

Los Angeles County Probationers Pay Price for Their Own Supervision

Offender Funding Program Saves California Taxpayers Millions Each Year

The Issues

Many state and local governments are looking for ways to provide alternatives to incarceration and intensive supervision of offenders, while holding them accountable and ensuring public safety. Over the past several years, there has been increasing concern from the public, media, government, political, judicial and correctional sectors regarding the need to supervise offender behavior within the larger community, without the need for traditional incarceration. Recent legislation from many state governments has also placed a direct impact on the ability of correctional and probation officers to comply with court orders under tightening budgets. Many are looking toward electronic monitoring solutions to provide the answers.

The Challenges

These are the challenges Los Angeles County faced prior to implementation of an electronic monitoring program:

- Overcrowded jails
- Unsupervised release of high-risk inmates
- Increased levels of violence among jail inmates
- Loss of deputies and staff due to budget restraints
- Negative publicity via the general public and regional media
- Loss of authority and/or means to incarcerate convicted offenders

Background

The Los Angeles County Probation Department initially contracted for a pilot program for low-risk offenders. In subsequent years, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department began to face overcrowded jails and a shrinking budget. In 1995, the program was expanded to include sentenced inmates released from custody of the Los Angeles Sheriff. Under a Memorandum of Agreement with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the program's daily population grew to exceed 2,250, making this the largest program in the nation fully funded by the offender.

Approach

The approach to this contract was unique, in that it is a public/private partnership, over which Sentinel Offender Services takes responsibility for all elements of program administration and delivery, while the Los Angeles County Probation Department provides selection criteria, operational guidelines and program enforcement.

Solution

Sentinel Offender Services provides the complete platform of electronic monitoring technology and tactical services, including field offices and staff who provide violation reporting, offender supervision, collection of fines and fees, case management, substance-abuse testing, equipment installation and referral services.



Sentinel Offender Services has actively provided a complete platform of technology-based and tactical, offender-funded, privatized probation services to the County of Los Angeles Probation Department (LA County Probation) since 1993.

This Sentinel Offender Services program was the first offender-funded model in the nation to receive widespread positive recognition, due to it's success and measurable results.

Sentinel Offender Services has monitored thousands of offenders through this program, all under the offender-funded model. Sentinel Offender Services successfully monitored more than 2,000 offenders daily for LA County Probation at the program's peak population. Sentinel Offender Services continues provide these services daily at no cost to the taxpayers of Los Angeles County. Sentinel Offender Services estimates that Los Angeles County saves \$18,000,000 a year through cost avoidance by monitoring and supervising rather than incarcerating thousands of offenders.

Additionally, this program has generated an even greater cost benefit to Los Angeles County, when one considers that offenders on electronic monitoring are able to keep their jobs and contribute to the county tax base when supervised through electronic monitoring.

Sentinel Offender Services has multiple offices throughout Los Angeles County actively servicing this account. Sentinel Offender Services provides Radio Frequency Electronic Monitoring, remote Breath Alcohol Testing, on- site drug testing and full-service Case Management through four fully staffed field offices and dedicated full-time staff of professional case managers.

The Outlook

Sentinel Offender Services is noted for serving Los Angeles County continuously for nearly 20 years with electronic monitoring and tactical offender supervision services. Sentinel Offender Services currently provides word-class service to over 220 law enforcement, probation departments and courts, across the nation.

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