



Community Justice Support Center

Policy & Procedures –

II. Participant Referrals

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II. Participant Referrals

Effective Date: 2/1/2026 Annual Review Date: 2/1/2027 Approved By: Vincent Lorenti, OCC Executive Director

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all business referred to the Community Justice Support Centers (Support Centers) adhere to carefully structured protocols that incorporate evidence-based practices, statutory requirements, and operational considerations.

Definitions

Contractor	Agency that is contracted to run the Support Center
Contractor Staff	Employees of the contracted agency running the Support Center
OCC Leadership	Executive Director and Deputy Director of the Office of Community Corrections

Acronyms

Acronym	Terminology
CBT	Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
CJSC/CJSCs or Support Centers	Community Justice Support Center(s)
CPCS	Committee for Public Counsel Services
CSP	Community Service Program
EBP	Evidence-based practice
ISA	Intergovernmental Service Agreement
IST	Intensive Supervision with Treatment
LS/RNR	Level of Service/Risk, Need, Responsivity
MPS	Massachusetts Probation Service
Multi-D	Multidisciplinary Team
OCC	Office of Community Corrections
ORAS	Ohio Risk Assessment System
ORAS-CST	Ohio Risk Assessment System – Community Supervision Tool
PAMI	Promoting Awareness of Motivational Incentives
PO	Probation/Parole Officer
TCU/DS	Texas Christian University Drug Screen 5

Metrics/Outcomes: Referrals

- Percent of Pathways by Referrals
- Percent of Referring Agency Categories

Quality Assurance Measures: Referrals

2.1 Eligibility & Exclusionary Criteria

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the OCC that Community Justice Support Centers (Support Centers) provide evidence-based programs that are intended as intermediate sanctions for eligible individuals.¹ Intermediate sanctions are justice interventions that are more intensive than traditional community-based criminal justice supervision but are not incarceration. These interventions provide an alternative to incarceration for those at moderate or high risk for recidivism when incarceration is not appropriate or necessary and are intended to reduce the risk to reoffend. The Centers provide treatment, support, and help participants make real change to heal, have better opportunities, and increase safety in our communities.

In addition to acting as an alternative to incarceration, Support Centers are also available to:

- Deliver services or monitor justice-involved individuals in lieu of bail or as a condition of release,²
- Provide case management services to participants at lower risk using Support Center and community-based resources,
- Support justice-involved individuals while on community supervision, and to
- Support individuals returning to the community after a period of incarceration.

Support Centers integrate community-based and evidence-based services such as treatment, education, and career services with accountability measures such as reporting/check-ins/program attendance, drug and alcohol screening, and community service.

Procedures

A. Eligibility

The resources of the Support Centers can be accessed by:

- Any person that has a criminal matter pending against them,
- Any person that has been convicted of a crime and is subject to criminal justice supervision such as probation, parole, or pre-release supervision at a correctional institution, or
- Any person that has been formerly incarcerated.

B. Exclusionary Criteria*

In accordance with GL c. 211F, s.3,³ individuals may not be sentenced to a Support Center instant offense is a crime that results in serious bodily harm or death to another person; rape, attempted rape or sexual assault; or a crime involving the use of a firearm.

Exclusionary criteria **only apply to individuals who are referred to a Support Center via the Intensive Supervision with Treatment pathway** (pre- and post-disposition) **and only if the charge is related to the instant offense for which the referral has been made** (i.e. past criminal history does not fall under the exclusions). Other pathways are not included in these exclusions. It is important to note that there are some nuances to these exclusions:

- a. Convicted of a crime that resulted in serious bodily harm or death to another person, except in situations where negligence was the primary reason for harm or death.
 - **Individuals are excluded from Support Centers for convictions of serious bodily harm or death only if that is the conviction for which the person is being sentenced to the Support Center. Serious injury includes injury that results in permanent disfigurement, loss or impairment of a bodily function, limb or organ, or a substantial risk of death.*

¹ G. L. c. 211F, § 3

² G. L. c. 276, §§ 57, 58, and 58A

³ See Policy & Procedures [2.2: Pathways and Referral Process](#) for additional information on pathways

- b. Convicted of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault. (see Related Information b. Massachusetts Offenses Requiring Registration as Sex Offender)
 - **Individuals convicted of sex offenses or who are registered sex offenders may still access services at a Support Center; the exclusion only applies if the sentence to the Support Center is for a current conviction of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault.*
- c. Convicted of a crime that involved the use of a firearm.
 - **Individuals are only excluded from Support Centers if the sentencing offense is for a crime involving the use of firearms. The possession of a firearm in relation to the sentence is not grounds for exclusion. For example, if an individual has been found guilty on two charges, one of which includes the use of a firearm, but the individual is sentenced to the Support Center on a non-firearm-related charge, that individual does not fall under the exclusionary criteria.*

In situations in which the appropriateness of the referral is unclear, staff should contact the OCC Executive Director who will consult with the legal department as needed.

