is to identify unknown or hidden substance abuse issues in offenders whose criminal offenses do not reflect drug or alcohol abuse. If substance abuse is determined

to exist, offenders are referred for a more thorough and comprehensive evaluation with a TAIP assessor. The findings of these TAIP assessments are then incorporated into the supervision recommendations presented to the court. By identifying substance abuse issues prior to sentencing, PSI officers can make appropriate condition recommendations that specifically address these criminogenic needs and increase the chances of offender success. All offenders whose criminal offense is drug or alcohol related or who have previous drug or alcohol related offenses on their records are still automatically referred for a TAIP evaluation as part of the PSI process. However, the new screening tool more effectively filters out persons that may not need the most extensive assessment.

The department has worked on certifying the majority of the PSI officers on the Omnix software system which allows them to view police/offense reports on-line. Having access to this system eliminates the need for PSI officers to secure hard copies of these reports from the District Attorney's office and/or the arresting agency. The PSI officers were also certified to access TCIC/NCIC records on-line. This visual access during the PSI interview eliminates the need to print out hard copies of these reports for the file. Final arrangements for access are pending with DPS and San Antonio police at this time.

C. Assessment of Overall Progress and Pending Tasks

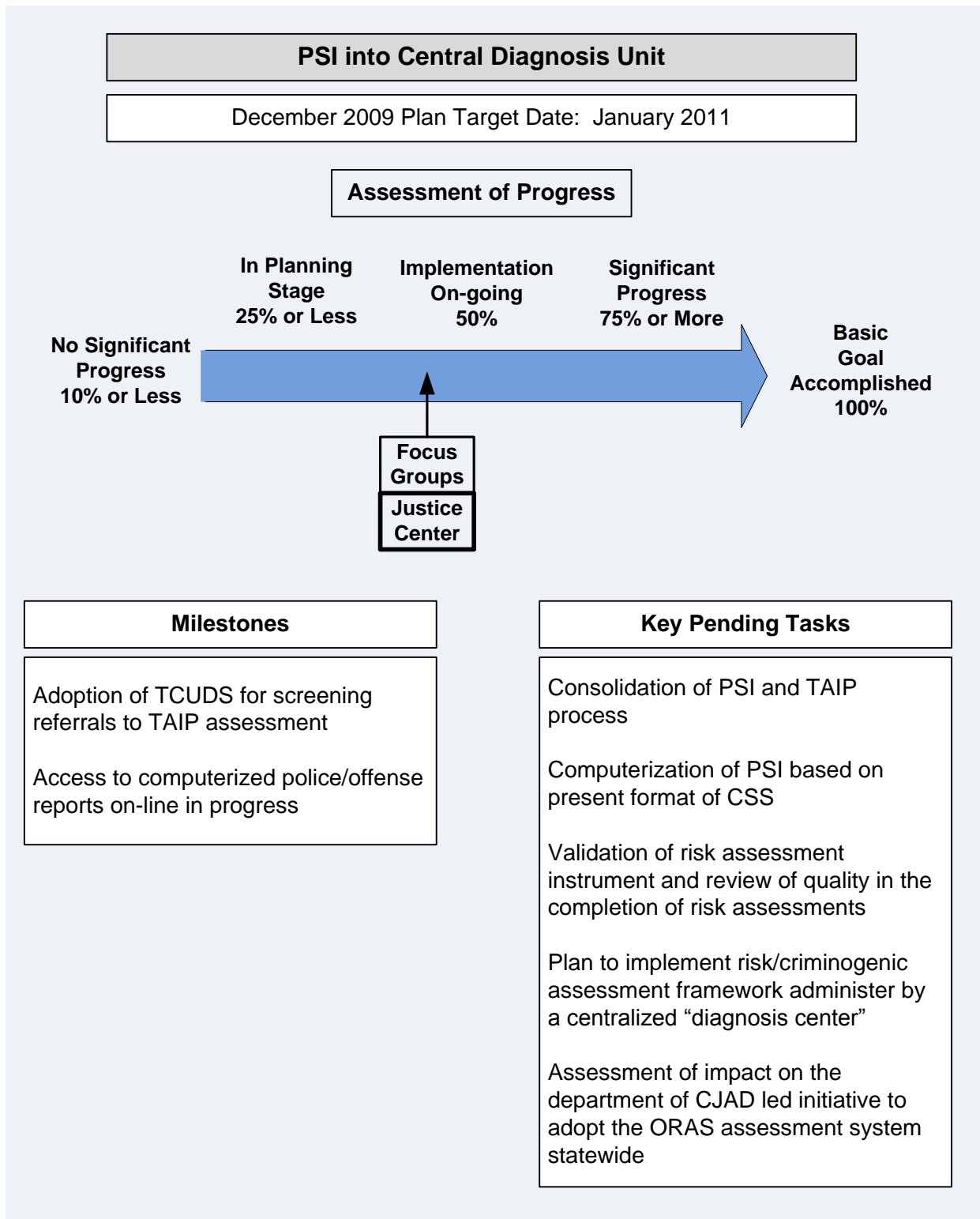
Figure 6 below shows the team's assessment of overall progress and some of the pending tasks. The figure also shows how the focus groups' assessment of the progress of the department in this area. The Justice Center team assessed the progress made at "40%" accomplished. The assessment of the focus groups of the department was similar.

The team assessment is that the department is still in the planning stages and more efforts are needed in this area. The department still has to make major process changes to create an effective centralized diagnosis unit relying on computerization to reduce paper work and increase efficiencies. The adoption of a risk and criminogenic "grid based" diagnosis, like the one adopted by Travis County, is recommended as the CSS system already has this process computerized. The CSS vendor has stated if the department adopts this process, it will make the software available to the department.

The following goals should be developed as part of a Phase II plan: a) transition to the present CSS computerized PSI to reduce paperwork and increase efficiencies; b) consolidate PSI and TAIP functions into one diagnosis center and adopt the diagnosis system developed for Travis County; c) validate the risk assessment on the Bexar County population; and, d) implement training and quality controls protocols to make sure that diagnoses are accurate.

On a side note, in recent months CJAD has been discussing the adoption of a new assessment instrument called ORAS (Ohio Risk Assessment System). The consensus among probation directors working with CJAD is that CJAD will eventually require this assessment system to be used by all departments, although no plans have been published at this time. The unknown timing makes developing plans for adopting the Travis County assessment process, as discussed in the December 2009 report, difficult. The department, therefore, should try to request clarification of long term intentions from CJAD before implementing a new diagnosis system in Bexar County.

