

# KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 1

## Community Supervision Agency



Clear leadership, strategic planning, dedicated staff roles, proper training, and intentional implementation are all essential to building an environment that supports and promotes positive supervision outcomes.

### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ There should be staff committed to working on implementing a strategic plan that is revisited every year and outlines the agency's vision, mission, values, and timelines for goals.
- ✓ Where possible, agencies should have dedicated staff that make up an implementation team to lead any new initiatives and ensure people across the agency are included in these implementation teams.
- ✓ Job descriptions should be regularly reviewed to ensure they highlight the skills and abilities necessary for effective implementation of evidenced-based practices, with a focus on:
  - *Commitment to behavior change work*
  - *Core correctional practices*
- ✓ Agencies should establish a training team that develops training, skill development exercises, as well as a framework for more experienced officers and supervisors to coach newer officers for more direct feedback.
  - *Skill practice can be supported by learning teams who focus on specific skill delivery*
- ✓ Agencies should establish policies to facilitate collaboration with service providers, housing, healthcare, and other necessary resources that support people on supervision.



### People

Supervision Staff | Trainers (Internal or External) | Community Service Providers



### Resources *Capacity-Building Opportunities for Supervision Agencies*

- Online resources including American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) website, Center for Effective Public Policy's (CEPP) Community Supervision Resource Center, [National Reentry Resource Center](#)
- Sending implementation team staff to community supervision conferences to learn from other supervision agencies
- Participating in local Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](http://appa-net.org)

## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 2

# Sentencing to Probation & Parole Release



Supervision agencies play an important role in shaping the conditions of supervision. Effective collaboration between supervision agencies, courts, and other releasing authorities is essential to ensure that supervision conditions are individualized to promote the success of the person ordered to comply with those conditions. Agencies should also promote early discharge from supervision opportunities and work to improve supervision outcomes through other incentives.

### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Supervision agencies should make conditions recommendations to courts and releasing authorities to ensure conditions are tailored, reasonable, and focus on criminogenic needs. This can be accomplished by:
  - *Playing a role during the pre-sentence interview (PSI) process to share relevant and updated information with the court before conditions are set or supporting mechanisms that allow supervision officers to make changes to conditions over the supervision term, as the individual demonstrates sustained compliance and progress*
  - *Co-training with PSI writers, judges, and parole board members on connecting conditions with risk, need, and responsivity factors*
- ✓ Agencies should work with courts and parole boards on establishing early discharge from supervision term policies outlining:
  - *What conditions need to be met to be eligible for early discharge*
  - *Who is responsible for bringing the early discharge application to the court or decision-maker*
- ✓ Where possible, direct any financial obligation the supervision agency is mandated to collect toward treatment and services for people on supervision.
- ✓ Agencies should outline all possible incentives officers can offer to encourage positive behavior; initial meetings should be used to learn about the person and identify which incentives might be most motivating.



### People

Supervision Staff, Judges, Parole Board Members, State Senators/Representatives who can establish early discharge legislation where no administrative mechanisms are in place



### Resources

- Core Correctional Practices and Evidence-Based Practices trainings and online resources, such as [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov)
- Participating in Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils, including quasi-legislative statewide bodies and local entities

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](https://appa-net.org)

## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 3

# Assessment

Assessments are the cornerstone of effective supervision because they outline the individual's risk and criminogenic needs. Agencies should use validated assessment tools to determine risk level and unique needs, in order to tailor supervision and connect people with resources. These assessments can also help agencies distribute caseloads fairly across the agency and can inform responsive case plans.



### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Agencies should use a risk screening instrument to identify individuals who score low risk and can be assigned to minimal supervision caseloads.
- ✓ Agencies should consider adoption of specialized risk and needs assessments when assessing specific populations on community supervision for whom generic risk and needs assessments have proven less accurate.
  - *Specialized assessments and resulting specialized caseloads are recommended for women and individuals convicted of certain crimes including sex offenses, intimate partner violence/domestic violence, driving under the influence, and violent crimes.*
- ✓ An officer should secure supervisor approval for any overrides to standard risk assessment recommendations.
- ✓ **Assessments should drive the development of a supervision case plan that identifies:**
  1. A level of supervision with proposed supervision contact schedules (indicating frequency and type of contacts for the initial period of supervision).
  2. Relevant programming or referrals that address underlying needs flagged by the assessment. Agencies should require reassessment at least annually as part of case plan review and adjustment.
- ✓ An officer should discuss risk assessment results, related court or releasing authority supervision conditions, and the supervision case plan with the individual on supervision to explain what assessment scores mean and how that impacts supervision.



### People

Supervision Staff | Community Service Providers | Assessment Facilitation Trainers

### Resources

- Trainings from experts and centers of excellence such as the University of Cincinnati
- Consultation with the developers of different risk assessment instruments to see which one is best for a given agency's needs and jurisdiction
- Conferences where data experts can explain the processes to validate assessments and utilize results in case plans
- Online resources such as the [BJA Risk Validation](#) and [BJA Risk Assessment](#) guides

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](http://appa-net.org)

## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 4

# Transition to the Community/ Pre-Release



Successful transitions from incarceration to the community require planning and coordination. Agencies should work with the individual starting supervision and other community partners to develop a reentry plan. These plans help to ensure that formerly incarcerated people have access to identification, housing, treatment, medicine, and other vital services.

### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Preparing for reentry should include addressing any need that will support successful supervision and reintegration into community, particularly focusing on stability factors such as housing and employment.
- ✓ Officers should create a reentry plan based on the individual's in-custody programming and skills. This will require some "in-reach" communication between the assigned supervision officer and the case management team serving the individual in custody.
- ✓ The reentry plan should include community-based support as well as family or support system, with the individual's permission.
- ✓ Discharge plans should identify any medical and/or mental health services available to the individual in the community.
- ✓ Individuals released to the community should be provided with photograph identification and resources to meet their immediate needs (e.g. 30-day supply of medication, transportation fare, clothing).
- ✓ Individuals being released to the community should have necessary information to contact the supervision agency.
- ✓ Agencies and correctional facilities should coordinate releases to ensure individuals receive transportation to suitable destinations and contact information for relevant community services.
- ✓ In crisis situations, agencies should use available funds for community residential centers, pre-release programs, and housing opportunities when individuals on community supervision need temporary housing.



### People

Supervision Staff, Case Managers in correctional facilities, Pre-Release Center Staff, Community Service Providers, Government Agencies who can provide services (Medicaid offices, DMVs, local public transit agencies, etc.), Families of Justice-Involved

### Resources

- Online resources such as the National Institute of Justice's "[Five Things About Reentry](#)" and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) "[Sequential Intercept Model](#)"
- Local Continuum of Care, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), or other planning bodies

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](http://appa-net.org)

## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 5

# Supervision Practices

Agencies should use the results of risk and needs assessments to provide individuals with an appropriate level of supervision, relying on risk, needs, and responsivity principles. Clear communication, individualized reentry plans, and accurate documentation help to establish trust and accountability. Agencies should also have comprehensive policy handbooks to share with individuals on supervision that address resources needed during supervision terms.



### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Agencies should give guidance to officers on caseload structure, providing appropriate supervision and services to those assessed as moderate-and high-risk, while imposing minimal services and supervision where an individual scores as low-risk.
- ✓ Following sentencing or release, the officer should meet with the person starting supervision to review and explain all terms and conditions of community supervision to ensure understanding.
- ✓ Officers should develop a contact schedule for everyone on their caseload that aligns with minimum contact standards. Nature and frequency of supervision contacts are based upon the case plan and responsiveness to treatment and supervision and may need to be adjusted over time.
- ✓ Officers should complete collateral contacts as needed to promote ongoing support in the community.
- ✓ Agencies should have clear policies guiding home visits and searches of individuals and property.
- ✓ Officers shall maintain accurate records of the progress for each person on community supervision.



