



National Association of Probation Executives  
Supporting Executives in Community Supervision Agencies

## **Adapting to Change: Innovations in Community Corrections**

Brian K. Ford, Chief Probation Officer, Alameda County Probation Department



Brian K. Ford

*“While advancements like data analytics and AI-driven tools can enhance efficiency, improve decision-making, and expand service delivery, they are likely to work best when paired with the relational aspects of community corrections”*

Technology is transforming the field of community corrections, reshaping workflows, data analysis, and service delivery. Organizations like the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) are leading the charge in promoting conversations around artificial intelligence (AI), ensuring that our field is proactively planning for and adapting to its transformative potential. These advancements offer opportunities to enhance public safety, streamline operations, and improve outcomes for justice-involved individuals. However, like many other jurisdictions,

in Alameda County we are taking a thoughtful and careful approach to ensure these innovations are effectively integrated into the profession. The goal is to embrace technology, recognizing that the next generation of probation professionals will heavily depend on it.

While many jurisdictions are embracing technology to enhance community corrections, some have taken a different approach, consciously opposing integration. Many of my colleagues have prioritized human interaction and relationship-building over digital tools, believing that the foundation of effective supervision lies in personal connections and trust. By focusing on face-to-face engagement, those agencies emphasize the importance of understanding each individual’s unique circumstances, needs, and challenges. Their approach reflects a belief that technology, while useful, cannot replace the empathy, intuition, and rapport that come from genuine human interaction. This perspective serves as a reminder that the success of community corrections ultimately depends on the balance between innovation and the personal touch that defines our profession.

Building trust, fostering accountability, and understanding the individual needs of clients require the human element that technology cannot replicate. Striking this balance will allow organizations to harness the strengths of innovation while preserving the personal connections that are essential for lasting change and successful reintegration. This blended approach ensures that technology complements, rather than overshadows, the human-centered mission of community corrections – that presumably, we all aim to achieve.

One thing is certain: technology is advancing at a pace faster than we can fully comprehend. Just as the transition from typewriters to the first computers once revolutionized how we worked, the rapid growth of emerging tools like artificial intelligence and advanced analytics is poised to do the same in community corrections. At some point, the momentum of these advancements will compel all jurisdictions to adapt, whether by necessity or choice. The key will be preparing for this inevitability by staying informed, investing in training, and fostering an openness to change, ensuring that when the time comes, organizations are ready to integrate these tools thoughtfully and effectively.

### **Additional Resources:**

**The National Institute of Justice reports that there are over five million individuals under some form of community supervision in the United States. Recent data shows that individuals on community supervision are showing an increased need for more intensive supervision, as well as more resources to address their criminogenic needs. Some jurisdictions are turning to Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool that can help officers with limited resources focus on those who have the highest needs.**

### **Articles on the use of AI in Community Corrections:**

#### **Correctional AI: Promise, Risks and the Way Forward**

[www.aca.org/common/Uploaded\\_files/Publications\\_Carla/Docs/Corrections Today/2024 Articles/CT\\_Fall 2024\\_Correctional AI.pdf](http://www.aca.org/common/Uploaded_files/Publications_Carla/Docs/Corrections_Today/2024_Articles/CT_Fall_2024_Correctional_AI.pdf)

#### **Federal Probation - A Journal of Correctional Philosophy and Practice December 2023**

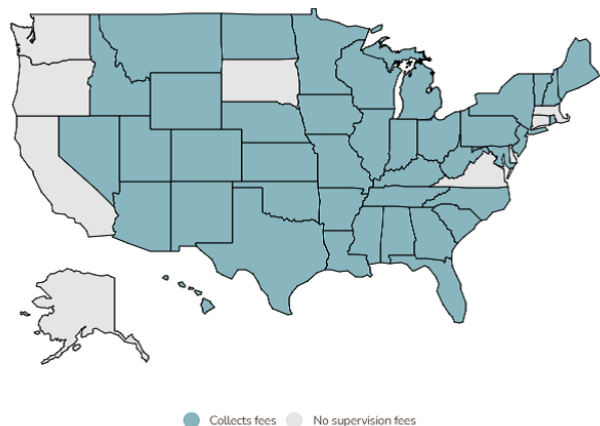
[www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/87\\_3\\_2.pdf](http://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/87_3_2.pdf)

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## **Release of A National Study on the Effect of Supervision Fees on Probation Agency Operations**

The Utah Criminal Justice Center (UCJC), in collaboration with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and NAPE, conducted interviews with community corrections executives across the nation to determine how fees drive agency budgets.

The project highlights the growing dependence on supervision fees across various jurisdictions, and the challenges administrators face under this structure. View or download the full report by clicking here:



#### **A National Study on the Effect of Supervision Fees on Probation Agency Operations**

[www.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/static.nicic.gov/Library/033097.pdf](http://www.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/static.nicic.gov/Library/033097.pdf)



National Institute of Corrections

The Nation Institute of Corrections has partnered with Rulo Strategies to create a Community Corrections Workplace Wellness Assessment. Agencies interested in participating in the assessment can submit a request for technical assistance and receive support at no cost.

### **I'm Looking for Technical Assistance for My Agency | National Institute of Corrections**

[www.nicic.gov/how-can-nic-help/im-looking-technical-assistance-my-agency](http://www.nicic.gov/how-can-nic-help/im-looking-technical-assistance-my-agency)

The NIC Technical Assistance Program responds directly to the needs, problems, and individual requirements of state and local correctional agencies. NIC's technical assistance includes onsite guidance, support, consultation, or training provided by an experienced technical resource provider or NIC staff member who serves in an advisory capacity and works with agency staff. An agency may request assistance to:

- Assess programs and operations
- Implement effective practices
- Improve agency management, operations, and programming
- Refine the design, delivery, management, and evaluation of staff training programs
- Assist in the development of offender programs and services, including reentry services

When appropriate, NIC may also cover the costs of practitioners' visits to another agency to observe effective practices.

