



*The Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association (OCPOA)*

*Community Corrections Act (CCA) Program Directors*

**Budget Testimony  
FY 2016-2017**

Submitted to Finance-Corrections Subcommittee

by: Melissa Litteral  
Representing:  
Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association, &  
CCA Program Directors,  
On behalf of Community Corrections Act (CCA) Programs &  
Community Corrections  
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Chairman Uecker and members of the Finance-Corrections Subcommittee, on behalf of the Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association, and Community Corrections Act (CCA) Program Directors, and as a practitioner in the field of law enforcement and community corrections for the past 21 years, I appreciate the opportunity to provide support regarding CCA programs funded through the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC). These programs provide cost effective, non-residential sanctions to divert offenders from costly prison and jail beds while providing public safety. By implementing evidence-based practice programs we are able to assist offenders in achieving positive behavioral change, which leads to a reduction in recidivism.

As you know Ohio has the 6<sup>th</sup> largest prison population and without change the prison system is not sustainable. The non-violent low level felonies that are currently being sent to the institution would be better served on Community Control and/or Community Corrections Programs, which include Community Corrections Act (CCA) Programs, Halfway Houses, and Community Based Correctional Facilities, which provide effective treatment alternatives for incarceration while assuring accountability and public safety. Beyond the fact that community corrections programs continue to strive for excellence in affecting recidivism rates, these programs are also cost effective and efficient. The Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association has been working with other state community corrections associations and The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections in a Community Corrections Collaborative to address cost efficiencies and effectiveness of program services. This collaborative effort has been very productive and has assisted in maintaining Ohio as a leader in community corrections.

Community Corrections Act (CCA) Programs are non-residential prison (Budget Line Item 407) and jail (Budget Line Item 408) diversion programs funded by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction through grants from the Bureau of Community Sanctions, and are

primarily associated with probation departments. CCA Programs serve as a vital component in the overall continuum of sanctions available to courts from pretrial services programs and diversion programs, to probation supervision services as a stand-alone sanction and direct diversion from prison, to supervision of offenders before and after placement in CBCFs and Halfway Houses. These programs also provide supervision services for Judicial Release cases from prison. Supervision of these offenders in CCA Programs after release from CBCFs, Halfway Houses and prisons provides for a successful transition from a structured setting into the community. This period of transition back into the community is a critical time in the rehabilitation of an offender. CCA Programs represent the largest number of diversions from state prison of all the community corrections programs funded through the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and divert a substantial number of offenders from local jails. A number of non-violent offenders sentenced to DRC serve one year or less. See table below. Very little or no programming can be provided for these short-term offenders. These offenders would be well served if they were placed on Community Control or into CCA Programs.

*2013- 5<sup>th</sup> Degree Felony Commitments Sentenced*

<i>Number of 5<sup>th</sup> Degree Felons Sentenced</i>	<u>Number of Days Served</u>				
	<u>0-90</u>	<u>91-180</u>	<u>181-270</u>	<u>271-365</u>	<u>365 +</u>
	145	804	764	629	441

*\* Data collected by Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Bureau of Research and Evaluation.*

CCA Programs represent a substantial cost savings while reducing recidivism and can assist in addressing this population. The mission of Community Corrections Act (CCA) Programs is to reduce the number of offenders entering prison and jail by offering Courts which includes the pretrial process up to sentencing alternatives at final disposition. These alternatives provide a balance between control

and treatment to assist offenders in achieving behavioral change to become productive, contributing members of society.

By not just diverting them from prison or jail, but also addressing the issues that created the offending behavior in the first place, by using evidenced based practices which can lead to decreasing recidivism and protecting the community.

Years of research have gone into developing “Evidence-Based Practices” to enhance the effectiveness of the supervision of offenders. CCA Programs and Court ordered Community Control Sanctions strive to incorporate this proven research into supervision services and treatment services provided to offenders to positively alter the offender’s behavior. Research demonstrates that CCA Programs have the ability to reduce recidivism rates of offenders. Practitioners in this field will continue to work closely with DRC to implement the best evidenced based practices that we may further improve the effectiveness of the services provided, thereby increasing public safety in our communities. However, continued funding is needed to ensure all programs are working towards jail and prison reduction.

Community Corrections is the most cost effective investment in reducing prison cost. The Community Corrections Act (CCA) Prison and Jail Diversion Program serve the most offenders and are the least costly of the community corrections programs and are especially cost effective when compared to the cost of incarcerating an offender in a state prison or local jail.

The success of community corrections in Ohio depends on adequate funding. At the same time, CCA Programs have received a substantial increase in the number of offenders supervised. We will continue to provide the best quality services possible to provide public safety, but require adequate funding levels to do so.

While this support is focused on the continued funding of CCA Program services, it is imperative that further equitable investment is made in all community correction program line items as well as community control initiatives. Investment in these programs provides offenders with a treatment alternative to incarceration that can greatly reduce recidivism, continue to be cost effective, and contribute to public safety in our communities. On behalf of the Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association, and CCA Program Directors, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to provide support to Community Corrections in Ohio.