Figure 6: Justice Center Team and Focus Group Assessment of Progress in Implementing Central Diagnosis Unit



VIII. Reorganization of Training to Emphasize Evidence-Based Practices and Skills

A. December 2009 Report Findings

The assessment of the department, as discussed in the December 2009 report, found the training program for the department to be rudimentary, particularly for its size and attempts to move toward EBP. Specifically:

- The department started providing in-house training for its personnel in 2003 with the hiring of a training director, but the training budget for the department was too small, relative to the needs of a large department, to be effective.
- Most training sessions were “orientations” as opposed to hands-on training with required practice drills. The sessions included basic probation officer training required by CJAD and officer safety sessions.
- Probation officers were trained “on-the-job,” but this varied by court. Each court had different expectations regarding policies and procedures. During the focus groups and one-on-one interviews, officers and managers stated training had to be enhanced.
- On-going continuing education programs presented a unique set of challenges due to fiscal constraints and the perception that department trainers were not taken seriously.
- Attendance at scheduled training sessions was a challenge. Often classes were scheduled, but employees neither attended nor notified the Training Department of nonattendance.

In re-assessing this area the following issues were reviewed: a) resources dedicated to training; b) changes in curriculum to stress skill based training; c) number of unique employees trained and number of training hours deployed; d) provision of remedial safety training at recurring intervals, and; e) consistent department wide policy implementation to provide opportunities for everyone to receive training.

B. Progress Report

The department continues to struggle to provide an adequate training curriculum. There is no New Employee Work Based Skills. According to department officials, they have tried a “train the trainer” program in house and reported the following certifications for officers: 4 to teach Officer Certification; 2 to teach Residential Certification; 3 to teach Strategies for Case Supervision; 1 to teach PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act); 1 to train staff in facilitating Thinking for a Change classes; and, 4 additional officers have completed initial phase of Thinking for a Change. The second phase of training conducted with the United States Probation Office will certify trainers to train other staff. CJAD has also conducted training

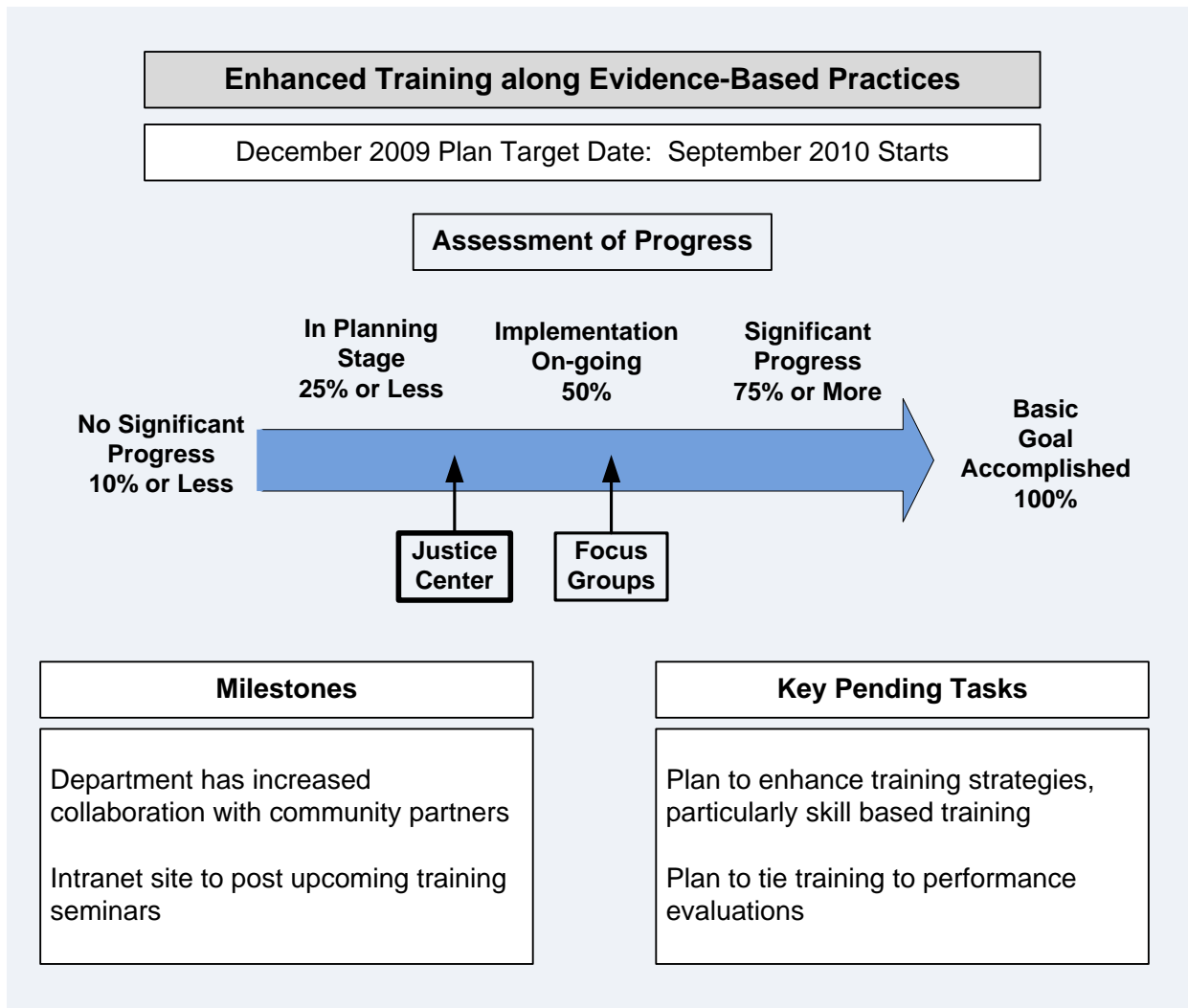
sessions. An internal web based system allows for announcing upcoming training seminars and a training room is available and equipped with audiovisual equipment.

C. Assessment of Overall Progress and Pending Tasks

Figure 7 below shows the team's assessment of overall progress and some of the pending tasks. The figure also shows the focus groups' assessment of the department's progress in this area. The Justice Center team assessed the progress made at "40%" accomplished. The assessment of the focus groups of the department was higher, at "55%". The Justice Center team assessment concluded this is one of the weakest areas in the department, because of a lack of funding and/or dedicated personnel, and much work is needed to improve it. The focus team seemed to have "scored" this area higher because they have been recently "trained" on the computer system, which makes them feel training has taken place. This is true for this specific area, but to sustain an overall EBP training and quality control, the department needs to significantly enhance this operation.

The following goals should be developed as part of a Phase II plan: a) provide a targeted training curriculum decided by the managers based on the specific needs of the department; and, b) designate a training director for the department with clear responsibilities in this area.

