

Polk County Community Corrections  
**Justice Reinvestment Capacity Building**



*Increasing Justice Program Equity  
by Understanding Successes, Barriers, and Needs  
to Plan and Apply Responsive Strategies*

*Funded Through a Grant from  
The Oregon Criminal Justice Commission*

**Polk County Community Corrections Department  
November 2023**

## **Overview**

Polk County Community Corrections (PCCC) in partnership with its sister department, Family & Community Outreach (FCO) are collaborating to identify current resources as well as deficiencies/barriers for those clients involved with the criminal justice system in Polk County.

Late last fall, Polk County's Community Corrections (PCCC) Department received a grant of \$35,000 from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission to assess equity related issues, staff training needs and barriers. This assessment was designed to inform the development of an action plan with measurable outcomes. The intent was to look broadly at factors that may impact equity such as race and culture as well as education level, age, gender, primary language, family status, housing, and other variables. Generally, Polk County does not have large percentages of people of color or culture compared to more metropolitan areas of Oregon. However, understanding the impact of real or perceived bias related to all the identified factors is important to employing strategies that achieve more equitable outcomes in the system.

The project was designed and directed by the leadership of PCCC, Jodi Merritt, and Polk County FCO's Director, Brent DeMoe, along with an independent project manager (consultant). The project manager, Dave Guile, Sounds of Silence, Inc., has done considerable work with FCO in program analysis and training over the past 12 years. Jodi Merritt has been the Community Corrections Director in Polk County for six years and Brent DeMoe has led the Family & Community Outreach Department for thirteen years.

The following report identifies the planning processes and how input was gathered including the administration of a corrections' client survey which was administered in spring 2023. There were face-to-face interviews and focus groups, an officers' survey, and a justice partners survey to gain perceptions from various constituents. The report includes demographics and data gathered from these surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The data sets were analyzed using disaggregation factors and correlation factors. Key Findings for the various data sets are presented on pages 6,9,10,11,17,22,25,27,29,32,38 and 47. A compilation of those findings is at the end of the report on pages 50-53. The post-supervision client focus group comments are informative and presented on pages 32-34, but no specific findings are listed. A report summary is available on pages 47-48. The action plan is presented on page 48-49.

## **Increasing Justice Program Equity by Understanding Successes, Barriers, and Needs**

### **Project Planning and Processes**

In summer 2022, the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission through the Justice Reinvestment Act announced the opportunity for Oregon counties to apply for a capacity building grant. Polk County Community Corrections (PCCC) in conjunction with the Family & Community Outreach (FCO) Department completed a grant application and submitted it in September 2022. Notification of a successful application was received in October 2022. The application had two main goals:

1. Develop survey tools and conduct interviews and focus groups for the following:
  - a. Staff and leaders who work for agencies/organizations that serve those currently involved with the criminal justice system and
  - b. current and former clients involved in the criminal justice system.
2. Data and information will be gathered to assess what is working well and what could be improved. This process will include considerations for aspects such as race, gender, ethnicity, housed or unhoused status, language, disability, and other variables.

Once the grant funding was in place, a consultant was employed to develop the necessary data gathering tools to implement the grant. The consultant also provided suggested timelines and processes to ensure confidential and timely information leading to a final report including key findings to inform the development of an action plan by PCCC. The consultant provided the following definitions to be used during this process:

### **Working Definitions and Descriptions**

**Cultural Competence:** Having the knowledge and tact to understand people and treat them equitably despite cultural differences (which may result in very different views about what is expected or appropriate in a particular situation).

**Culturally Responsive Services:** means services that have been adapted to maximize the respect of and relevance to the beliefs, practices, culture and linguistic needs of the diverse client populations and communities being served, including clients and communities of color.

**Disparate Actions or Outcomes:** When a client is treated differently or has a very different outcome based on a variable or demographic aspect as compared to the general client population and those with very similar case descriptions.

**Clients:** Adult persons currently in the Community Corrections Parole and Probation system

**Officers:** The nine current parole/probation officers working in Community Corrections

**Administrators:** The three supervisors/leaders in Community Corrections

**Justice System Partners:** Includes law enforcement, judicial, mental health, social service, and government leaders, employees and volunteers

The following variables were also suggested to guide the development of surveys for clients and corrections' officers.

### **Variables and Demographic Aspects of the Study**

1. Race
2. Gender
3. Ethnicity
4. Housed or unhoused
5. Primary language
6. Disability
7. Technology access opportunities – i.e. virtual vs face to face
8. Transportation needs
9. Educational background
10. Length of time in parole/probation system
11. Number of parole/probation violations in previous 6 months
12. Employment Status

The consultant also recommended incentivizing client participation. The corrections director agreed to provide a \$25 gift card (limited to 1 per client) for those that completed the survey. No incentives were provided to employees for their participation. The survey participation rate was just over 24% of all adult clients in Polk County under supervision by PCCC officers.

Prior to conducting the client survey, the consultant conducted a focus group with three people who had successfully completed their supervision period in Polk County. The consultant also interviewed the three supervisors (leadership) in Polk County Community Corrections. The purpose of these activities was to ensure that the breadth of information gathering was sufficient and to learn from their experiences what they perceived were barriers for clients, gaps in services and successful practices. Internet research was conducted to discover what other counties both within the state and in other states were doing to help improve outcomes for people on supervision.

Once these activities were completed the PCCC officers and the PCCC client surveys were developed and made available to their respective audiences.

### **Surveys**

The PCCC officers' survey was conducted from February 28 to March 9, 2023. All nine officers completed a survey. The officers' survey included seven demographic questions, fourteen barriers questions, four accessing services questions, eleven corrections department/officers activities questions, two resources available/gaps questions, one personal safety questions, and one disparate treatment/outcomes question.

The client survey was offered on-line and in English between March 28 and May 5. There were 114 respondents that completed the survey, a 24% response rate when compared to the total client caseload. The client survey included: fourteen demographic questions, fourteen barriers questions, thirteen accessing services questions, eight corrections department/officers activities questions, eight personal parole/probation questions, seven resources available/gaps questions, two personal safety questions, two technology-use questions, and one disparate treatment/outcomes question.

Follow-up focus group meetings were held for the officers (April 11, 2023) and for unhoused clients (May 24, 2023). At the officers’ meeting clarifying questions related to personal safety, training, and departmental operations were discussed. At the meeting with unhoused clients the focus was on health and basic needs/barriers. An officers/administrators’ work session was held on August 1, 2023 to review the initial data and discuss possible next steps and action plan elements.

It was decided to interview and survey Polk County justice partners and interested community leaders and members. Interviews and an on-line survey were conducted in September and October to solicit input from various stakeholder groups and individuals.

In November, an action plan was developed and reviewed by Community Corrections and Family & Community Outreach leaders and key staff. The report and action plan will be presented to the County Commissioners and submitted to the Criminal Justice Commission.

Principal survey demographic data charts and graphs follow here.

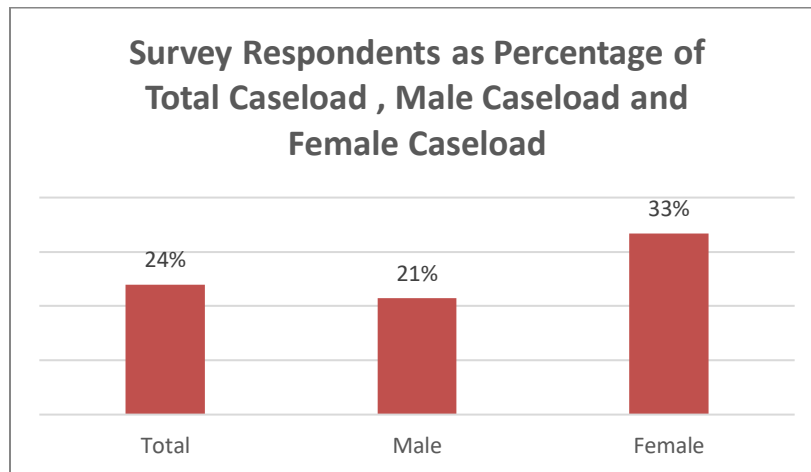
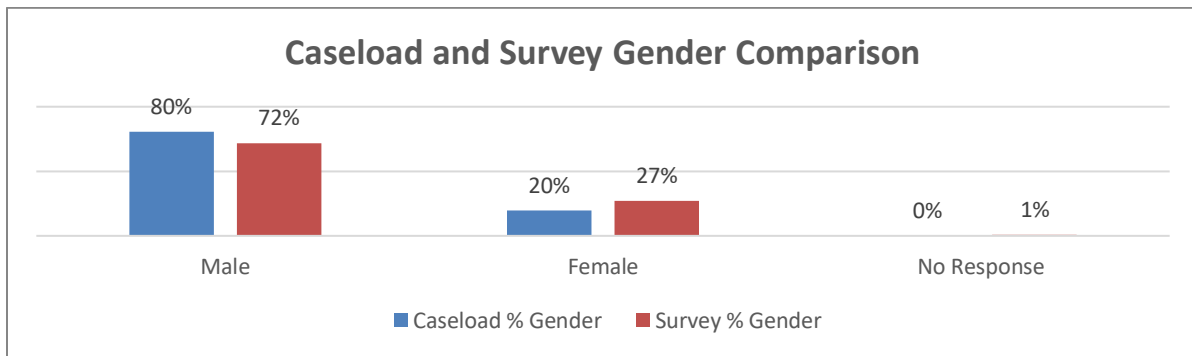
## **I. Survey Respondents (Clients), Corrections Officers and Administrators Demographics**

### **Client Survey Response Data**

	<b>Polk County Corrections Caseload (May 2023)</b>	<b>Caseload Gender Percentage (May 2023)</b>	<b>Client Survey Respondents (April-May 2023)</b>	<b>Percentage of Caseload Respondents</b>
<b>Total</b>	476	100%	114	24%
<b>Male</b>	383	80%	82	21%
<b>Female</b>	93	20%	31	33%
<b>No Response</b>	0	0%	1	0%

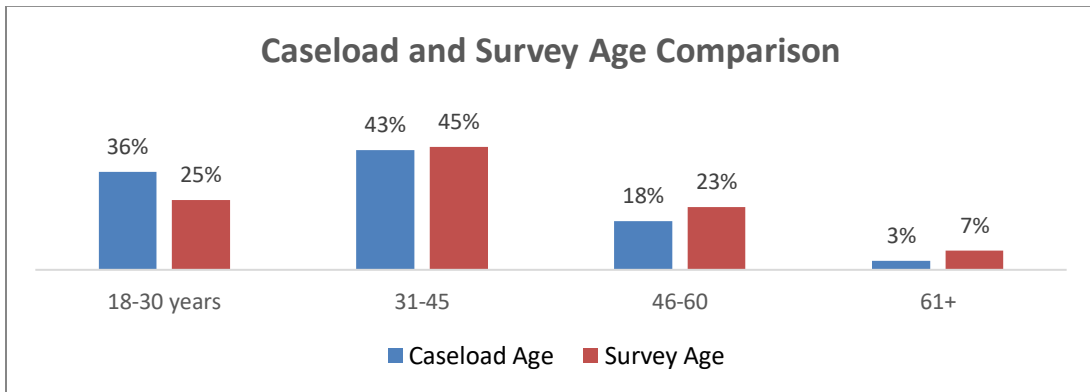
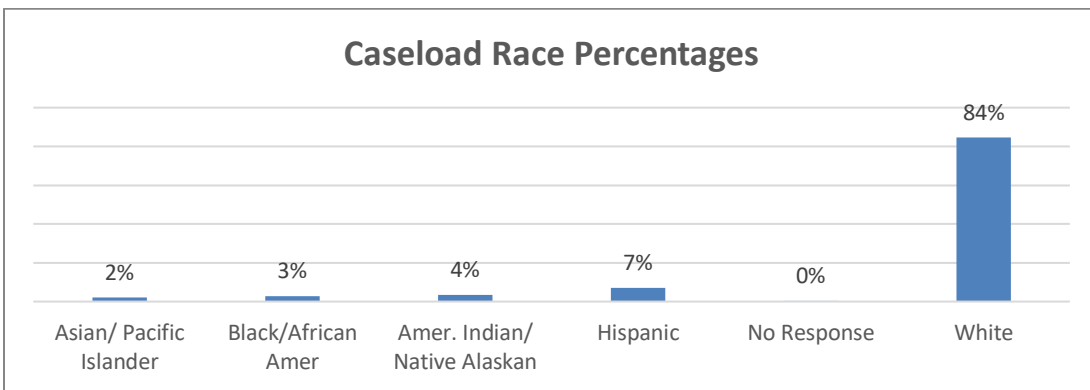
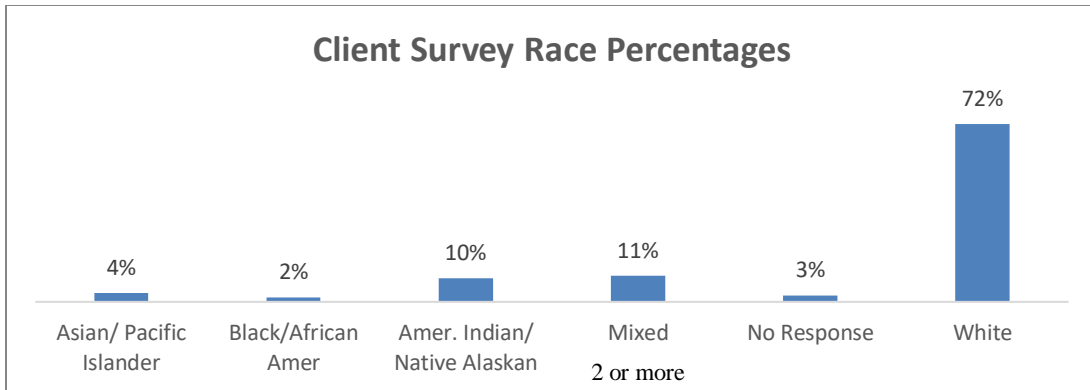
## Client Age Data

