

Information Sharing Between Community Supervision and Law Enforcement:

Strategies from the Field to Promote Public Safety and Reentry

Introduction

Community supervision and law enforcement agencies share information about people returning to the community from incarceration to promote public safety through recidivism-reduction strategies. With funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, which is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center interviewed senior public safety officials from 51 community supervision, corrections, and law enforcement agencies on information sharing practices and partnerships.¹ This publication examines information-sharing practices between community supervision and law enforcement agencies and highlights key approaches. It is the second in a series on information sharing between community supervision, corrections, and law enforcement agencies.

Information-Sharing Challenges Related to Reentry

In interviews, community supervision agencies highlighted a series of challenges that include technological limitations, structural barriers, and staffing shortages. Community supervision and law enforcement agencies often operate in silos with limited or incompatible data systems and collection practices. Some smaller municipalities may not have formal data systems and rely on paper files and case notes, while larger jurisdictions may have advanced data systems that lack interoperability with other systems. These technological barriers make it difficult to access and share timely and actionable data, leading to missed opportunities for coordination and a disjointed approach to public safety.

There are also structural challenges to sharing information between community supervision and their partners in law enforcement prior to release from jail versus prison. Community supervision is often a division of corrections agencies, yet silos exist between the divisions that operate correctional facilities and those that oversee community supervision. The timing and process of release also creates distinct coordination challenges. Jail releases are often unpredictable and happen with little notice (particularly if people are released on bail or bond), limiting opportunities for timely information sharing. While prisons tend to have a more structured release process than jails, they are often less connected to local law enforcement agencies and have limited integration with local data systems.

Staffing shortages and turnover, both of which increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and have continued since, have led to fewer joint home visits between law enforcement officers and community supervision agents and greater difficulty building new relationships and maintaining positive partnerships between the agencies. These resource constraints hinder the trust and regular communication needed for effective information sharing and often lead to agencies having to prioritize immediate operational needs over long-term partnership building.

Information Available Among Law Enforcement and Community Supervision Agencies

While both community supervision and law enforcement agencies play a critical role in addressing public safety, they have distinct roles and access to different information. The chart below outlines examples of the unique information each type of agency collects to help inform information-sharing partnerships in the field.

Information from law enforcement	Information from community supervision*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monikers/nicknames from the community • Photograph of individual from arrest • Address at time of arrest(s) • Prior police contact and incident reports (including body-worn camera video and observations at time of arrest related to mental health crisis) • Social media intel • Peer affiliations in the community, including peer groups and street gang affiliations that will impact participation in programs with other individuals • Information available through intelligence or fusion centers on threats to security, public safety, or retaliatory violence • Patterns of crime (e.g., drug trafficking) • Known addresses in the community • Arrests and criminal activity of peer affiliations in the community • Active investigations • Police contact at the home, either related to the individual on supervision or their family members/roommates • Community resources specific to violence prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current information about individuals on community supervision, including contact information, address, vehicle information, family members in the home, and treatment plan in the community • Conditions of community supervision • Reentry plan, including release date, address, and referrals in the community • Photograph of individual from intake • Risk and needs assessments • Psychosocial information, such as family history; housing history; employment history; education experience; mental health, behavioral health, and medical health needs; and prior substance use and treatment participation • Information prior to and during incarceration, such as disciplinary and infraction records • GPS/electronic monitoring data • Reentry resources in the community

**This information is specific to community supervision agencies regarding people in the community. For information unique to corrections, please see the chart [here](#).*

Case Study: Strategies in Practice in Kansas City, Missouri

The **Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department (KCPD) Save KC Program** has a focused deterrence program within their probation and parole squad where they meet with individuals 60 days prior to their release date. This is a partnership with the Missouri Department of Corrections Division of Probation and Parole. Focused deterrence involves targeting interventions to individuals assessed to be at a high risk of reoffending through validated assessments and directly communicating the consequences of violating supervision conditions. The KCPD probation and parole squad receives a report each month from the **Missouri Department of Corrections** of individuals releasing to Kansas City who are assessed as having a high risk of reoffending. They focus on people convicted of the most serious crimes (homicide, first degree robbery, and burglary).

A team consisting of a police detective, parole officer, and social worker meet with these individuals together in the facility prior to their release. All three have a different mandate and message: the law enforcement agent goes over criminal history, any active or current warrants, and what is expected of the person from a public safety perspective; the parole officer goes over the conditions of community supervision and is responsible for facilitating treatment coordination and compliance; and the social worker discusses needs, conducts assessments, and makes referrals to appropriate services. If there are any active warrants, law enforcement will communicate with the prosecutors from those counties to resolve the warrant status prior to release. From the assessment, the individual is connected to mental health and substance use treatment, job training, and/or provided with housing assistance. There are ongoing conversations pre- and post- release about expectations and consequences. Consequences can include increased supervision requirements, treatment engagement, and penalties for certain offenses, such as possession of a weapon or committing another offense while on supervision.

