

An Analysis of Educational Levels and Experience of Probation and Parole Agents in the
Wisconsin Department of Corrections

by

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ABSTRACT

Little research has been undertaken to analyze the occupation of a probation officer and little objective data has been collected to support various viewpoints on the educational preparation necessary to perform the occupational duties effectively. The literature tends to support higher levels of education due to the demanding and wide variety of skills and competencies required to perform this job. The most accurate descriptions of these occupational expectations were written many years ago and still hold relevance and a high degree of accuracy today in understanding what probation officers actually continue to do. This research project attempted to clarify tasks and duties as the position exists today in Wisconsin for the purpose of refining the understanding of what an appropriate preparatory education would be. This project attempted to contribute to the existing and dated body of material relevant to preparation for the probation officer position. A survey of current probation officers in Wisconsin was implemented to collect data about their

experience with various job tasks and duties at their time of hire, and relevant to their various educations, internship experiences, and other factors. Opinions of current officers were solicited as to their beliefs about the appropriate level of education necessary. The resulting data supports the current hiring policy of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and provides some empirical supported for it, although limited at this level of inquiry. This project supported the need for higher education beyond the two-year technical college level for adequate skills and competencies to be developed to perform as a probation officer effectively.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
List of Tables	vii
Chapter I: Introduction.....	I
<i>Background</i>	1
<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	6
<i>Purpose of the Study</i>	7
<i>Research Questions</i>	9
<i>Importance</i>	9
<i>Limitations of the Study</i>	10
<i>Methodology</i>	12
Chapter II: Review of Literature.....	13
<i>Introduction</i>	13
<i>Historical Development</i>	13
<i>Problems of Definition</i>	14
<i>Expansion of the Field</i>	22
<i>Summary</i>	23
Chapter III: Methodology	25
<i>Introduction</i>	25
<i>Subject Selection and Description</i>	25
<i>Instrumentation</i>	25
<i>Data Collection</i>	26

<i>Data Analysis</i>	26
<i>Limitations</i>	27
Chapter IV: Results.....	29
<i>Introduction</i>	29
<i>Job Description Analysis</i>	29
<i>Demographic Information</i>	29
Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusions, Recommendations.....	40
<i>Introduction</i>	40
<i>Summary</i>	40
<i>Conclusions</i>	42
<i>Recommendations for Probation and Parole Agents</i>	43
<i>Recommendations for Department of Corrections</i>	43
<i>Recommendations for Educators</i>	44
<i>Recommendations for Further Study</i>	44
References.....	47
Appendix A: Position Summary	50
Appendix B: Summary of Responses to Question 11.....	70
Appendix C: Survey Tool.....	72

List of Tables

Table 1: <i>Wage Comparisons</i>	4
Table 2: <i>Age of Respondents</i>	30
Table 3: <i>Length of Service</i>	30
Table 4: <i>Pre-hire Education</i>	31
Table 5: <i>Necessary Skills and Attributes for an Agent</i>	33
Table 6: <i>Necessary Skills and Attributes for an Agent and Most Difficult to Attain</i>	35
Table 7: <i>Respondent's Most Challenging Skill Areas by Educational Level</i>	36
Table 8: <i>Military Experienced and Educational Levels</i>	37
Table 9: <i>Skills Indicated by Participants with Intern or Limited Term Employment Experience</i>	38

Chapter I: Introduction

Background

The State of Wisconsin - Department of Corrections (DOC) currently employs 1,724.73 staff in its Division of Community Corrections, with 1,224.80 of those being full-time probation and parole agents (Department of Corrections, 2007). The history of the DOC's hiring policies in the area of probation and parole has evolved as societal attitudes and politics have changed (M. Lew, personal communication, September 29, 2007). Mr. Lew's 35 years of expertise as a corrections professional began in 1971 as a management specialist. Over the years he worked on many DOC projects and programs. He was also a field supervisor of probation and parole units, as well as an assistant regional chief overseeing an entire region of probation and parole agents. Initially, agents had attained master's degrees prior to hire and usually in social work. This was the case into the late 1960's. In the early 1970's, the DOC had changed its system of classifying agents to an agent one for entry level, a two for objective level, and a three for senior agents. A bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, or counseling was acceptable to be hired as an agent one. In order to move up to an agent two, a master's degree was required, and those who had a master's prior to hire could be hired as an agent two from the start. To advance to a three level, an agent had to complete courses at the DOC's academy and level three agents were then considered to be lead workers. There was usually no more than one or two per office. One of the issues prompting change was that minorities were under-represented and the racial balance was extremely disparate. In about 1980, the master's degree requirement was removed and reclassification was based solely upon the accumulation of DOC Academy credits. The system changed again in 1982-1983 to a training credit requirement to advance to an agent two, but then to advance to an agent three, an agent needed an area of specialization. Agents were allowed to

choose an area of interest and the supervisors would assist their staff in getting training from any source that would cooperate with the DOC evaluation process to certify that an agent had accomplished an area of specialization. At this same time, the degree requirement was removed by the law in effect at the time, and the DOC began hiring non-degreed agents. In about 1990, the specialization requirement was removed and in the mid-1990's, the training hour requirement was eliminated, substituted with time in class. This allowed agents to reclassify from one to two to three in about three years if there were no disciplinary or performance problems. In 1997, the DOC changed its hiring criteria for the agent position from a high school diploma and a driver's license to a four year degree or 60 undergraduate credits plus two years of extensively related work experience. Decisions to make these changes have been typically done after work groups of managers from various departments convene, discuss, and make recommendations to upper management and the Bureau of Personal and Human Resources (BPHR). Actual requirements and hiring policies are determined and finalized by BPHR (N. Di Benedetto, personal communication, September 25, 2007). In some cases, legislative action impacts the direction of hiring practices as in the case of Affirmative Action. There has been no evidence found that indicates any of the changes in hiring or training requirements have been based upon empirical research, but rather upon departmental needs, politics, or legal developments and changes. This is not to say that research results haven't been considered or haven't had any bearing upon decision-making at any point in time.

The changes made in hiring practices by the Department of Corrections via the BPHR now require a minimum of 60 undergraduate college credits which can be obtained through the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). This is one of the least expensive of the available options, serving approximately one in nine adults in the state, equating to approximately 460,000

students per year. Typically, two years of full-time course work as opposed to four years at a college or university cuts not only the expense, but the time involved prior to entering the workforce, in half. Among its goals is the provision of a variety of educational options directed toward specific careers. The system prides itself on a commitment to delivering training in high-skill, high-wage occupations (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2007). Probation and parole agent is the highest paying, highest skill job at entry level of all available job options in the corrections field. The future is stable and a modest level of growth is expected (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006-2007).

Four of the WTCS campuses offer an Associate Degree program in Criminal Justice – Corrections. For Criminal Justice – Corrections Science graduates of the WTCS, there are a variety of job options available. Many jobs relating to the area of correctional services are classified by Wisconsin's WORKnet under Community and Social Service Occupations, also known as Human Service Occupations (Wisconsin WORKnet, 2006). These occupational titles are Court Liaison, Youth Tracker, Juvenile Probation Officer, Program Specialist, Dispatcher, Federal Probation Technician, Home Detention Specialist, Shelter Manager, and Rehabilitation Specialist, to name only a portion of what is available. In a general statement of occupational descriptions reported by the Bureau of Labor,

...they assist professionals from a wide variety of fields such as psychology, rehabilitation, or social work, to provide client services, as well as support for the families. May assist clients in identifying available benefits and social and community services and help clients obtain them. May assist social workers with developing, organizing, and conducting programs to prevent and resolve problems relevant to

substance abuse, human relationships, rehabilitation, or adult daycare (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, n.p.).

Everything stated in this description is contained within the job description of a probation agent with the exception of adult daycare (Department of Corrections-Human Resources, 2007).

One typical goal upon graduation from the Criminal Justice-Corrections Science program is the securing of a relatively high paying job option. Most of the job titles mentioned above fall into the low to median ranges in the table below. Nationally, this is how areas of similar work compare.

Table 1

Wage Comparisons

	Lowest	Median	Median (State Gov't)	Top 10%
Human Services	\$15,000.00	\$24,270.00	\$29,270.00	\$39,600.00
Corrections Officer	\$22,600.00	\$33,000.00	\$33,080.00	\$54,000.00
Probation Officer	\$26,300.00	\$39,600.00	\$39,800.00	\$66,600.00

(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006-2007, n.p.)

In Wisconsin, the current starting wage for a State Probation and Parole Agent is \$33,727.20 (Department of Corrections-Human Resources, 2007). There are a good number of entry level positions available each year in Wisconsin. Statistics provided by the Department of Corrections (DOC) indicate that 43 agents were hired and went through agent basic training in the last half of 2004, 79 in 2005, 104 in 2006, and 74 as of July 2007 (N. Di Benedetto, personal communication, September 25, 2007).

At all four of Wisconsin's technical colleges offering Criminal Justice - Corrections Science, acknowledge in their catalogs that additional education will probably be needed to become a probation and parole agent. This has been the technical colleges published information and agrees with the DOC's own elevation of educational requirements. One of Wisconsin's Technical Colleges, Moraine Park, specifically states in their Corrections Program Description the new DOC policy of hiring those with the two years of related work experience (Moraine Park Technical College Catalog, 2006). It is interesting that prior to 2007, there has not been an incremental jump to a two-year college educational requirement by the DOC. The average age of the technical college student is about 28 years (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2006) and maturity has often been cited by correctional field supervisors as a factor in becoming a successful agent.

In the 1950's, The National Probation and Parole Association (NPPA) recommended that all probation officers hold a bachelor's degree supplemented by at least one year of graduate study or full time field experience, on the assumption that an educated officer is a more competent and mature individual and thus is in a better position to efficiently perform the varied functions of the probation officer. (Comanor as cited in Eskridge, 1979, p. 41)

There is some disparity here in that the four year college student tends to be younger than a two-year college student, although the gap has seemed to be closing as more and more adults return to school to make career changes and advancements. Whisnant, Sullivan, and Slayton (1992) reported results of their study on age of students as confirming what their literature review had established previously; "...older, non-traditional students perform at higher academic levels than do younger, traditional students." (p. 5). They also added that it appears to be qualities brought to

the academic setting with non-traditional students that accounts for their higher levels of achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Technical college graduates have not been meeting the hiring requirements of the past to become employed as probation and parole agents in Wisconsin, the highest paying position available within their area of concentration. To date, no clear evidence has been presented that a four year degree is necessary other than perhaps two year graduates are competing with four year graduates for the same jobs. The DOC believes it is clear that by raising the educational standard for hire, the DOC has an expectation that they will be better served in some manner. Furthermore, the areas of deficiency have not been specifically identified. It is helpful to have an industry standard or model to use in making comparisons and assessments, however, although a standard exists, it has not been adopted by all agencies, including Wisconsin (Evans, 2006). As a result, the tasks and duties of a probation and parole agent in Wisconsin fall under multiple disciplines and all of the duties and tasks do not fit into any one discipline.