Age	Caseload Number	Percentage	Survey Number	Survey Percentage
<b>18-30</b>	175	37%	29	25%
<b>31-45</b>	199	42%	50	44%
<b>46-60</b>	85	18%	27	24%
<b>61+</b>	18	4%	8	7%



<b>Percent of Survey Respondents Identifying as LGBTQ+</b>	<b>11%</b>
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Caseload Hispanic	Percent Survey Hispanic	Note: The survey questions allow for a separate answer for Hispanic while the data from corrections has Hispanic as a race choice and is not separate.
<b>7%</b>	<b>20%</b>	



**Findings: Client Survey Response**

- 1. Females had a higher response rate than males (33% compared to 21%), though males account for 80% of the caseload in Polk County.**
- 2. 7% of the caseload identified as Hispanic while 20% of the survey respondents identified as Hispanic. However, Hispanic identity was separate from the race question on the survey, while the Corrections Department collects Hispanic as a race.**

3. **10% of the client survey respondents identified as American Indian or Native Alaskan, but only 4% of the caseload identifies in the same fashion.**
4. **White respondents underrepresented on the survey at 72%, though they account for 84% of the caseload.**
5. **11% of the client survey respondents identified as LGBTQ+.**
6. **The age distribution of survey respondents was fairly similar to the caseload data though the age 18–30 year-olds were underrepresented on the survey.**

### **Additional Client Survey Demographics Follow**

<b>Do You Receive Disability Benefits</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Do You Have a Cell Phone</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	7%	Yes	89%
No	92%	No	11%
No Response	1%	No Response	1%

<b>English as Primary Language</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Daily Access to Internet</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	98%	Yes	85%
No	1%	Sometimes	6%
No Response	1%	No	9%

<b>Employment</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Full or Almost Full Time	48%	Did Not Complete HS	19%
Part Time	11%	Graduated HS	51%
Temporary	2%	Trade School or Comm. College	15%
Unemployed	39%	Graduated College	15%
Receive benefits	17%		

<b>Veterans</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Have Family Living in Polk Co</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	11%	Yes	83%
No	89%	No	15%
		No Response	2%

<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Where Currently Living</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Own a Car	47%	Rental or Apartment	39%
Family/Friends Give a Ride	19%	With Friend or Relative for Free	22%
Mostly Walk	10%	Unhoused	19%



Borrow a Car	6%	Own house	18%
Bus	3%	RV	2%
Bike	1%		
Varies: Bike, Bus, Walk, Ride	14%		

<b>How Long Living in Polk County</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>First Time on Parole/Probation</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 1 year	15%	Yes	46%
1-2 Years	14%	No, but first in Polk County	15%
3-5 Years	21%	No	38%
5 or more years	50%	No Response	1%

<b>How Long on Supervision</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Convicted of:</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0-2 Months	14%	Misdemeanor	28%
3-6 Months	19%	Felony	16%
7-12 Months	25%	Both	56%
More than 1 Year	38%		
Lifelong Supervision	4%		

<b>Same Parole Officer</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number of Sanctions – All</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	41%	None	74%
No	58%	1	14%
No response	1%	2 or 3	5%
		More than 3	7%

<b>Having None or 1 Sanction</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White	84%
Two or More Races	88%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	95%
Hispanic	91%

### **Community Corrections Officers/Administrators Demographic Data**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Administrators</b>
Female	5	1	18-30 Years Old	3	0
Male	4	2	31-45 Years old	3	1
			46-60 Years Old	3	2

			61+ Years Old	0	0
<b>Race or Culture</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Administrators</b>			
Asian	0	0	<b>Identify as:</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Administrators</b>
Black	0	0	LGBTQ+	0	0
Hispanic	3	0			
American Indian/Native Alaskan	0	0			
White	5	3			
Unlisted	1	0			
<b>Years Employed in Corrections</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Years Employed in Polk County</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Administrators</b>
0-2 Years	2	0	0-2 Years	2	0
3-5 Years	1	0	3-5 Years	1	0
6-10 Years	1	0	6-10 Years	1	2
11+ Years	5	3	11+ Years	5	1

**Findings: Survey Respondents (Client) Demographic**

1. 98% had English as their primary language.
2. 15% had limited or no access to the Internet on a regular basis.
3. 89% reported having a cell phone
4. 46% reported this was their first time on probation or parole
5. 83% reported having family in Polk County
6. 58% had been under supervision for less than a year.
7. 58% reported having a different parole officer from when they started
8. 72% had been convicted a felony
9. 47% reported having their own car
10. 49% were employed at least part-time
11. 19% had not completed a high school education
12. Less than 17% of any race/culture identity reported a sanction by their parole officer
13. Whites had the highest reporting percentage of sanctions at 16%

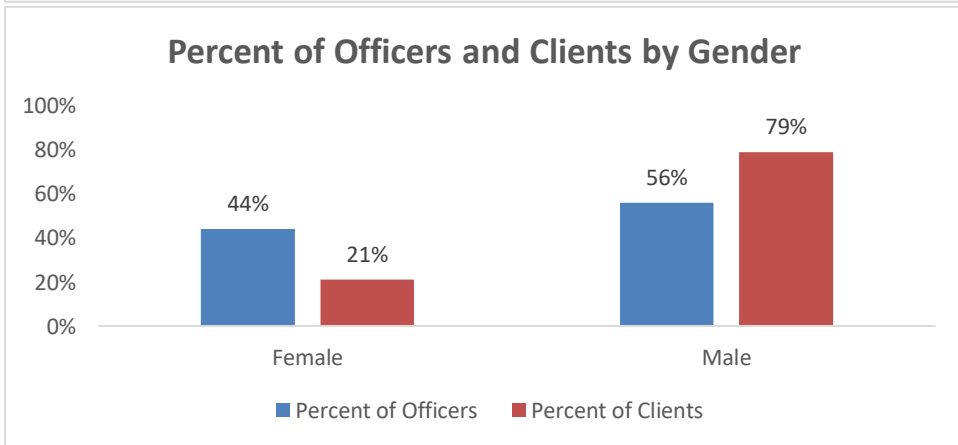
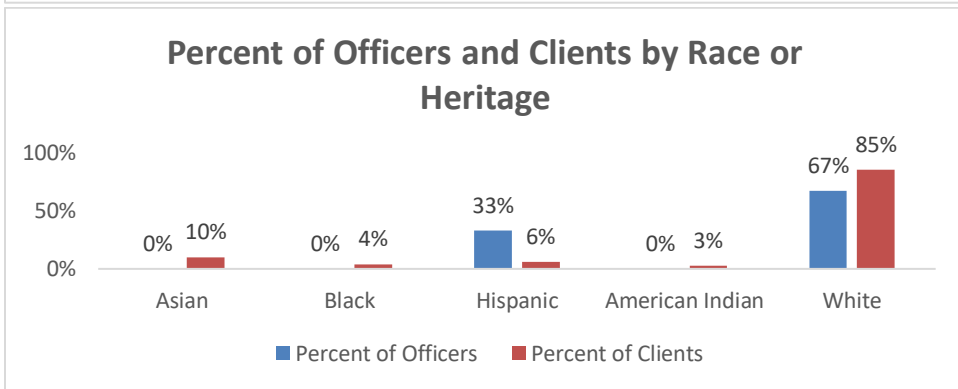
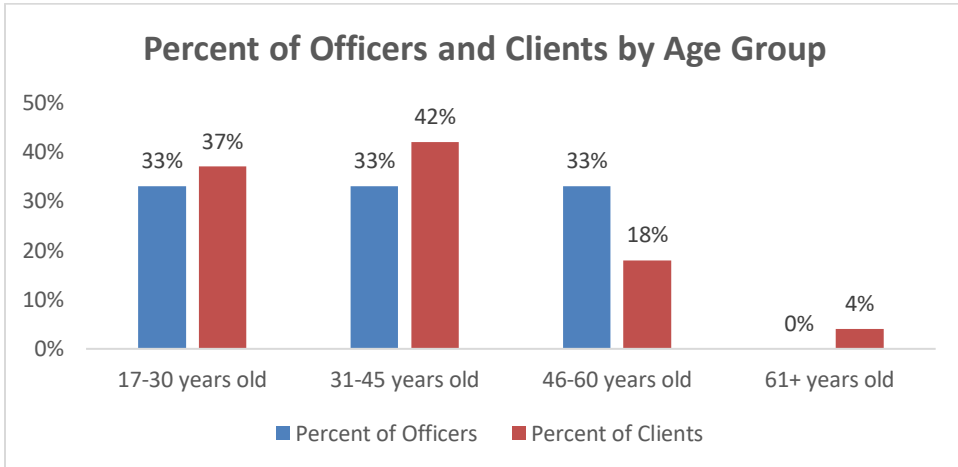
**Findings: Officers' Demographic**

1. The percentage of officers/administrators is gender and age balanced
2. 25% of parole officers/administrators identify as Hispanic
3. There is balance in experience with over 50% exceeding five years in corrections work

**Findings: Administrators' Demographic**

- 1. All administrators identified as white
- 2. Each administrator had over ten years of experience in corrections work
- 3. There is gender balance: one female and two male administrators

**Officer and Client Demographic Comparisons  
March 2023: 9 Officers and 489 Clients Represented**



**Findings: Officer/Client Comparison**

1. Client diversity is not matched by officer demographics except for Hispanic
2. Percent of female officers is double the percent of female clients

**II. Barriers Clients Face to Successfully Completing Corrections Supervision**

**Client Identified Barriers to Successfully Completing Supervision**

**Percent of Total Survey (Yes or Sometimes) in Rank Order**

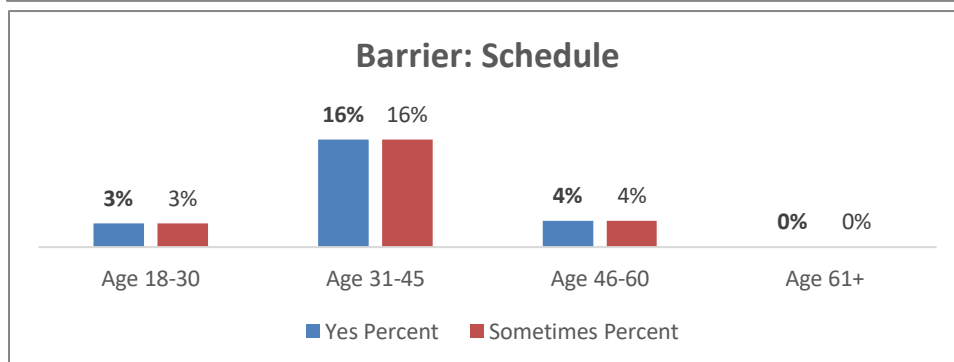
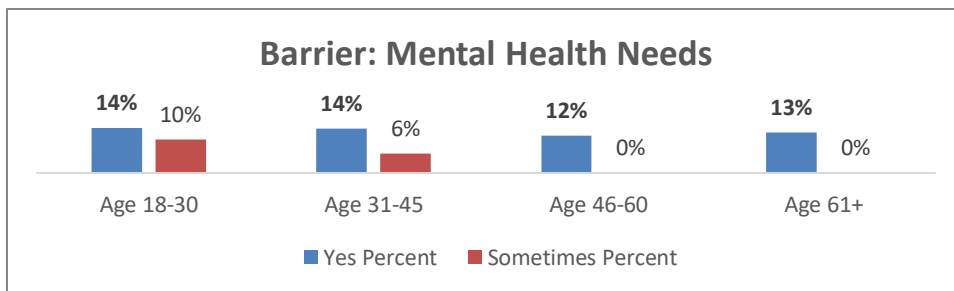
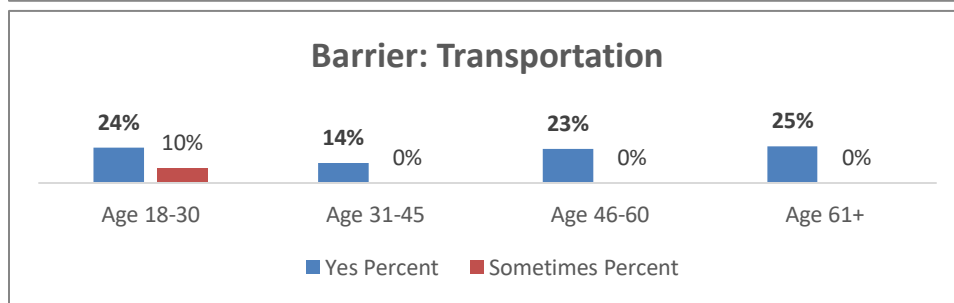
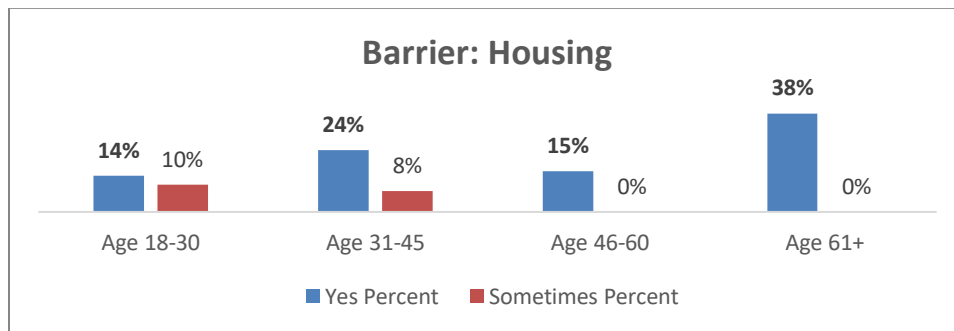
Stress	36%
Cost of basic necessities	32%
Transportation	32%
Knowing how to ask for help	31%
Housing	26%
Employment	23%
Knowing how to access resources	23%
Schedule	21%
Mental Health Needs	18%
Drugs or Alcohol	10%
My Commitment	8%
Child Care	5%