Figure 7: Justice Center Team and Focus Group Assessment of Progress in Enhancing Training along Evidence-Based Practices



IX. Re-design of the Personnel Evaluation and Incentives System

A. December 2009 Report Findings

The assessment of the department, as discussed in the December 2009 report, found the personnel evaluation system was deficient to promote EBP and in need of re-design. Modifying the personnel evaluation system was a sensitive task in need of support from the department's personnel. It was likely to be a long term process. Specific issues were:

- The main indicators of personnel performance measured compliance with paperwork processes. There were few indicators to evaluate effective skills in executing case supervision strategies.
- Personnel evaluations were not tied to pay increases or promotional opportunities. The evaluations seemed to be "pro forma" to the officers and staff.
- The department revised an instrument borrowed from Yavapai County Probation Department in Arizona to meet their need. The tool provided a solid framework to a new personnel evaluation system, but needed to be modified to better reflect the skills required under the EBP model.
- Multiple staff commented no performance feedback was offered during the reporting year.
- All probation staff came due for evaluations at the same time each year. Employees were often handed their evaluation form and instructed to "read and sign," others were expected to write their own evaluations, rendering the performance evaluation system ineffective at best.
- Managers and supervisors did not "know when to do evaluations," or "what should and should not be written on evaluation forms." There were no formal written instructions on how to maintain files, nor any standards for conducting evaluations.

In re-assessing this area the following issues were reviewed: a) plans regarding the re-design of the personnel evaluation system; b) changes in protocols to make present evaluations more meaningful; c) development of a career ladder allowing for and promoting performance based merit increases; d) department wide policy on promotional opportunities; e) creation of retention tools; and, f) pilot tested new personnel evaluation forms and process.

B. Progress Report

The department continues to struggle to design a new employee performance appraisal system. Currently, it is working to adopt a performance appraisal process to provide information and feedback about employee job performance and future potential for increased responsibility to the employee, managers, and administration. Department officials state that they would like to develop an evaluation system with four objectives: (a) provide employees with "honest periodic performance feedback so they will know what the department and their managers

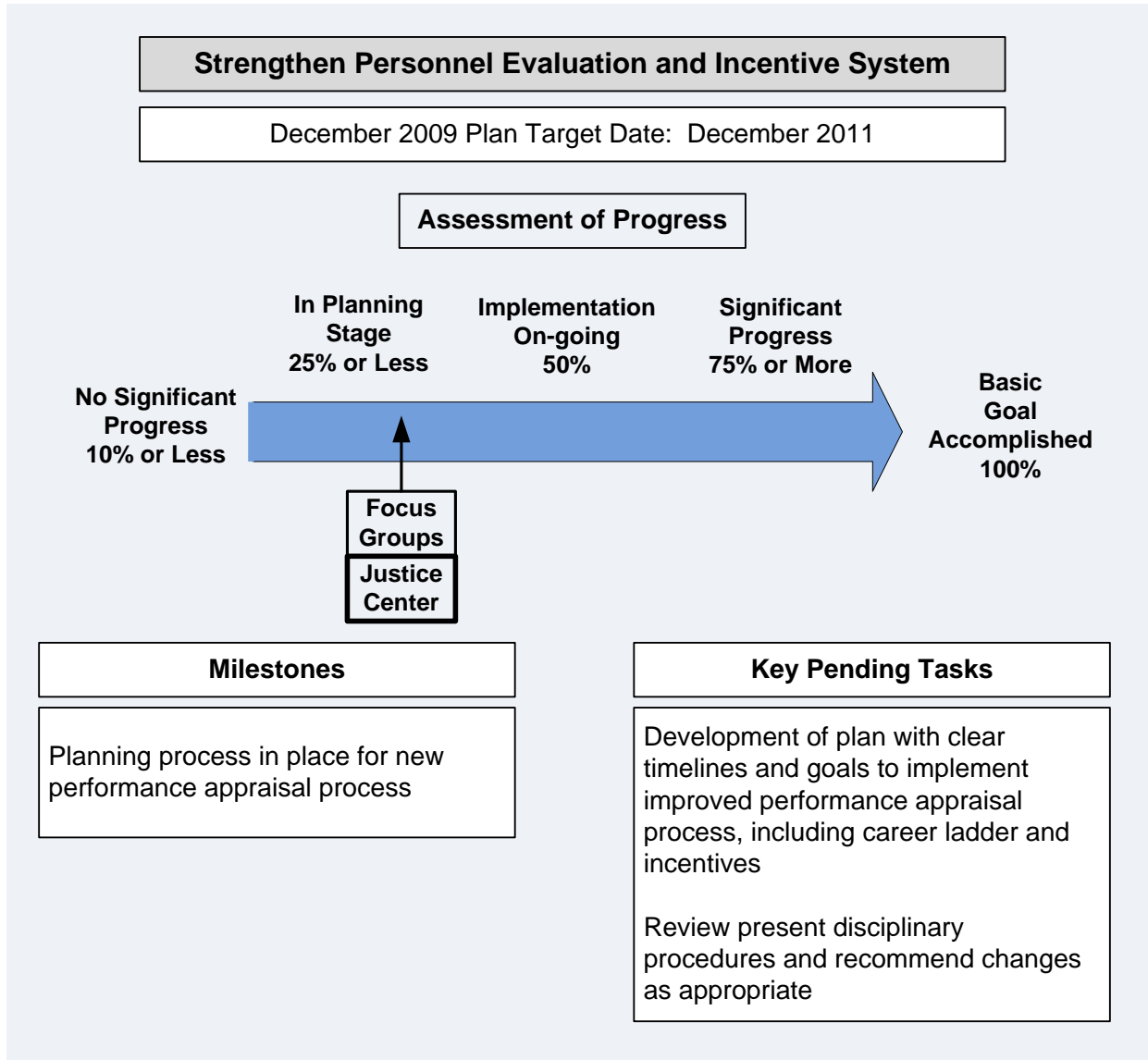
expect”; (b) provide managers and administration “with an honest periodic assessment of the employees’ potential for additional responsibilities and future promotional considerations”; (c) provide managers and administration “a viable assessment tool in determining incentives and rewards for employees based on the overall evaluation”; and, (d) provide annual performance assessments. During years where economic times allow merit raises, the performance assessment will be used to determine their distribution. The department administrators noted all promotional opportunities are based on vacancies presently. They also explained there is a hiring freeze in place, so all promotions and movement have been suspended due to state funding cut backs. Any position change, other than a lateral move, must be approved as an exception by the director. Other promotional opportunities and staff reorganizations are not being planned until budget reductions are known and whether actions are affordable.

C. Assessment of Overall Progress and Pending Tasks

Figure 8 below shows the team’s assessment of overall progress and some of the pending tasks. The figure also shows how the focus groups assessed the department’s progress in this area. The Justice Center team assessed the progress made at “30%” accomplished. The assessment of the focus groups of the department was similar.

The team assessment found this is another weak section for the department and much work needs to be done to improve this area. The following goals should be developed as part of a Phase II plan: a) new appraisal forms; b) employee appraisal manual; c) review of present disciplinary policies; and, d) development of career retention strategies.

