

## U. S. PROBATION DEPARTMENT

### Supervision Practices

Nearly every sentence imposed includes either probation or a term of supervised release. The community supervision aspect of the sentence is as important as any sentence of imprisonment or any financial sanction the Court may order.

We see our responsibilities in each case we supervise falling into three general and equally important areas: enforcing the Court ordered conditions of supervision; controlling any risk the person under supervision may pose to the community, and; providing the person with needed treatment and assistance to ensure they remain law-abiding and productive members of our community. Looking at each one a bit more closely, the Judge imposes a sentence of probation or supervised release and orders conditions or rules for each person to follow. These almost always include the standard conditions of supervision approved by the Court and often include special conditions which are tailored to the individual. An example of a special condition is substance abuse treatment. When the Judge orders conditions, the effect of this is twofold: the defendant must follow the rules and the probation officer must monitor and enforce them.

Controlling potential risks a person may present to other people in the community is our second goal. Here we use our professional discretion to analyze the past behavior of a person and determine the likelihood, or risk, of future similar behavior. For example, a person who has embezzled money from a bank, may be seen as presenting a risk of financial loss if they were to become employed in a capacity of handling and controlling funds. Or, a person with a history of abusing children may pose a risk of physical harm if they were employed in a day care center. If risks are identified, the probation officer attempts to tailor strategies to minimize that risk. This may include increasing supervision, notifying third parties who may be at risk, or precluding the person from engaging in certain occupations or activities.

The role of providing correctional treatment and meeting the needs of the people we work with springs out of the rehabilitation model. Here we work with the person in providing the needed counseling and direction. This often includes the use of outside community resources, such as substance abuse or mental health treatment programs or vocational training. The extent to which we are successful in assisting the offender solve their problems or improve their situation goes a long way toward ensuring they will remain law-abiding members of the community.

Our goal is to blend these three initiatives together to form a case plan that maximizes our responsibilities to our community and to the person we are working with. Throughout this process, we often need and welcome the assistance of many others, such as family members, friends, associates, employers, counselors and attorneys. Effective supervision leads to the successful outcome of the person ending the supervision term having abided by the rules set by the Court and improving their life. This process is enhanced when others who play a significant role in the life of the person under supervision are involved.

Things do go wrong and when people fail to adhere to the rules, it is our duty to manage the non-compliant behavior. Our response is dependent on the severity of the behavior of the person under supervision. Whenever feasible we attempt to exhaust all efforts of working with the person in the community setting prior to seeking revocation of the term of supervision.