In addition, there are many related correctional services provided by agencies often employing those with the same education as the probation and parole agents with two year and four year degrees. There are also many agents working in their field who have two-year and four-year degrees in disciplines other than Criminal Justice-Corrections. It will be helpful for clarification to identify the standards in use as well as to review the very specific duty and task analysis for the occupation of probation and parole agent in Wisconsin.

The occupation of a probation and parole agent generally appears to have been inconsistent in defining itself. Part of the difficulty lies in the governmental nature of the job and the differences in the job from one state to another. In some states, the functions of the

correctional agencies or departments are handled by county governments. In some states, probation officers are armed. There are juvenile probation departments at the state and county levels. The agencies tend to be large and are not dependent upon local opinion and need, as much as they are on their state budgets. Agents are not usually licensed as such.

The most closely related occupation to that of an agent in Wisconsin might be the institution social worker. They are licensed and there are many social workers operating outside of corrections as a field, but under that same license. There are general standards that apply to all of them. There are no probation and parole agents employed by any other private agency in Wisconsin, no licensing requirements, and no control outside of state government.

This study will focus on the opinions of probation and parole agents in Wisconsin and will examine occupational preparation and the perception of differences in ability between the two-year graduate and the four-year graduate.

Purpose of the Study

It is necessary to examine whether technical college students fall short of the desired level of skills, traits, and abilities to be hired as probation and parole agents by the State of Wisconsin. The primary issue is to determine what an individual needs to know to function successfully as a probation and parole agent and in what setting and time period can that potential be delivered to the learner. These questions can be asked while applying Malcolm Knowles basic references to determine learner needs: 1) the perception of the learner, 2) as prescribed by the employer, 3) as conceived by professionals in the field, and 4) as competencies desired by the clientele being served by the learner. Item one provides the point of view for the survey to become part of this study. Item two provides the detailed job skills to be considered. What emerges is the DOC is heavily reliant on items two and three of Knowles basic references

(cited in Smith & Dowling, 1978). Item two appears dominant as the influence of professional opinion from other organizations has not been adhered to in the area of agent education (Eskridge, 1979). Item one, the perception of the learner, is developed in part, via the department's indoctrination process, which includes the material the DOC presents to new-hires. In item four, the clientele served isn't involved as a stakeholder in the planning processes of agent training.

It would be beneficial to know if two-year graduates are truly deficient in some area(s) or if the suspected disparity in hiring is artificial or based upon quantity (four years of college) versus ability, and perhaps other assumptions. This particular issue apparently has not been widely researched and limited data is available. A survey of probation and parole agents and correctional field supervisors, was conducted in January of 2008, to assess skill level and performance correlated to other factors (age, educational level, related work experience, internships). In addition, related research on the competing models of criminal justice education and on the goals, expectations, and standards, was conducted and will suggest if it is possible to deliver the needs of this occupation in a two-year format, or will suggest whether students interested in this career would be better served by preparing for a four-year education.

One approach to the evaluation of tasks, duties, and required knowledge involved in this occupation was to identify and consider the knowledge according to where it is acquired: pre-service or in-service. This was accomplished by using the most current job description of a Wisconsin probation and parole agent and reviewing whether the tasks and duties are learned in on-the-job training or in college settings or both. The desire is to identify those skills the employer is prescribing and to analyze where they are acquired. The in-service learning is the skills that are specifically job-based and the knowledge specific to the Wisconsin DOC that is

delivered to newly hired agents in the Agent Basic Training (ABT). The pre-service learning group is foundational knowledge considered necessary for the carrying out of the actual job requirements. An example of this would be the required need for solid writing skills due to the large amount of report writing, documentation, and written communication needed to perform the job of an agent. The purpose here is to establish whether there is a specific platform of knowledge at the time of hire that facilitates the successful training and carrying out of the job tasks and duties.

Research Questions

The following research questions directed this study.

1. What are the skills and attitudes necessary to become a probation and parole agent?
2. Can the necessary skills and attitudes to become a probation and parole agent be taught in the WCTS?
3. What, if anything, does a four-year college graduate obtain that better qualify those graduates for this position?
4. Does a four-year education provide a better candidate?

Importance

It is in the best interest of the community to have the most capable individuals employed in any protective service occupation. To keep technical college education viable, it is beneficial to review trends and industry decisions for the purpose of making adjustments where necessary. This helps maintain competitiveness of both the WTCS as well as the program graduates. The observations made of evolving issues in education help us to predict future needs and invent the future.

1. Students want to qualify for and be successful in the highest earning categories and positions available. As previously stated, probation and parole agent positions are at the top of the category of corrections occupations and students enrolled in Criminal Justice-Corrections are assumed to be interested in qualifying for those jobs.
2. In the case of this particular occupation, there appears to be an opportunity to develop a more competitive program or concentration in Criminal Justice – Corrections in the WTCS. If deficiencies in the curriculum are present and can be identified and then corrected, it may be possible to improve the level of skill attainable by program graduates and thereby satisfy the DOC hiring standards. If there are elements missing from the program, it is possible that they will be identified by those corrections field supervisors who are the first line overseers of what takes place in the actual performance of job duties. Again, these elements may possibly be added to the program to enhance ability and skill levels of graduates producing more competitive candidates for the highest paying job in their category, Probation and Parole Agent.
3. With the costs of education rising, educators want to maximize the possible outcomes for students. As educators, it is desirable to deliver the best product we can in a competitive market and one in which a primary focus is earning potential upon completion of the degree.

Limitations of the Study

The research sought opinions from professionals in a field that may or may not have distinguished itself as a profession. These individuals are from a variety of disciplines,

backgrounds, and educational levels. It is expected that they all have individual biases. The survey itself is intended to produce generalities.

1. Conclusions drawn will not be able to account for biases on the part of interviewers and those who actually make hiring decisions. They are a group of people who come from various levels of education and various occupational environments prior to community corrections and are likely to have a variety of viewpoints.
2. The tasks and duties of a probation and parole agent vary from state to state and there is a lack of uniformity causing the occupation to be difficult to define, hence, this study will only involve the Wisconsin DOC. Department employees having come from other states may view the issues specific to Wisconsin differently than lifetime correctional employees of the Wisconsin system, having been influenced by their home state.
3. The position description of a probation and parole agent is very broad and at times, ambiguous.
4. There is no control over the honesty of the respondents to survey questions.
5. This study is a preliminary step in the more broad scope of work needed to be done on defining the occupation of probation and parole agent and what education is needed to perform those functions. It is intended to identify generalities to be used for further study and not designed to produce absolute definition of the occupation of probation and parole agent or of the hiring standards employed by the DOC.

6. It is acknowledged that information provided by the DOC may be that which only represents their interests in the best possible light.

Methodology

The data collection phase of this study focused on the issues of the research questions. A survey of current probation and parole agents was used to ask their opinions about needed levels of education, and prior experience they had at the time of hire. This was selected as the best method available to reach a group of agents working throughout the state.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion of the development of Wisconsin state level probation and parole supervision and the skills needed to be a probation agent including a discussion of the problems associated with identifying the best recommendation for pre-service education. Following will be a general discussion of current trends in the research of probation. Through a meta-analysis of the correctional literature, several themes continue to emerge.

Historical Development

Historically, the direction of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) has reduced its educational requirement downward from the master's degree level after formal community supervision first developed in 1932. Beginning with 10 probation officers, the number grew and in the late 1950's, probation supervision had become a common method of reintegrating people with problems back into society. The idea itself was prompted, in part, by the need to assist military personnel with their reintegration to civilian living, but then transformed into a means for monitoring and transitioning criminal offenders (McCarthy & McCarthy, 1984). The earliest probation from about 1822 to the 1900's consisted of many community volunteers and a philosophy that community members functioning as average citizens most often do, would be adequate to assist others in shaping similar lifestyles. This proved to be inadequate, however, as populations grew and the complexities of life not only increased, but diversified and the desire became to professionalize corrections services (Callison, 1983). By the 1950's, the first probation officers, or agents as they are now called in Wisconsin, needed a master's degree. A study done in 1964 advocated that a graduate degree would lower the amount of time a newly hired agent needed to assume a full caseload and that the training

needed would also be reduced, lessening the effort the employer needed to invest in this area. Insufficient data was offered to support these ideas, however, and the researcher wasn't able to determine the educational level needed to best serve the corrections system (Comanor, cited in Eskridge, 1979). In the 1970's, the American Bar Association and the American Correctional Association (ACA) agreed that a minimum of a bachelor's degree for probation officers was the best recommendation (Carlson & Parks, 1979). Although these are two very well-respected organizations, they are independent of the governments which are under no obligation to follow the recommendations of outside groups. In the 1970's, accreditation had become the reform movement, supported by the ACA, and they had developed a manual containing approximately 1300 standards with a five step process (Callison, 1983).

Problems of Definition

The first problem in identifying an appropriate level of pre-service education for a probation and parole agent is that probation has been slow to develop any large scale, uniform performance standards or competencies. It isn't practical for each state to have its own requirements of what that curriculum would be and then expect it to be saleable, developed, and delivered to a modern and mobile society on any broad scale that would justify the expense of the effort. The result is that probation does not meet most definitions of an independent academic discipline at present. It is only a part of the broader area of Corrections, which is a subset or an area of study within Criminal Justice. As such, general principles, theories, and practices can be taught, however, alongside the reality that independent government units run their probation services and do not collectively adhere to any national standards or curriculum. According to Carlson and Parks (1979), this has contributed to a very slow progress toward probation meeting

the definition of a profession and historically has accounted for a system that is immature both administratively and professionally.