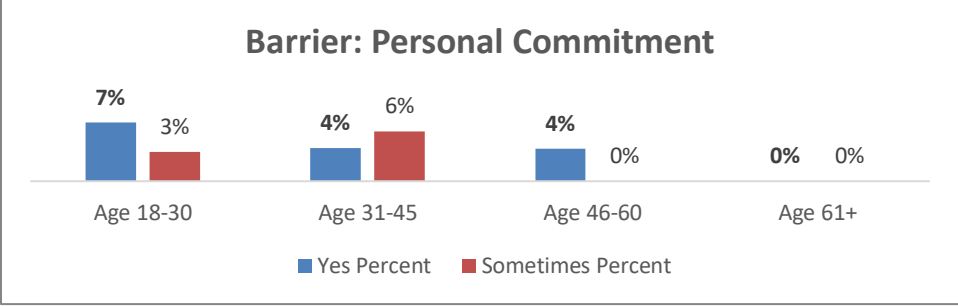
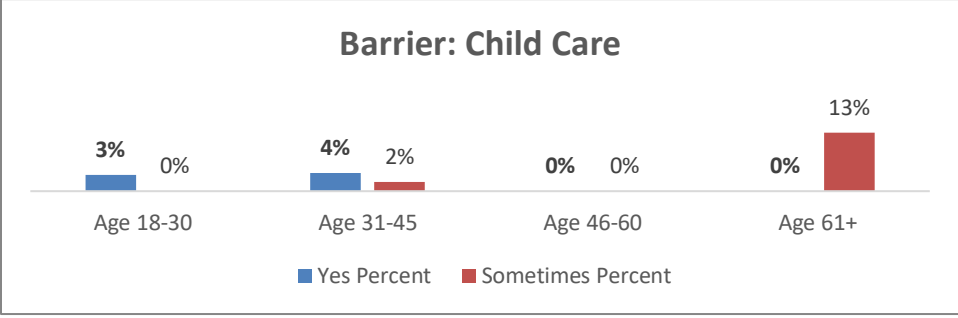
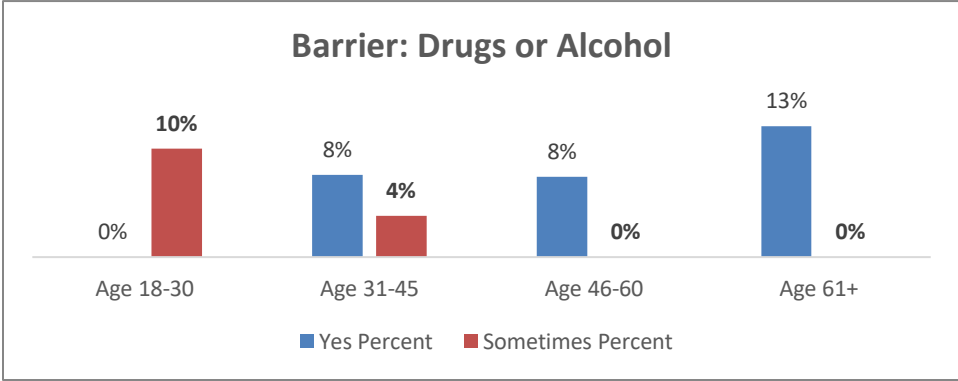
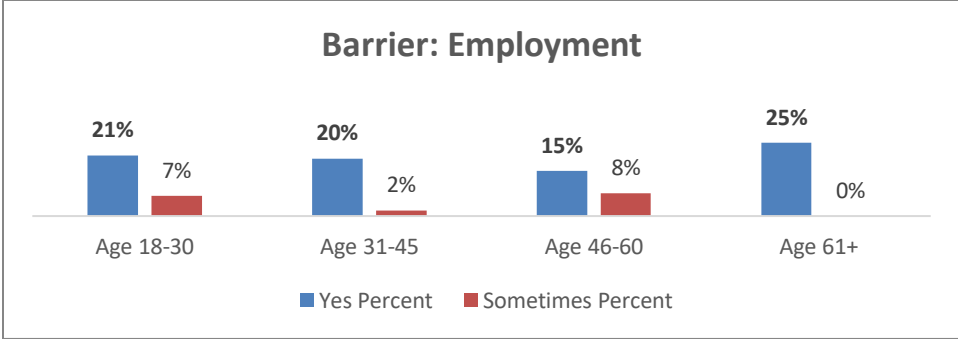
**Client Survey All Respondents: Barriers Percent (Yes or Sometimes)**

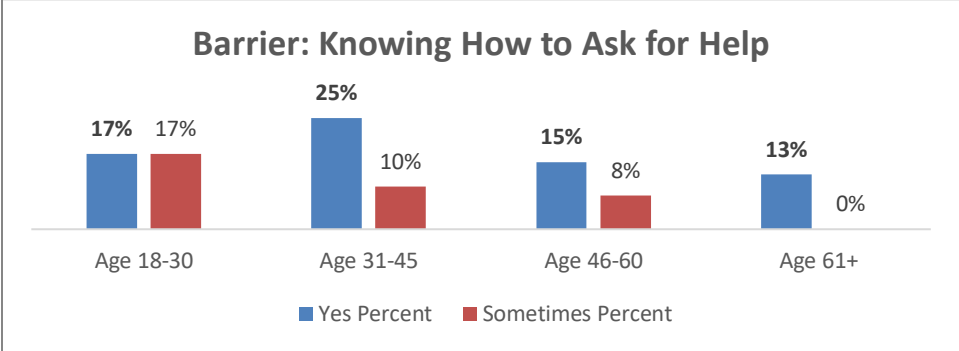
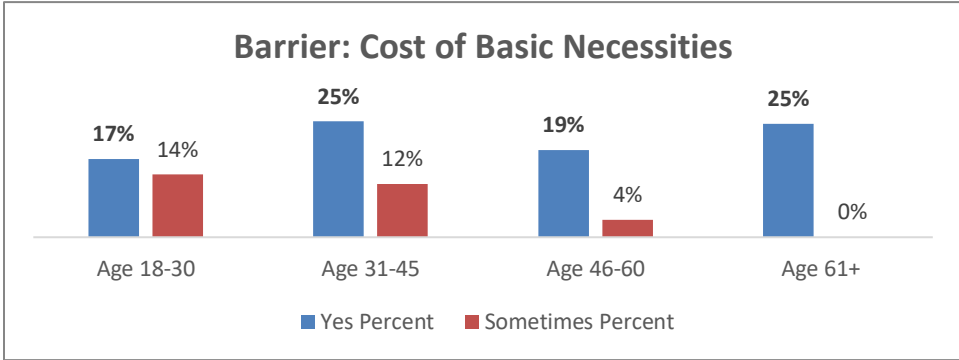
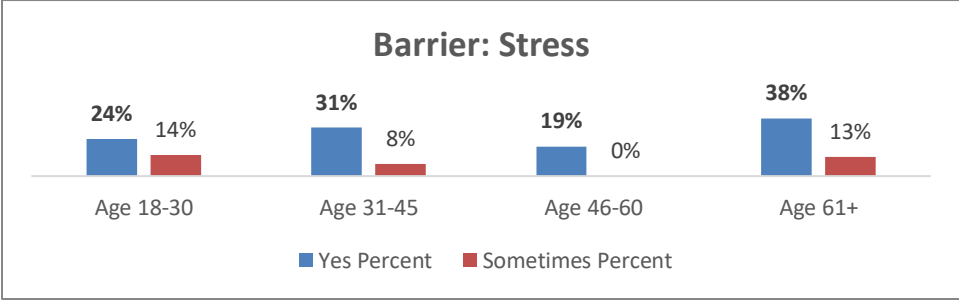
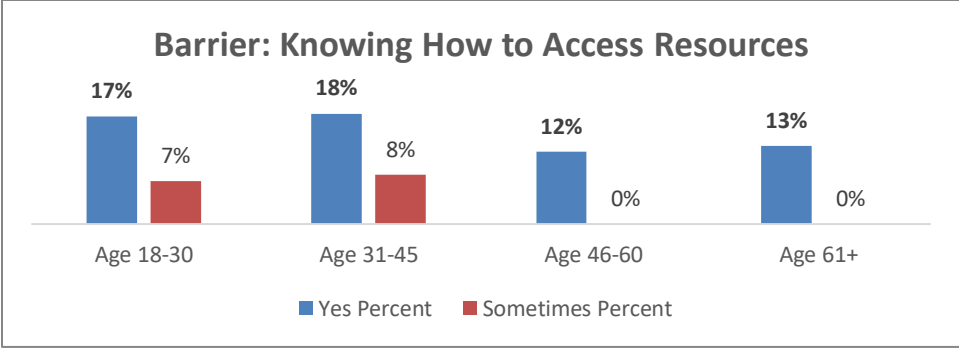
	Housing	Transportation	Mental Health Needs	Schedule
Yes	20%	25%	13%	12%
Sometimes	6%	7%	5%	9%
	Employment	Drugs or Alcohol	Child Care	My Commitment
Yes	19%	6%	3%	4%
Sometimes	4%	4%	2%	4%

	Knowing how to access resources	Stress	Cost of basic necessities	Knowing how to ask others for help
Yes	17%	27%	22%	20%
Sometimes	6%	9%	10%	11%

**Client Identified Barriers (Yes or Sometimes) by Age**







**Client Identified Barriers (Yes or Sometimes) by Race/Culture**

**Note 1: The respondent numbers for Black/African American and Asian were fewer than 5 and are not portrayed to protect the identity of respondents)**

**Note 2: Hispanic identity is separate from the race question**

<b>Race/Culture</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Mental Health Needs</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
White	28%	38%	16%	27%
Two or More	33%	33%	17%	25%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	18%	0%	18%	0%
Hispanic	22%	26%	17%	13%
Total All	26%	32%	18%	21%
<b>Race/Culture</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Drugs or Alcohol</b>	<b>Child Care</b>	<b>My Commitment</b>
White	27%	15%	5%	11%
Two or More	33%	17%	0%	8%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	18%	0%	9%	9%
Hispanic	26%	4%	4%	4%
Total All	23%	10%	5%	8%
<b>Race/Culture</b>	<b>Knowing how to access resources</b>	<b>Stress</b>	<b>Cost of basic necessities</b>	<b>Knowing how to ask for help</b>
White	26%	41%	39%	34%
Two or More	25%	25%	25%	8%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0%	36%	27%	27%
Hispanic	13%	22%	26%	26%



### Highest Rated Client Barriers by Age and Race/Culture

Age	1 <sup>st</sup> Highest Barrier	2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest Barrier
18-30 years	Stress (38%)	Knowing how to ask for help (34%)
31-45 years	Stress (39%)	Cost of necessities (37%)
46-60 years	Cost of necessities (23%)	Knowing how to ask for help (23%)
61+ years	Stress (51%)	Cost of necessities and Employment (25%)
Race/Culture	1 <sup>st</sup> Highest Barrier	2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest Barrier
White	Stress (41%)	Cost of necessities (39%)
Two or more races	Employment and Transportation (33%)	Housing (33%)
American Indian or Native Alaskan	Stress (36%)	Knowing how to ask for help and Cost of necessities (27%)
Hispanic	Employment and Transportation (26%)	Cost of necessities and Knowing how to ask for help (26%)

### Officers' Rating of Barriers for Their Caseload Clients

The community corrections officers were asked to rate the barriers their clients face on a scale of 1-5. The following graph is the average rating by the nine officers. Officer responses indicate the significance of each barrier, while the client responses indicate how a particular barrier applied to them. Lack of family support was noted as a barrier by some officers in their written comments.



## Administrators' Perception of Client Barriers

*What barriers do Community Corrections clients face to successfully completing their supervision period with few or no sanctions?*

- Housing
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Employment needs
- Child Care
- Hygiene
- Basic life skills
- Desire/Accountability
- Transportation

### **Findings: Barriers**

1. *Stress* was identified by the highest percentage of clients (36%) while officers rated it ninth highest
2. *Housing* and *access to transportation* were rated highly by clients and officers
3. *Cost of basic necessities* was the second highest rated barrier by clients while officers identified it as the tenth highest barrier
4. *Mental health needs* were rated highly (tied for first) by officers, but was one of the lower percentages (18%) by client respondents
5. Administrators identified similar barriers, but these were unranked in the focus group
6. Access to drugs and alcohol was rated fourth highest by officers but was 10<sup>th</sup> highest rated by client survey respondents
7. Employment was a highly-rated barrier for Hispanic clients and for those of two or more races

### **III. Resources, Services, Programs and Safety**

#### **Client View of Need for More Access to Resources and Services**

##### **Client Respondents: Percent Yes**

<b>Helping Pay Rent, Utilities, Etc.</b>	<b>Helping Find Resources</b>	<b>Transportation Access</b>	<b>Food Bank/Food Assistance</b>
48%	39%	37%	32%
<b>Activities for Kids/Families</b>	<b>Child Care</b>	<b>Public Access to Computers</b>	
30%	21%	26%	

