

Blue Ridge Court Services

*Working Smarter for Safer Communities in
The Central Shenandoah Valley*

Presented by The Office of Community Development



Mission

- *The mission of Blue Ridge Court Services is to provide research proven sentencing alternatives for the local criminal justice system in an effort to reduce jail overcrowding, enhance public safety and offer rehabilitative opportunities to local offender and pretrial populations in Staunton, Waynesboro, Lexington, Buena Vista and the Counties of Augusta, Rockbridge and Highland.*

Overview

- BRCS is a public non-profit organized under the umbrella of the City of Staunton
- City of Staunton acts as the fiscal agent
- Founded in 1995 as the result of Virginia's Comprehensive Community Corrections Act
- Provide an array of alternative sentencing options to the courts of Central Virginia...Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro, Highland, Lexington, Rockbridge and Buena Vista

Overview

- BRCS receives 2200 + new referrals annually
- Annual Budget of \$1,000,000
- Funded through grants from DCJS, Supreme Court, DBHDS, CAPSAW and Augusta Health
- Operations guided by the Blue Ridge Criminal Justice Board

Overview

- Staff of 15 local probation and pretrial officers who provide services for seven programs...
 - Local Probation
 - Pretrial Services
 - Drug Court
 - Home Electronic Monitoring
 - Domestic Violence
 - Therapeutic Docket
 - Re-entry Services

Local Probation

- Primary program offered by BRCS
- Offenders are placed on probation in lieu of serving a jail sentence
- Required to pay restitution, perform community service, or complete remedial programs
- 940 probation case referrals in FY 2019

Pretrial Services

- Two main purposes of pretrial
 1. Pretrial Investigations and risk assessments
 2. Pretrial supervision
- Goal is to reduce awaiting trial population at MRRJ
- 874 pretrial placements in FY 2019
- 1219 pretrial investigations in FY 2019

Drug Court

- Drug Court was founded in July 2002
- Meets every Thursday morning in SCC
- Multidisciplinary approach using incentives and sanctions to change behaviors
- Very intensive but very successful
- 80+ Graduates with a recidivism rate of 16.2%

Home Electronic Monitoring

- Targets appropriate defendants and offenders to serve their time at home instead of jail
- Allows offenders to keep jobs and support families
- Saves needed beds at MRRJ for higher risk defendants
- HEM saved 5,230 bed days in 2019 and \$447,000 in jail costs

Domestic Violence

- Targets those offenders from the JDR Courts involved in family assaults
- DV Team assesses the offender's risk and needs and places them into the appropriate treatment setting
- Vast majority participate in anger management or batterer's intervention groups
- 190 DV Placements in 2019

Therapeutic Docket

- Founded in July 2014 to target those offenders whose crimes were influenced by their mental illness
- Multidisciplinary team approach using incentives and sanctions to change behaviors
- Therapeutic docket held 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month
- 61 participants to date with 28 graduates

Re-entry Services

- Funded by a grant from CAPSAW
- Focus is to help MRRJ inmates successfully transition from jail into the community
- Re-entry staff assist these recently released individuals in getting jobs, better places to reside, transportation, food, clothing and connection with community resources
- Assisted 200 re-entry clients in 2019

For More Information

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