

Office of the Sheriff

LOB #219:

INMATE HOUSING ALTERNATIVES

Purpose

The Fairfax County Sheriff's Office provides alternative housing options for inmates in its custody. While the provision of such options is not mandatory for the Sheriff's Office, offering these alternatives is governed by Virginia Code §§ 53.1-131, 53.1-131.1, 53.1-131.2, 53.1-128, 53.1-129, 19.2-354 and 19.2-303. These codes establish guidelines and mandates for the alternative incarceration areas of operation which include, but are not limited to, alternative sentencing programs such as electronic incarceration, work release, weekend confinement, fines options, community labor force and other revenue resources.

Description

The Inmate Housing Alternatives line of business comprises all programs related to alternative housing options. These programs include weekend confinement, electronic incarceration, fines options, community labor force and work release. Inmates participating in these options are housed in the Alternative Incarceration Branch (AIB) located adjacent to the Adult Detention Center, which houses inmates pending approval for involvement in the AIB programs. All offenders who are suitable and eligible for participation in the AIB program have the opportunity to participate in available treatment, education and rehabilitation programs.

The Fairfax County Sheriff's Office continues to provide alternative incarceration opportunities for that part of its inmate population who meet the eligibility and suitability requirements for a minimum security environment. The Sheriff's Office AIB provides a comprehensive approach that enhances public safety by providing inmates with program opportunities that assist them in their efforts to successfully reintegrate back into the community. In accordance with Virginia Code § 53.1-131, the AIB places considerable emphasis on ensuring offenders defray the cost of their incarceration and pay their financial debts, which includes fines, court costs, restitution, fees associated with participation in educational and rehabilitation programs, and child support payments. Re-entry programs reduce recidivism, save taxpayers money by investing in more affordable support programs, and make communities safer. The alternative incarceration option provides a means for inmates to re-enter society with improved life skills and other resources such as employment and housing assistance that will improve their chances for a successful transition back into the community.

The AIB operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Sworn staff members monitor and supervise inmates ordered into the Electronic Incarceration Program by the courts or placed there by the Sheriff. The safety and security of the AIB, to include the supervision of AIB inmates, is accomplished by deputy sheriffs assigned to the facility. The Sheriff's Office has the responsibility of providing room and board for inmates housed in the AIB. In addition, Sheriff's Office sworn personnel are responsible for the safety and security of the inmates in the facility and maintain accountability of them when they are in the community.

The AIB substance abuse program is designed to combat inmate illicit drug use and addresses the unique addiction characteristics and other negative coping mechanisms that are associated with them. In short, the program supports a recovery-oriented system of care that addresses clinical as well as overall community re-integration. The program places significant emphasis on rehabilitation, employment, housing, and access to other applicable community resources. This program is a partnership between the Sheriff's Office and the Community Services Board (CSB). The CSB case managers provide inmate clinical services and serve as a link to applicable areas in the inmate recovery plan that may include housing, employment, counseling, and other re-integration needs.

Office of the Sheriff

The Community Labor Force (CLF) provides supervised inmate labor crews of 8 to 10 inmates each on a daily basis to many county agencies, the City of Fairfax and the Towns of Herndon and Vienna. Bus shelter cleaning, lawn mowing, landscape beautification and maintenance, stormwater dry pond maintenance, furniture and equipment moving, trail clearing, records retirement, snow removal, and painting are common tasks accomplished by the CLF. Each inmate labor crew is supervised by a sworn staff member.

Benefits

Inmate housing alternatives offer the County housing options that reduce the costs of incarceration in the Adult Detention Center. When the inmate population goes up, the AIB is an option that is available to the Sheriff's Office to reduce inmate overcrowding in the Adult Detention Center, which minimizes the risks associated with increasing the population within each housing unit. Equally as important, however, inmate housing alternatives afford the inmates the opportunity to continue working during their incarceration. This allows them to support their families, pay their fines and court costs, and be gainfully employed, thereby allowing for a smoother and more successful transition back into the community. With an emphasis on re-entry, the Sheriff's Office is committed to providing as many resources as possible to assist inmates in their efforts to return to the community.

Having a different facility for minimum security inmates enables the low risk offender to more easily remain separate from criminal talk and attitudes, which makes a productive community re-entry more likely.

Also significant, however, is the cost savings provided by the Community Labor Force (CLF). These volunteer inmate work teams support community improvement projects such as landscaping, litter removal, painting, snow and sign removal, and graffiti abatement. Additionally, CLF crews support Celebrate Fairfax, Fall for Fairfax, July 4th Celebration in Fairfax City and Centreville Days in Centreville. Inmates in these programs are low risk inmates suitable for supervised access to the community and minimum security housing. Crews are committed 52 weeks per year. In FY 2015, the total value of all work performed by the Community Labor Force was \$1,472,380.