#### **How Clients Learn About Available Services and Resources**

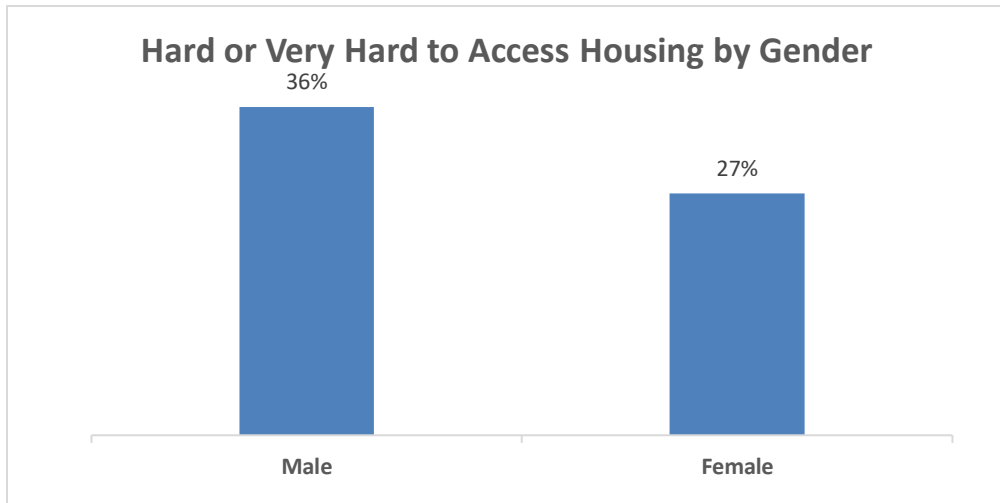
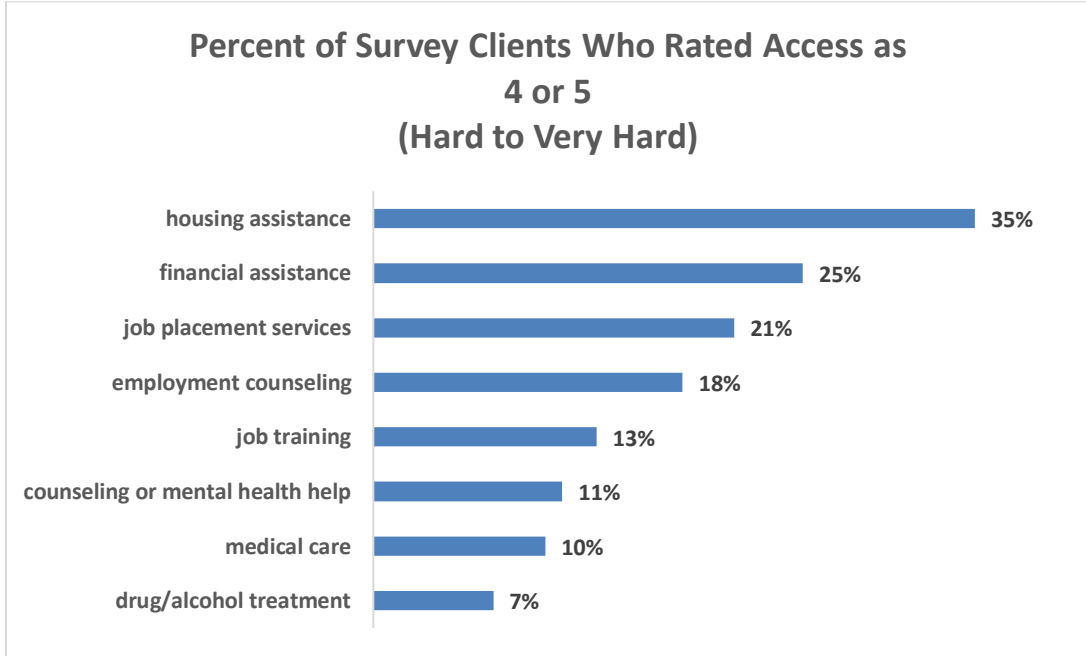
**Eighty-one survey respondents provided answers to the following question:**

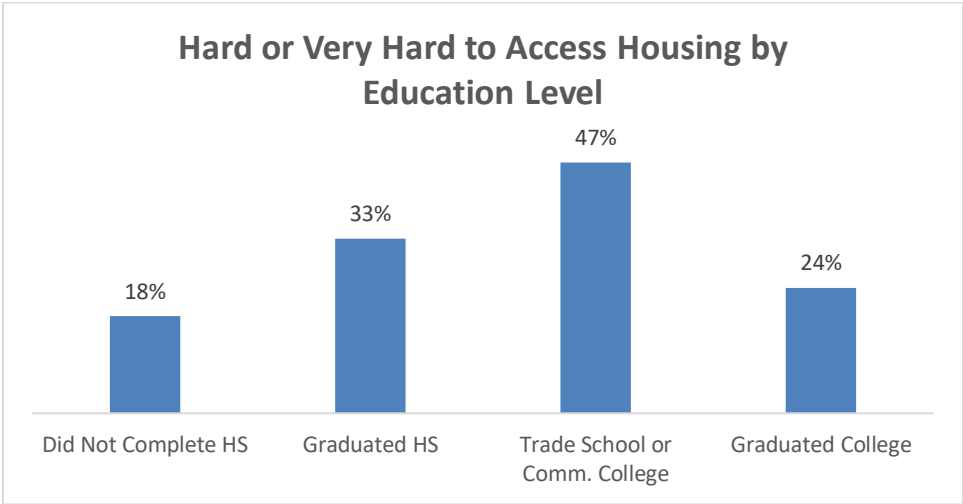
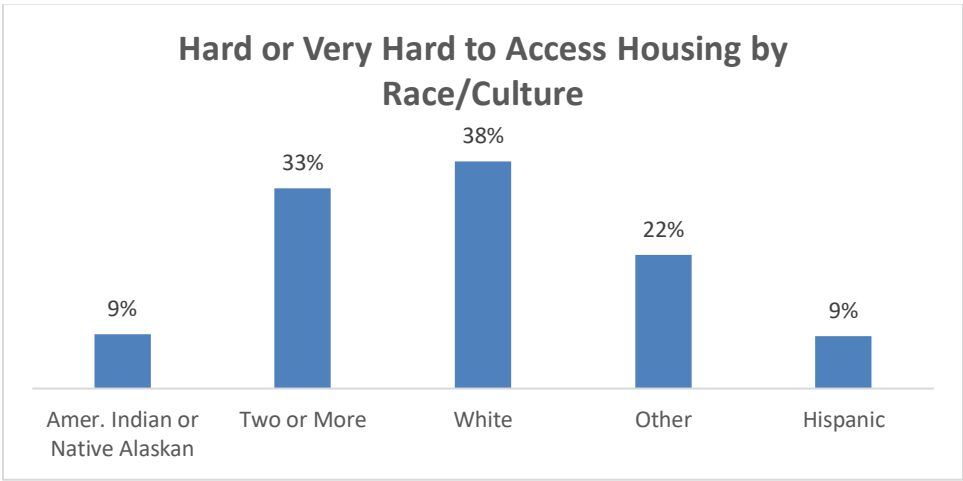
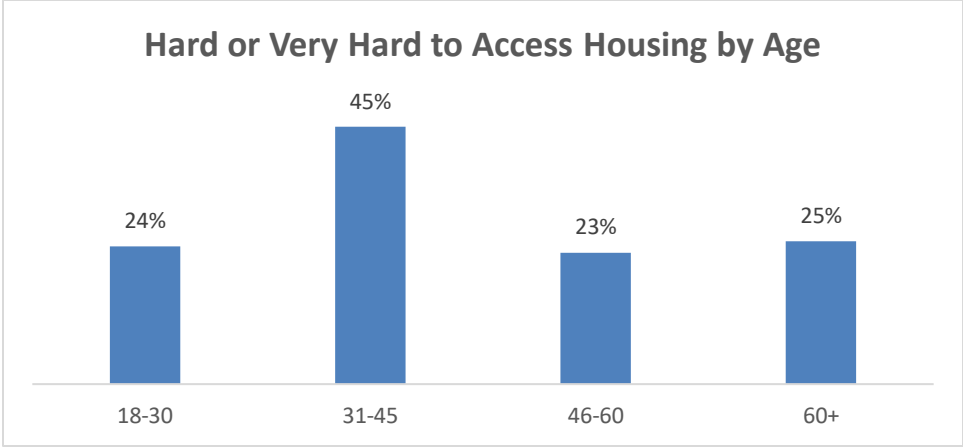
*How do you find out about services or resources in Polk County? Please list top 2 or 3 ways. For example, social media or newspaper or friends or Polk County offices or flyer/posters or??*

<b>How learn about services or resources</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Parole officers	22
Social media	19
Family and Community Outreach/Academy Building/ Polk County offices	18
Family and friends or word-of-mouth	17
Personal research	12
Poster/Flyers	5
Do not need resources	5
Counselor	3
Polk County Behavioral Health	3
Newspaper	2
Doctor/Hospital	2
Work Source Oregon	2
DHS	2
RoCC Day Shelter	1
Family Building Blocks	1
From my workplace	1
From the State	1
Calling 211	1

**Client Perception of Program and Service Access Ease**

*On a scale of 1 (easy) to 5 (very hard) rate: How easy is it to access each of the following in Polk County?*





**Officers’ Perception of Helpful Programs and Services**

***What current county or community programs or services best help your clients to meet their supervision requirements?***

Polk County Resource Center has been huge! Bus tickets, food boxes, backpacks, clothing items. A lot of my folks get out after a rather long stint in prison and they have nothing here. I also utilize the ROCC center as much as I can. We have 2 therapists from PCBH dedicated to us and they have an office in our office. I also utilize WorkSource and Goodwill Job Connections.
Polk County Behavioral Health (6 officers listed PCBH). PCBH has had a huge impact on our clients. The mentors and counselors they work with there seem to have a great impact and rapport building skill. Some of our Behavioral Health counselors seem as though they are very hands on.
Clients I have had with peer support express the benefits and appreciation of this program once they are open to the idea.
Housing assistance, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, case planning.
Alcohol and drug help, mental health work, anger management

**Administrators’ Perception of Helpful Programs and Services**

***What current county or community programs or services best help clients to meet their supervision requirements?***

- Family and Community Outreach programs
- Polk County Behavioral Health
- ROCC – Recovery Outreach Community Center
- Resource navigators/connectors

**Client Perception of Safety and Treatment in Polk County**

**Note 1: The respondent numbers for Black/African American and Asian were fewer than 5 and are not portrayed to protect the identity of respondents**

**Note 2: Hispanic identity is separate from the race question**

**All Client Respondents**

	<i>Do you feel safe in Polk County?</i>	<i>Do you feel fairly treated in Polk County?</i>
Yes	73%	71%
Somewhat	20%	18%
No	8%	11%

**Client Perception of Safety by Race/Culture**

*Do you feel safe in Polk County?*

	<b>White</b>	<b>2 or More Races</b>	<b>American Indian/ Native Alaskan</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Yes	72%	75%	56%	73%
Somewhat	18%	25%	33%	23%
No	9%	0%	11%	5%
# of Respondents	76	16	9	22

**Client Perception of Treatment by Race/Culture**

*Do you feel fairly treated in Polk County?*

	<b>White</b>	<b>2 or More Races</b>	<b>American Indian/ Native Alaskan</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Yes	69%	88%	50%	78%
Somewhat	18%	6%	38%	17%
No	13%	6%	13%	4%
# of Respondents	78	16	8	23

**Findings: Resources, Programs, Services and Safety**

1. Clients identified housing/financial help, finding resources and transportation as the highest program or service needs
2. Clients learned of resources through a variety of sources led by parole officers, social media, Family and Community Outreach and other Polk County offices
3. Officers and administrators recognized the importance to client success of county programs including behavioral health, resource navigators and Recovery Outreach Community Center
4. Over 70% of clients reported feeling safe and being fairly treated in Polk County, with approximately 10% of clients identifying they do not feel safe or fairly treated.
5. A higher percentage of respondents identifying as American Indian/Native Alaskan felt less safe than other races/cultures
6. A higher percentage of respondents identifying as American Indian/Native Alaskan did not feel treated fairly compared to other races/cultures

## IV. Community Corrections Elements

### Client Perception of Community Corrections Elements

Note 1: The respondent numbers for Black/African American and Asian were fewer than 5 and are not portrayed to protect the identity of respondents)

Note 2: Hispanic identity is separate from the race question

#### All Client Respondents

	<i>Are there enough staff/officers for the work Community Corrections does?</i>	<i>Are the staff/officers in Community Corrections knowledgeable and well trained?</i>	<i>Do the staff/officers in Community Corrections understand and respect people from different cultures or backgrounds?</i>	<i>Do you feel listened to and understood by your Corrections Officer?</i>	<i>Are your concerns addressed by your Corrections Officer?</i>
<b>Yes</b>	48%	72%	69%	87%	80%
<b>Somewhat</b>	6%	6%	7%	9%	7%
<b>Unsure</b>	42%	19%	21%	2%	6%
<b>No</b>	4%	4%	3%	2%	6%

### Client Perception of Understanding and Respect of People by Race/Culture

*Do the staff/officers in Community Corrections understand and respect people from different cultures and backgrounds?*

	<b>White</b>	<b>2 or More Races</b>	<b>American Indian or Native Alaskan</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
<b>Yes</b>	72%	75%	50%	74%
<b>Somewhat</b>	2%	19%	25%	9%
<b>Unsure</b>	23%	0%	25%	13%
<b>No</b>	2%	6%	0%	4%
<b>Respondents</b>	81	16	8	23



## Client Perception of Case Planning by Race/Culture

*How much input did you have into building your case plan?*

	White	2 or more races	American Indian or Native Alaskan	Hispanic
A lot	45%	38%	0%	35%
Some	35%	44%	83%	57%
Not much	13%	19%	17%	4%
None	8%	0%	0%	4%
Respondents	80	16	6	23

## Client Perception of Meeting Time to Resolve Issues by Race/Culture

*When you meet with your corrections officers, do you have enough time to deal with any issues or concerns you have?*

	White	2 or more races	American Indian or Native Alaskan	Hispanic
Yes, always	76%	88%	88%	78%
Yes, usually	18%	12%	12%	13%
Seldom	4%	0%	0%	9%
Never	2%	0%	0%	0%
Respondents	82	16	8	23

## Client Perception of Sanction Appropriateness by Race and Culture

**Note 1:** The respondent numbers for Black/African American and Asian were fewer than 5 and are not portrayed to protect the identity of respondents

**Note 2:** Hispanic identity is separate from the race question

*On a scale of 1 (very unfair) to 5 (very appropriate) how would you rate:  
The appropriateness of sanctions in Polk County's Community Corrections department?*

Race or Culture	Average	Number of Responses	Response Percent
White	3.66	70	85%
Two or more	3.50	12	75%
Amer Indian or Native Alaskan	3.63	8	73%
Hispanic	3.50	22	91%

**Findings: Client Perceptions of Community Corrections**

1. 96% of clients generally felt listened to and understood by their parole officer with 87% feeling their concerns at least somewhat addressed
2. American Indian/Alaskan Native clients felt less sure if community corrections staff and officers understood and respect people from different backgrounds or cultures
3. 82% to 92% of each race/culture indicated they had *some* or *a lot* of input into their case plan
4. 91% to 100% of each race/culture indicated they had enough time with their parole officer to address concerns or issues
5. Clients generally felt that sanctions in Community Corrections were appropriate and there were no significant differences by race/culture in the ratings

**Officers' Ratings of Community Corrections Program Elements**  
*On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent:*  
*Rate each of the following in Polk County:*



**Administrators’ Ratings of Community Corrections Program Elements**

*On a scale of 1-5 rate each of the following (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree)*

- There are sufficient staff for the work that Community Corrections does (4)
- Staff within Community Corrections are knowledgeable and well-trained (4)
- Community Corrections staff understand and respect others from different cultures or backgrounds (4)
- Client sanctions are appropriate and effective (3.66)

**Administrators’ Perception of What Works Well in Community Corrections**

- Good rapport with clients and staff
- Know the clients well
- Experienced officers
- Low turn-over of employees
- Good management/leadership
- Quality of life and flexibility in work including personal days
- Community and program value family
- People oriented approach
- Resource partners (other depts.)