Exclusive training in select NIC courses may be available for some agencies, though within designated funding limits. The collective cost to NIC, including training expenses for instruction, course preparation, onsite work, travel, and technical assistance reporting must not exceed the funding limit. Agencies must agree to defray the costs for reproducing materials provided by NIC, the cost for reserving the facilities in which NIC will conduct the training, audio-visual equipment needed for the training, and any additional costs related to agency participants attending the training.

### **Visit the NIC website for more information.**

[www.nicic.gov](http://www.nicic.gov)



**Justice Center**  
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

The CSG Justice Center and the U.S Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance are accepting applications from supervision agencies to participate in the Smart Supervision Resident Analyst (SSRA) program, which will embed an

experienced data analyst full-time for one year in participating agencies at no cost.

### **Apply through our streamlined process by January 8, 2025.**

[www.csgjusticecenter.org/2024/12/10/apply-now-for-new-smart-supervision-resident-analysts-program-to-increase-supervision-agencies-data-analysis-capacity/](http://www.csgjusticecenter.org/2024/12/10/apply-now-for-new-smart-supervision-resident-analysts-program-to-increase-supervision-agencies-data-analysis-capacity/)

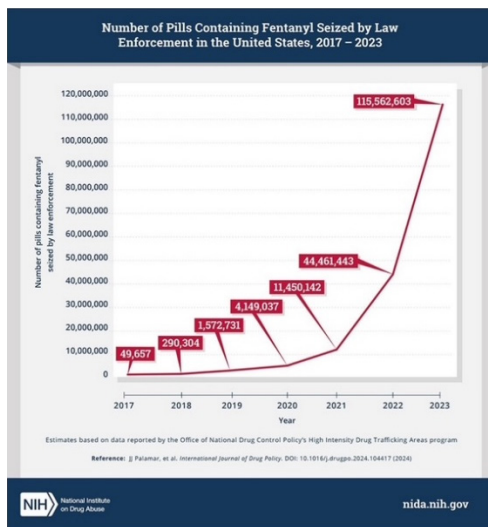
SSRA is open to all supervision agencies (i.e., Tribal, state, and county probation and pretrial supervision offices, as well as probation and parole agencies located within or outside of departments of correction). This opportunity is funded through the FY22 Smart Supervision: Grants, Tools, and Technical Assistance to Facilitate Change program and builds on the success of the Resident Corrections Analyst initiative, which places embedded analysts in departments of corrections.

[www.csgjusticecenter.org/projects/state-corrections-data-analysts-in-residence/](http://www.csgjusticecenter.org/projects/state-corrections-data-analysts-in-residence/)

Contact Chandrika Derricho at [cderricho@csg.org](mailto:cderricho@csg.org) if you have any questions about the project or to find out if it's the right fit for your supervision agency or department.

## Corporate Corner

The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports an increase in the seizure of pills containing fentanyl. This increase is nearly 50-fold from the beginning of 2018 to the end of 2021. The number of pills seized more than doubled by the end of 2021.

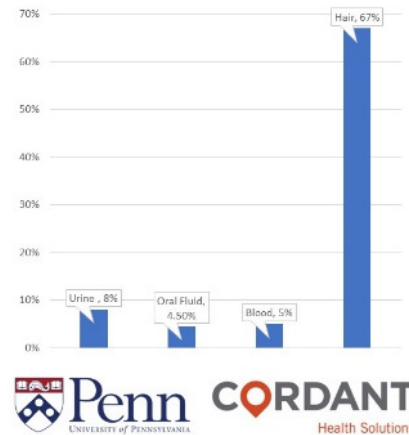


### Detect Drugs 60% More of the Time with Hair

In a study of 250 donors providing blood, urine, oral fluid, and hair for drug testing, 67% of hair samples revealed undisclosed prescription and/or illicit drugs not detected in other matrices.

Detection of undisclosed prescription drugs and illicit compounds in hair: Utility when onboarding new patients (2023). Presented at the International Conference on Opioids, Boston, MA.

4-Matrix Comparison of the Same Donor



The ability to reliably detect substance use is important when implementing treatment strategies. One study of 250 donors, showed 67% of hair samples revealed undisclosed prescription and/or illicit drugs not detected in other matrices.

Micro-Distributing is a leading provider of drug and alcohol testing products and services.

The STATHAIR Test Solution offers:

- Results in minutes
- 90 day window of detection
- Turn key laboratory confirmation process



[www.micro-distributing.com](http://www.micro-distributing.com)



HAPPY  
*Holidays*

**NAPE wishes to thank you for  
your support throughout 2024.**

Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season.

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## Join the NAPE Network

We invite members to share information about NAPE with other community supervision executives to help expand our network and strengthen our opportunities, data, and expertise. Affordable annual NAPE membership options are available and can be purchased/renewed at [napehome.org](http://napehome.org)

- Individual (recurring discount available)
- Retired
- Organizational
- Corporate

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NAPE is dedicated to enhancing the professionalism and effectiveness in the field of community corrections by creating a national network for executives, bringing about positive change in the field, and making available a pool of experts in community corrections management, program development, training, and research.

Learn more: [napehome.org](http://napehome.org)

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