Figure 8: Justice Center Team and Focus Group Assessment of Progress in Strengthening Personnel Evaluation and Incentive System



X. Accountability and Quality Control

A. December 2009 Report Findings

The assessment of the department, as discussed in the December 2009 report, found the department, due to its need for effective computerization, lacked effective quality control monthly or quarterly reports. For example, it was time consuming to produce a monthly report for probation officers to know what offenders were in their caseloads. Specifically:

- A clerk in the department manually sorted printouts and made them available to over 200 probation officers by internal agency mail.
- Probation officers did not have the ability to access the computer on any given day to check their total caseloads, specific records, or to generate useful tracking reports.
- Managers did not have routine monthly reports to identify process issues that needed to be addressed, e.g. a report identifying officers with a large number of cases in which fees were delinquent or risk re-assessment had not been conducted.
- Administrators did not have routine monthly report to determine trends regarding the number of probationers placed on probation or terminated by revocation.

In re-assessing this area the following issues were reviewed: a) routine monthly/quarterly performance reports generated for probation officers, managers, and/or administrators; and, b) quality auditing and compliance reports generated.

B. Progress Report

The department now has the foundation to generate better management reports due to the new computerized case management system. The department reports that the new CSS system has allowed managers and administrators to run exception reports to check compliance with basic standards for case management auditing. Routinely, managers can check for offenders on direct status with no face-to-face contact, expirations, condition compliance, program compliance, fee compliance, and read chronos from multiple officers without leaving their desk. CSS has also been used to populate state mandated reports; this dramatically reduced the staff's preparation time. CSS has been utilized for grouping cases into zip codes to determine the proper allocation of officers in each region.

Among the direct benefits of having the new reporting capabilities of the CSS system are:

- *No state funds lost to poor reporting*

In the past five years the department has lost about \$250,000 of state funding each year due to poor reporting of required state information and this is now prevented by the automatic reporting of data to the state by the CSS system.

- *Personnel can directly generate reports*

Departmental staff no longer submits requests through mainframe programmers for basic information. The reports menu on CSS is accessible to all users for generating reports related to their assigned duties.

- *More effective monitoring by managers*

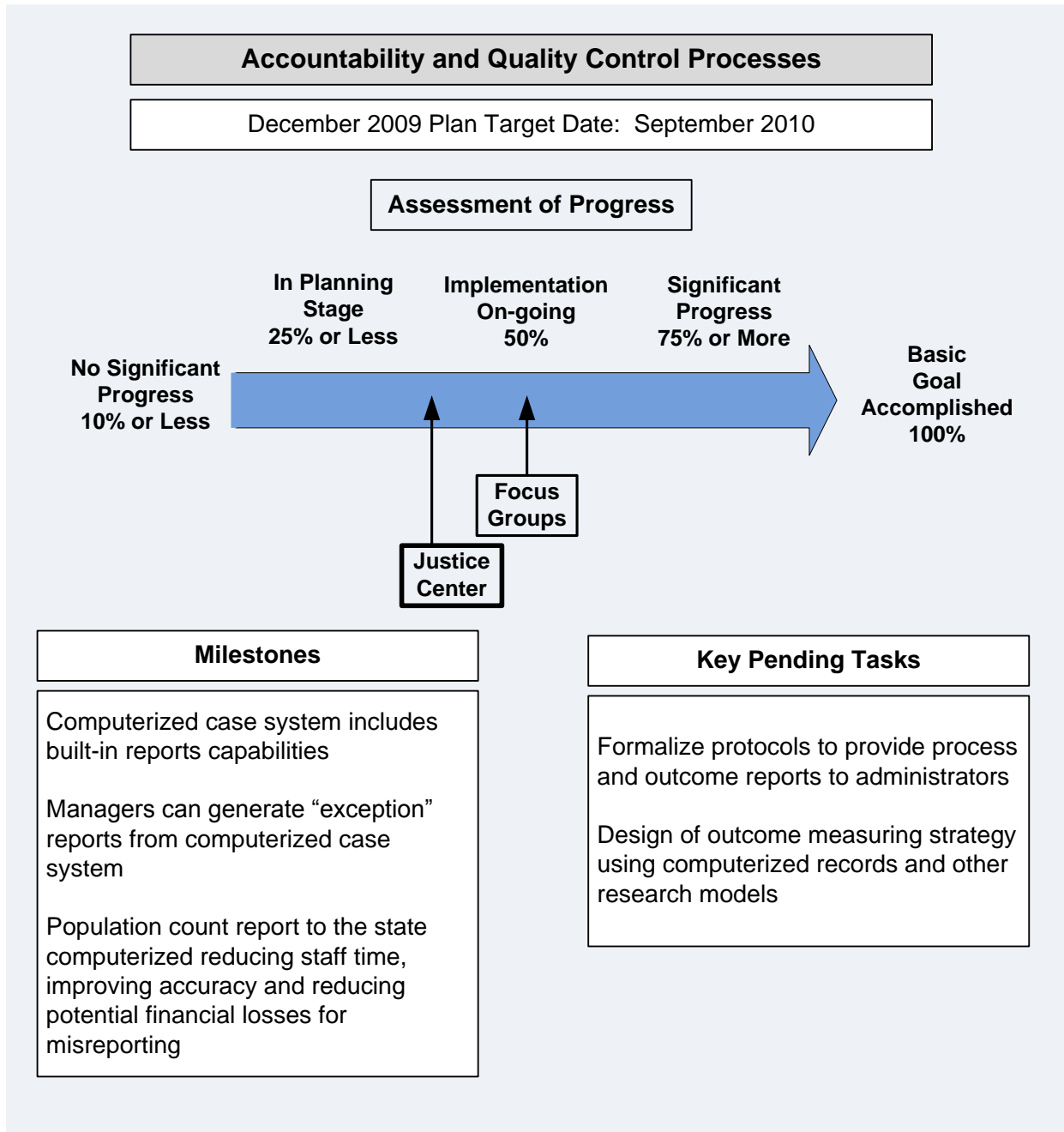
Routinely, managers and senior administration officials check officer caseload totals to ensure equitable distribution of cases by risk level in the department. Each manager is conducting a comprehensive case audit of at least 15 cases per month. In addition, managers also review all cases going to court for compliance and motions to revoke for adherence to progressive sanctions. Managers also check all requests for extensions and early terminations to ensure adherence to eligibility requirements. The quality assurance specialist at Intake is assigned to double check the data entered in CSS for accuracy. To verify ignition interlock compliance, the CSCD field team conducts field compliance checks on DWI and other high risk offenders

C. Assessment of Overall Progress and Pending Tasks

Figure 9 below shows the team's assessment of overall progress and some of the pending tasks. The figure also shows how the focus groups assessed the department's progress in this area. The Justice Center team assessed the progress made at "35%" accomplished. For the first time, department personnel have the ability to generate reports, which is a major leap forward and a large influence on the departmental focus groups' assessments. The Justice Center team, however, valued the progress at a lower score, because the potential for improvements have not been fully maximized. Administrators have access to data to generate monthly process quality reports, at a minimum, but have yet to implement them.

The following goals should be developed as part of a Phase II plan: a) development of routine reports of process compliance and outcomes to upper management; b) development of a quarterly report for the judges highlighting progress in implementing process changes and highlighting key trends; and, c) development of an annual report for the department with basic population information and highlighting accomplishments for the year.