Key Strategies for Information Sharing

In the interviews with community supervision and law enforcement agency officials, three priorities emerged: community safety, officer safety, and successful reentry for people on community supervision. Officials revealed key concerns in these areas, along with the strategies their respective agencies used to address them.

Public Safety Strategies

Addressing drivers of violent crime in their communities is a primary reason community supervision and law enforcement agencies partner to share information. Law enforcement can share operational data on incidents of crime that involve people under community supervision, and agencies can partner to identify trends and prioritize resource allocation. Law enforcement agencies can also work collaboratively with community supervision agencies after crime trends have been identified by law enforcement intelligence centers to determine collective action to prevent and respond to crime. Officials interviewed acknowledged that supporting successful reentry from incarceration is a crucial component of effective public safety strategies. Research suggests that suppressing gang violence without coordinated support services can increase violence levels.²

1

Develop a shared understanding of each partner's data repository and terminology and create an information-sharing procedure. Public safety officials indicated that information sharing is most successful when requests for information are clear and specific, and both agencies are working from a similar set of definitions. This can include defining different supervision types and data markers for requesting information, such as release data.

2

Examine data on people under community supervision and violent crime victimization to ensure people under community supervision do not become future victims of crime. Senior public safety officials expressed concerns that people returning home from incarceration are particularly vulnerable to such victimization, stemming from retaliatory acts linked to their past convictions or from returning to neighborhoods with higher rates of violent crime. These circumstances not only endanger people returning home from incarceration but also pose risks to community members who may be harmed as bystanders in violent incidents.

3

Participate in joint task forces to dedicate time and resources to common crime and recidivism reduction goals. Task force meetings are opportunities for community supervision officers to provide additional context related to people on community supervision who are persons of interest in criminal investigations. During these regular meetings, information is also shared that can help parole officers better supervise individuals in situations where they have police contact, are under investigation, or instances that involve a member of their household. These regular meetings can provide opportunities for community supervision staff to offer more immediate interventions and support to the individual and their family unit in the community.

4

Upon release from incarceration, facilitate information sharing practices that ensure ready identification of people with high needs to match those individuals with high-intensity services. This process can be informed by information from law enforcement on individuals on community supervision involved in violent incidents and information from community supervision on risk and needs assessment and history of violence. Information sharing between law enforcement and community supervision agencies about this population in reentry can then help connect these people to services.

5

Create mental health bulletins as an internal resource for law enforcement officers responding to emergency calls. These can be developed in partnership with community supervision agencies to include information about individuals with serious mental illness so that officers responding to crisis can see baseline information and key contacts. This can help officers determine the best response and ensure an individual's needs are met while experiencing a mental health crisis.

Officer Safety Strategies

Community supervision officers may have high-risk situations where they ask for support from law enforcement to conduct joint home visits for officer safety purposes. This can be due to an active investigation in the community or in cases where there is a known significant history of violence and there is a risk of retaliation. While joint visits were once common practice, some agencies have become more selective about when to partner for home visits given constraints due to staffing shortages and concerns about unintentionally deepening criminal justice system involvement or creating additional barriers for people on community supervision. Some agencies now conduct joint visits only when there is a clear safety risk posed to the community supervision officer.

6

Flag information on active police investigations that involve people under community supervision. This information is critical to community supervision officers to prevent them from entering unsafe and risky environments during routine home visits. Agencies can accomplish this through shared access to data systems to allow community supervision officers to access information about specific areas where investigations are occurring or where there has been a recent shooting or incident.

7

Share staff resources to support interagency cooperation and navigate staffing challenges.

This includes opportunities for joint visits in rural communities that have few law enforcement officers, so community supervision in those areas is viewed as an added law enforcement presence.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2018-SM-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Endnotes

1. Thank you to the following agencies that shared insights: Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles; Burlington, Vermont Police Department; Colorado Department of Public Safety; Georgia Department of Community Supervision; Minnesota Department of Corrections Field Services; Missouri Department of Corrections Division of Probation and Parole; Multnomah County, Oregon, Department of Community Justice; National Fusion Center Association; Nebraska Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation, Adult Probation Services Division; New York City Department of Probation; New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision; North Carolina Department of Adult Corrections Division of Community Supervision; Oregon Department of Corrections; Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Office of Field Services; Saint Paul, Minnesota, Police Department; Salt Lake County Department of Human Services Criminal Justice Services; San Diego Law Enforcement Resource Center; Tennessee Department of Corrections; Vermont Department of Corrections, Burlington Probation and Parole; Washington State Department of Corrections Division of Community Supervision; and Wisconsin Department of Corrections Division of Community Corrections.
2. Hannah D. McManus et al., *Street Violence Crime Reduction Strategies: A View of the Evidence* (Cincinnati: International Association of Chief of Police/University of Cincinnati Center for Police Research and Policy, 2020), https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/Research%20Center/Violence%20Reduction%20Literature%20Review_FINAL.pdf.



**Justice
Center**