

Intensive Supervision

An Outcome Evaluation of the PA DOC Intensive Supervision (IS) Caseload Program

Background

The Intensive Supervision (IS) Caseload Program was created to identify reentrants who have a high propensity for violent behavior and to impose supervision conditions that will provide increased structure and accountability while also addressing the factors that contribute to their violent behavior.

A review team assesses potential candidates for the program based upon criteria such as: 1) a violent instant offense followed by a subsequent parole revocation, 2) a parole revocation, regardless of instant offense, that was assaultive or violent in nature, 3) a significant history of domestic violence, and 4) a criminal history or supervision history that poses an elevated risk to community safety such as illegal possession of firearms.

Once selected, participants proceed through a phased system that lasts for a minimum of six months. Components of the program include increased supervision, enrollment in 12 sessions of cognitive behavioral treatment, structured responses to violations, and enhanced case management services. Successful completion of the program results in a reentrant being transferred to a general supervision caseload.

The IS supervision program operates in three parole districts (Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh), with a total of 18 dedicated agents supervising participants in the program. The IS program began in June 2021. Through April 2023, a total of 518 reentrants were enrolled in the program and 171 have successfully completed.

Study Design

This evaluation of the IS program used Propensity Score Matching to match 268 IS parolees to a comparison group of 658 general supervision parolees who were supervised in a period of time immediately before the IS program started and who looked similar on many relevant factors to IS participants. The comparison group was limited to parolees who were supervised within the same three districts as IS parolees and who also had one of the same agents as the 18 dedicated IS agents. The comparison group was further matched to the IS group on age, race, gender, instant offense type, risk score, criminal history, history of violence, parole violation history, and time on supervision. A strong match between IS parolees and comparison parolees was attained.

Results

At a 1-year follow-up period, statistical results showed that 7.2% of IS parolees and 6.8% of comparison parolees were re-arrested for a violent offense. While the violent re-arrest rate was slightly higher for IS parolees than comparison parolees this difference was not statistically significant. The estimated 1-year re-incarceration rates were 15.5% for IS parolees and 15.2% for comparison parolees. The estimated 1-year overall recidivism rates were 21.4% for IS parolees and 27.7% for comparison parolees. None of these differences were statistically significant.

The conclusion based on this evaluation is that the IS program has had no impact to date on reducing violent or general recidivism rates compared to similarly situated parolees who did not receive IS supervision.