**Officers’ Perception of Sanctions Available**

**Each box is one officer’s response on their individual survey**

***What do you think about the sanctions currently available to utilize with clients when needed?***

We have somewhat limited sanctions which occasionally pose difficult situations to react to aside from jail or community service work. More options available would be helpful such as GPS or alcohol bands.
They are good, We have alternative options available to us. GPS may be beneficial.
Appropriate
Feel it is basic as there are some alternatives not offered. Sometimes it appears that it is expected that certain clients are to receive a certain type of sanction that doesn’t necessarily match with the violations
At times they feel too short.
Adequate

I think the sanctions we have are appropriate. I'm relatively new still to this type of work, therefore, I haven't fully explored every sanction we utilize for our clients. From my understanding and what I have witnessed I think our community service program is extremely efficient and I enjoy seeing that being utilized as a sanction.

Now that the jail is lodging again, it's nice to know it's an option. However, it's rarely the first option. We try working with them on tools to address their behavior.

## Findings: Officers' and Administrators' Perception of Community Corrections

1. Officers' and administrators' views on community correction elements are similar; viewing the number of staff and being well-trained are program strengths, while available sanctions and available treatment programs scored slightly lower
2. Administrators identified their officers as knowing their clients well, having good rapport within the program and having experienced officers and low turn-over as strengths
3. Both officers and administrators thought that additional sanction options, like having GPS monitoring when needed for a client, would be helpful

### Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

The DPSST certifies/licenses police officers, corrections officers, parole and probation officers, and other criminal justice positions. The corrections officers training requirements are:

- Annual Training Requirements
  - 8 hours Use of Force or Firearms training
  - 1 hour Ethics training
- 3-year Training Requirements
  - 3 hours Equity training (required for those completing the 2023 three-year maintenance cycle.)
    - The Equity training must include at least one of the following concepts:
      - Increasing awareness and understanding of diverse identity, thought, and experiences.
      - Strategies to mitigate disparate outcomes.
      - Improving public trust and confidence.
      - Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.
  - 2 hours Airway Circulatory Anatomy and Physiology (ACAP) training
    - ACAP training includes the risk of various holds on respiratory compromise, the signs of a person in respiratory compromise, and the law enforcement officer's responsibility to render or obtain aid.
  - 3 hours Mental Health/Crisis Intervention training
  - 84 hours total training over the 3-year period
- Must hold both First Aid and Adult/Child CPR Certification at all times

In concert, the Polk County Community Corrections Director requires 40 hours of annual training for each employed corrections officer.

## Officers' Training Responses

**Each box is one officer's response on their individual survey**

### *What training have you received in the past 12 months?*

Mandatory DT's x5, Mandatory Advanced LSCMI, Mandatory Taser recert, Mandatory OC recert, mandatory ethics x2, mandatory ACAP, working with victims of sex trafficking	Sex Offender Specialist Academy, Static 99R, STABLE, ACUTE, defensive tactics, taser, OC spray, ethics, leadership, mental health for professionals	Risk Assessments, defensive tactics, CIT	Basic Parole and Probation (DPSST), LS/CMI (basic and advanced), WRNA (basic), Case Planning, Ethics, and Defensive Tactics.	Advanced LS/CMI training, Defensive Tactics instructor workshop, Ethics, First Aid, Taser Instructor and Certification, Behavior Change Plan Training, Leadership trainings (various types), among others
91 hours of various trainings attended in 2022.	WRNA LS/CMI Advanced LS/CMI Academy	Defensive tactics, taser recertification, case planning, ethics	One officer did not answer	

### *What other trainings would you like to see offered in the next 12 months?*

Crisis Intervention Training.	Static 99R/STABLE/ACUTE in person if at all possible. More leadership training. More teamwork building. CIT	Substance abuse training, use of force (disarming guns), CIT related trainings (breakdown) refresher, de-escalation training	DEI, Cultural Awareness (learning not to make assumptions), working with MH clients for all staff, working with victims, drug identification, work/life balance, trauma coping, communication	Not sure, I'm always looking for a good training to attend.
ongoing training	Gender responsive Motivation Interviewing Crisis intervention	Motivational interviewing, drug recognition, firearm handling	There have been many posted that I have not had the opportunity to explore yet.	

## Administrators' Perception of Training Needed

*What training topics would help Community Corrections be more efficient or effective?*

- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training Courses
- Mental health training
- Motivational interviewing
- RCM – risk control matrix assessment
- Emotional Intelligence and trauma informed
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

### **Findings: Community Corrections Training**

1. Training opportunities are often varied dependent on the officer's prior training, personal choice, certification requirements and availability of trainers.
2. A variety of additional training ideas were suggested by officers and administrators with crisis intervention, mental health, trauma informed and cultural awareness among the most frequent cited.
3. Discussions with officers and administrators found that there is a desire to have more face-to-face training rather than as much virtual training as has occurred in the past three years.

## V. Perceptions About Disparate Treatment

### Client Perceptions of Disparities Within Justice System

On the next page, the thirty-three specific responses below the survey question are from the client survey answers with some editing to protect the identity of the client or officer. A total of sixty-one individuals wrote a comments, but twenty-six of those just wrote they “did not know” or it “did not affect them”. Also, two respondents included situational details from other counties or states and the comments were excluded. The thirty-three respondents by race or culture are shown below.

<b>Race or Culture</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Total Race or Culture</b>
White	19	23%
People of Color	14	44%
Hispanic	7	29%

**Note : Hispanic identity is separate from the race question. Also, due to low response numbers the People of Color data is not disaggregated by individual race to protect the identity of the respondents.**

**Each box is one client's response on their individual survey**

<p align="center"><i>Beside the actual facts of a person's case, are there circumstances or characteristics of certain people that lead to differences in sentences or terms of their parole/probation? If yes, what are those circumstances or characteristics.</i></p>
<p>My kids and I were in a domestic violence lifestyle but, I didn't realize it until an altercation with my teenager. I learned through treatment and therapy what I was living in. Police should understand that women in long term relationships/marriage don't realize we were in abusive situations until we leave.</p>
<p>I feel very much that I was unfairly treated while in jail and in court.</p>
<p>Yes, in Polk County I believe discrimination and bias are very much a fact in the legal system</p>
<p>I personally don't think the information would vary and the person would get the same outcome in the end. If there is any difference, they would more than likely attend to those needs and take more of their time to make sure that the person fully understands what's going on.</p>
<p>I think in all counties, people that are heavily tattooed are treated differently</p>
<p>I believe there are, but I would not like to answer or go into detail</p>
<p>Yes, I believe that since I am simply a male and the charges that were brought against me, I am forced into harsher terms and more restrictions during this entire process.</p>
<p>If someone has family with money and better access to better legal counsel, then it's easier</p>
<p>Discrimination by courts for my age, gender, and veteran status</p>
<p>I think everyone is sentenced equally</p>
<p>Not legal ADA, On occasion there needs to be internal audits and case sourcing to apply into the county registry with proper Chapter 18 regulations.</p>
<p>Mentally challenged people tend to fall through the cracks as their mental health may appear normal but is not.</p>
<p>Being treated like my crime was just as bad as child molesters and people who sexually assault people. Being put in the same category as offenders much worse than myself is stereo typing. It's time we updated the system and stop acting like all crimes are the same.</p>
<p>I believe accountability is a big determining factor in sentencing. An example is if someone committed a crime and they acknowledge and accept that they made a mistake, and actively make changes in their life to ensure it will not happen again (Mental Health Counseling, Drug and Alcohol Treatment, etc.) Versus someone who is arrogant, in denial, makes up lies, and denies they ever did wrong.</p>
<p>The only exception and things that I think need to be more looked into when it comes to sentencing is someone's mental health. Of course, people can claim that they are crazy to receive a lighter sentence which may ruin it for others, but in a lot of cases, mental issues have a huge impact on what happens. Hopefully in the future, Polk County can come up with more programs to address these issues.</p>
<p>I think a lot of that has to do with whether or not somebody shows they're making an effort to change their lives. I think if someone really wants to change they will if they are given the opportunity.</p>
<p>People with severe mental health issues seem to get lighter sentences, people who engage in treatment and are more proactive.</p>

I believe males sometimes get treated unfairly for certain crimes.
I would have to say the biggest problem is differences in sentencing based on different states or counties.
Yes (3)
Its people's willingness and understanding, but also how Polk County looks at law enforcement and authority figures
Some get sympathy
Men are treated more harshly in case handlings by police than women.
Long time, homeless, jobless, criminals, known to law enforcement officers are treated better. Allowed to turn the tables because they are known to officers.
Where they fall on the grid, interactions they have had with law enforcement.
Yes, I believe that someone with access to a reasonable amount of money would stand a better chance, ie have options to get a better lawyer to help with their case.
Crimes involving drugs and drug treatment are treated different and not as much trust is giving to the person who commits drugs crimes it seems
I feel we're all different, but race and gender are really big factors
Race plays a major factor & a person's financial status definitely does too.
I believe people of any ethnicity other than white receive a harsher sentence
I think everyone is fair and they give us what we deserve, it's our own fault for getting ourselves in the situation and law enforcement is just doing their job and doing it correctly according to what evidence they have, to charge you with.

## **Officer Perceptions of Disparities Within Justice System**

**Each box is one officer's response on their individual survey**

***Besides the actual arrest case facts, do you think there are client characteristics or client circumstances that lead to disparities in sentencing or terms of supervision in Polk County? If yes, please describe the circumstance(s) or characteristic(s) that may be involved.***

Not that I can think of.
Yes, a certain population has a difficult time complying with the conditions imposed upon them by the court.
I do not feel I've had enough exposure in our county yet to give a confident answer regarding this topic.
I think housing or lack thereof can have a huge impact on frequency in which a client is going to jail given that those who are homeless lack transportation and a way to connect to our office leaving us little information about their whereabouts which constitutes abscond.
Client ethnicity plays a big role in sentencing
Yes. Race has been a big factor in sentencing when comparing cases with similar criminal history and crimes. Occasionally gender.



## **Administrators' Perception of Disparities within the Justice System**

*Besides the actual case facts, are there client circumstances or client characteristics that cause disparities in sentencing or terms of supervision in Polk County? If yes, what are the circumstances or characteristics?*

- Attitude of client
- Knowledge of client background

### **Findings: Perceptions of Disparities in the Justice System in Polk County**

1. Approximately 30% of clients identified in their written comments disparate conditions that impact client success. These range from race to gender to community connections.
2. Approximately 30% of the officers who responded to a similar question also identified race and gender as factors for some in disparate treatment.
3. Administrators identified client attitude as a factor as well as people within the justice system knowing a client's background/history leading to some disparate treatment.

## **VI. Post-Supervision Client Responses** **Regarding Polk County Community Corrections**

**Focus Group with three participants: African American, White, American Indian**

- 1) **What do you think Polk County Community Corrections program does well?**
  - a) They work around my schedule.
  - b) POs do their best within their means to guide and help us.
  - c) A person not the program is what helped. Having probation officers interested in success.
  - d) PO stuck with me even when I was struggling.
  - e) Reinforced my need to be accountable.
  - f) Taught me to be accountable.
- 2) **What barriers do you see that make it hard for people to successfully complete their Community Corrections supervision?**
  - a) Drugs and alcohol are too easy to access.
  - b) It was hard to ask for the help I needed.
  - c) You either comply or defy.
  - d) Staying out of trouble, not using at all for the whole stretch
  - e) No resources or they are hard to find.
  - f) Need more behavioral health support.
  - g) Fines and fees (though fees have been waived now)

- h) Having a dirty urine analysis means having to pay for it.
  - i) Finding steady employment or qualifying for unemployment when laid off.
  - j) Having a peer mentor for financial guidance especially when living paycheck to paycheck
  - k) Low starting-pay for jobs
  - l) Personal barriers (situations and character traits)
  - m) Lack of dependable transportation
  - n) Cost of basics like getting a driver's license and insurance
  - o) I had to stay focused on myself and what I needed to do.
- 3) **Were there programs or services in Polk County that you tried to access, but had difficulty? If so, what were they? How did you find out about them?**
- a) Getting/keeping housing is the highest need.
  - b) Wait time to get into housing or get housing assistance -rental relief.
  - c) If don't have a residence that is a probation/parole violation
  - d) Transition to housing when graduate from drug court
  - e) Stress – constant worry about housing or financial or failure
- 4) **Do you think Community Corrections staff understand and respect others from different cultures or backgrounds?**
- a) They have been good listeners.
  - b) Mine tries to understand and is honest with me.
  - c) Feel like they are respectful and willing to work with us.
- 5) **During your supervision period were concerns you had addressed by your parole/probation officer? Can you give an example?**
- a) They try to set us up for success.
  - b) They do what they can with the resources they have.
  - c) Example of an intervention by four POs to “help set me straight”.
  - d) They want what is best for me.
- 6) **Do you feel safe in Polk County? Elaborate.**
- a) Yes, mostly.
  - b) Concern about growing number of homeless and access to drugs in the community
  - c) Has experience some racism via comments but didn't feel unsafe. Did find it difficult to share with PO because wasn't sure what the goal of the conversation would be.
- 7) **During your supervision period did you have any sanctions for a parole/probation violation? If so, did you think the sanction was appropriate?**
- a) At first the sanctions by Drug Court were too easy
  - b) Covid limited sanctions
  - c) Believe sanctions to be helpful motivators - needed to remind clients they want to avoid jail time.
  - d) Sanctions should match what motivates the individual.
  - e) I didn't have any sanctions during my probation.