Figure 9: Justice Center Team and Focus Group Assessment of Progress in Strengthening Accountability and Quality Control



XI. Overall Progress

Figures 10 and 11 show the overall assessment of progress by the Justice Center team grouping the activities along “modernization” tasks and tasks to “strengthen the organizational support structures”. The Justice Center team’s overall assessment is that the department is making significant progress in accomplishing the modernization goals stated in the December 2009 report (“75%” in the scale). Some progress has been made in strengthening the organizational support structures, but these are the areas in which more activities are required to achieve major progress and accomplish the goals of the December 2009 plan (“40%” in the scale).

Figure 10: Justice Center Team Assessment of Overall Progress in Modernization Tasks

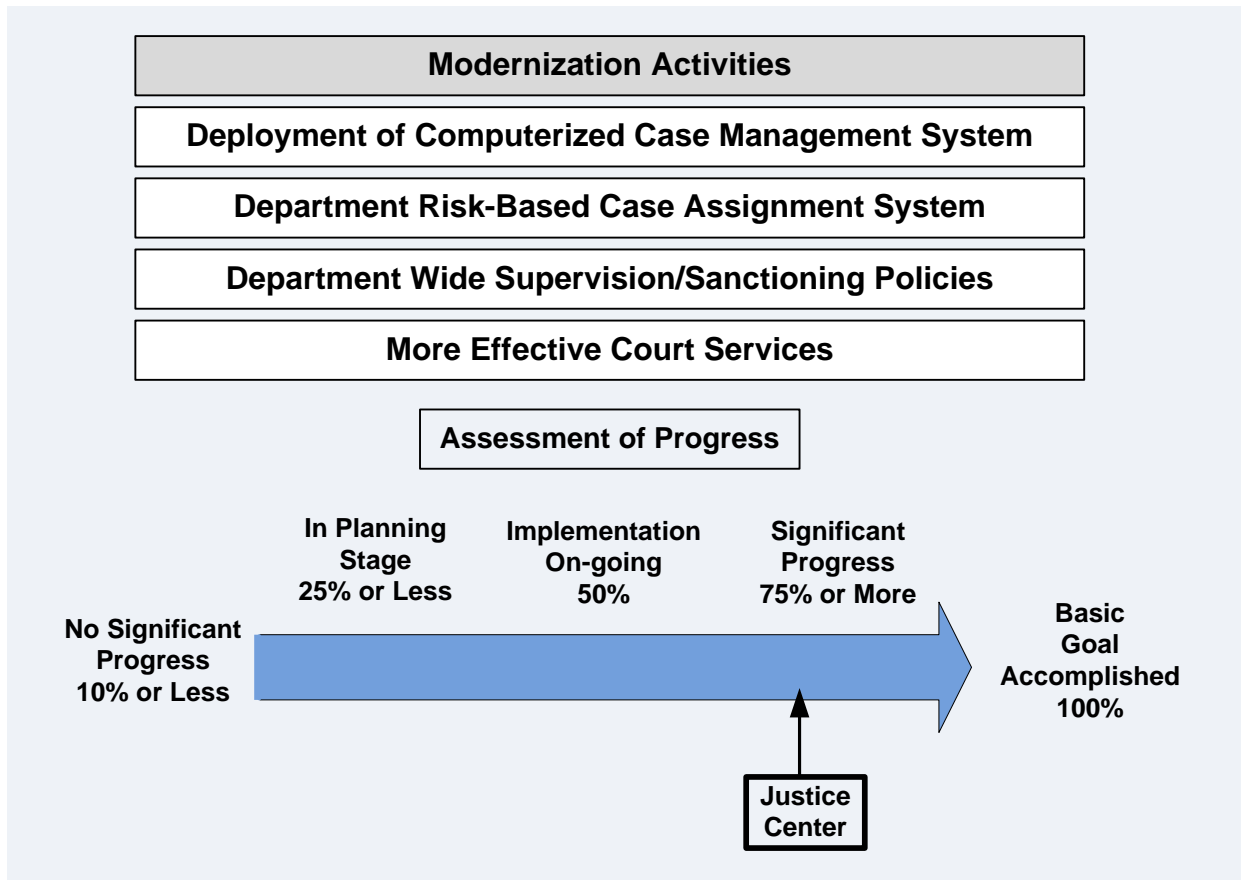


Figure 11: Justice Center Team Assessment of Overall Progress in Tasks Related to Strengthening the Organizational Infrastructures