It is difficult to evaluate probation officer education and performance when there has been little agreement on what exactly a probation and parole agent does. According to McCarthy and McCarthy (1984), probation work is a synthesis of law enforcement and counseling activities as well as resource brokering and writing of pre-sentence reports. Loughery (1975), although expressing his views 32 years ago, produced an explanation that is the most congruent with present day practices of any found in the research. It is unfortunate this most presently accurate description is so dated. He said,

Increasingly, probation officers are being called upon to provide traditional, practical probation services to the Court and to the community, while supporting the offender in his own efforts to survive lawfully at large. They are expected to understand the adversary system and due process more clearly so they can work comfortably within its boundaries. They are being called upon to report more fact and less opinion – to understand and administer court orders more precisely; to assure that fines, restitution and family support payments are made regularly; to report accurately and promptly to the Court regarding violations of probation and to maintain sufficiently close contacts with probationers so that they know when violations take place. Concerning the latter points, a variety of recent Appellate Court decisions at various levels. . . have narrowed the probation officer's options regarding violations. The modern probation officer must have sufficient grounding in the law to understand appellate decisions and interpret his own function in light of them. . . Further, he must know and use the vast panoply of public and private community resources which are generally available but inaccessible to the

uninitiated. Finally, he must be able to utilize volunteers and paraprofessional effectively, harmonizing their special skills with his own. . . The probation officer is therefore required to become much more sophisticated in the management of his time and resources and to administer workload classification systems and time expenditure plans which rival the management techniques of middle level corporation executives in their complexity. (p.1-7)

Carlson and Parks (1979) acknowledged that an agreement must be reached as to what constitutes probation officer competency before effective education and training can be evaluated. According to their investigation, what little research was available at that time agreed that the first step was to determine what probation officers are supposed to be able to do. Carlson, Parks, and Allen (1979) attempted to create a comprehensive body of knowledge about probation in an attempt to assess what works. Their focus was primarily on offender success, but also served to uncover many deficiencies and difficulties in an overall body of knowledge about probation theory and education of its practitioners. They stated,

At the outset of this review of knowledge, we had hoped to be able to approach an answer to the question: What is probation? We discovered that not only are there a number of different definitions for probation (e.g. a legal disposition, a measure of leniency, a punitive measure, an administrative process, social casework treatment, and a combination of casework administration), but there does not appear to be any widespread agreement, at least among researchers, on what constitutes the process of probation... We found that it was extremely rare that researchers and evaluators in the area of probation grasped the ranges of roles and tasks, not to mention normative prescriptions and expectations, implied by the wide variety of processes we call probation. The result of

this lack of a discriminating framework within which to conduct research has produces a conglomeration of contradictory and non-cumulative findings and consequent inability to build a systematic theory of probation services and management efforts. We believe that the value of future probation research will depend heavily upon whether such a theoretical framework is established. (Carlson, Parks, & Allen, 1979, p. 239-240)

As previously stated, there is much overlap with the tasks and duties of a probation and parole agent in Wisconsin falling under multiple disciplines and all of the duties and tasks not fitting into any one discipline. This has been supported by Loughery (1975) who stated

. . . it is obvious that direct application of specific college course content to probation work is not an essential, or even important, test of whether or not probation officers should be college graduates. As Frank Colston, Chief Probation Officer of Ventura County, has said, “. . . More important than a specific course of study, the college graduate has been trained and groomed in rational and objective thinking. He has spent four years gathering and compiling data, organizing facts into concise, meaningful pieces of information, as well as analyzing and evaluating that information to drag out the salient issues and to discard those which are not relevant . . . He has developed skills in report writing, as well as the grammar and vocabulary to accurately convey information . . . The qualities of objectivity, realization, articulate communication, and analytical inquiry cannot be developed in an on-the-job training program. They require years of preparation, guidance, and nourishment. These are the very essence of a competent and qualified probation officer. (p. 1-7)

The conclusion drawn by Loughery (1975) provides two things. He gave an accurate description of what a current probation agent in Wisconsin is responsible for and needs to be educated to do in spite of his writing it 32 years ago. He said:

We have established that he needs advanced education in the law, in investigative techniques, in logical thinking, problem analysis, writing and communication, political science and government, and in the management and administration of a job which involves a large number of simultaneous urgent and complex demands. Beyond this, of course, he must still know something of medical, psychological and psychiatric concepts in order to deal with the various therapists who are frequently involved with the treatment of probationers and who write reports about them which the probation officer must summarize and synthesize in his own reports. His education, in other words, must be an eclectic one and it is doubtful that it can be combined under any one academic major or specialty. We need to recognize the complex educational needs of the probation officer and to acknowledge that fact that they can only be secured at the college level.

(Loughery, 1975, p. 1-7)

The second area clarified accurately by Loughery is that of probation service being a profession. He said:

Probation cannot lay claim to any unique and separate discipline or body of knowledge. Neither can it demonstrate its devotion to an ideal of service which places it above and beyond bureaucratic controls and justifies the independent practice of each of its members in terms of his own convictions and apart from organizational policy and control. Probation has no final control over its delivery system (either as to intake nor [sic] as to case closing, both of which are ordered by the Court) . . . and unless Probation

attains the essential professional criteria of commanding its own separate body of specialized knowledge . . . it will never be a profession. (Loughery, 1975, p. 1-7)

Professions are defined as having a body of specialized knowledge and standards of conduct. They are usually organized into professional bodies. Members typically decide upon the appropriate required educational standards, training, and control entry into the profession. Another hallmark of a profession is its use of licensure of its members or the requirement for some type of certification (Nilsson, n.d.). There is no licensure of probation agents in Wisconsin. According to Smart, Feldman, and Ethington (2000), a profession holds exclusive powers to recruit, train, and judge qualifications as it chooses and also regulates itself. Social prestige is high and professions are built upon a foundation of complex knowledge. The significance of their work, in part, is an examination of the changes and stability in the lives of undergraduates in consideration of how one understands academic disciplines. They consider how individuals fit into their environments based upon assumptions about personality types. Of the six types they discussed, the investigative personality appears to be the most congruent to the work of a probation and parole agent. They explained that primarily, this type focuses upon explanation and seeks to predict or control social or natural things. The investigative personality is drawn to explore and understand. This is significant because their research has concluded that individuals tend to select occupations and education that fit them and their own personality the best. Students naturally seek parallels suited to their personalities and when found, seem to be more successful. This aspect serves to further complicate the matter of discipline choices, however, as the individuals from many disciplines may have an investigatory personality and also fit well into the role of a probation agent.

There are no two states whose probation departments are alike, and although there are many similarities and overlap, every state has its own laws, governments, administrative needs, and philosophies. For any research to have broad application, it will need broad agreement. This may be part of the “host of reasons” Carlson, Parks, and Allen (1979) referred to when they stated, “With few notable exceptions, the state of research relating to probation is quite poor. For a whole host of reasons, very little probation research has been attempted, while that which exists is of dubious quality” (p. 225). Since their 1979 report, there has been more research done, however, it does not appear in the area of probation agent education.

According to Gooch (1977), whose research centered primarily on the education of federal probation agents, the primary functions of agents are to conduct investigations, prepare reports for the court, supervise probationers, and obtain or provide services for them. He noted that valid data was urgently needed at that time for the purpose of developing curriculum and training. Although educational research had nearly tripled, research in corrections appears to have been negligible. A comprehensive review of the research in the field revealed that this continues to be the case. Gooch compared the general field of corrections to a bastard stepchild in higher education because it has no natural home. It does not fit into any clear discipline and overlaps into several (Gooch, 1977). This may be another factor contributing to why this particular focus has been passed over for continuing research.

One logical assumption in a growing field is that expanded responsibility and knowledge equates to more education. This is not necessarily the case. Buerger (2004) explained that the result of a four year education can be good theoretical background, ability to think critically, and “well-honed skills of analysis more suitable for academia than for their chosen occupation”

(Buerger, 2004, p. 2). An educated individual is not necessarily a developed employee and may not have any experience at all in any real practical applications.

Bills (2004) explained that in 1992, under President Clinton's Administration, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) wrote reports to address the needed skills of workers needed to keep this country competitive in the new global economy. They identified reading, performance arithmetic and mathematical operations, listening and speaking, thinking skills, thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, visualizing, reasoning, and knowing how to learn, taking responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self management, and integrity/honesty as the generic competencies necessary to be acquired in educational institutions and outside the domain of employer training. They also provided five work competencies:

1. the ability to identify, plan, and allocate such resources as time, money, materials, facilities, and human resources;
2. the ability to work with others as a team member, teacher, leader, negotiator; ability to work with others from diverse backgrounds;
3. the ability to acquire, evaluate, organize, maintain, interpret, and use information, and to use computers to process information;
4. the ability to understand, monitor and correct, and improve systems and other complex inter-relationships; and
5. the ability to select, apply, and maintain a variety of technologies. (Bills, 2004)

Although created by government as the foundational educational goal to aim for in keeping America economically competitive and as the basis for educational reform, another unintentional job description was written, again, accurately fitting the job of a probation and parole agent.

Other issues in further support of the educational disparity in probation include the rapidly changing roles of agents who must respond to ongoing court rulings which influence their practice, technological advances, political forces that shape availability of funding for services, and the increasing complexities of society. It requires a probation agent to fill multiple roles, including counselor, mediator, and advocate. Gooch (1977) concluded that it was almost impossible to expect colleges and universities to provide comprehensive and relevant pre-service training to probation officers and believed in-service training was the most appropriate for continuing education.

Thirty years ago, United States probation officers participating in Gooch's (1977) study felt the most important competencies to their performance were interviewing skills, knowledge of sentencing alternatives, knowledge of investigative resources, ability to organize information and dictate pre-sentence investigations, skill in one-on-one guidance and counseling, understanding of the criminal justice system, ability to make proper referrals for services, skills in dictating evaluative reports, and understanding of criminal law. Since then, each of those competencies and more have been expanded to include tasks and duties all needing to be mastered by a probation and parole agent to perform adequately in Wisconsin.

Expansion of the Field

Thirty years later, probation service in Wisconsin and undoubtedly everywhere else, has become more specialized and complex. This body of knowledge is immense, continues to cross disciplinary lines, and is being added to at a rate that will defy anyone who believes he/she can maintain all-encompassing competencies. The world has changed and our communities reflect that great change.

New research in specialization areas continues to contribute to this growing body of material, one of them being that of our evolving multicultural society. Shearer and King (2004) cited several studies calling for an increase in cultural awareness and the development of multicultural knowledge and skills. Probation agents need to understand various cultural contexts of those they work with, to not just be effective, but also to not be offensive. Communication with clients relies upon the ability to demonstrate cultural empathy and to bridge barriers that hinder a healthy helping relationship. All of the sources cited agreed that the criminal justice system must have sensitivity to differing cross-cultural world views.

Computers and electronics have added to the skills inventory necessary for agents to fully perform in the Wisconsin DOC. Global positioning systems are being used to track sex-offenders. The sobriety unit monitors alcohol consumption of offenders via fiber optic telephone cable transmissions. Polygraph technology has evolved and now a Computer Voice Stress Analysis is available as an investigatory tool. The future is likely to offer continuing developments requiring ongoing training. The issue then returns to the question of what foundational educational experience best prepares an individual for this occupation.

Summary

The literature has presented supporting ideas for several of the conditions present today in the broad occupational area of corrections. There is a lack of consensus as to what the appropriate educational scheme should be for a probation agent. Many disciplines contain a substantive core that relates well to much of what a probation agent's duties and tasks are, but no one discipline contains a curriculum substantially relevant to the occupation. Little agreement exists as to what profession this occupation belongs to if, in fact, it is a profession. As a result of passing time, this industry is growing more technological and complex, which continues to

broaden the issues and needs of educating practitioners rather than narrowing and defining them more concisely. Finally, the natural inclination to think that more education is better is not always equivalent to creating a more capable worker.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter is an explanation of how the subjects of the study were selected and how the survey was distributed. Content of the survey is discussed and then followed by a section addressing data collection. Following this is an analysis of the data and limitations of the study.

Subject Selection and Description

Subjects were selected from a roster of all current state probation and parole agents in Wisconsin who are members of their union, the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Council 24, forwarded to the researcher. Initially, a large postal mailing was planned; however, funding was applied for and denied. The result was a change to a smaller sample. An independent third party constructed a list of 60 of the agents to receive the survey. No home e-mail address list was available and no home mailing addresses were accessible so the surveys were sent by postal mail to various unit offices. The third party had no knowledge of the survey content other than that it was an educational analysis of agents. The researcher had no knowledge of the source of returned surveys because return envelopes were provided with the researcher's return address label affixed. There was no way to determine who or from which particular unit one had responded to the survey.