Related Information & Resources

- a. [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 211F, Section 3, Chapter 276, Section 57, Chapter 276, Section 58, and Chapter 276, Section 58A](#)
- b. [Massachusetts Offenses Requiring Registration as Sex Offender](#)
- c. [Participant Information for Ralph Gants Project](#)
- d. Debunking the Myths of Community Justice Support Centers

Standards

ALL RISE. (2023). [ADULT TREATMENT COURT BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS - ALL RISE](#)

- STANDARD I. A: TARGET POPULATION – OBJECTIVE ELIGIBILITY AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

AMERICAN PROBATION AND PAROLE ASSOCIATION. (2024). [APPA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY SUPERVISION](#)

- STANDARD 1.5: SENTENCING TO PROBATION & PAROLE RELEASE – AGENCIES SHOULD HAVE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ESTABLISHED PRACTICES THAT ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE COLLABORATION WITH AGENCIES THAT SERVE INDIVIDUALS ON COMMUNITY SUPERVISION OR THAT HAVE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES THAT CAN SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY SUPERVISION PROCESS.
- STANDARD 2.1: THE COMMUNITY SUPERVISION AGENCY – AGENCIES SHOULD WORK WITH THE COURTS AND RELEASING AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE THAT TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SUPERVISION ARE REASONABLE, TAILORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL, NOT OVERLY BURDENSOME, AND INCLUDE A FOCUS ON CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS

2.2: Pathways & Referral Process

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the OCC that criminal-legal system agencies are authorized to refer statutorily eligible individuals to community-based programming and/or support services that adhere to best- and evidence-based practices.

This policy:

- Defines the statutory bases, or pathways, to a Support Center,
- Provides well-defined procedures for Support Center staff,
- Ensures transparency for potential Support Center participants,
- Ensures Support Center staff have the necessary information to begin to develop an individualized participant plan, if applicable, and
- Facilitates multi-disciplinary collaboration using community-based services that serve justice-involved individuals.

Statutory Bases

The statutory bases, or pathways, to the Support Center are:

- **Intensive Supervision with Treatment (IST)** pathway is based on the statutory provisions that authorize the court to order participation in services at the Support Center as an alternative to incarceration, either pre- or post-disposition.⁴
 - o *Post-Disposition:* A court can sentence a person to the Support Center in lieu of a period of incarceration. A sentence to the Support Center is imposed as a special condition of probation.⁵ This IST pathway is also available to the Parole Board for the purposes of parole supervision.⁶
 - o *Pretrial:* A court can enter an order of IST in the pretrial phase of a case when the defendant consents to that order.⁷
- The **Pretrial Services Program (PSP)** pathway is the statutory provision⁸ that authorizes the court to order a person to a special program at the Support Center designed to increase the likelihood that a person will appear for their next required court date.
- The **Probation Officer Referral for a court-ordered program (POR)** is the statutory provision⁹ that authorizes the probation officer to refer a person that is subject to probation supervision to the Support Center to satisfy a probation condition for a court-ordered program that is available at the Support Center. For example, where the court orders a person to “enter a GED program” the probation officer can refer the person to the Support Center to satisfy that condition. The statute states that service provision under this authority is dependent upon whether programming is available at the Support Center. To that end, the OCC reserves programming for those at moderate to very high risk on the risk/needs assessment.
- The **Ralph Gants Project (Gants Project)** is a special program at the Support Center designed to address the immediate and emerging needs, especially those related to responsivity, of those under probation supervision¹⁰ or returning to the community after a period of incarceration.¹¹

⁴ [M.G.L. 211F §3](#), [M.G. L. 211F §4](#), [M.G.L. 276 §57](#), [M.G.L. 276 §58](#), and [M.G.L. 276 §58A](#)

⁵ [M.G.L. 211F §3](#)

⁶ [M.G.L. 211F §4](#)

⁷ [M.G.L. 276 §57](#), [M.G.L. 276 §58](#), and [M.G.L. 276 §58A](#)

⁸ [M.G.L. 211F §3A](#)

⁹ [M.G.L. 211F §3B](#)

¹⁰ [M.G.L. 211F §3B](#)

¹¹ [G.A.A. 2023 Line Item 0339-1003](#)