**8) Besides the actual case facts, are there circumstances or client characteristics that cause disparities in sentencing or terms of supervision in Polk County? If so, what circumstances or characteristics seem to be the most likely to experience a disparity?**

- a) The person's background and connections within the community make a difference. Those well connected get off easier.
- b) People with ties to a local business, agency or non-profit get off easier
- c) Things that matter in the system: being "known"; status in the community (this was seen as a positive - family, in town connections, what they've done for the community, past history)
- d) Judges make the decisions, but when a person has a PO or counselor or mentor, that person should influence the sentence and probation conditions.
- e) There should be intervention groups available to help people.
- f) Marion County judges are more open to a variety of solutions. Polk County the case loads are too big so judges just go off "paper".

**9) What other programs, services, treatments or incentives are needed in Polk County to improve the success rates for people under Community Corrections supervision?**

- a) More PC Behavioral Health programs and staff
- b) More addictions services
- c) Med Ride is a good idea, but not very efficient.
- d) Transportation through CARTS is limited by schedule.
- e) Help with costs for paperwork or insurance
- f) PC Behavioral Health crisis line isn't always 24-7. Sometimes unanswered. Need a crisis line for Corrections Clients especially nighttime when the stress may drive them back to drugs for relief.
- g) Having family in the area is helpful
- h) Additional access to crisis services needed

**10) Any closing thoughts?**

- a) Corrections officers make a difference by guiding me and helping me succeed
- b) POs having an even better understanding of client's mindset and reality/feelings/reasons for doing what they do.
- c) I appreciate my PO.
- d) Being accountable is the key to completing parole/probation
- e) Believe judges and sheriffs should be interviewed because the people who go through the system are known and potentially recognized by these people.
- f) People who are recognized don't get the attention they need because they are known, because of gaps - more help for the frequent/high needs clients.

## VII. Interviews with Clients Who Are Also Unhoused

A focus group of five clients who are currently unhoused was scheduled for May 24 and again on May 31. However, only one client attended. A summary of that client’s comments was made available to the Corrections Director but is not included here to protect the client’s identity.

## VIII. Additional Program, Services or Resources Needed

### Clients’ Perception of What Else is Needed

**Each box is one client’s response on their individual survey**

There were 53 unique responses. 8 Respondents indicated “housing”.

**Note: 61 respondents did not answer or said their needs were being met.**

<i>What else is needed in Polk County to assist people in transitioning into the community as they complete their supervision period?</i>
Financial assistance
Employment and housing information for sex offenders
Accountability of the courts and law enforcement in adhering to state and federal laws, including but not limited to: discrimination, equal access to justice (both by law enforcement and courts)
Rental and deposit assistance, help with housing applications, housing availability for sex offenders
Housing (8 respondents)
Direction and assistance. the ability to give others their own rope rather than the constant mentality of Polk Co. is out to get them. the negative thought that being on parole that a PO is strictly out to get them. try and find jobs that help for the long term rather than just temp ones and housing that is affordable. in this day in age the second might be harder but a subsidized housing within parameters might work best for those who aren't a revolving door within the system.
To be heard
Help with drivers license, pay my fees
A better model of a work center for the inmates and maybe another set of project managers/laborers for permanent positions.
Mental Health help
Help paying fines or dissolving other state cases.
More rewards
Housing for those who have nothing and nowhere to go who are active in recovery and sex offenders.
More places for females to live

Having those resources that are stated above ready, available, and easily accessible to people returning to the community.
Chance for early release upon good behavior and completion of plan
Availability for other community service rather than just the one.
Jobs
Food, transportation, and support by others that have gone through the same thing.
Transportation and treatment services- especially recovery mentors! Mentors were life changing for me when I changed
More or better access to housing and rental assistance.
A place that people can afford
More help
Maybe longer hours of operations of some departments.
Transportation
Public transportation
Homeless shelters and basic resources
A job
More information and knowledge about how to communicate with their supervisor
Open minded individuals
More opportunities for those who don't have anything to go back to. Like jobs more room for housing or renting.
Accessibility to relicensing programs
I feel less sanctions are necessary if the right accommodations for poverty were met. Sometimes we all become victims of circumstance. women are at higher rate of violence and sexual trafficking's because of the judicial system and poverty. I have to fight daily to just get my basics met.
Vehicle and job access
Grace. Understanding. And to look at me for me, not the piece of paper in front of you.
Legal help
Less prejudice
Medical transportation
We need better transportation for people who don't live in town.
I feel like helping them with their next steps after probation or parole would be a huge impact you know like actually giving example of where they could go for the next step to help be good within the future and stay on that healthy path
A trade program, or a reintegration program where it helps parolee's get a better job.
Housing for both sexes, structure, and more job opportunity
Housing!! Jobs!!(that are normal in the community such as Starbucks, or fast-food) Help getting them hired onto jobs so if they are ready to work then they will be able to right away
I think parolees should be guided a lot more as to how to go about basically everything because a lot of us myself included spent most of our life incarcerated & are basically clueless to life out here. So having someone who could help us with the ABC's of life would be a major help. Also, every & all resources that are available to us should be something someone should take the time to teach/tell us about.
Make time fun and go by smoothly

To recognize the facts of the case and with sound judgement allow people, mainly fathers who are striving to keep their children safe as well as allow them to resume their role for the mental and emotional support of the children. Be able to effectively determine while keeping the public and community safe based on their years of working in such role who would pose a threat and who would. Also allow those who don't pose a threat to gain trust on a faster track to allow the person to be self-sustained as quickly as possible. All this said understanding that trust isn't built in a day, but neither is wisdom to decipher.

## Officers' Perception of What Else is Needed

**Each box is one officer's response on their individual survey**

<i>List any innovative programs, policies, procedures or processes that you think Polk County Community Corrections should consider implementing in the future.</i>
Having GPS for client monitoring
Addressing male trauma. Making more available or approving more training for PO's in the office, which may cost money. Having more open schedules to help meet client needs.
At this moment, the only recommendation I have would be a gender responsive caseload or an additional subsidized oxford house.
Mental Health Court as a possibility as well as more help/funding to support restitution payment (and victim help).

## Administrators' Perception of Program Improvements

*Are there any organizational changes that would be beneficial to Community Corrections?*

- Better engagement/communication with law enforcement
- Public communication about what program does and doesn't do
- Revise and clarify roles and duties and post on the website
- Address the challenge of frequent changes in the law and community or state expectations
- Discern which external audiences need more information and create a communications plan

*What types of client data or justice system data do you wish the County had available to you as a leader in this program?*

- Better platform and dashboard to access real time client information/sanctions
- User friendly consolidated database to run reports
- Be able to sort by diversity factors and case similarities

*Are there innovative policies, procedures or programs that you think PC Community Corrections should consider implementing?*

- Electronic monitoring
- Home detention
- Breathalyzer testing
- Geographical check in
- Virtual sessions

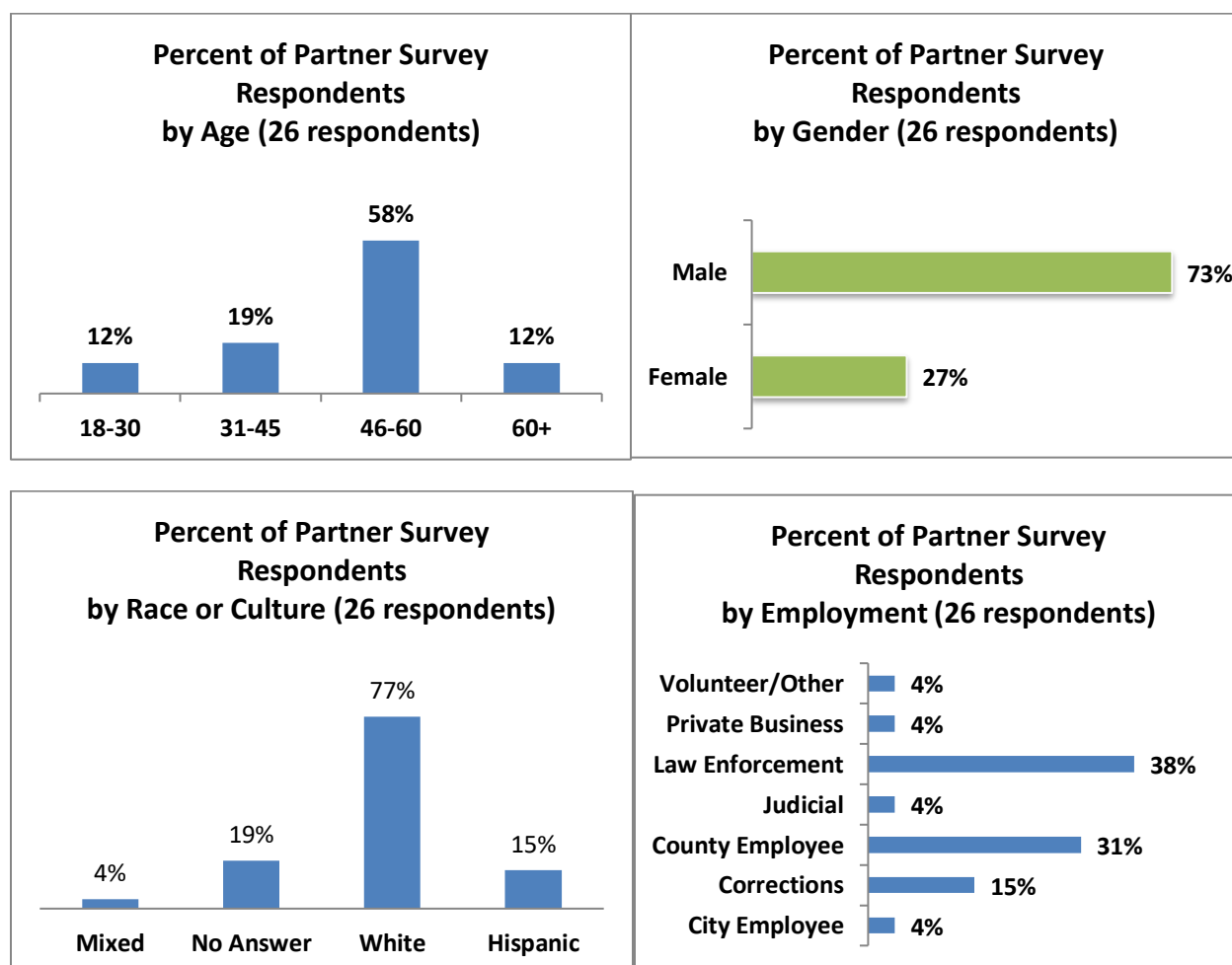
**Findings: Other Perceived Program Improvements Needed**

1. Clients generally identified the need to address many of the barriers listed in Section II
2. The client comments reflect some other specific needs such as fast-tracking a probation when certain conditions are met and teaching the “ABCs” of life after prison
3. Officers identified other specific needs such as addressing “male trauma”, having a gender responsive caseload, and a having a mental health court
4. Administrators identified the need for improved communication systems, a better technology dashboard, and having geographical check-ins and virtual client sessions

## IX. Justice Partners Input

Individual interviews and an on-line survey were conducted to solicit input from various stakeholder groups. The on-line survey was conducted from October 2 through October 24, 2023. The Polk County Community Corrections Director sought participation from law enforcement, district attorney’s office, county leadership, judicial, county mental health and the Family & Community Outreach Department. Twenty-six people completed the on-line survey. The survey sought perceptions about barriers and issues faced by justice involved clients, access to services, perceptions of disparities, effectiveness of collaboration between agencies, training needs for employees and ideas for the development of a county action plan. The demographics of the survey respondents and the survey results follow.