Instrumentation

A survey was created by the researcher specifically for this project and as such, had been subjected to other tests for validity or reliability. Survey was reviewed by research advisor for face validity. The survey was approved by the University of Wisconsin-Stout Institutional Review Board for distribution to a target sample of current probation and parole agents working for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Division of Community Corrections. It included a

cover letter explaining the purposes and value of the research, instructions for completing the survey, contact information for the researcher and the research advisor, and a statement regarding complete anonymity of the participants.

The first questions related to demographic information. Questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, relate to education and experiences of agents prior to hire including traditional college course work. Relevant experience may include military service, prior related employment, and job-related internships or field placements to enhance college course work. Questions 12, 13, and 14, addressed the specific employment experiences of agents as they began their careers. Finally, question 15 asked for agent opinion as to the appropriate level of educational preparation for the position.

Data Collection

In early January of 2008, surveys were prepared, printed, and mailed to a group of probation and parole agents in the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. Selection was made by work units of agents where the researcher's colleagues had contacts who could assist in distributing and returning the surveys once completed. The designee in each unit collected the surveys and returned them in prepaid, addressed envelopes. Upon receipt, the researcher opened the envelopes, discarded them, and added the received surveys to the collection that had been received to eliminate any chance of identifying the respondents. Data was then entered into an electronic University of Wisconsin-Stout survey tool for processing. Qualitative responses were compiled and entered into a software program for ease of thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

One approach to the examination of tasks, duties, and required knowledge to perform as a probation and parole agent is to consider where that knowledge is most typically acquired. This

is the first step toward answering research questions one and two. These questions considered the skills and abilities that have been previously determined to be needed at the time of hire by the DOC and that the DOC would desire the candidate to possess. The objective was to develop an understanding of what those skills and attributes are, where those things are obtained, and then to consider what amount of time or educational setting; on-the-job, formal job training, two-year technical college programs, or four-year college programs. To accomplish this, a current job description of an entry level agent was examined with all goals and worker activities listed individually. These items were used as the basis for questions 12, 13, and 14, the primary issues of the research.

The first section of the survey included demographic questions categorizing responses and describing the participants. The second set of questions related to the educational and experiential backgrounds of agents. The primary intent was to look at similarities and differences between agent backgrounds correlated to those skill areas they struggled with or identified as more challenging as newly hired agents. The research analyzed patterns and correlations based upon an agent's job preparation and personal experiences once hired and performing the tasks required.

Limitations

Due to the inaccessibility of home e-mail addresses of current probation and parole agents, and because of the expense and time involved in executing a large postal delivery of and response to the survey, distribution had to be limited to a smaller than the original desired group of agents. Electronic distribution of the survey was prohibited by the Department of Corrections which would not permit staff to respond to the survey on their computers. The survey could not

be sent to home e-mail addresses because they were not available and some agents have no home e-mail address.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The first topic of discussion is a description of a probation and parole agent's job tasks and duties. These are the basic, foundational skills needed to do an agent's job according to the Department of Corrections and examines where these required skills are typically obtained, pre- or post-employment. Following this are the survey results.

Job Description Analysis

Probation and parole agents are labeled in Wisconsin by the letters A, B, or C which indicate the level of competency they have attained. Entry level agents are labeled A, and C agents are senior.

The position summary of an agent A contains a list of 67 "goals and worker activities" followed by a list of 22 topics of knowledge and skills required to perform the duties of an agent (See Appendix A). The activities listed assume varying degrees of knowledge and all tasks are not subjects in which the DOC trains its employees specifically. Some of the skills are learned on-the-job while others assume some previous foundational knowledge upon which additional learning is based.

Demographic Information

Of the 62 surveys sent out, 39 were returned for a 63% response rate and were processed for analysis. Question 1 asked participants to indicate their gender. Of the respondents, 67% or 26 were female and 33% or 13 were male. Question 2 asked participants to select their age in years from several ranges offered. Responses are summarized in Table 2 below. The number of respondents was 39 except where noted. The greatest number of participants (36% or 14) were between the ages of 35 and 44.

Table 2

Age of Respondents

Age Range	Percent (N)
18-25	3 (1)
26-34	28 (11)
35-44	36 (14)
45-54	23 (9)
55+	10 (4)

Question 3 asked the respondents for their length of service as an agent in years. Twenty-eight percent (28%) or 11 were in the 6-10 year category, fewer than 5% or 2 had been in service 21-25 years.

Table 3

Length of Service

Length of Service In Years	Percent (N)
0-5	26%
6-10	28%
11-15	26%
16-20	15%
21-25	5%

Question 4 asked participants when they were hired as a probation and parole agent. Respondents indicated they were hired during the following decades: 13% or 5 in the 1980s, 51% or 20 in the 1990s and 36% or 14 in 2000 and after. Question 5 asked about their current level of seniority. Respondents indicated their levels of seniority as of the survey date were 13% or 5 at level A (new), 10% or 4 at level B, and 77% or 30 a level C (senior).

Question 6 addressed the level of education at the time of hire in the probation and parole position. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents had the level of education at their time of hire currently desired by the DOC. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents had the level desired by the DOC at their time of hire. Only one respondent had education exceeding the desired level.

Table 4

Pre-hire Education

Education Prior to Hire	Percent (N)
High School	5%
Associate's Degree	8%
Bachelor's Degree	85%
Master's Degree	3%

Items seven and eight asked about military experience. Five respondents had military experience of 77.25 years combined.

Items nine and ten asked about intern or limited term employee experience. Of the respondents, 31% (12) had experience as an intern or limited term employee for the Department of Corrections. The total number of respondents for this question was 36.

Question 11 asked participants about other work experiences. A summary of those responses is available in Appendix B. A breakdown of their corresponding educational levels is included in that table. The total number of respondents for this question was 31.

Question 12 asked participants for their opinion of the necessary skills needed to function as an agent. In table 5 below, results are shown. The highest four scores were determined by adding columns four and five together. The results were that verbal communication (mean of 4.5), time management (mean of 4.4), organizational skills (mean of 4.3), and interviewing skills (mean of 4.4) were believed to be the most important in response to the question. By selecting the four highest scores associated to the least important skills, electronic monitoring (mean of 2.7 with N=38), risk and needs assessment and classification systems (mean of 3.1 with N=38), statutes and administrative rules (mean of 3.1 with N=38), and social work methods were indicated to be the least important to performing this occupation.

Table 5

Necessary Skills and Attributes for an Agent

Skill Area	1 Least important	2	3	4	5 Most important	Mean	Standard Deviation
Records Management	1	1	10	10	17	4.1	1.02
Verbal Communication	1	0	2	12	24	4.5	.82
Time Management	0	1	2	17	19	4.4	.71
Victim Services	1	5	13	15	5	3.5	.97
Organizational Skills	1	1	2	16	19	4.3	.89
Maturity, self awareness, personal strengths and weaknesses (N=37)	1	1	7	17	13	4.0	.93
Good writing skills, grammar, punctuation	0	1	10	18	10	3.9	.79
Investigative techniques and procedures	0	1	8	22	8	3.9	.72
Interviewing Skills	0	1	1	19	18	4.4	.67
Court Process	0	1	15	16	7	3.7	.79
Dynamics of Human Relations	1	1	7	17	13	4.0	.93
Problem identification and solving techniques	1	0	7	14	17	4.2	.91
Cultural awareness	1	3	7	20	8	3.8	.95
AODA issues and treatment	1	1	5	21	11	4.0	.87
Security and restraint	2	4	16	13	4	3.3	.98
Social work methods (N=37)	2	8	10	12	5	3.3	1.12
State statutes and administrative rules (N=38)	6	8	5	13	6	3.1	1.36
Risk and needs assessment, classification systems (N=38)	6	5	12	10	5	3.1	1.26
Electronic monitoring (N=38)	9	7	12	5	5	2.7	1.33

Question 13 asked participants their opinion on which necessary skills needed to function as an agent are the most difficult to attain. The results are shown in Table 6 on the following page. The highest four scores were again determined by adding columns four and five together. The results were that time management (mean of 3.9), organizational skills (mean of 4.0), problem identification and solving techniques (mean of 4.0), and interviewing skills (mean of 3.9) were believed to be the most difficult skills to attain in response to the question. By selecting the four highest scores associated to the least important skills hardest to attain, security and restraint techniques (mean of 2.9), statutes and administrative rules (mean of 2.9), electronic monitoring (mean of 2.7), and court process (mean of 3.3) were indicated.

Table 6

Necessary Skills Areas and Attributes for an Agent and Most Difficult to Attain

Skill Area	1 Least important	2	3	4	5 Most important	Mean	Standard Deviation
Records Management	0	5	9	10	14	3.9	1.07
Verbal Communication	1	1	12	11	13	3.9	1.01
Time Management	0	1	8	15	14	4.1	.83
Victim Services	4	6	8	16	4	3.3	1.18
Organizational Skills	0	2	10	13	13	4.0	.91
Maturity, self awareness, personal strengths and weaknesses (N=37)	0	5	8	8	16	3.9	1.10
Good writing skills, grammar, punctuation	1	7	11	11	8	3.5	1.11
Investigative techniques and procedures	0	2	16	15	5	3.6	.79
Interviewing Skills	0	1	10	18	9	3.9	.78
Court Process (N=37)	2	7	13	9	6	3.3	1.12
Dynamics of Human Relations	1	4	13	15	5	3.5	.95
Problem identification and solving techniques	0	2	7	19	10	4.0	.82
Cultural awareness	2	5	15	12	4	3.3	1.01
AODA issues and treatment	2	5	16	10	5	3.3	1.04
Security and restraint	7	8	11	7	5	2.9	1.30
Social work methods	2	7	16	7	6	3.2	1.09
State statues and administrative rules (N=37)	5	6	9	11	6	3.2	1.29
Risk and needs assessment, classification systems	5	4	14	11	4	3.1	1.17
Electronic monitoring	9	8	12	4	5	2.7	1.32

Question 14 asked participants about what they felt were their weakest skills at the time they were hired. Responses are summarized by demographic categories in Table 7 below. Time management, court process, and paperwork appear to present some challenge at all educational levels. Responses are summarized in Table 7 below according to the educational level of the respondents and the work skills they found particularly challenging.

