

# Strategic Plan 2012

**The New York City Model of Probation**



**Michael R. Bloomberg**  
**Mayor**

**Vincent N. Schiraldi**  
**Commissioner**

# Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to present the New York City Department of Probation Strategic Plan 2012.

The Department of Probation (DOP) has made significant progress toward the goal we set for ourselves last year, which was to establish the NYC Model of Probation as a national standard. Between Fiscal Years 2009 and 2011, we achieved significant advances in our most critical indicators:



## **Adult**

- The annual rate of adult probation clients who were re-incarcerated dropped by 22%
- The felony re-arrest rate dropped by 13%
- The submission of early discharge requests increased by six-fold
- The rate of violations filed by DOP dropped by 37%

## **Juvenile**

- The annual rate of juvenile probation clients who were re-incarcerated dropped by 25%
- The felony re-arrest rate dropped by 10%
- The number of cases successfully adjusted diverted from court increased by 39%, and 89% of diverted youth successfully completed their adjustment plan
- The rate of violations of probation filed by DOP decreased by 26%

As proud as we are of these gains, we know that much more needs to be done. In order to improve long-term outcomes for people in the justice system, we must continue to make real and fundamental changes in how we interact with them.

DOP is proud to be the lead agency on eight of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's Young Men's Initiative (YMI) programs. The Young Men's Initiative, which was announced by the Mayor in August 2011, is the nation's boldest and most comprehensive effort to tackle the broad disparities that are slowing the advancement of black and Latino young men.

The centerpiece of DOP's roster of YMI programs is the Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON), which represents an entirely new approach for the way that we interact with our clients and their communities. We are investing our most valuable resource—our staff—in the neighborhoods where clients live. The NeON initiative will link people on probation to quality opportunities, resources and services in the neighborhoods where they live. In some neighborhoods, people will now be able to meet with their probation officers at a close-to-home NeON Satellite Office, which will be co-located with community-based organizations and partner with local stakeholders.

As you read our 2012 Strategic Plan, I hope you will notice that the NYC Model of Probation embodies the same ideals that make New York City great—innovative thinking, cooperation, optimism, and mutual respect. As long as we work hard and stay true to these ideals, I am confident we will continue improving client outcomes and help New York City remain the safest large city in America.

Vincent N. Schiraldi  
Commissioner

## Mission

The New York City Department of Probation helps build stronger and safer communities by working with and supervising people on probation, fostering positive change in their decision-making and behavior, and expanding opportunities for them to move out of the criminal and juvenile justice systems through meaningful education, employment, health services, family engagement and civic participation.

## Vision

The New York City Model of Probation advances public safety and improves communities by adopting a Justice Reinvestment framework. Justice Reinvestment is a two-part approach that focuses resources on individuals who pose the highest risk to public safety and reinvests in the communities where people on probation live. By partnering with government agencies, community organizations and residents, DOP:

- Matches individuals to appropriate probation supervision and support services based on their needs, interests and risk to public safety.
- Rewards people under supervision with incentives when they do right by themselves and their communities.
- Establishes a Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) with community organizations, government agencies, local businesses and residents to expand client access to quality opportunities, resources and services that build on their strengths and reduce involvement with criminal and juvenile justice systems.
- Uses current research and best available information to inform policy and practice.
- Reinvests in communities where people on probation live in ways that support positive individual and community outcomes.
- Empowers staff by integrating them into decision-making processes, recognizing their achievements, rewarding positive change and providing the information and training needed to implement our ambitious priorities.

# Statement of Values

**Public Safety:** We believe that fostering opportunities for people on probation to move out of criminal and juvenile justice systems through meaningful education, employment, and family and civic engagement is the most effective way to advance public safety.

**Respect:** We recognize the inherent dignity of all human beings and respect colleagues, people on probation, people harmed by crime, partners in government, the community and the public. We also recognize the authority we have over people on probation, and strive to exercise that authority prudently to avoid doing harm.