### Survey Respondent Demographics





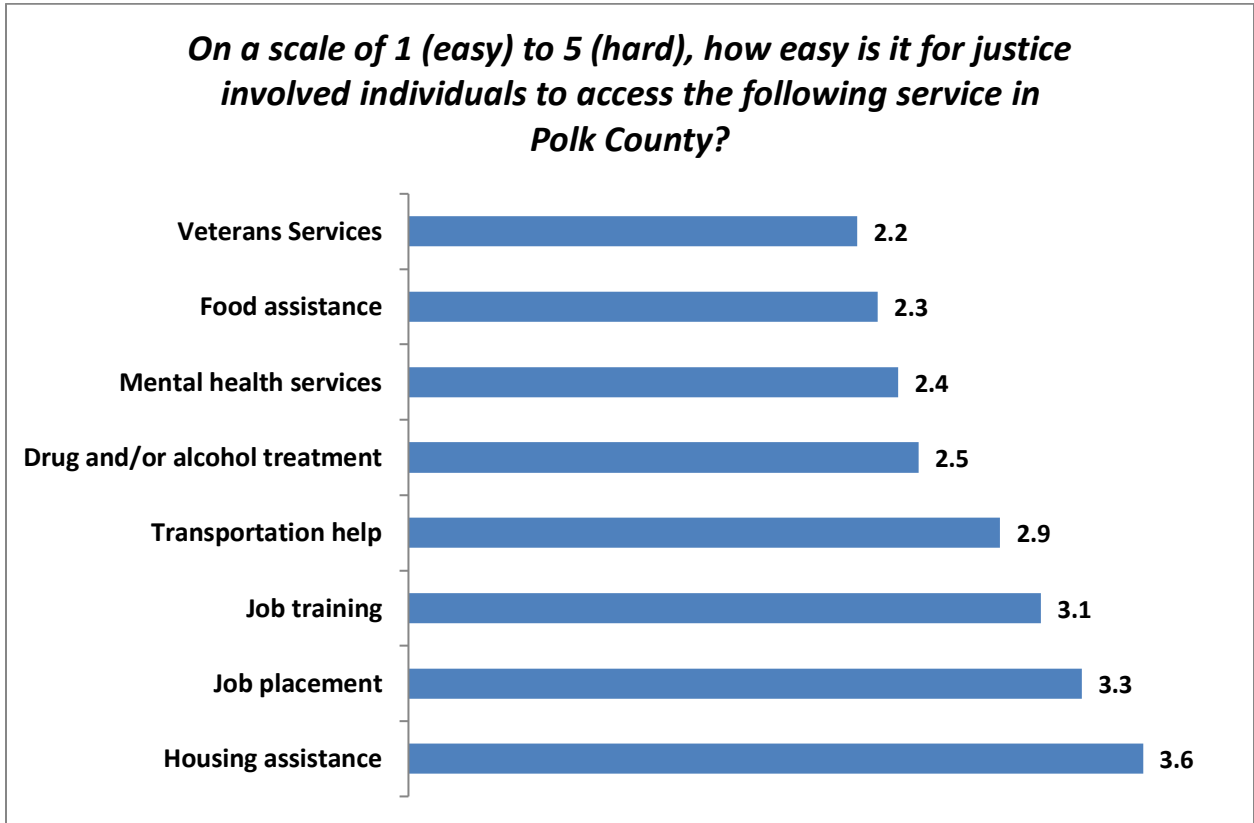
**Partner Perception of Barriers Faced by Clients**

***What are the two or three most significant barriers that clients face making it a challenge for them to complete their parole or probation supervision period?***

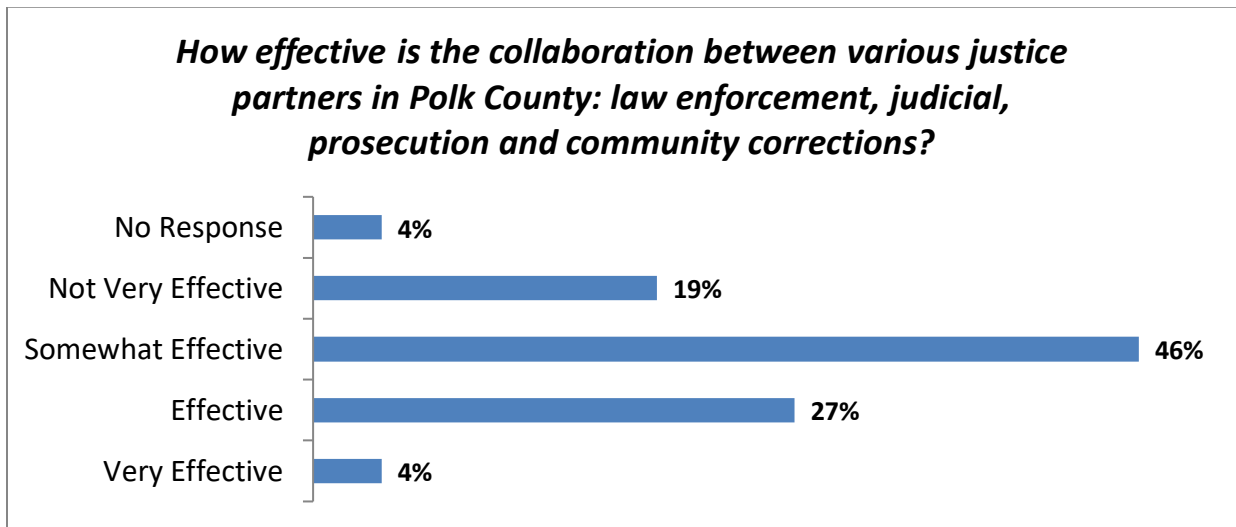
**(each box represents one individual's comments)**

<p>1) How easy it is to get drugs                  2) Jobs in Polk County that parolees can get are in places filled with drugs                  3) Lack of education for clients when they exit the system</p>
<p>They are drug addicts. They either do not desire treatment or cannot obtain it if desired. They have little regard for the authority of probation officers.</p>
<p>People who get sentenced to probation but show that probation will not work for them. They are set up for failure. Judges sentence folks to probation, assume the person is getting out, jail runs them for warrant, they have one and stay in jail. They don't go see their probation officer because they are in jail, then get a new parole violation for not making it to see their probation officer                  People who don't have transportation, maybe probation officer could go to the client. There are buses, but the folks who can't seem to make it to appointments are the ones who will have an excuse.</p>
<p>They are poor candidates that are set up for failure due to being homeless and addicted to drugs.</p>
<p>Drug addiction/ mental health issues. The jail could use more mental health services.</p>
<p>Housing, employment, substance abstinence</p>
<p>Transportation, substance use and mental health issues</p>
<p>Finding housing, getting jobs and childcare</p>
<p>Accountability. Sometimes there is not enough accountability for some of them. They violate the terms of their probation over and over and over, for months and months on end before the ultimate consequences get paid.</p>
<p>Substance abuse, lack of stable and affordable housing, lack of desire to change.</p>
<p>Medication access/stabilization, decriminalized drug use and lack of housing</p>
<p>A) Can't stay away from the addictions that helped get them in trouble.                  B) Can't stay away from people that are bad role models.                  C) Don't have the kind of "hands-on" case management that is needed for people that constantly make bad choices.</p>
<p>Intoxicant use, lack of transportation, and housing.</p>
<p>Lack of effort</p>
<p>Lack of accountability and consistency, meaningful resources.</p>
<p>Legalized drugs and no to little accountability for their actions.</p>
<p>Addiction</p>
<p>Motivation to comply.</p>
<p>There is not enough accountability with clients. Many times the clients are breaking the rules and/or conditions of their parole or probation because they are not being held accountable.                  Transportation and housing are other factors that hinder the ability to get jobs and stay on track.</p>
<p>Drugs/Alcohol , Getting a good job Mental Health issues</p>

Partner Perception of Services Access Ease



Partner Perception of Departmental Collaboration



***How effective is the collaboration between various justice partners in Polk County: law enforcement, judicial, prosecution and community corrections?***

**(each box represents one individual's comments)**

<p>Courts plow through and do not consult others (corrections, mental health, jail staff) before they sentence people. People come through the system and due to drugs and mental issues they are in a perpetual revolving door. They get put on probation, yet with previous <i>Failure To Appear</i> it is a good indicator supervision won't work for this person.</p>
<p>Seems like there is a lot of bickering among some of the partners. Not a lot of meaningful collaboration.</p>
<p>There are not many jobs in Polk County and the jobs that people are able to get when they are released. Often, they can only get a job where there are drugs and they fall right back into the system.</p>
<p>I feel community corrections does a good job in communicating with behavioral health to give their clients the best chance at success as they can, within the limits that the law allows these days.</p>
<p>I think that the prosecutors want more punishment than anyone else and are willing to stop at nothing to make that happen. Unfortunately, a lot of times, this doesn't line up with the rest of the things and make it harder on community corrections and law enforcement.</p>
<p>Effective between all parties except for judicial.</p>
<p>Our Judicial system has pulled back from working with others. While all other are collaborating very well together.</p>
<p>The desire to be collaborative is there but the excessive liberal policies of Oregon set in law make it very difficult to be effective.</p>
<p>I feel there is a gap between law enforcement, corrections and the DA's office. We are working separately much of the time which adds to ongoing frustrations.</p>
<p>Collaboration is hindered by various partners unwillingness to work with each other</p>
<p>Law enforcement and corrections work well together.</p>

**Partner Perception of Cross-Departmental Training Options**

***Are there cross-departmental training programs you would like to see implemented***

***(or continued) for justice partners in Polk County?***

**(each box represents one individual's comments)**

<p>Sheriff's Office new patrol hires should serve in the jail for a period to develop their communication and de-escalation skill.</p>
<p>Continued opportunity to learn and understand different roles and obligations of different agencies/partners and how to increase fruitful communication between agencies/entities.</p>
<p>I personally am always willing to learn more about the partners that I work with. I feel that it would better help me to support my clients to understand more in depth what probation does, what goes on behind closed doors at the jail, possibly do a ride along with LE, etc.</p>
<p>We currently do cross training, but it would be nice to really identify the needs of the community partners and identify what trainings would be appropriate and ensure that staff can attend.</p>

Community Corrections has reached out to all partners offering participation in what they do and state guidelines they have to follow. Our DA's office and staff have been attending.
Not sure if training or if cross-departmental briefing would be more helpful. These briefings could be done on an as-needed basis. There are times when it might be helpful to have information about a specific subject or topic related to the county.
It would be great to shadow other agencies within Polk County from the academy building the community corrections.
Really should have more communication and partnership between departments. The different departments feel isolated from one another.
Crisis Intervention Training has been good.

**Partner Perception of Client Characteristics or Circumstance Disparities**

***Besides the actual case facts, are there client circumstances or client characteristics that cause disparities in sentencing or terms of supervision in Polk County?  
(each box represents one individual's comments)***

Chronic homelessness and lack of housing in Polk County, so individuals end up in jail more often due to causing problems for the community members businesses or homes.
Those with financial means or community connections do better than those who aren't well connected. Education may also play a part.
People with severe and persistent mental illness; especially if they are un-housed, and/or considered to be any kind of "public nuisance".
Drugs, education, lack of mental health services
I think that the way that you all handle the houseless population is awesome. They would be the ones that would claim disparities, however, your office works with them and their circumstances to make things as easy as possible.
There are many biases, based perceptions based on how a person acts or looks. Scuzzy looking folks are treated worse than non-scuzzy people, women are treated better than men. Blacks in this county are treated worse than whites by our courts.
There is no accountability. There is no accountability before they went in and there is none after.
For those who want to change and do better, some just don't get the correct set up for them to succeed. Whether it is housing or work.
I believe that people dealing with extreme mental health issues who law enforcement are coming into contact with are not being held responsible for lower end crimes because we cannot prosecute those who cannot assist with their defense.

**Partner Perception of Action Plan Ideas to Address Barriers and Needs**  
*As the county develops an action plan to address client barriers and identify resource needs for justice partners what would you most like to see included?*

(each box represents one individual's comments)

Find ways to help those on parole or probation get back into school and/or assistance with a timeline. Polk County also needs more jobs
Better long-term in-patient treatment facilities.
Communication between courts, corrections mental health and the jail concerning sentences for individuals well known to all three before the person is set up for failure.
Bus rides to another jurisdiction
More housing available for the justice involved clients, especially those who also have co-occurring mental health needs. Increased communication with services partners such as FCO, housing and employment services.
More housing options are highest need.
Polk County judicial system as a whole does not understand severe and persistent mental health issues. All deputies need to be better trauma-informed. There needs to be a mental health worker along with law enforcement for any/all mental health calls (mobile crisis options expanded). Deputies in the jail need to be trained on how to work with/deal with people in psychosis; lock-up only adds to the problem, and mental health workers need to be allowed access to them inside of the jail. Medication management needs to be a priority once they are in there and make sure they are bridged for a day or two upon release. Heroin addicts entering jail should have the option for MAT! Many of the surrounding jails offer it. No one should have to detox in jail. Polk County lacks a lot on both MH and addiction services.
Housing opportunities. Affordable/stable housing. Stop arresting everyone for being homeless, then they would bail on our town and stop migrating here because they are on probation.
Some sort of mechanism to support medication adherence. Shelter/housing options that serve difficult to house individuals. Transportation for difficult-to-serve individuals (hygiene, in appropriate behaviors, and very symptomatic.
Our judicial system needs to have the ability to force repeat clients to enroll in services to address their needs. We also need a safe and secure facility to house repeat offenders to address their mental and addiction challenges. Expecting 36 counties to provide this service is just not reasonable. We need 3-4 lock down facilities within the state to address this issue to keep our communities safe and reduce recidivism.
More corrections staff and better collaboration from the courts to support the work that Community Corrections is required to do.
Transportation solutions and clean and sober housing.
Have zero tolerance
Collaboration and training for justice partners so meaningful work can be done together. Many people working at the ground level do not know about the resources within the county or how they can work together to solve problems.
The return of drug court or some sort of accountability for offenders. If we're to truly help folks, currently Measure 110 is not helpful.
More treatment facilities within Polk County regarding addictions.

We need more avenues to deal with the extreme mentally ill. Jail is not always appropriate, however sometimes we have no choice but to arrest them. Then they get kicked out jail and do the same all over again. Through no fault of the DA's office they will also dump cases because people are unable to assist in their defense.
Job training for clients. Improved technology - i.e. cameras, license plate readers in the community.
Repeal measure 110 and hold people accountable for their actions/crimes.
We need more avenues to deal with the extreme mentally ill. Jail is not always appropriate. Sometimes the DA will dump a case because the person is unable to assist in their defense.

## **Individual Interviews of Justice Partners**

An invitation from the Director of Polk County Community Corrections was sent to justice partners to share their perspectives via an individual interview with the project consultant. This invitation was sent to the district attorney office, law enforcement and mental health individuals. The option for an interview was reiterated in meetings with law enforcement and other partner leaders. Three law enforcement individuals agreed to interviews which occurred in September 2023. The questions and participant answers are summarized below.

- 1) *From your perspective what do you see as the most significant or common barriers or issues that a person involved in the criminal justice system when they encounter your department?*  
Drug and alcohol involvement, mental health issues or access to service, lower income, lack of education, lack of housing.
- 2) *Are there training topics that would help members of your department when they interact with various justice involved clients?*  
Proud of current Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) but also could take it to the next level. More training about county/agency resources available and how to partner with those providers.
- 3) *What works well in your department?*  
Sense of culture in department and within the county. "I wish Mental Health Court process was still in place", but ok with FACT Program now. Supportive of having a deputy and mental health worker going out together on certain calls (MCRT). Cross-department collaboration is good but can always be better. CIT and MCRT training and actions work well. Quality people in the department – but some agencies are short staffed.
- 4) *How well do you think the various Polk County justice departments work collaboratively with each other and are there things you'd like to see departments collaborate on in the future?*  
Good to excellent collaboration especially between leaders of each department, not sure if all information gets to "boots on the ground". Sometimes collaboration seems to ebb and flow. At leadership level collaboration generally remains strong, but not at all levels. Local Public Safety Coordinating Council doesn't seem to foster collaboration very well or often. The monthly Law Enforcement meetings are a good forum for sharing and cooperating.