Table 7

Respondent's Most Challenging Skill Areas by Educational Level

Skill Area	High School	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
Cultural Awareness		1	8	
AODA			11	
Verbal Communication			6	
Personal Strengths and Weaknesses			2	
Victim Services			7	
Maturity			4	
Written Communication		2	4	
Dynamics of Human Relations			2	
Interviewing			4	
Investigation Techniques			5	1
Security and Restraints		1	10	
Search and Seizure			2	
Paperwork	1	2	4	1
Social Work Methods			4	
Department Policies	1		2	
Organizational Skills	1		5	
Criminal Law			3	
State Statutes			5	
Court Process	1	2	8	1
De-escalation		1		
Time Management	1	2	11	1
Computers	1	1	1	
Records Management			6	1
Electronic Monitoring		1	3	
Legal/Liability Issues			2	
Dealing w/co-workers			1	
Taking direction	1		2	
Gangs			1	
Logistics			1	
Community Resources			2	
Issuing sanctions			1	
Office procedures	1			
Dealing w/supervisor	1			

Table 8

Military Experienced and Educational Levels

Skill Area	# with Military Service/ Bachelor's Degree	# with Military Service/ Master's Degree
AODA	1	
Victim Services	1	
Written Communication	1	
Interviewing	1	
Investigation Techniques		1
Security and Restraints	1	
Paperwork		1
Social Work Methods	1	
Criminal Law	1	
Court Process		1
Time Management	1	1
Computers	1	
Records Management		1

N = 5

Table 9

Skills Indicated by Participants with Intern or Limited Term Employee Experience

Skill Area	# Who Served as Doc	
	Intern/Limited Term Employee High School	Bachelor's
Cultural Awareness		5
AODA		3
Verbal Communication		3
Victim Services		1
Maturity		2
Written Communication		1
Dynamics of Human Relations		1
Interviewing		1
Investigation Techniques		1
Security and Restraints		2
Search and Seizure		2
Paperwork	1	2
Social Work Methods		3
Department Policies	1	1
Organizational Skills		2
State Statutes		1
Court Process		4
Time Management	1	4
Records Management		1
Electronic Monitoring		2
Dealing w/co-workers	1	
Taking direction	1	
Gangs		1
Logistics		1
Community Resources		1
Office procedures	1	
Dealing w/supervisor	1	

Item 15 asked for respondent's opinions as to the appropriate level of educational background for hire as a probation and parole agent. Item 15 revealed that one individual out of 39, or 3%, felt a high school education is an acceptable minimum, adequate to perform the job of a probation and parole agent. Eleven respondents or 28%, said an Associate's Degree would be an adequate minimum, with two of them specifying substantial related experience also required.

A Bachelor's degree requirement was supported by 27 of 39 (or 69%) of the responding probation and parole agents.

Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendation

Introduction

In this section, the results of the study will be discussed as they relate to the research questions as well as the literature reviewed in chapter two. Following this will be recommendations for further research, to students desiring careers as probation and parole agents, and to those who prepare them.

Summary

Research Question 1. What are the skills and attitudes necessary to become a probation and parole agent? The State of Wisconsin – Department of Corrections, has listed in its job descriptions of an agent A, B, and C, the knowledge and skills desired of probation and parole agents which are the same at all three levels. Those lists were used, almost item for item, in developing survey questions 12 and 13. The results suggest that respondents rated items that are usually learned on the job lower than those acquired prior to hire when answering as to what skills are important to have to function as an agent. Electronic monitoring (mean of 2.7 with N=38), offender classification systems (mean of 3.1 with N=38), and state statutes (mean of 3.1 with N=38) were ranked the lowest of the items. The same three items with the addition of social work methods were again ranked lowest in response to question 13 indicating the Department appears to be doing a good job of making the acquisition of those skills available to new agents. Other items were dispersed with a standard deviation of less than 1.0 except for records management (1.02) and social work methods (1.12) suggesting that the respondents were in agreement with the skills and knowledge desired by the employer. Question 13 asked for opinions as to what knowledge and skills were most important and difficult to obtain in an attempt to distinguish items that are not typically on the job training topics. The expectation was

that topics requiring academic preparation would score higher because educational preparation varies. The greater dispersion of selections made in response suggests less agreement on this issue which possibly does reflect a wider array of background education, but organizational skills, time management, problem identification and solving techniques, interviewing skills, and verbal communication scored higher than other items. These skills are typically not on the job training topics and are the higher order thinking requiring a higher level of foundational job knowledge and skill. This helps to distinguish between skill sets needed to function effectively in the agent's opinion and begins to focus specifically on what is very necessary as well as difficult.

Research Question 2. Can the necessary skills and attitudes to become a probation and parole agent be taught in the WTCS? Of the skills identified in this study; organization (mean of 4.0), time management (mean of 4.1), and problem solving (mean of 4.0), are seen as difficult to acquire as well as to teach due to the need of the individual to identify their own thinking patterns and sense of order. For every individual, these will differ and be influenced by a variety of factors with only one of them being their educational achievement. This question cannot be decisively answered using the data produced by the survey.

Of 39 respondents, 11 or 28 % stated that an associate degree education is sufficient to perform this occupation. Of the 11, one had a high school diploma and seven had a bachelor's degree with the remaining three having an associate's degree.

Research Question 3. What, if anything, does a four-year college graduate obtain that qualify those graduates for this position? The data compiled from the survey failed to point to a definitive answer. According to the literature reviewed in chapter two, four year education is a period of time spent in developing and honing general skills in thinking processes, learning to develop and to analyze material, and then learning to communicate it accurately. In this view,

four is better than two in the sense that practical experience in exercising these processes continues to develop over a lifetime, assuming the student is making effort to acquire skills.

Research Question 4. Does a four-year education provide a better candidate? Data from the survey and literature review indicated that the demands are high in ability to organize thoughts (mean of 4.3) and time (mean of 4.4) in this occupation.

Conclusions

Just as there is no uniformity for this occupation, there is no uniformity within the population of program enrollees in the WTCS. Levels of ability, maturity, life experience, and other factors at the time of enrollment would impact an evaluation of program outcomes. There are associate's degree program graduates performing in this occupation currently as shown by 8% of the respondents, however, survey question four revealed that 87% of the respondents have been hired in the 1990's or later and 87% of them, with a completed bachelor's degree. These results precede the Department changing the minimum educational hiring requirement which suggests that even if adequate education to perform the job tasks was acquired in the WCTS, competition with bachelor's degreed candidates will be a factor.

These results were unexpected. It was believed that agent's responses would correspond to the same level of education they had attained. It was believed that agents would tend to elevate their position in terms of knowledge needed rather than to diminish it. This belief assumes that they see education as a positive component in achieving job competence. It is possible that this is not the connection being made and that more agents believe life experience and other non-academic factors generate the skills needed to perform.

Loughery (1975), in the literature review, explains the complexity of this occupation in such a way as to create some doubt as whether even bachelor's degreed candidates will be able to perform effectively upon hire.

The DOC has not established firm measures of competence but has only established an educational minimum which assumes a level of competency of graduates.

As written in the literature review, Frank Colston, Chief Probation Officer of Ventura County, stated the situation most concisely when he said, "...More important than a specific course of study, the college graduate has been trained and groomed in rational and objective thinking. He has spent four years gathering and compiling data, organizing facts into concise, meaningful pieces of information, as well as analyzing and evaluating that information to drag out the salient issues and to discard those which are not relevant . . . He has developed skills in report writing, as well as the grammar and vocabulary to accurately convey information . . . The qualities of objectivity, realization, articulate communication, and analytical inquiry cannot be developed in an on-the-job training program. They require years of preparation, guidance, and nourishment. These are the very essence of a competent and qualified probation officer." This addresses the research question with an answer of quantity. Are two years necessarily inferior to four? Unless the appointing authority sets an alternative standard of assessing a candidate, the answer will remain affirmative.

Recommendations for Probation and Parole Agents

For anyone aspiring to become a probation and parole agent, attention needs to be given to the fact that regardless of any evidence supporting contrary standards, the employer has a minimum standard which must be met. The data presented here strongly supports the need for a bachelor's degree if for no other reason than that.

Additionally, Appendix B provides data indicating that prior related work experience was present in the histories of 64% of this group of respondents who were hired for this position and that is in addition to a bachelor's degree in most cases.

Agents with prior internships and direct work with the DOC also appear to benefit in the fact that 31% of this sample was hired for the position. For the aspiring agent, there is a stated minimum that an associate's degree and two years of substantially related experience are adequate. One needs to consider their preparation with this and the competition in mind. The value on job related experiences and internships cannot be emphasized enough.

It would also be of benefit to review the skills and knowledge required by the Department and to focus one's efforts toward achieving competence. Work experience and internships provide the practical aspect but also a means to demonstrate and document one's abilities.

Recommendations for Department of Corrections

Because it is specific skills that are desired over a specific level of education or major, it would be helpful to establish a means of assessing the skills of applicants beyond the assumptions made about what one should know upon completion of a specific degree.

Recommendations for Educators

By reviewing the hiring standards within the industry, educators will be able to evaluate their relevance in an ongoing process that takes into account the career goals of their students as well as industry needs. Programs must be continuously honed to deliver the best product possible.

Recommendations for Further Study

In answering any of the research questions, it becomes necessary to first determine how each of the skills necessary to function as a probation and parole agent is acquired. This was not

a component of this research effort, beyond informal consideration, and would be beneficial in future studies.

Another factor making this particular occupation difficult is the wide array of backgrounds of agents and the very large number of variables this presents. Carlson and Parks (1979) have stated the importance and need to determine what constitutes probation officer competency before effective education and training can be evaluated. This still appears as a need almost 30 years later.

In addition to it being a difficult task due to the array of job duties it is also seen as the result of a rapidly changing society. It is a very dynamic occupation, always reflecting changes in technology, political views, public policy and opinion, leadership, and legislation. Without many constants, this research effort reveals more about the general process of education and less, the specifics of any particular program or job requirements. This is perhaps, the reason there has been little research undertaken in this area.

It would be helpful to study some of the issues presented here as individual research topics. There are many questions that could be asked to further narrow and define the data presented here. Job satisfaction related to educational levels may have bearing upon the responses given, particularly to questions about level of education needed to perform the job. There were no questions asked as to whether respondents know what the job related components of an associate's degree vs. a bachelor's degree program are. Attitudes toward the occupation were not considered.

Job performance data was not available for individuals participating in the study. Future research considering an agent's responses to these and other questions would be especially useful if it was known to what levels they perform the required job functions currently and perhaps at

various points in their careers. One example of this would be to assess writing skills levels and then compare responses. In this case, writing skills were recognized as being important by respondents but not particularly difficult to attain. It is not known whether they believe they have actually attained adequate skill in this area or just whether they think they have done so.

The sample was not of an adequate size given that there are approximately 1,224 agents in Wisconsin. Future research would benefit from a larger scale project.