**Organizational Excellence:** We are dedicated to the highest standards of professionalism and strive to create an organizational culture that promotes client success, supports staff development and innovation, honors and encourages staff input into agency reforms, and employs proven management practices.

**Evidence- Based Practice:** The objective and responsible use of current research and the best available data inform our decisions about practice, policy and programming in order to produce outcomes that are just and effective.

**Restorative Practice:** We believe in giving people on probation, people harmed by crime, and communities the opportunity to manage conflict by restoring relationships damaged by crime and delinquency.

**Justice Reinvestment:** We believe that by focusing resources on individuals on probation who pose the greatest risks to public safety and reinvesting in the communities where people on probation live, DOP can best enhance public safety and strengthen individuals and communities. We believe that people on probation can be assets to their communities.

**Partnership:** We believe that developing strong partnerships with other criminal and juvenile justice agencies, human and social service organizations, and families and communities is the best way to express our vision and achieve our mission and goals.

**Accountability:** We have a strong focus on accountability and use data, as well as qualitative evaluation, to drive decision-making and adjust our approach as indicated. Our performance measures assess progress, test new innovations and demonstrate what works. Continuous quality improvement is our goal.

# The New York City Model of Probation

## Goal 1: Safer Communities

Strategy 1 - Target Resources to People on Probation at High-Risk of Reoffending

Strategy 2 - Create and Rapidly Administer a Continuum of Graduated Responses

## Goal 2: Opportunities, Resources and Services

Strategy 3 - Establish the Neighborhood Opportunity Network

Strategy 4 - Prioritize Education, Work and Strength-Based Development

Strategy 5 - Realign Juvenile Justice Services

Strategy 6 - Broker Opportunities and Eliminate Barriers to Success

## Goal 3: Organizational Excellence

Strategy 7 - Strengthen Professional Development

Strategy 8 - Adopt Best Practices

Strategy 9 - Embrace Organizational Culture of Client Success

## Goal 4: Strong Partnerships and Community Engagement

Strategy 10 - Establish Partnerships with Communities

Strategy 11 - Collaborate with City, State and National Partners

Strategy 12 - Build Broad Support for DOP Priorities

## Goal 5: Measuring Success

Strategy 13 - Streamline Data Collection and Improve Analysis Capacity

Strategy 14 - Promote Accountability

# Goal 1: Safer Communities



*Advancing public safety in New York City's neighborhoods*

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Our highest priority is to advance public safety and reduce recidivism in all New York City neighborhoods. We can best achieve this goal by concentrating our resources on probation clients who pose the greatest risk to public safety, reducing required contact with individuals who pose a low risk to public safety and/or have a proven record of success, and investing agency, staff and client resources and efforts in neighborhoods where people on probation live.

Our two core strategies for achieving this goal are 1) focus on high-risk clients through programs and practices with proven rehabilitative results, and 2) create a continuum of actions that recognize positive behavior and impose quick and certain graduated responses for violating the conditions of probation.

By targeting resources to clients who pose the highest-risk to public safety, DOP:

- Reduces re-arrests
- Reduces failures to report
- Reduces unnecessary violations of probation
- Reduces intensity and frequency of supervision when appropriate
- Increases early discharges for people on probation who maintain a record of success
- Avoids unnecessary incarceration
- Diverts juveniles from formal court processing when appropriate

The continuum of swiftly administered graduated responses includes:

- Individual Achievement Plans with specific goals that match the interests, needs and risks of each probation client
- Partnerships with law enforcement and community organizations to enhance supervision and the prospect of rehabilitation
- Case management tools to track and respond to milestones and setbacks for clients
- Assessment tools that reflect client assets, interests and validated risks to public safety

# Goal 2: Opportunities, Resources and Services

*Establishing the Neighborhood Opportunity Network*

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People on probation are more likely to be successful if they have access to a wide range of opportunities that build on their strengths, needs and interests. Consistent with our vision for Justice Reinvestment, the Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) maximizes use of valuable resources and services in neighborhoods where clients live.