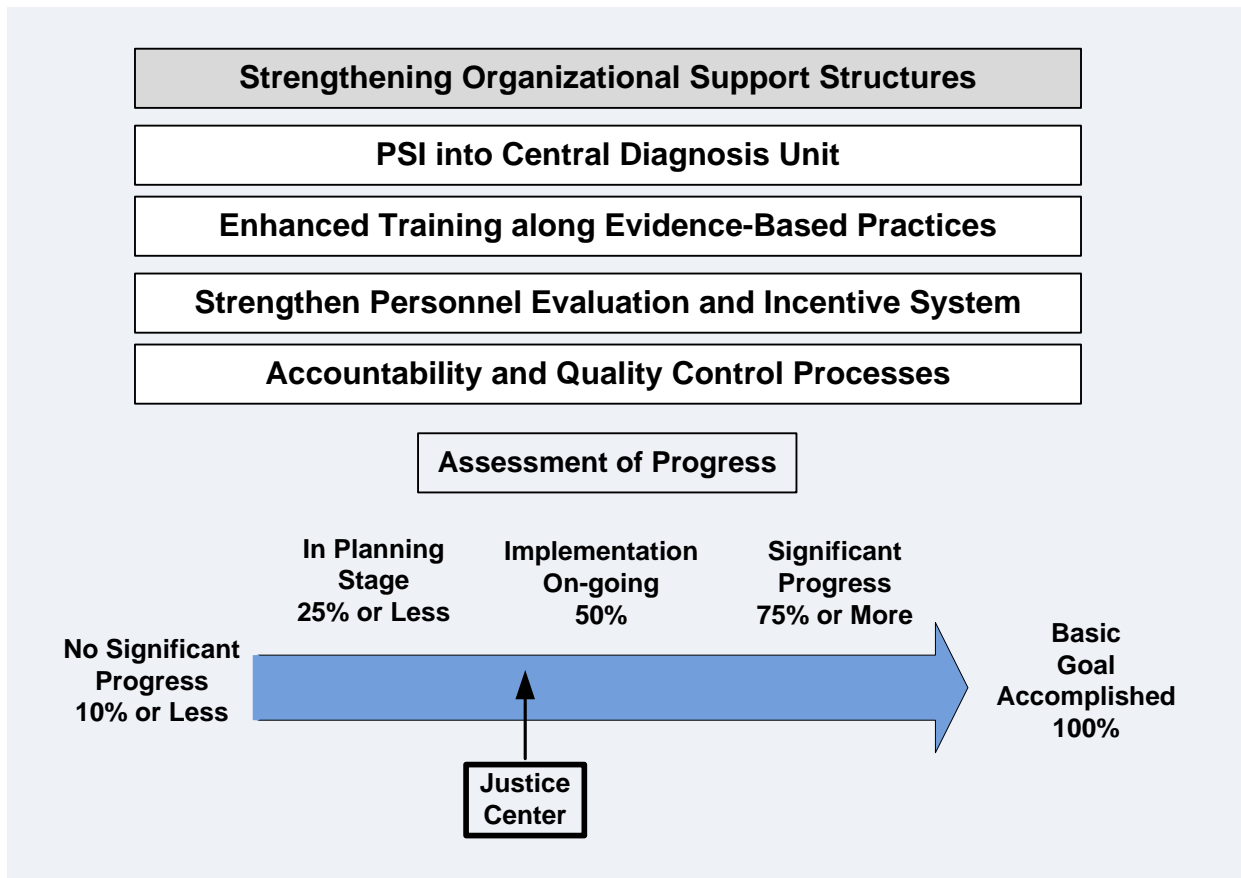
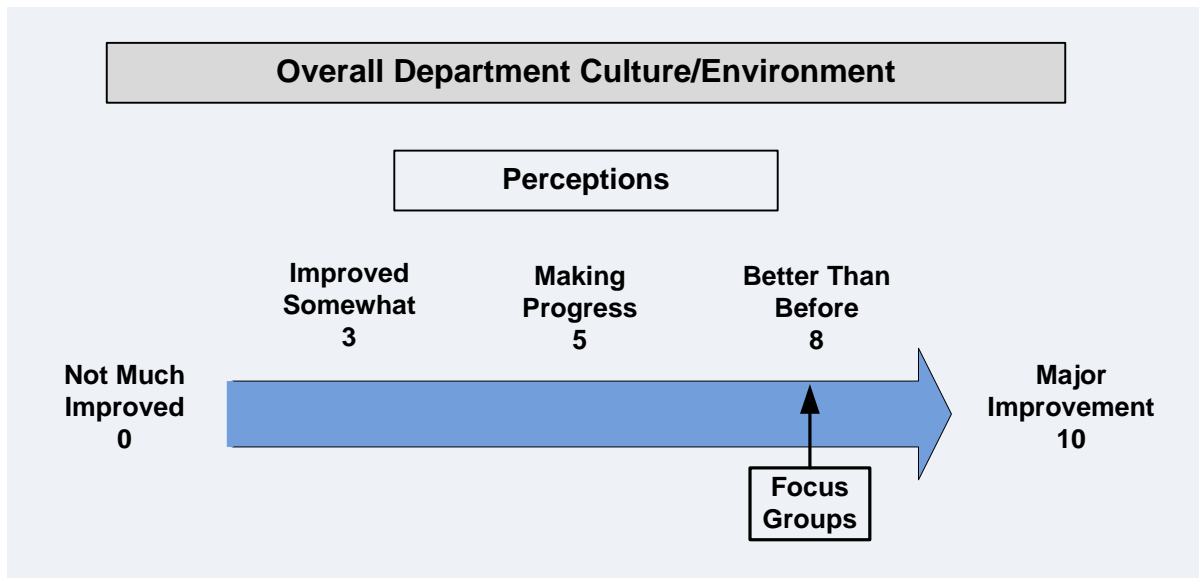


Figure 12 below shows the assessment by the focus groups made up of department personnel. They were asked about their overall feelings regarding the culture and environment of the department. In general, the department focus groups stated that the environment and culture of the department is much improved. They gave an average score of 7.6 on a 10 point scale, with 10 points being “major improvements” and 8 being “better than before”.

Figure 12: Assessment by Department Focus Groups Regarding Culture and Environment of the Department



XII. Phase II Improvement Plan

Phase II below established the goals, milestones, and timelines agreed upon to make the next set of improvements. These improvements are directed at strengthening the organizational infrastructures and require steady administrative leadership. The areas covered are: expansion of the paperless court project, enhancement in the diagnosis process, improvement and re-structuring of the supervision plans, and enhancement in quality control and training. Finally, the Justice Center team recommends that three progress reports should be submitted by the director to the judges, district attorney, and county commissioners. These reports will allow Bexar County officials to have a record to assess progress in the implementation process of Phase II and raise questions as needed to maintain accountability.

Figures 13 through 19 present a timeline in each of the areas and a short explanation of the goals to be accomplished. Figure 20 summarizes the goals, milestones, and timelines for Phase II of the modernization of the department.

Figure 13: Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Paperless Court Reporting System

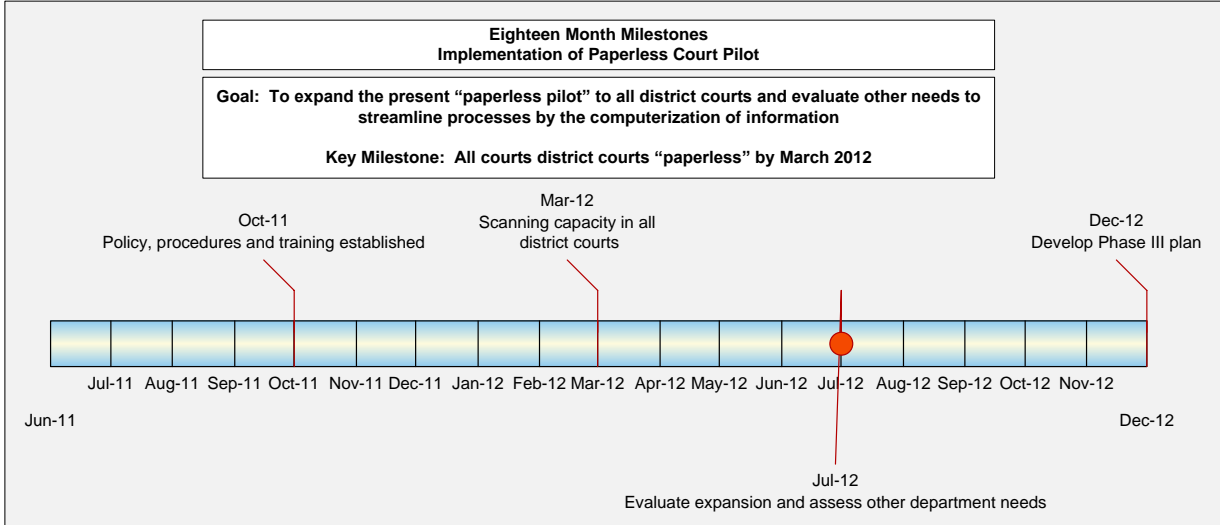


Figure 14: Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Central Diagnosis Unit

