



A moment to focus on the good our team is doing every day



zoom Up Your Revenue

TSBDC AT UCDD, OTHERS WORKING WITH SMALL BIZ OWNERS

The Tennessee Small Business Development Center at UCDD and other community partners including Tennessee Tech University's Center for Rural Innovation, and The Biz Foundry have begun hosting an entrepreneurial think tank via Zoom. They are bringing together community leaders, business experts, and local entrepreneurs to discover creative and innovative opportunities for growth. For more information, visit the TSBDC at UCDD Facebook page.

TH, 6:30 PM
COMMUNITY CALL



Center for Rural Innovation
TENNESSEE TECH



Out in the Field

CLAY CO. HEALTH/REHAB DELIVERS PIZZA TO UCHRA



Thank you, Clay Co. Health and Rehabilitation for lunch!

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS: 'WHAT ARE WE?'

UC*HRA Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS: 'WHAT ARE WE?'

SUBMITTED BY JESSICA EATON | UCHRA COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS CASE OFFICER

We are not the Tennessee Department of Corrections (TDOC). We are not Probation. We are Community Corrections.

Case Officers hear this every time we go to a training, meeting, or conference. Generally, Community Corrections is a program that defers felony offenders from incarceration. Something that has historically made us different from TDOC is that every judicial district has the freedom to use our program in a way that is tailored to that area's needs. We are still that way today but it is a bit different.

TDOC has put stringent guidelines on Community Corrections and structured it in a way so that it is as exactly like TDOC, except we get paid less to do more. This is probably why we so often hear employees who figure this out and leave – to get paid more money to work for TDOC.

Some of us, however, do stay. The truth is, we are very different than the bureaucracy of the department corrections. We are closer to our clients – we have to be, seeing them every single week. We work hard to get a successful termination – because we have to. Our clients are the worst of the worst – two- and three-time probation violators. The majority of them are the ones who are used to not making it on community supervision.

So, what are we? Are we probation officers or are we social workers? Well, in a sense, we are both. We give a virtually and statistically impossible task to help the ones that everyone else has already to help

Case Officers shares insight into
Community Corrections Dept. on pg. 2

COVID KITS FOR IN-HOME SERVICES



Safety kits containing PPE are being made
and given to In-Home Services staff.

STAR SUCCESS STORY: DANIEL ROBERTS

The following information was submitted by a UCHRA program participant and has been edited for clarity.

My name is Daniel Roberts. I would like to share my success story with you. As a junior in high school, I enrolled in the STAR program through Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA).

The Self-sufficiency Training And Results (STAR) program helped with funds that allowed me to attend dual enrollment classes at TCAT (Tennessee College of Applied Technology) Livingston. After graduating from high school in 2019, I continued to attend TCAT with assistance from the STAR program for gas and books.

I am happy to say I received my Administrative Office Diploma and now have a career with the University of Tennessee Knoxville Extension Office in Clay County. I am employed as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) assistant. I am grateful for the STAR program because before I enrolled in the program I was not sure where my future was headed.

Thanks to the program and my case manager, Balinda Westmoreland, I have become successful in my life.



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Some of us, however, do stay. The truth is, we are very different than the bureaucracy of the department of corrections. We are closer to our clients – we have to be, seeing them every single week. We work harder to get a successful termination – because we have to. Our clients are the worst of the worst – two- and three-time probation violators. The majority of them are the ones who are sure not to make it on community supervision.

So, what are we? Are we probation officers or are we social workers? Well, in a sense, we are both. We are given a virtually and statistically impossible task: to help the ones that everyone else has already to help – and failed. Our job is to provide both supervision and social work. I believe that we are in the most adequate position to do this compared to any other community supervision program. We work for an agency whose sole purpose is to provide services to the economically and physically disadvantaged and the courts have given us the authority to enforce the law among the people we supervise.

We are in a perfect position to help the impossible (clients). We need to do better if we want our clients to do better. I can come up with a million excuses not to help my clients:

"They don't appreciate it."

"They don't want to change."

"They just want to buy time before they go back to jail."

"They are a bunch of liars."

"I don't get properly trained around here."

"I'm not appreciated."

"I don't get paid enough."

There are also many reasons why I need to help my clients. One thing many of us do not realize is that our client's success is our success. When we help a client achieve a successful termination from our program, we achieve our program's primary purpose. We should do each and everything we possibly can to get these clients where they need to be. In a way, it is so easy for us. While other programs within our Agency do not have the ability to threaten their clients with imprisonment (if they do not follow their suggestions) we do!

There will be plenty of clients who do not want help. We need to switch gears with those clients, continue to provide strict supervision and move on to help the next client. We cannot let those clients who don't want to change force us to lose motivation to help the ones that do. We also cannot lose the trust of the courts by loosening the reins on supervision because we are trying to help our clients. I have had personal experience with giving clients second chances that, ultimately, really disappointed the judges in our district. The courts must remain on our side. They trust us and keep our program going in our community – we cannot fail them.

I was listening to a pastor once and heard a phrase that I think about every single day: “Correction does much but encouragement does more.” I can almost guarantee that every one of our clients has been yelled at or threatened by an authority figure more than once in their lifetime. Consequently, most of them resent authority to some degree. It is also evident this intimidation has not invoked a positive change within them (or they would not be in our program today). I do not doubt it had an effect on them and probably made them do what they were supposed to in that moment. But, did it have a lasting, positive impression? Most likely, no, it did not.

On the other hand, there are plenty of treatment professionals and social workers who can talk to our clients about their feelings and help them analyze why their family issues led to their life of crime and addiction. That's not really what we need to do either. Instead, we need to do what we have the resources to do. Our focus should be on giving our clients the practical resources for re-entry. Upon intake, our clients should get this idea of our program and our officers:

Hi, I'm your case officer/worker. I have the resources available to hand you a job, housing, addiction treatment; assistance with transportation, food, utility bills, legal aid, childcare, even support resources for HIV positive individuals. You have zero excuses to fail but you can if you choose. This is your last stop on the road. Don't waste my time or yours. Take what I am giving you or go back to jail.

It is that simple.

We are unique compared to other supervision programs across the state because of these available in-house resources and because we have the authority to do this. New employees need to understand this. Too often, new employees are told that Community Corrections is ‘kind of like state probation’ or ‘kind of like adult babysitters. No. Our job contains two essential components: supervision and resource providing. We aim to provide every possible opportunity for our clients to help them succeed. That's it. The goal is for our clients to have no excuses to fail. Of course, the courts have entrusted us with the authority to ensure our clients are obeying the law. This part of the job is essential but it is not enough for us to achieve a successful termination. Remember: our clients are the worst of the worst. They need more than just supervision; more than they have gotten in the past. Because we want to help, we cannot ever let up on supervision

Our Community Corrections program differs from other programs offered by this agency. We are not a customer service program; we are a corrections program. We need to be strict, but we also need to lift others up. That's what makes us unique. This job is not for the money or glory. We try to help hundreds of people who do not take our help and do not appreciate it. We get angry and resentful with clients and public officials multiple times per day.

So, why do we do it? Because it helps us as case officers/caseworkers. We are better people because of what we do here. We are humbled, grateful, angry, opinionated, embarrassed, and enlightened.

That's what a Community Corrections Officer is.

Jessica Eaton has worked in UCHRA Community Corrections Department since October 2017 and works in both DeKalb and Putnam counties. She graduated from Tennessee Tech University with a bachelor's degree in August 2014 and received her master's degree from Tennessee Tech in May 2017. She was on the Dean's list in Spring 2012 and Fall 2013. Jessica is married with two sons, Henry and Wally.