Key NeON elements include:

- Joining and enriching local networks of educators, businesses, social service providers, law enforcement, community groups, and residents to enhance client's access to opportunities, resources and services
- Probation officers and clients working together in a community-setting
- DOP staff and clients engaging in efforts to benefit the neighborhoods in which clients live

For juveniles and young adults on probation, we will use proven and promising practices that:

- Develop Individual Achievement Plans
- Dramatically expand youth development opportunities
- Improve engagement with educational opportunities
- Foster mentoring relationships between young clients, their probation officers and positive adult role models
- Serve them closer to the communities where they live, ranging from school- and community-based to residential programs
- Prevent them from being unnecessarily confined in distant, state facilities

To help eliminate barriers to success we will:

- Provide clear guidelines for successfully completing probation
- Create opportunities for meaningful community service and civic engagement
- Partner with organizations that link people to education and work in growth industries
- Facilitate access to benefits
- Remove legal barriers to employment, education, housing and civic participation to facilitate success
- Enhance client achievement through the use of evidence-based practices

# Goal 3: Organizational Excellence

*Achieving client success through a professional staff, proven practices and strong partnerships*

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As a state of the art agency, the Department of Probation aims to set the national standard for achieving probation client success through a highly-trained professional staff, proven and promising practices, and strong partnerships. Fulfilling this goal requires the coordinated efforts of all staff.

We strengthen staff skills by providing on-going education, training and coaching that:

- Incorporates evidence-based and promising practices
- Shares relevant knowledge and research
- Builds technical and administrative skills
- Strengthens the agency as a learning community

We will develop and adopt management systems and practices that:

- Improve efficiency
- Communicate clear expectations
- Rely upon sophisticated management information systems
- Encourage staff and client participation in agency decision-making
- Respond to employee and client suggestions
- Solicit staff, client and community input

We embrace an organizational culture that promotes client success by:

- Adopting supervision practices grounded in professional development
- Upgrading facilities to include better resources for staff and clients
- Transforming waiting rooms into Resource Hubs
- Ensuring that our organizational structure meets our needs
- Improving staff evaluation practices
- Recognizing staff and client achievements



# Goal 4: Strong Partnerships and Community Engagement

*Building effective neighborhood networks*



Probation clients are more likely to succeed when they have strong, positive connections to the communities where they live. By working with local partners to provide a continuum of opportunities, and engaging in efforts to benefit the neighborhoods that have been harmed by crime, we can help build safer, healthier, more beautiful and sustainable communities.

We establish partnerships by:

- Creating the Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON)
- Inviting stakeholders and residents to collaborate on projects and programs
- Engaging people harmed by crime to help restore community and individual relationships
- Leveraging existing community assets
- Empowering clients to participate in civic activities that improve their communities
- Establishing NeON Advisory Councils
- Co-locating staff with community organizations and working with clients in community settings

We collaborate with stakeholders by:

- Identifying, working with and learning from strategic partners
- Working across sectors to solve complex issues that affect probation clients, their families and communities

We build broad support for our priorities through:

- Public forums
- Media outreach
- A website that provides useful information for people on probation, service providers, strategic partners and the public

# Goal 5: Measuring Success

*Assessing progress, testing innovations, using new technology, and demonstrating what works*



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Our staff and clients are accountable for positive outcomes. New performance measures better assess progress, test innovations, use new technology, and demonstrate what works.

To improve internal analysis capacity we:

- Streamline and improve data collection
- Adopt new technologies to share data and analysis across our offices and with stakeholders
- Establish working partnerships with researchers

To promote accountability for clients and staff we:

- Define and rigorously use specific and relevant data to drive decision-making
- Establish incentives that encourage positive results
- Advance public safety by adopting evidence-based, validated risk and needs assessment instruments to guide supervision and decision-making
- Solicit feedback from staff, clients and communities



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