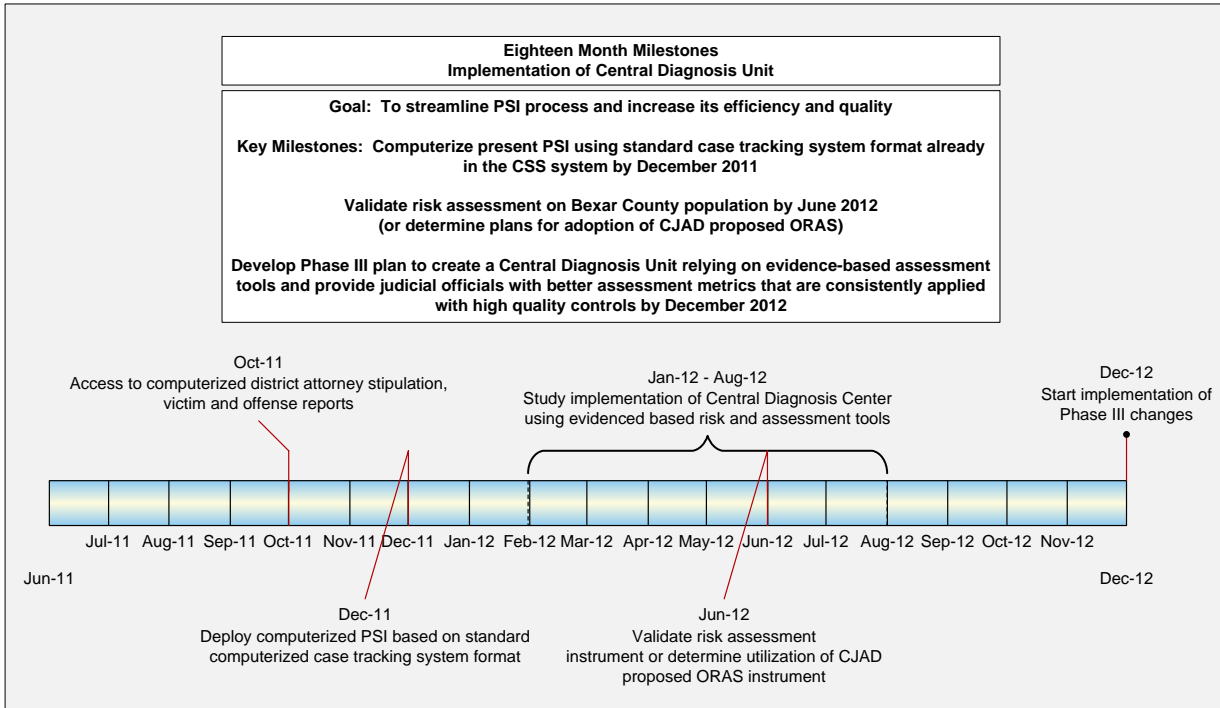


Figure 15: Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Evidence Based Practices Supervision Plan

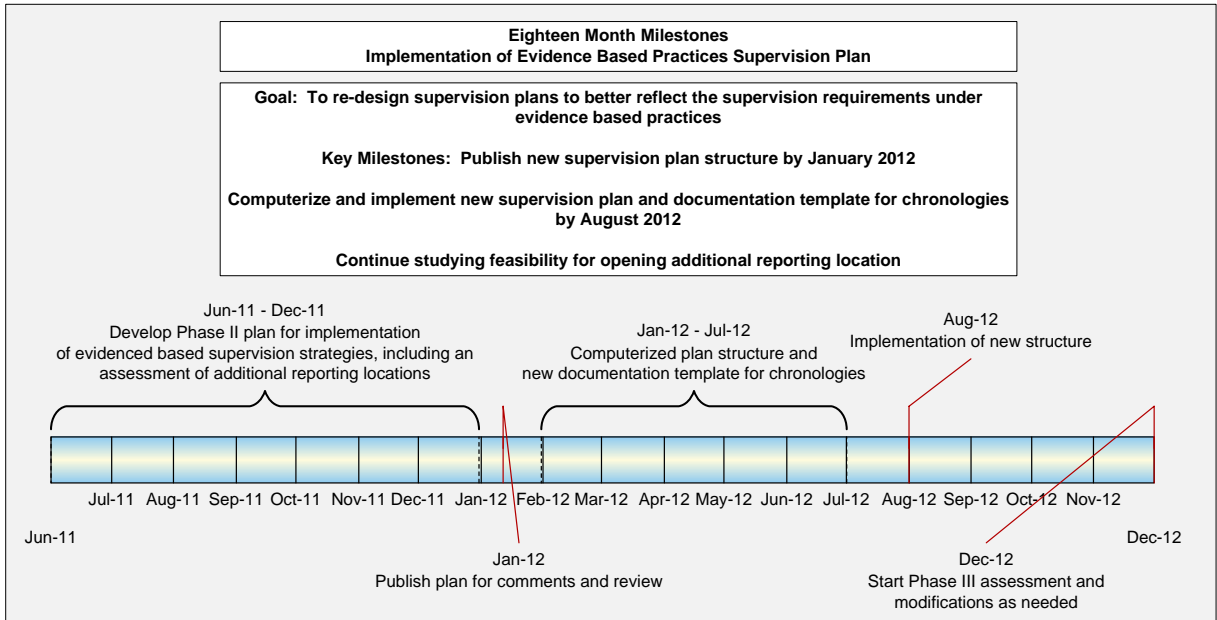


Figure 16: Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Enhancements in Personnel Appraisal System

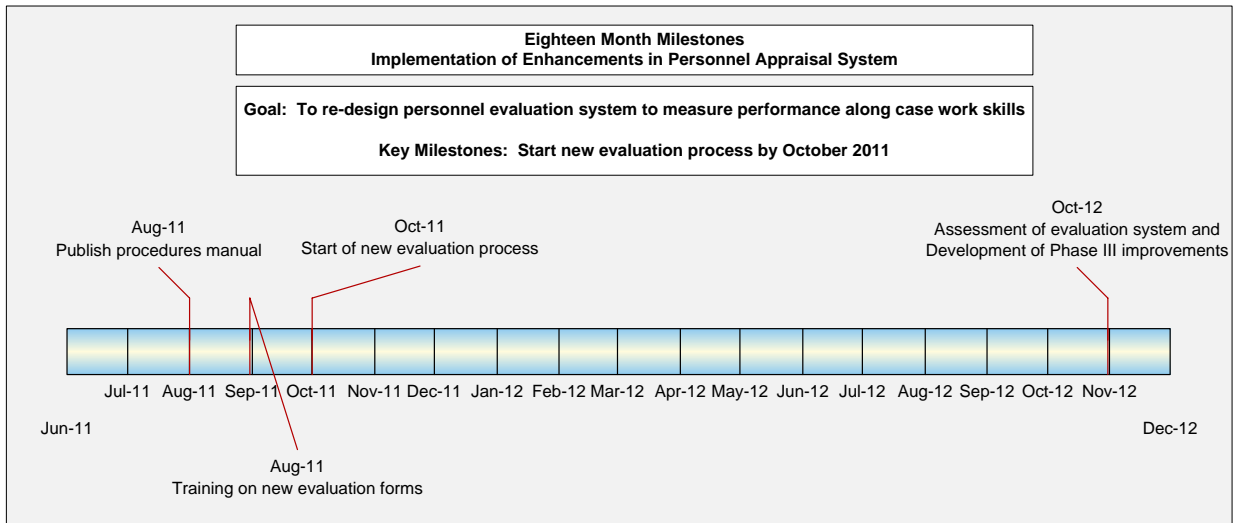


Figure 17: Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Quality Control Improvements