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Appendix A
Position Summary

POSITION DESCRIPTION
 DER-PERS-10 (Rev. 07/97)
 State of Wisconsin
 Department of Employment Relations

	1. Position No.	2. Cert/Reclass Request No.	3. Agency No. 410
4. NAME OF EMPLOYEE	5. DEPARTMENT, UNIT, WORK ADDRESS Department of Corrections Divison of Community Corrections		
5. CLASSIFICATION TITLE OF POSITION Probation & Parole Agent (A)			
7. CLASS TITLE OPTION (to be filled out by Personnel Office)	8. NAME AND CLASS OF FORMER INCUMBENT		
9. AGENCY WORKING TITLE OF POSITION	10. NAME AND CLASS OF EMPLOYEES PERFORMING SIMILAR DUTIES		
11. NAME AND CLASS OF FIRST-LINE SUPERVISOR	12. FROM APPROXIMATELY WHAT DATE HAS THE EMPLOYEE PERFORMED THE WORK DESCRIBED BELOW?		
13. DOES THE POSITION SUPERVISE SUBORDINATE EMPLOYEES IN PERMANENT POSITIONS? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No IF YES, COMPLETE AND ATTACH A SUPERVISORY POSITION ANALYSIS FORM (DER-PERS-84).			
14. POSITION SUMMARY- PLEASE DESCRIBE BELOW THE MAJOR GOALS OF THIS POSITION: (See Attached)			

15. DESCRIBE THE GOALS AND WORKER ACTIVITIES OF THIS POSITION (Please see sample format and instructions)

____ GOALS: Describe the major achievements, outputs, or results. List them in descending order of importance.
 ____ WORKER ACTIVITIES: Under each goal, list the work activities performed to meet that goal.
 ____ TIME %: Include for goals and major work activities.

TIME %	GOALS AND WORKER ACTIVITIES
(See Attached)	

16. SUPERVISORY SECTION - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE FIRST LINE SUPERVISOR OF THIS POSITION. (See Instructions)

a. The supervision, direction and review given to the work of this position is close limited general.
 b. The statements and time estimates above and on attachments accurately describe the work assigned to the position.
 (Please initial and date attachments.)

Signature of first-line supervisor _____ Date _____

17. EMPLOYEE SECTION - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INCUMBENT OF THIS POSITION.

I have read and understand that the statements and time estimates above and on attachments are a description of the functions assigned my position. (Please initial and date attachments.)

Signature of employee _____ Date _____

18. Signature of Personnel Manager _____ Date _____

CLASSIFICATION TITLE- SUB-TITLE

Probation & Parole Agent (A)

POSITION SUMMARY

Under close supervision, with an emphasis on training, this position is responsible for the provision of services to protect the public by holding offenders accountable for their behavior; the preparation of case plans for offenders; fostering law abiding behavior and positive participation of individual offenders in the community; the preparation of accurate and timely investigations, reports, and case records; community outreach activities, liaison activities and other special assignments as required. This position may provide a variety of services for a targeted caseload or program in one or more of the following areas: intensive sanctions, sex offender, mental health, drug, high risk, program liaison, interstate compact, and/or other programs identified by the supervisor. Decisions that have a serious consequence for the offender or community require prior approval by the supervisor. The agent shall comply with the department's administrative rules and the agency's policies and procedures.

(Rated PD
Only)

<u>TR1</u>	<u>TR2</u>	<u>TIME %</u>	<u>GOALS AND WORKER ACTIVITIES</u>
		30%	A. Provision of services to protect the public by holding offenders accountable for their behavior.
			A1. Maintain offender contacts and conduct home visits in accordance with level of supervision
			A2. Conduct searches and seizures in accordance with agency policy.
			A3. Inform offender of local law enforcement registration requirements.
			A4. Hold offenders accountable for complying with case plans and rules of supervision, informing offender of consequences of non-compliance.
			A5. Issue apprehension requests on offenders who have escaped, absconded or violated conditions of supervision; locate, transport and detain offenders in accordance with agency policy.
			A6. Conduct violation investigations; provide written documentation and discuss dispositional alternatives with supervisor.
			A7. Develop and present rationale for revocation at administrative hearings; testify, examine and cross-examine victims, witnesses, and the offender; present evidence; when appropriate develop appeals of hearing examiner's decisions.
			A8. Attend and testify at court hearings following revocation of supervision.
			A9. Recognize and respond to the legitimate needs of crime victims and alert them to issues of concern during offender supervision.
			A10. Determine whether case/situation requires emergency or routine handling after supervisory consultation.
			A11. Keep supervisor informed of offender activities, casework, and special problems.
			A12. Collect urine specimens to monitor offender consumption of alcohol and drugs.
			A13. Complete all activities necessary for the prosecution of inmates who escape while on intensive sanctions supervision.
			A14. Comply with all requirements for reporting inmate movement for the preparation of the daily inmate count.

- A15. Orient offenders and their families to the policy, procedures and requirements of the electronic monitoring program.
 - A16. Properly sign out, enroll and install electronic monitoring equipment in the offender's residence and on their person.
 - A17. Establish and modify, as necessary, a monitoring curfew schedule for offenders to provide for release to attend work, school, recreation, medical, treatment programs or other approved activities.
 - A18. Investigate and report all electronic monitoring tampers, escapes or alerts to determine if a violation occurred.
 - A19. Investigate and report any damaged or missing equipment.
 - A20. Recover all offender electronic monitoring equipment upon termination.
 - A21. Conduct routine checks of electronic monitoring equipment to ensure that the equipment is in proper working order.
- 25% B. Preparation of assessments and development of case plans for offenders.
- B1. Review offender's background by interviewing offender, reading records, searching for information, interviewing collateral sources.
 - B2. Assess the risk the offender presents to the public and the nature and causes of the offender's problems to determine level of supervision in accordance with the case classification system.
 - B3. Develop and monitor offender participation in objective-based case plans determining short-term and long-term goals and objectives.
 - B4. Establish rules of supervision that will address offender risk and need factors.
 - B5. Secure offender participation in development and modification of case plans.
 - B6. Inform supervisor of activities, casework, special problems, etc. through scheduled reviews, discussions and informal meetings.
 - B7. Periodically reassess offender risk and needs and revise case plan and rules of supervision accordingly.
 - B8. Serve as a member of the program review committee.
 - B9. Monitor offender's progress with service provider and evaluate the need for continuation of service or modification of the case plan.
 - B10. Counsel offenders, individually or in groups, on specific problems.
 - B11. Involve those closely associated with the offender in his/her case-plan; where appropriate encourage their support; when necessary advise them on ways of coping with the offender.
- 20% C. Fostering law abiding behavior and positive participation of individual offenders in the community.
- C1. Determine court obligations and supervision or monitoring fees, and establish and enforce payment plan; collect and process payments in accordance with department and division policy.
 - C2. Identify resources available to meet the offender's needs, make appropriate referrals and facilitate offender access.
 - C3. Upon referral, communicate with provider personnel to establish mutual goals and expectations for the offender.

- C4. Monitor offenders progress with service provider and evaluate the need for continuation of service or modification of the case plan.
 - C5. Provide information to offender regarding services, rights, responsibilities, policies, rules, procedures, etc.
 - C6. Explain court proceedings, rulings and recommendations to offenders to be certain they understand and are prepared for same.
 - C7. Understand and utilize purchase of service procedures.
 - C8. Counsel offenders, individually or in groups, on specific problems.
 - C9. Facilitate transition from the institution to the community by maintaining contact with incarcerated offenders and institution staff in accordance with agency policy.
 - C10. Provide liaison duties to state institutions to include routine contact with intensive sanctions and intensive sanctions eligible offenders, contact with facility staff to share information, reports and program changes, orientation, and to update the status of intensive sanctions offenders.
- 15% D. Preparation of accurate, timely investigations, reports and case records.
- D1. Maintain complete and accurate case records for each offender.
 - D2. Maintain records and follow systems for appointments, case review dates, due dates, etc.
 - D3. Conduct presentence investigations and write other reports requested by the court or required by the department or division.
 - D4. Attend and testify at court hearings.
 - D5. Conduct investigations of interstate compact and intrastate transfer requests.
 - D6. Write presentence, social and admission investigations and legible chronological case records in compliance with prescribed formats and due dates.
 - D7. Provide thorough parole plan investigation reports as required.
 - D8. Write letters to the court summarizing case situations and clearly stating action requested from the court.
 - D9. Investigate all alleged violations of supervision. Where violations have occurred, determine appropriate sanctions or dispositions. Serve the offender with the violation as required in compliance with prescribed formats and due dates.
 - D10. Correspond with offenders and resources as needed.
 - D11. Investigate institution visitor lists.
- 5% E. Execution of safety and security requirements related to the movement, monitoring and surveillance of offenders.
- E1. Arrange for inter-institutional visits for offenders with specified family members in other state institutions.
 - E2. Properly utilize communications and safety equipment in compliance with policies and procedures.
 - E3. Place offenders in secure and non-secure detention in state institutions or county jails.

- E4. Complete duties related to the arrest, custody and transportation of offenders to and from institutions and home residence.
- E5. Secure and inventory the property of offenders being placed in custody.
- 5% F. Performance of Community outreach activities, liaison activities and other special assignments as required.
 - F1. Establish and maintain effective and cooperative working relationship with other criminal justice and human service agencies.
 - F2. Maintain community relationships through public appearances and speeches addressing DOC goals and programs.
 - F3. Provide general advocacy services for DOC offenders, develop and monitor community resources to address offender needs.
 - F4. Respond to public inquiries about agency goals, policies and programs and about specific offenders without violating confidentiality rules.
 - F5. Serve on local and statewide committees as assigned.
 - F6. Speak to elementary and high school students about the consequences of criminal behavior.
 - F7. Attend training as requested by employee or directed by supervisor.
 - F8. Complete other tasks as assigned by supervisor.
 - F9. As assigned, provide liaison duties to purchase of service agencies to include screening of referred offenders, review of offender report forms, placement, and sharing of information between the facility and department and division staff.

KR1 KR2 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

1. Knowledge of dynamics of human relations.
2. Knowledge of English language and ability to communicate effectively.
3. Knowledge of correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure in written work.
4. Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
5. Knowledge of problem identification and solving techniques.
6. Knowledge of culturally different values (cultural awareness).
7. Knowledge of criminal justice system
8. Knowledge of community resources.
9. Knowledge of legal procedures.
10. Knowledge of purchase of service systems.
11. Knowledge of security and restraint techniques.
12. Knowledge of drug analysis techniques.
13. Knowledge of investigation procedures.
14. Knowledge of time management and organizational techniques.
15. Knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses.
16. Knowledge of treatment techniques.
17. Knowledge of social work methods.
18. Knowledge of AODA issues and treatment.
19. Knowledge of principles of offender classification.
20. Knowledge of electronic monitoring systems.
21. Knowledge of staff security, public protection and health and safety practices.
22. Knowledge of statutes and administrative rules.

PROBATION AND PAROLE AGENT OBJECTIVE

POSITION SUMMARY

Under the limited direction of the supervisor, this position is responsible for the provision of services to protect the public by holding offenders accountable for their behavior; the preparation of case plans for offenders; fostering law abiding behavior and positive participation of individual offenders in the community; the preparation of accurate and timely investigations, reports, and case records; community outreach activities, liaison activities and other special assignments as required. This position provides a variety of services for a targeted caseload or program in one or more of the following areas: intensive sanctions, sex offender, mental health, drug, high risk, program liaison, interstate compact, and/or other programs identified by the supervisor. Decisions that have a serious consequence for the offender or community require prior approval by the supervisor. The agent shall comply with the department's administrative rules and the agency's policies and procedures.