Procedures

Once an individual has been sentenced or referred to a Support Center, there are several forms that need to be completed by the judge, probation officer, other supervising agency, or community-based organization, and then provided to the Support Center. The referral form, documents, and services vary based on the type of participant pathway to the Support Center, as outlined below:

A. Referral Types Requiring Court Order¹²

Intensive Supervision with Treatment (IST) as an alternative to incarceration, either pretrial or post-disposition:

Who Can Make this Referral	Required in Referral Packet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Massachusetts Probation - Parole - Sheriffs - DOC - US Probation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CJSC Programming (Supervised) Referral on Courtyard or accessible through MassCourts code OCC, revised 2/4/25 - Community Corrections Order revised 9/25/22 - Conditions of Probation for individuals on post-disposition IST - Pretrial Conditions of Release Order (PTCOR) category B conditions, for individuals on pretrial IST, requires person's consent - Police Report - CORI Report - Court Activity Record Information (CARI) - ELMO Curfew Schedule if applicable - ORAS Score Sheet and Interview Notes if available
Services Offered	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk/Needs Assessment - Treatment Planning for individuals at moderate to very high risk based on assessment - Case Management for individuals at low or low-moderate risk 	

Pretrial Services as a condition of pretrial release:

Who Can Make this Referral	Required in Referral Packet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Massachusetts Probation - <i>Category B Conditions of Release, no consent required</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CJSC Programming (Supervised) Referral on Courtyard or accessible through MassCourts code OCC, revised 2/4/25 - Pretrial Conditions of Release Order (PTCOR) revised 10/22/19 - Court Activity Record Information (CARI) - CORI Report - ORAS Score Sheet and Interview Notes if available
Services Offered	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notification of next court date - Case Management for emerging needs - Drug testing, if ordered 	

¹² Note on referrals via Interstate Compact: we can only accept participants for programming that is very similar to the conditions from the originating state. Massachusetts generally cannot add new/different conditions without the matter being brought before the court, so only states that have ordered community corrections-based conditions may be accepted at the Support Centers. If your Center receives an interstate compact referral, Program Managers should reach out to their Regional Manager for guidance.

Probation Officer Referral post-disposition or pretrial probation as a disposition for completion of a court-ordered program available at the CJSC:

Who Can Make this Referral	Required in Referral Packet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Massachusetts Probation <p><i>*Note: not available to US Federal Probation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CJSC Programming (Supervised) Referral on Courtyard or accessible through MassCourts code OCC, revised 2/4/25 - Court Activity Record Information (CARI) - ORAS Score Sheet – required <i>The individual must score at least moderate need in the applicable ORAS domain; CJSC staff should not be completing the ORAS</i>
Services Offered	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in court-ordered programming that is available at the CJSC <p><i>*Note: only one program can be assigned at a time</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Groups offered at the CJSCs include Responsible Thinking, Relationships and Communication, Addressing Alcohol and Drug Use, Healthy Relationships Family and Social Support, Education, and Career Services 	

B. Voluntary Referral Types

The Ralph Gants Project Voluntary Services (Gants Services) for help with basic or emerging needs through the Ralph Gants Project:

Who Can Make this Referral	Required in Referral Packet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Massachusetts Probation (upon agreement) - Parole (reentry participants) - Sheriffs (reentry participants) - DOC (reentry participants) - US Federal Probation (reentry participants) - Walk-in participants who have spent at least one night in custody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ralph Gants Project (Voluntary) Referral on Courtyard or accessible through MassCourts code RGRF, revised 2/4/25 - ORAS Score Sheet – required for MA Probation referrals if participation is for CBT group <i>The individual must score at least moderate need in the applicable ORAS domain; CJSC staff should not complete the ORAS for these referrals</i>
Services Offered	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CBT Programming <i>Only available for MA Probation referrals with a completed ORAS resulting in moderate to very high risk level</i> - Case Management to address basic and emerging needs 	

C. Suggested Referral Practice (not required)

For purposes of streamlining the referral/intake process, it may be helpful to use a generic intake email address in the event that there is turnover in Center staff. For example, a Center may instruct all referring agencies to email “intake@lowellCJSC.org” at the time of the referral for notification purposes.

Related Information & Resources

a. [Ralph Gants Project Description and Contacts](#)

Standards

AMERICAN PROBATION AND PAROLE ASSOCIATION. (2024). [APPA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY SUPERVISION](#)

- STANDARD 1.7: THE COMMUNITY SUPERVISION AGENCY – AGENCIES SHOULD HAVE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ESTABLISHED PRACTICES THAT ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE COLLABORATION WITH AGENCIES THAT SERVE INDIVIDUALS ON COMMUNITY SUPERVISION OR THAT HAVE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES THAT CAN SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY SUPERVISION PROCESS.
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