5) *What existing programs or services are most helpful to Justice Involved Individuals in Polk County?*

CIT, Mental Health, MCRT, social services through Family & Community Outreach Department. Service Integration Teams help to build relationships and support. Good community corrections program for both adult and juvenile supervision.

6) *What additional programs or services do you believe are needed?*

Mental Health support after regular business hours. It is tough to get a quick response. There is probably a need for more Mental Health staffing. Bringing various service providers into officers' mtgs for face-to-face conversations can help officers know what resources are available.

7) *On a scale of 1-5 rate each of the following (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree)*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Comment</b>
There are sufficient staff at your agency	3.3	Varied by agency from fully staffed to needing additional deputies
Staff at your agency are knowledgeable and well-trained	4.0	Always room for growth
Staff at your agency understand and respect other from different cultures or backgrounds	5	Excellent
Client arrests/prosecution/sentencing are appropriate and effective	3.0	Changes in laws and community norms have changed expectations for officers. Law enforcement is somewhat handcuffed in response possibilities. The entire system was more effective before pandemic. Some tools are not available now. Greater Mental Health concerns play a role too.

8) *Besides the actual case facts, are there client circumstances or client characteristics that cause disparities in arrests, sentencing or terms of supervision in Polk County? If yes, what are they?*

If a client has mental health issues, then supervision and outcomes can be different. Income level, substance abuse, who the client associates with and education level all play a role.

9) *What training topics would help your department be more effective / efficient?*

Perhaps a multi-agency training like "how to conduct a high-risk traffic stop. Might need to do training with selected agency representatives then have that employee can bring training back to department.

*10) What type of Polk County client data or justice system data is available to you in your work?*

No real concerns about each individual agency's data collection/use. However, having access to data across departments with a common dashboard (like E-Court) and congruent software was thought to be beneficial. Some investigation tools such as license plate readers and cameras could be expanded.

*11) As the county develops an action plan to address equity or disparate outcomes what 2 or 3 things would you most like to see included?*

Continued collaboration between partners especially among "ground level" employees. Joint field work and training as appropriate. Establishing a centralized database. All departments/agencies in county need to make sure all resource contact lists are updated and available to partners. Expanded transitional housing, improved client access to mental health services. Expanded collaboration and perhaps a mobile interagency team.

## **Findings: Justice Partner Perceptions**

1. The client barriers identified by partners are similar to the barriers identified in client and correction officer surveys. These barriers include housing, lack of jobs, access to drugs/alcohol, and client mental health needs.
2. There is a general feeling of collaboration between partners, though a concern that it "ebbs and flows" at times and may not reach all departmental employees.
3. Some partners believe that the pandemic and Measure 110 have limited the "tools" available to address client needs and support client accountability.
4. Mental health access was a recurring theme both in the survey and interviews. Having greater after-hours access to mental health workers and having a mental health worker accompany a deputy on certain calls was identified as resource needs.
5. There was support for cross-departmental training and gaining technology to support the justice system's efforts including a common dashboard with congruent software across jurisdictions and the purchase of additional license plate readers or cameras for Polk County communities.
6. Most partners did not identify race, culture, age or gender as client characteristics that might result in disparate treatment or outcomes. but did identify community connection, income level, lack of housing, educational level, mental health, substance abuse, and a lack of accountability or commitment as possible factors.

## **X. Summary**

Many of the barriers that challenge parole and probation clients were consistently identified across all survey and interview groups and demographics. These barriers included lack of housing, limited employment opportunities, transportation issues, mental health needs, access to



resources and substance abuse. A key discrepancy between respondent groups was the specific identification of stress as a barrier. Stress was the highest ranked (36%) barrier to successfully completing supervision by parole and probation clients. While the causes of stress, such as lack of housing, were identified as important by all groups, dealing with stress itself was very important to the clients. The cost of basic necessities was the second highest ranked (32%).

Race and culture did not generally present as critical factors in the data sets except for American Indians/Native Alaskans having a lower sense of being fairly treated than other groups. Gender (males) also presented as more likely to be a characteristic in disparate treatment in the judicial system according to the comments of survey and interview groups.

There was general respect for the corrections program in Polk County, with a significant majority of clients viewing their probation officer as helpful and supportive. A potential area for growth is ensuring that clients feel they have significant input into their case plan. Overall, 80% of clients felt they had “some” or “a lot” of input into their case plan with Hispanic clients being the highest at over 90%. Also, while there is some success at collaboration across justice partners, it was described as to “ebb and flow” at times. There was a feeling of significant collaboration between law enforcement and corrections, but less so with other partners with judicial described being the least connected.

The issue of client accountability/commitment was the highest named success factor by clients who were interviewed after successfully completing their supervision period. Comments from various judicial partners supported this view. However, in the client survey only 8% saw their commitment as a potential barrier to completing supervision. Strengthening client accountability and commitment through the case plan and work of the supervising officer is consistently a goal of the corrections program, but additional training in this area may be important.

This data collection and assessment has been a good first step for Polk County. To continue the process suggested action plan elements follow.

## **XI Action Plan Elements**

### **Polk County Community Corrections and Justice Partners Equity Action Plan**

This project was funded through an Oregon Justice Reinvestment capacity building grant “designed to empower counties to understand, build and apply cultural responsiveness and equity in Justice Reinvestment programs.” The specific goals under the grant were to:

1. Gather data and perspectives from corrections’ clients, corrections’ employees and justice partners relative to barriers and practices that may create disparate outcomes for clients based on race, culture, gender, age, educational background or other significant factors.
2. Issue a final report including an equity action plan based on the data collected.

Utilizing data from this project and consistent with Oregon's 2021 *Roadmap: The Path to Implementing the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan*, the Community Corrections Department and Family & Community Outreach Department identified the following actions.

Action 1: Establish an annual survey of parole and probation clients and justice partners to compare with 2023 baseline survey data and identify areas of improvement and those areas needing continued efforts. Disaggregate client data based on race, culture, gender, age, housing and educational background.

Action 2: Host an annual *Community Justice Forum* for leaders of all county justice partner agencies/departments including Behavioral Health and Family & Community Outreach to review current data, progress made, and collaboratively plan for adjustments in programs or services needed.

Action 3: Strengthen and broaden links with county, community, and area partners (and potential partners) to address barriers faced by clients, expand prevention activities, and implement strategies for client reintegration into their families, the community and the workforce. For example, the Corrections Department monthly *Learn and Lunch* sessions and partnerships with Family & Community Outreach and Polk County Behavioral Health demonstrate this action currently. Examining other justice projects such as *Sponsors* in Eugene and *Transformative Justice Community* in Salem may also help to inform and implement this action. Potential client mentoring by former clients could be an important element.

Action 4: Conduct a quarterly focus group comprised of one corrections' administrator, one corrections' officer and six clients. The focus group clients for each quarter will be homogenous. Fall – Native American/Alaskan Native, Winter – males, Spring – People of Color, Summer – females. A balance of other demographics such as age and education background should be incorporated. The groups will discuss barriers and issues which are of greatest concern to the client participants. This information will be shared with justice partners and included at the *Community Justice Forum* (see Action 2).

Action 5: Procure training for corrections' employees and justice partners which broaden the understandings of bias, culture, equity, and inclusion.

Action 6: Identify client perceived stressors as a formal part of the corrections intake process and incorporate that information into the case plan as well as determining what types of motivations and possible sanctions may best fit the individual client.

Action 7: Assess, plan and budget for equipment and technology upgrades/purchases that improve case management, data analysis, client monitoring and/or criminal prosecutions.

Action 8: Identify grants, internal and external funding sources which can help support the actions listed above.

## Compilation of Section Findings

### Findings: Client Survey Response

1. Females had a higher response rate than males (33% compared to 21%), though males account for 80% of the caseload in Polk County.
2. 7% of the caseload identified as Hispanic while 20% of the survey respondents identified as Hispanic. However, Hispanic identity was separate from the race question on the survey, while the Corrections Department collects Hispanic as a race.
3. 10% of the client survey respondents identified as American Indian or Native Alaskan, but only 4% of the caseload identifies in the same fashion.
4. White respondents underrepresented on the survey at 72%, though they account for 84% of the caseload.
5. 11% of the client survey respondents identified as LGBTQ+.
6. The age distribution of survey respondents was fairly similar to the caseload data though the age 18–30 year-olds were underrepresented on the survey.

### Findings: Survey Respondents (Client) Demographic

1. 98% had English as their primary language.
2. 15% had limited or no access to the Internet on a regular basis.
3. 89% reported having a cell phone
4. 46% reported this was their first time on probation or parole
5. 83% reported having family in Polk County
6. 58% had been under supervision for less than a year.
7. 58% reported having a different parole officer from when they started
8. 72% had been convicted a felony
9. 47% reported having their own car
10. 49% were employed at least part-time
11. 19% had not completed a high school education
12. Less than 17% of any race/culture identity reported a sanction by their parole officer
13. Whites had the highest reporting percentage of sanctions at 16%

### Findings: Officers' Demographic

1. The percentage of officers/administrators is gender and age balanced
2. 25% of parole officers/administrators identify as Hispanic
3. There is balance in experience with over 50% exceeding five years in corrections work

### Findings: Administrators' Demographic

1. All administrators identified as white
2. Each administrator had over ten years of experience in corrections work
3. There is gender balance: one female and two male administrators

## **Findings: Barriers**

1. *Stress* was identified by the highest percentage of clients (36%) while officers rated it ninth highest
2. *Housing* and *access to transportation* were rated highly by clients and officers
3. *Cost of basic necessities* was the second highest rated barrier by clients while officers identified it as the tenth highest barrier
4. *Mental health needs* were rated highly (tied for first) by officers, but was one of the lower percentages (18%) by client respondents
5. Administrators identified similar barriers, but these were unranked in the focus group
6. Access to drugs and alcohol was rated fourth highest by officers but was 10<sup>th</sup> highest rated by client survey respondents
7. Employment was a highly-rated barrier for Hispanic clients and for those of two or more races

## **Findings: Resources, Programs, Services and Safety**

1. Clients identified housing/financial help, finding resources and transportation as the highest program or service needs
2. Clients learned of resources through a variety of sources led by parole officers, social media, Family and Community Outreach and other Polk County offices
3. Officers and administrators recognized the importance to client success of county programs including behavioral health, resource navigators and Recovery Outreach Community Center
4. Over 70% of clients reported feeling safe and being fairly treated in Polk County, with approximately 10% of clients identifying they do not feel safe or fairly treated.
5. A higher percentage of respondents identifying as American Indian/Native Alaskan felt less safe than other races/cultures
6. A higher percentage of respondents identifying as American Indian/Native Alaskan did not feel treated fairly compared to other races/cultures

## **Findings: Client Perceptions of Community Corrections**

1. 96% of clients generally felt listened to and understood by their parole officer with 87% feeling their concerns at least somewhat addressed
2. American Indian/Alaskan Native clients felt less sure if community corrections staff and officers understood and respect people from different backgrounds or cultures
3. 82% to 92% of each race/culture indicated they had *some* or *a lot* of input into their case plan
4. 91% to 100% of each race/culture indicated they had enough time with their parole officer to address concerns or issues

5. Clients generally felt that sanctions in Community Corrections were appropriate and there were no significant differences by race/culture in the ratings

### **Findings: Officers' and Administrators' Perception of Community Corrections**

1. Officers' and administrators' views on community correction elements are similar; viewing the number of staff and being well-trained are program strengths, while available sanctions and available treatment programs scored slightly lower
2. Administrators identified their officers as knowing their clients well, having good rapport within the program and having experienced officers and low turn-over as strengths
3. Both officers and administrators thought that additional sanction options, like having GPS monitoring when needed for a client, would be helpful

### **Findings: Community Corrections Training**

1. Training opportunities are often varied dependent on the officer's prior training, personal choice, certification requirements and availability of trainers.
2. A variety of additional training ideas were suggested by officers and administrators with crisis intervention, mental health, trauma informed and cultural awareness among the most frequent cited.
3. Discussions with officers and administrators found that there is a desire to have more face-to-face training rather than as much virtual training as has occurred in the past three years.

### **Findings: Perceptions of Disparities in the Justice System in Polk County**

1. Approximately 30% of clients identified in their written comments disparate conditions that impact client success. These range from race to gender to community connections.
2. Approximately 30% of the officers who responded to a similar question also identified race and gender as factors for some in disparate treatment.
3. Administrators identified client attitude as a factor as well as people within the justice system knowing a client's background/history leading to some disparate treatment.

### **Findings: Other Perceived Program Improvements Needed**

1. Clients generally identified the need to address many of the barriers listed in Section II
2. The client comments reflect some other specific needs such as fast-tracking a probation when certain conditions are met and teaching the "ABCs" of life after prison
3. Officers identified other specific needs such as addressing "male trauma", having a gender responsive caseload, and a having a mental health court
4. Administrators identified the need for improved communication systems, a better technology dashboard, and having geographical check-ins and virtual client sessions

## **Findings: Justice Partner Perceptions**

1. The client barriers identified by partners are similar to the barriers identified in client and correction officer surveys. These barriers include housing, lack of jobs, access to drugs/alcohol, and client mental health needs.
2. There is a general feeling of collaboration between partners, though a concern that it “ebbs and flows” at times and may not reach all departmental employees.
3. Some partners believe that the pandemic and Measure 110 have limited the “tools” available to address client needs and support client accountability.
4. Mental health access was a recurring theme both in the survey and interviews. Having greater after-hours access to mental health workers and having a mental health worker accompany a deputy on certain calls was identified as resource needs.
5. There was support for cross-departmental training and gaining technology to support the justice system’s efforts including a common dashboard with congruent software across jurisdictions and the purchase of additional license plate readers or cameras for Polk County communities.
6. Most partners did not identify race, culture, age or gender as client characteristics that might result in disparate treatment or outcomes. but did identify community connection, income level, lack of housing, educational level, mental health, substance abuse, and a lack of accountability or commitment as possible factors.