TIME % GOALS AND WORKER ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 30% | <p>A. Provision of services to protect the public by holding offenders accountable for their behavior.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A1. Maintain offender contacts and conduct home visits in accordance with level of supervision.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A2. Conduct searches and seizures in accordance with agency policy.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A3. Inform offender of local law enforcement registration requirements.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A4. Hold offenders accountable for complying with case plans and rules of supervision and inform offender of consequences of non-compliance.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A5. Issue apprehension requests on offenders who have escaped, absconded or violated conditions of supervision; locate, transport and detain offenders in accordance with agency policy.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A6. Conduct violation investigations, provide written documentation and discuss dispositional alternatives with supervisor.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A7. Develop and present rationale for revocation at administrative hearings; testify, examine and cross-examine victims, witnesses, and the offender; present evidence; when appropriate develop appeals of hearing examiner's decisions.</p> |
|-----|---|

Probation and Parole Agent Objective PD, Page 2

- A8. Attend and testify at court hearings following revocation of supervision.
- A9. Recognize and respond to the legitimate needs of crime victims and alert them to issues of concern during offender supervision.
- A10. Determine whether case/situation requires emergency or routine handling after supervisory consultation.
- A11. Keep supervisor informed of offender activities, casework, and special problems.
- A12. Collect urine specimens to monitor offender consumption of alcohol and drugs.
- A13. Complete all activities necessary for the prosecution of inmates who escape while on intensive sanctions supervision.
- A14. Comply with all requirements for reporting inmate movement for the preparation of the daily inmate count.
- A15. Orient offenders and their families to the policy, procedures and requirements of the electronic monitoring program.
- A16. Properly sign out, enroll and install electronic monitoring equipment in the offender's residence and on their person.
- A17. Establish and modify, as necessary, a monitoring curfew schedule for offenders to provide for release to attend work, school, recreation, medical, treatment programs or other approved activities.
- A18. Investigate and report all electronic monitoring tampers, escapes or alerts to determine if a violation occurred.
- A19. Investigate and report any damaged or missing equipment.
- A20. Recover all offender electronic monitoring equipment upon termination.
- A21. Conduct routine checks of electronic monitoring equipment to ensure that the equipment is in proper working order.

Probation and Parole Agent Objective PD, Page 3

- 25% B. Preparation of assessments and development of case plans for offenders.
- B1. Review offender's background by interviewing offender, reading records, searching for information, interviewing collateral sources.
 - B2. Assess the risk the offender presents to the public and the nature and causes of the offender's problems to determine level of supervision in accordance with the case classification system.
 - B3. Develop and monitor offender participation in objective-based case plans determining short-term and long-range goals and objectives.
 - B4. Establish rules of supervision that will address offender risk and need factors.
 - B5. Secure offender participation in development and modification of case plans.
 - B6. Inform supervisor of activities, casework, special problems, etc. through scheduled reviews, discussions and informal meetings.
 - B7. Periodically reassess offender risk and needs and revise case plan and rules of supervision accordingly.
 - B8. Serve as a member of the program review committee.
 - B9. Monitor offender's progress with service provider and evaluate the need for continuation of service or modification of the case plan.
 - B10. Counsel offenders, individually or in groups, on specific problems.
 - B11. Involve those closely associated with the offender in his/her caseplan; where appropriate encourage their support; when necessary advise them on ways of coping with the offender.
- 20% C. Fostering law abiding behavior and positive participation of individual offenders in the community.
- C1. Determine court obligations and supervision or monitoring fees, and establish and enforce payment plan; collect and process payments in accordance with department and division policy.
 - C2. Identify resources available to meet the offender's needs, make appropriate referrals and facilitate offender access.

Probation and Parole Agent Objective PD, Page 4

- C3. Upon referral, communicate with provider personnel to establish mutual goals and expectations for the offender.
 - C4. Monitor offenders progress with service provider and evaluate the need for continuation of service or modification of the case plan.
 - C5. Provide information to offender regarding services, rights, responsibilities, policies, rules, procedures. etc.
 - C6. Explain court proceedings, rulings and recommendations to offenders to be certain they understand and are prepared for same.
 - C7. Understand and utilize purchase of service procedures.
 - C8. Counsel offenders, individually or in groups, on specific problems.
 - C9. Involve those closely associated with the offender in his/her case plan; where appropriate, encourage their support; when necessary, advise them on ways of coping with the offender.
 - C10. Facilitate transition from the institution to the community by maintaining contact with incarcerated offenders and institution staff in accordance with agency policy.
 - C11. Provide liaison duties to state institutions to include routine contact with intensive sanctions and intensive sanctions eligible offenders, contact with facility staff to share information, reports and program changes, orientation, and update the status of intensive sanctions offenders.
- 15% D. Preparation of accurate, timely investigations, reports and case records.
- D1. Maintain complete and accurate case records for each offender.
 - D2. Maintain records and follow systems for appointments, case review dates, due dates, etc.
 - D3. Conduct presentence investigations and write other reports requested by the court or required by the department or division.
 - D4. Attend and testify at court hearings.
 - D5. Conduct investigations of interstate compact and intrastate transfer requests.

Probation and Parole Agent Objective PD, Page 5

- D6. Write presentence social and admission investigations and legible chronological case records in compliance with prescribed formats and due dates.
 - D7. Provide thorough preparole plan investigation reports as required.
 - D8. Write letters to the court summarizing case situations and clearly stating action requested from the court.
 - D9. Investigate all alleged violations of supervision. Where violations have occurred, determine appropriate sanctions or dispositions. Serve the offender with the violation as required in compliance with prescribed formats and due dates.
 - D10. Correspond with offenders and resources as needed.
 - D11. Investigate institution visitor lists.
- 5% E. Execute safety and security requirements related to the movement, monitoring and surveillance of offenders.
- E1. Arrange for inter-institutional visits for offenders with specified family members in other state institutions.
 - E2. Properly utilize communications and safety equipment in compliance with policies and procedures.
 - E3. Place offenders in secure and non-secure detention in state institutions or county jails.
 - E4. Complete duties related to the arrest, custody and transportation of offenders to and from institutions and home residences.
 - E5. Secure and inventory the property of offenders being placed in custody.
- 5% F. Community outreach activities, liaison activities and performance of other special assignments as required.
- F1. Establish and maintain effective and cooperative working relationship with other criminal justice and human service agencies.

Probation and Parole Agent Objective PD, Page 6

- F2. Maintain community relationships through public appearances and speeches addressing DOC goals and programs.
- F3. Provide general advocacy services for DOC offenders, develop and monitor community resources to address offender needs.
- F4. Respond to public inquiries about agency goals, policies and programs and about specific offenders without violating confidentiality rules.
- F5. Serve on local and statewide committees as assigned.
- F6. Speak to elementary and high school students about the consequences of criminal behavior.
- F7. Attend training as requested by employee or directed by supervisor.
- F8. Complete other tasks as assigned by supervisor.
- F9. As assigned, provide liaison duties to purchase of service agencies to include screening of referred offenders, review of offender report forms, placement, and sharing of information between the facility and department and division staff.

Probation and Parole Agent Objective PD, Page 7**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

1. Knowledge of dynamics of human relations.
2. Knowledge of English language and ability to communicate effectively.
3. Knowledge of correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure in written work.
4. Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
5. Knowledge of problem identification and solving techniques.
6. Knowledge of culturally different values (cultural awareness).
7. Knowledge of criminal justice system.
8. Knowledge of community resources.
9. Knowledge of legal procedures.
10. Knowledge of purchase of service systems.
11. Knowledge of security and restraint techniques.
12. Knowledge of drug analysis techniques.
13. Knowledge of investigation procedures.
14. Knowledge of time management and organizational techniques.
15. Knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses.
16. Knowledge of treatment techniques.
17. Knowledge of social work methods.
18. Knowledge of AODA issues and treatment.
19. Knowledge of principles of offender classification.

Probation and Parole Agent Objective PD, Page 8

20. Knowledge of electronic monitoring systems.
21. Knowledge of staff security, public protection and health and safety practices.
22. Knowledge of statutes and administrative rules.

CLASSIFICATION TITLE- SUB-TITLE

Probation and Parole Agent C

POSITION SUMMARY

Under general supervision, this position is responsible for the provision of services to protect the public by holding offenders accountable for their behavior; the preparation of case plans for offenders; fostering law abiding behavior and positive participation of individual offenders in the community; the preparation of accurate and timely investigations, reports, and case records; community outreach activities, liaison activities and other special assignments as required. This position provides a variety of services for a targeted caseload or program in one or more of the following areas: intensive sanctions, sex offender, mental health, drug, high risk, program liaison, interstate compact, and/or other programs identified by the supervisor. Decisions that have a serious consequence for the offender or community require prior approval by the supervisor. The agent shall comply with the department's administrative rules and the agency's policies and procedures. These activities will require the physical ability to gain access to all types of buildings and operate in all weather conditions.

(Rated PD
Only)

<u>TR1</u>	<u>TR2</u>	<u>TIME %</u>	<u>GOALS AND WORKER ACTIVITIES</u>
		30%	<p>A. Provision of services to protect the public by holding offenders accountable for their behavior.</p> <p>A1. Maintain offender contacts and conduct home visits in accordance with level of supervision.</p> <p>A2. Conduct searches and seizures in accordance with agency policy.</p> <p>A3. Inform offender of local law enforcement registration requirements.</p> <p>A4. Hold offenders accountable for complying with case plans and rules of supervision, informing offender of consequences of non-compliance.</p> <p>A5. Issue apprehension requests on offenders who have escaped, absconded or violated conditions of supervision; locate, transport and detain offenders in accordance with agency policy.</p> <p>A6. Conduct violation investigations; provide written documentation and discuss dispositional alternatives with supervisor.</p> <p>A7. Develop and present rationale for revocation at administrative hearings; testify, examine and cross-examine victims, witnesses, and the offender; present evidence; when appropriate develop appeals of hearing examiner's decisions.</p> <p>A8. Attend and testify at court hearings following revocation of supervision.</p> <p>A9. Recognize and respond to the legitimate needs of crime victims and alert them to issues of concern during offender supervision.</p> <p>A10. Determine whether case/situation requires emergency or routine handling after supervisory consultation.</p> <p>A11. Keep supervisor informed of offender activities, casework, and special problems.</p> <p>A12. Collect urine specimens to monitor offender consumption of alcohol and drugs.</p> <p>A13. Complete all activities necessary for the prosecution of inmates who escape while on intensive sanctions supervisions.</p>