Inmates in the alternative housing options were ordered to incarceration by a judge. If alternatives were not available, the inmates would be remanded to the jail without assurance of restitution or the possibility of continuing support for family living costs.

Mandates

Inmate housing alternatives are not mandated. However, The Sheriff's Office is a strong advocate in the effort to promote public safety and reduce crime by preparing inmates for success through a continuum of services and supervision in collaboration with stakeholders (state and local partners) from the time of an inmate's entry into the Adult Detention Center through his/her transition and reintegration back into the community. Since the Sheriff's Office does participate in offering these programs, they are governed by the Code of Virginia as outlined in the "Purpose" section of this LOB. In addition, these housing alternatives are governed by accrediting agencies which include the American Correctional Association, National Commission on Correctional Healthcare, and Virginia Department of Corrections.

Office of the Sheriff

Trends and Challenges

While there are strict eligibility and suitability requirements determining which inmates are eligible, the number participating in the Alternative Incarceration Branch (AIB) is proportional to the overall count. From FY 2014 to FY 2015, the total number of inmates housed in the AIB decreased from 170 to 138. In comparison, the overall inmate population decreased during the same timeframe from 1,228 to 1,108.

While participating in inmate alternatives to incarceration options is not mandated, it is a significant cost savings to the County. Inmates participating in the AIB programs are required to pay a portion of their earnings to defray the cost of their incarceration. Additionally, inmates pay court costs, fines, restitution, fees associated with educational and rehabilitation programs, taxes and family support from their earnings.

The request for CLF support for projects continues to grow. Recently, a new sign removal crew was established to remove illegal signs from along the highway. The Sheriff's Office works closely with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and the Park Authority, among others, to see if there are portions of large county contracts that the CLF crews can perform at a significantly reduced rate. The inmates also learn a trade while performing this work and can point to work they've performed once they begin looking for a job.

A significant number of individuals assigned to the Alternative Incarceration Branch have severe substance/alcohol problems. These problems impact not only these individuals but also have an adverse effect on their families and the community at large. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has identified the increase in opiate use as a key problem affecting the community. In FY 2014, the Board created an Opiate Task Force which identified the need for both law enforcement and treatment intervention to combat the problem. Drug trafficking, organized crime and other associated crimes remain a challenge for the community. From 2013 to 2014, the number of heroin deaths doubled in Fairfax County. Treatment programs to address these problems are essential. The programs in the AIB help keep the community safe and provide opportunities for these individuals to address the core issues of their drug/alcohol related problems and assist them in their efforts to transition successfully back into the community.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #219: Inmate Housing Alternatives			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$4,001,211	\$3,922,710	\$4,077,665
Operating Expenses	725,344	699,286	677,953
Capital Equipment	31,432	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$4,757,987	\$4,621,996	\$4,755,618
General Fund Revenue	\$1,685,562	\$1,684,272	\$1,774,921
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$3,072,425	\$2,937,724	\$2,980,697
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	43 / 43	43 / 43	43 / 43
Total Positions	43 / 43	43 / 43	43 / 43

Office of the Sheriff

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Average daily number of prisoners housed in the Alternative Incarceration Branch (AIB)	158	170	138	145	145
Annual hours of work performed by the Community Labor Force	57,566	61,587	64,033	65,000	65,000
Percent of customers very satisfied with the Community Labor Force services	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total value of all work performed by the Community Labor Force	\$1,421,883	\$1,498,266	\$1,472,384	\$1,515,000	\$1,515,000

Programs such as work release and electronic incarceration allow inmates to maintain their employment and support their families while serving their sentences. The programs also historically reduce overcrowding and reduce the cost of incarceration in the Adult Detention Center. Recently, the overall inmate population has decreased, which has impacted housing alternatives in that the amount of inmates assigned to these programs has also decreased, from 170 in FY 2014 to 138 in FY 2015. However, the Sheriff's Office is continually evaluating all inmates to determine if more can be assigned to housing alternatives in order to enhance their opportunities.

Perhaps the area most easily measured alternative is the Community Labor Force, which oversees the activities of inmates working in the community and provides a revenue option for the county. This program provides inmate work teams to support community improvement projects such as landscaping, litter removal, painting, snow removal, graffiti abatement and sign removal. For FY 2015, the Community Labor Force has seen a significant increase in the number of hours worked, from 57,566 hours in FY 2013 to 64,033 in FY 2015. The increase is partially due to a 100 percent satisfaction rate from its customers and partially due to the overall value of the program, which has increased from \$1,421,883 in FY 2013 to \$1,472,384 in FY 2015.