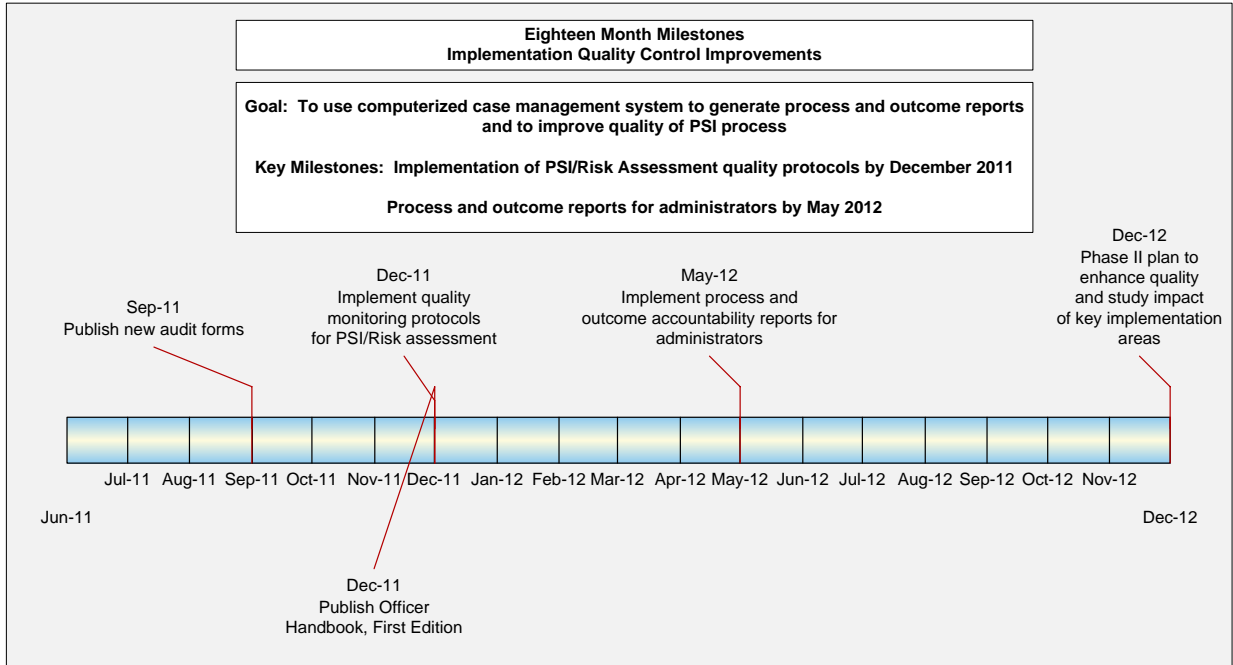


Figure 18: Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Enhancements in Training Programs



Figure 19: Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Progress Reports to the Courts, District Attorney and County Commissioners

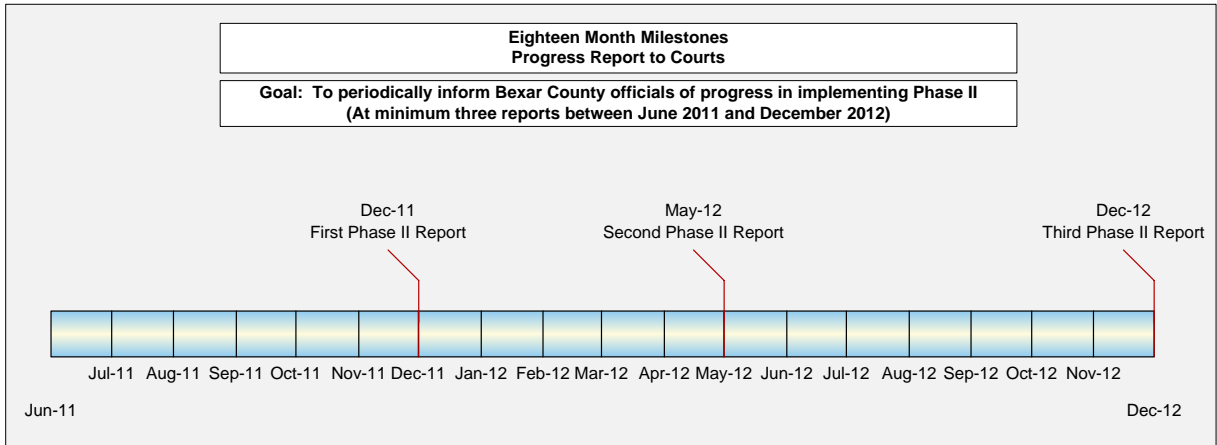


Figure 20: Summary of Goals, Milestones and Timeliness for Implementation of Phase II Changes

Summary of Phase II Goals and Milestones
<p>Goal: To expand the present “paperless pilot” to all the district courts and evaluate other needs to streamline processes by the computerization of information</p> <p>Key Milestone: All courts are “paperless” by March 2012</p>
<p>Goal: To streamline PSI process and increase its efficiency and quality</p> <p>Key Milestones: Computerize present PSI using standard case tracking system format already in the CSS system by December 2011</p> <p>Validate risk assessment on Bexar County population or determine utilization of CJAD proposed ORAS by June 2012</p> <p>Develop Phase III plan to adopt a Central Diagnosis Process relying on evidence-based assessment tools and provide judicial officials with better assessment metrics that are consistently applied with high quality controls by December 2012</p>
<p>Goal: To re-design supervision plans to better reflect the supervision requirements under evidence based practices</p> <p>Key Milestones: Publish new supervision plan structure by January 2012</p> <p>Computerize and implement new supervision plan and documentation template for chronologies by August 2012</p> <p>Continue studying feasibility for opening additional reporting location</p>
<p>Goal: To re-design personnel evaluation system to measure performance along case work skills</p> <p>Key Milestones: Start new evaluation process by October 2012</p>
<p>Goal: To use computerized case management system to generate process and outcome reports and to improve quality of PSI process</p> <p>Key Milestones: Implementation of PSI/Risk Assessment quality protocols by December 2011</p> <p>Process and outcome reports for administrators by May 2012</p>
<p>Goal: To improve training and prioritization of training sessions</p> <p>Key Milestones: Training plans by October 2011 for 2012 and by October 2012 for 2013 to clearly prioritize skill based training sessions related to evidence based practices</p>