- A14. Comply with all requirements for reporting inmate movement for the preparation of the daily inmate count.
 - A15. Orient offenders and their families to the policy, procedures and requirements of the electronic monitoring program.
 - A16. Properly sign out, enroll and install electronic monitoring equipment in the offender's residence and on their person.
 - A17. Establish and modify, as necessary, a monitoring curfew schedule for offenders to provide for release to attend work, school, recreation, medical, treatment programs or other approved activities.
 - A18. Investigate and report all electronic monitoring tampers, escapes or alerts to determine if a violation occurred.
 - A19. Investigate and report any damaged or missing equipment.
 - A20. Recover all offender electronic monitoring equipment upon termination.
 - A21. Conduct routine checks of electronic monitoring equipment to ensure that the equipment is in proper working order.
- 25% B. Preparation of assessments and development of case plans for offenders.
- B1. Review offender's background by interviewing offender, reading records, searching for information, interviewing collateral sources.
 - B2. Assess the risk of offender presents to the public and the nature of causes of the offender's problems to determine level of supervision in accordance with the case classification system.
 - B3. Develop and monitor offender participation in objective-based case plans determining short-term and long-term goals and objectives.
 - B4. Establish rules of supervision that will address offender risk and need factors.
 - B5. Secure offender participation in development and modification of case plans.
 - B6. Inform supervisor of activities, casework, special problems, etc. through scheduled reviews, discussions and informal meetings.
 - B7. Periodically reassess offender risk and needs and revise case plan and rules of supervision accordingly.
 - B8. Serve as a member of the program review committee.
 - B9. Monitor offender's progress with service provider and evaluate the need for continuation of service or modification of the case plan.
 - B10. Counsel offenders, individually or in groups, on specific problems.
 - B11. Involve those closely associated with the offender in his/her caseplan; where appropriate encourage their support; when necessary advise them on ways of coping with the offender.
- 20% C. Fostering law abiding behavior and positive participation of individual offenders in the community.
- C1. Determine court obligations and supervision or monitoring fees, and establish and enforce payment plan; collect and process payments in accordance with department and division policy.
 - C2. Identify resources available to meet the offender's needs, make appropriate referrals and facilitate offender access.

- C3. Upon referral, communicate with provider personnel to establish mutual goals and expectations for the offender.
 - C4. Monitor offenders progress with service provider and evaluate the need for continuation of service or modification of the case plan.
 - C5. Provide information to offender regarding services, rights, responsibilities, policies, rules, procedures, etc.
 - C6. Explain court proceedings, rulings and recommendations to offenders to be certain they understand and are prepared for same.
 - C7. Understand and utilize purchase of service procedures.
 - C8. Counsel offenders, individually or in groups, on specific problems.
 - C9. Facilitate transition from the institution to the community by maintaining contact with incarcerated offenders and institution staff in accordance with agency policy.
 - C10. Provide liaison duties to state institutions to include routine contact with intensive sanctions and intensive sanctions eligible offenders, contact with facility staff to share information, reports and program changes, orientation, and to update the status of intensive sanctions offenders.
- 15% D. Preparation of accurate, timely investigations, reports and case records.
- D1. Maintain complete and accurate case records for each offender.
 - D2. Maintain records and follow systems for appointments, case review dates, due dates, etc.
 - D3. Conduct presentence investigations and write other reports requested by the court or required by the department or division.
 - D4. Attend and testify at court hearings.
 - D5. Conduct investigations of interstate compact and intrastate transfer requests.
 - D6. Write presentence social and admission investigations and legible chronological case records in compliance with prescribe formats and due dates.
 - D7. Provide thorough parole plan investigation reports as required.
 - D8. Write letters to the court summarizing case situations and clearly stating action requested from the court.
 - D9. Investigate all alleged violations of supervision. Where violations have occurred, determine appropriate sanctions or dispositions. Serve the offender with the violation as required in compliance with prescribed formats and due dates.
 - D10. Correspond with offenders and resources as needed.
 - D11. Investigate institution visitor lists.
- 5% E. Execution of safety and security requirements related to the movement, monitoring and surveillance of offenders.
- E1. Arrange for inter-institutional visits for offenders with specified family members in other state institutions.
 - E2. Properly utilize communications and safety equipment in compliance with policies and procedures.

annual goals

- E3. Place offenders in secure and non-secure detention in state institutions or county jails.
 - E4. Complete duties related to the arrest, custody and transportation of offenders to and from institutions and home residences.
 - E5. Secure and inventory the property of offenders being placed in custody.
- 5% F. Performance of community outreach activities, liaison activities and other special assignments as required.
- F1. Establish and maintain effective and cooperative working relationship with other criminal justice and human service agencies.
 - F2. Maintain community relationships through public appearances and speeches addressing DOC goals and programs.
 - F3. Provide general advocacy services for DOC offenders, develop and monitor community resources to address offender needs.
 - F4. Respond to public inquiries about general goals, policies and programs and about specific offenders without violating confidentiality rules.
 - F5. Serve on local and statewide committees as assigned.
 - F6. Speak to elementary and high school students about the consequences of criminal behavior.
 - F7. Attend training as requested by employee or directed by supervisor.
 - F8. Complete other tasks as assigned by supervisor.
 - F9. As assigned, provide liaison duties to purchase of service agencies to include screening of referred offenders, review of offender report forms, placement, and sharing of information between the facility and department and division staff.
 - F10. May assist in training or orienting PPAE's as requested by supervisor.

KR1 **KR2** **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

1. Knowledge of dynamics of human relations.
2. Knowledge of English language and ability to communicate effectively.
3. Knowledge of correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure in written work.
4. Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
5. Knowledge of problem identification and solving techniques.
6. Knowledge of culturally different values (cultural awareness).
7. Knowledge of criminal justice system.
8. Knowledge of community resources.
9. Knowledge of legal procedures.
10. Knowledge of purchase of service systems.
11. Knowledge of security and restraint techniques.
12. Knowledge of drug analysis techniques.
13. Knowledge of investigation procedures.
14. Knowledge of time management and organizational techniques.
15. Knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses.
16. Knowledge of treatment techniques.
17. Knowledge of social work methods.
18. Knowledge of AODA issues and treatment.
19. Knowledge of principles of offender classification.
20. Knowledge of electronic monitoring systems.
21. Knowledge of staff security, public protection and health and safety practices.
22. Knowledge of statutes and administrative rules.

Appendix B

Summary of Responses to Question 11

<u>PRIOR EXPERIENCES</u>	<u># of Agents (of 39 respondents)</u>	<u>Length of experience</u>
Limited Term Employee	1	260 hrs
Correctional Officer	4	
Internship	2-DA's office 3-DOC 1-Public Defender's	280 hrs, 480 hrs, 720 hrs 6 mos.
Shelter worker	1 1 3 1	2 yrs 16 yrs 4 yrs
AODA worker	2	
DOC Office Operations Asst.	1	
Youth Counselor/Social Worker	2 1 1 1 1 1	10 yrs 8 yrs 5 yrs 5 yrs
Probation Worker- other agency or state	1	5 yrs
Case Manager	3	
Public Defender's Investigator	1	
Disability Worker	1	
Jail Volunteer	1	
Law Enforcement/Security	1	

14 respondents or 35.9% had no prior related work experience(s).

25 respondents or 64% had 1 or more related work experiences.

Appendix C

Survey Tool

Analysis of the Educational Levels of Probation and Parole Agents in the WI-DOC

1. Gender M ___ F ___
2. Age in years ___ 18 to 25 ___ 26 to 34 ___ 35 to 44 ___ 45 to 54 ___ 55 or older
3. How long have you been and agent? ___ 0-5 yrs ___ 6-10-yrs ___ 11-15 yrs ___ 16-20
 ___ 2 -25 yrs ___ 26 to 30 yrs ___ 31 – 35 yrs ___ 36 yrs or more
4. In what decade were you hired? ___ 1970's ___ 1980's ___ 1990's ___ 2000's
5. What level of agent are you at this time? ___ A(new) ___ B ___ C(senior)
6. Highest educational level attained PRIOR to becoming an agent. For degrees not completed, please state the completed number of credit hours.

 High School _____
 One year certificate/diploma _____
 Associate's Degree _____
 Bachelor's Degree _____
 Master's Degree _____
 Doctorate _____
7. Do you have any military service? ___ yes ___ no
8. If yes to #7, please state in years and months how long you served.
9. Did you ever serve as a WI-DOC LTE or intern?
10. If yes to #9, please state the length of your internship, field experience, or limited term of employment in total hours. _____
11. Please list any other work experiences you had prior to hire as an agent such as social work, law enforcement, law, vocational rehab, or anything else you believe to be related.

PLEASE GO TO SIDE 2

12. What do you feel are the most important skills and attributes necessary to function as a Probation and Parole Agent? Please rate the following with 5 being the most important and 1, the least.*

	1	2	3	4	5
records management	<input type="radio"/>				
verbal communication	<input type="radio"/>				
time management	<input type="radio"/>				
victim services	<input type="radio"/>				
organizational skills	<input type="radio"/>				
maturity, self awareness, aware of personal strengths and weaknesses	<input type="radio"/>				
good writing skills, grammar, punctuation	<input type="radio"/>				
investigative techniques and procedures	<input type="radio"/>				
Interviewing skills	<input type="radio"/>				
knowledge of court process, criminal law, search and seizure rules	<input type="radio"/>				
dynamics of human relations	<input type="radio"/>				
problem identification and solving techniques	<input type="radio"/>				
cultural awareness	<input type="radio"/>				
alcohol/drug issues and treatment	<input type="radio"/>				
security and restraint techniques	<input type="radio"/>				
social work methods	<input type="radio"/>				
state statutes and administrative rules	<input type="radio"/>				
risk and needs assessment, classification systems	<input type="radio"/>				
electronic monitoring systems	<input type="radio"/>				

13. What do you believe are the most important skill areas or necessary attributes to being an agent, that are the most difficult for newly hired probation and parole agents to attain? Please rate the following with 5 being the most important and 1, the least.

	1	2	3	4	5
records management	<input type="radio"/>				
verbal communication	<input type="radio"/>				
time management	<input type="radio"/>				
victim services	<input type="radio"/>				
organizational skills	<input type="radio"/>				
maturity, self awareness, aware of personal strengths and weaknesses	<input type="radio"/>				
good writing skills, grammar, punctuation	<input type="radio"/>				
investigative techniques and procedures	<input type="radio"/>				
Interviewing skills	<input type="radio"/>				
knowledge of court process, criminal law, search and seizure rules	<input type="radio"/>				
dynamics of human relations	<input type="radio"/>				
problem identification and solving techniques	<input type="radio"/>				
cultural awareness	<input type="radio"/>				
alcohol/drug issues and treatment	<input type="radio"/>				
security and restraint techniques	<input type="radio"/>				
social work methods	<input type="radio"/>				
state statutes and administrative rules	<input type="radio"/>				
risk and needs assessment, classification systems	<input type="radio"/>				
electronic monitoring systems	<input type="radio"/>				

14. What do you feel were your five weakest skill areas at the time of hire?

15. What level of education do you believe is the minimum level necessary for an entry level probation and parole agent to possess at their time of hire?

HSED/GED

High School Grad

Less than Associate's Degree

Associate Degree'

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Comments:

Thank you very much for your assistance with this project!