### People

Supervision Staff, Community Service Providers, Community Members/Collateral Contacts, Judges, Parole Board Members, Victims/Survivors, Victim Services



### Resources

- Online resources such as the [Quality Contacts Standards Form](#)
- Core Correctional Practices and Evidence-Based Practices trainings and online resources, such as [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov)

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](https://appa-net.org)

## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 6

# Caseload Size

Caseload size plays a critical role in effective and safe community supervision. Caseload size impacts leadership capacity, Community Supervision Officer (CSO) satisfaction and retention, and has an important influence on supervision outcomes.



### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Caseload sizes vary by risk levels, service needs, and demonstrated compliance and should inform officer assignment.
- ✓ The National Standards outlines best practices on caseload ratios which can serve as a guide; caseload ratios should be informed by population needs, staffing capacity, whether specialized caseloads exist.
- ✓ High-risk individuals need more supervision; low-risk individuals need less supervision.
- ✓ Common caseload categories include: Intensive, Moderate to High, Low, and Administrative.
- ✓ Field visits should be focused on intensive and moderate to high-risk individuals. Agencies should conduct workload studies to determine the appropriate staffing needs for their overall caseload.
- ✓ Reducing caseload size allows for more tailored supervision, lowering recidivism and technical violation by improving the quality of the supervision for both officer individual on supervision.



#### People

Supervision Staff | Trainers



#### Resources

- American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) [Community Supervision Workload Considerations for Public Safety](#)
- Trainings in Core Correctional Practices (CCP), Effective Practices for Correctional Supervision (EPICS), Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Rearrest (STARR), Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision (STICS) and other supervision frameworks

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](https://appa-net.org)



## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 7

# Engagement and Building Relationships



Effective supervision relies on building and maintaining trust and relationships and fostering strong engagement over time. Officers should make use of the following strategies for supervision success, including motivational interviewing, the use of incentives, and adherence to procedural justice principles.

### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Changing individual behavior requires skill development, coaching, and programming that foster motivation.
- ✓ Supervision officers should use motivational interviewing and other evidence-based training programs to improve engagement.
- ✓ Agencies should establish policies to enhance intrinsic motivation with individuals on supervision through the use of cognitive restructuring tools.
- ✓ Building trust between the supervision officer and the individual on supervision is critical to successful supervision completion; involving the individual in their case planning fosters trust and rapport.
- ✓ Incentives are more likely to promote and foster positive behavior change than sanctions.
- ✓ An individual's readiness for change can be assessed using tools like Stages of Change.



#### People

Supervision Staff | Trainers



#### Resources

- Core Correctional Practices (CCP) training, Motivational Interviewing (MI) training

## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 8

# Case Planning

Agencies should establish effective case planning strategies to ensure that individuals on supervision receive individualized, goal-oriented, and responsive supervision. The key considerations below outline best practices from the Standards that help agencies to develop and maintain case plans. Some strategies include using validated assessments, collaboration with the individual through on-going case plan reviews, and data collection related to case plan outcomes.



### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Agencies should establish written policies and practices for case planning across supervision levels.
- ✓ Agencies should use validated risk and needs assessments to help guide case plan creation.
- ✓ Supervision agents should collaborate with the individual on supervision to establish SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound).
- ✓ Case plans should be reviewed and updated on standardized timeframes – this helps to update and reflect on an individual’s progress or completion of programming and goals.
- ✓ Supervisors should review case plans, provide feedback, and check alignment with agency standards.
- ✓ Agencies should provide training and coaching in case planning skills and engagement techniques, including continuing education opportunities.
- ✓ Agencies should track case plan outcomes across short and long term goals.



### People

Supervision Staff, Trainers, Institutional Case Managers/Staff, Community Service Providers



### Resources

- Training on [Carey guides](#) and/or other case plan models; Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center [model](#)



## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 9

# Effective Interventions

Effective interventions in community supervision require training officers in evidence-based practices, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and maintaining clear policies that help guide behavior change engagement, as opposed to mere compliance monitoring.



### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Agencies should establish written policies, procedures and training practices that establish an officer's role as a combination of a behavior change agent and an enforcement officer.
- ✓ Agencies should provide training on rapport building, cognitive-behavioral techniques, and skill practice.
- ✓ Community Supervision Officer's (CSO) should use evidence-based practices to help create behavior changes including the use of interventions and sanctions to encourage prosocial change.
- ✓ Agencies should work towards creating collaborative relationships with community providers who also use evidence-based interventions.
- ✓ Agencies should establish written policies and procedures on how they engage with service providers and other community partners that offer referral services or research/data analysis support.
- ✓ Agencies should have written guidance outlining expectations for structuring meetings between officers and individuals on supervision, with specific goals, behavior change tools, and compliance monitoring strategies planned.



### People

Supervision Staff, Community Service/Treatment Providers, Family Members/ Individuals' Support System



### Resources

- Training on principles of effective intervention, Core Correctional Practices (CCP), Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision (STICS), Effective Practices for Correctional Supervision (EPICS), Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Rearrest (STARR), Carey Guides, Proactive Community Supervision (PCS), National Curriculum and Training's Complete Behavior Change System
- Group-based cognitive behavioral interventions such as Thinking for a Change, Moral Reconation Therapy, Aggression Replacement Therapy, Decision Points, and Reasoning & Rehabilitation

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](http://appa-net.org)

## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 10

# Influencing Behavior

Influencing behavior in the community supervision field requires officers and the agency to balance approaches that emphasize fairness, consistency and proportional responses. The following key takeaways outline how agencies can address compliance and non-compliance, how they can best use incentives, and legal requirements to consider when addressing violations.



### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Responses to behavior, whether positive or negative, should be fair, transparent, consistent and swift.
- ✓ Written policies should guide the use of responses to behavior – both incentives and sanctions. A graduated response matrix can help promote equitable responses across the agency.
- ✓ Responses to noncompliance should be proportional to the seriousness of the behavior and the current risk level at which the person is assessed.
- ✓ Agencies should engage with community supports to help integrate individuals on supervision back into their communities.
- ✓ If noncompliant behavior rises to a level of filing a violation of supervision – agencies must follow requirements set forth in federal and state case law.
- ✓ Agencies must provide written probable cause documentation to the individual when filing a violation, in advance of their hearing.
- ✓ Counsel must be provided to all indigent individuals in their violation hearings.
- ✓ When, and if violations have been sustained, alternatives to reincarceration should be considered if public safety allows.



### People

Supervision Staff, Judges, Parole Boards, Defense Attorneys/Public Defenders, Local Police/Sheriffs



### Resources

- Online trainings and [articles](#) on graduated sanctions/incentives matrices
- [Effective Responses to Offender Behavior: Lessons Learned for Probation and Parole Supervision](#)
- The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) [Incentives for Supervision Compliance](#)

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](http://appa-net.org)

## KEYS TO THE STANDARDS: STANDARD 11

# Performance Measurement

Effective performance measures help agencies to track and assess supervision outcomes and officer effectiveness. The results can help agencies improve positive practices and promote accountability for both officers and leadership. The following key takeaways outline how an agency can use performance measurements, what data to track, and what outcomes are aligned with public safety and long-term prosocial behavior change.



### Policy & Practice Considerations

- ✓ Agencies should establish a performance measurement system that tracks supervision activity (inputs) and outcomes.
- ✓ Standardized definitions of key measures should be created and used across the agency.
- ✓ The performance measurement system should track staff compliance and fidelity to agency policies and practices.
- ✓ Agencies should collect and assess data on recidivism, violations, revocation, and successful completion, or early discharge.
- ✓ Relative demographic information should also be collected and assessed such as sex, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic information, criminal record information, time on supervision, and other key factors.
- ✓ Agencies should support and engage in internal research relevant to their programs as well as research conducted by outside professionals.



### People

Supervision Staff | Research Partners



### Resources

- Conferences –meeting with other community supervision agencies to learn about their policies and practices
- [Practice Guidelines for Community Supervision](#), the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence, George Mason University

Learn More About the Standards: [appa-net.org](https://appa-net.org)