



D.C. PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY
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THE ADVOCATE

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY JUSTICE

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MISSION STATEMENT

The D.C. Pretrial Services Agency (PSA) honors the constitutional presumption of innocence and enhances public safety by formulating recommendations that support the least restrictive and most effective nonfinancial release determinations, and by providing community supervision for defendants that promotes court appearance and public safety and addresses social issues that contribute to crime.

From the Director by Susan W. Shaffer



Congratulations to the Director's Staff Communications Advisory Committee (CAC) for putting together our new Peer Awards program, and congratulations to the first two staff members to be recognized by their peers--Michael Baksis and Lenn Palma. The process is easy (see the attached job aide from the Training Department), and the accompanying excellent work done by Human Resources and Procurement has allowed us to get this underway with some fun awards in the offing!

One of the most important things the CAC did in developing this process was to identify the core values that govern our work at PSA, and to link these values to the peer recognition program. As I started to write about this, I read Norma Scott's article for this *Advocate*, and decided that no one could describe better than she the importance of identifying our core values and then keeping them in mind throughout our work day. I urge you to read her article carefully, as it beautifully

sets out how these core values guide us. As Norma writes, open communication is critical to providing effective customer service. None of us can do our jobs well if we cannot communicate. Learning how to listen as well as how to convey information is critical to effective performance. Think about the times you have felt misunderstood or disrespected, and remember that you may in turn sometimes neglect to communicate carefully, thereby making someone else feel the same. We all make mistakes, but we are never too old to learn from them. I am very proud that PSA has the reputation of being a strong customer service agency, which means we not only are knowledgeable and willing to share our knowledge, but we do so respectfully and professionally, taking the initiative to assist whether we are asked to do so by the court, a colleague, a defendant, or a member of the public. There is very little that makes me more proud than seeing this reputation flourish.

One reason I particularly value the CAC is that it allows for communication be-

tween all levels of the organization and ensures that Peter and I are aware of issues that may be of concern to you. Be sure you know who your CAC representative is from your unit, as (s) he can be a great resource for you in knowing what issues may be percolating in the Agency. Instead of meeting next month in our usual monthly CAC meeting, Peter and I are "hosting" a larger meeting on April 20 for senior agency managers and supervisors to join with the CAC and share knowledge about what various units have accomplished over the past six months. Again, this is a great opportunity for us to communicate with each other and learn about all the accomplishments going on across the Agency. We plan to do this at the end of September as well, so that we have a full picture of the entire fiscal year. Because we have grown so large, it is increasingly difficult to bring the entire Agency together in any one setting, but if you are interested in attending the April 20 event, we will make every effort to accommodate you.

News

from The Honorable Bruce Beaudin Senior DC Superior Court Judge and former Director of PSA

I have recently learned that a former member of our Agency has received a singular honor and while there may not be too many people who remember him, there are still some who knew and worked with Tom who might be interested in knowing what he has achieved.

Tom Ross worked at the Agency for quite a few years in a number of capacities but spent most of his time as I remember in what we used to call the Condition Supervision Section. During much of his time at the Agency he commuted between DC and Westminster Md., where he lived and went to Law School. Ultimately he graduated from the Agency and law school and clerked for Judge Alfred Burka in Judge Burka's last year on the bench. He practiced

around the DC Courts for a while and in Prince George's County as well before he moved farther out in Maryland. He was in partnership with Greg Powell, another DC Pretrial Services graduate.

On January 9, Tom was sworn in as a Circuit Court Judge for the State of Maryland, having been appointed by the Governor of Maryland. In case anyone would like to send a note to Tom, his address is 118 West Water Street, Centreville, MD 21617. I talked with Tom for quite a while, and he was quite happy about becoming a judge. He will be the only judge in his county and it is a pretty busy place.

It is wonderful to know that so many "graduates" of the Pretrial Services

(University) have done so well as they have grown up and gone on to other work. For many who don't know it, before Susie [Shaffer] and Jay [Carver] engineered the tremendous growth of the Agency from the 50 or so employees who were there when I left in 1984, most of the "Interviewers" were students who finished law or graduate school and then went on to other things. Besides Judges there are Prosecutors, Defense Lawyers, and lots of other former Agency members engaged in myriad professions.

Anyway, congratulations to Tom Ross for what he has accomplished. I am sure he would love to hear from his colleagues at the Agency who worked with him and remember him as a hard working and great to get along with guy.

Deputy's Digest by Peter A. Krauthamer



Tamara Lane, Tarya Lewis, Barbara McClendon, Angela McDonald-Alieu, Katina Palmer, Brian Perry, Alan Petty, and Antoinette Williams. The graduation ceremony brought luminaries from around the criminal justice system. Paul Quander, CSOSA's Director, his Deputy Director, Adrienne Poteat, and his Chief of Staff, Beverly Hill, graced us with their presence. Also in attendance were The Honorable Cheryl Long, current Drug Court judge, Jasper Ormond, Associate Director of Community Justice Programs, Kevin Lineberger, Assessment and Orientation Center Clinic Manager, the famous Michael Gunn, along with numerous others. The highlights were the two tremendous speeches given by Rita Adu, representing last year's graduating class, and Alan Petty, a member of this year's class. Both their speeches made me swell with PSA pride and for those who want to get a glimpse of what I am talking about, take the time to read their speeches appended to this *Advocate*. Of course, you will not get the sense of the energy and passion that went into them.

Last week, I had the honor to attend an inspirational event that celebrated some of the best PSA has to offer. On March 4th, the Substance Abuse Treatment Training Program (SATTP) held its second graduation ceremony. The proud graduates were: Ana Caro, Kelly Crisp,

The SATTP Committee (Charles Windley, Chair, Linda Buckmon, Staci Burrough, Rufus Felder, Dr. Renee Madden, Dan Taylor, and Terrence Walton) was also acknowledged, as it has been arduously working over the past few years to ensure that a quality program is provided to all PSA staff interested in enhancing their substance abuse treatment knowledge; and almost as important is the fact that it is at no cost to the participants. The SATTP meets the educational requirements to become a Certified Criminal Justice Addictions Professional (CJP) by preparing a participant to sit for the CJP examination through the District of Columbia Certification Board for Professional Alcohol and Drug Counselors (DCCB/PADC). In addition, employees interested in pursuing the entry level Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor credential (CADC I) can satisfy their required minimum of 67 hours of substance abuse-specific training through this program.

Our energetic faculty of qualified, DCCB/PADC approved instructors is comprised of Rufus Felder, Dr. Ronald Klein, Dr. Renee Madden, Trudy mitchell-gilkey, Daniel Taylor, Terrence Walton, and Charles Windley. (Linda Buckmon is joining the faculty for the 2004 program.) Though the time commitment and the work are significant, this requirement is dwarfed by the benefits this program offers. So, please congratulate any graduate you see and commend the committee and the faculty for providing PSA with a stellar educational program that supports our mission.

Krauthamer-Continued on page 5

CONVERSION TO THE COMPETITIVE SERVICE

by Donald Brady, Director

Office of Human Resources, Strategic Planning, Analysis and Evaluation



Donald Brady

On March 21, 2004, all PSA employee appointments with the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency will be converted from the excepted service to the competitive service. This change is a result of our completion of the start-up phase as a new Federal agency. During this time, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) granted CSOSA/PSA excepted authority to facilitate hiring; this authority is being discontinued.

No action is required on your part; my Office will process this conversion. You will receive a Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action to document these actions.

The following describes the impact this conversion will have on you based on OPM regulations.

For employees having at least three years of continuous federal service – you will be given a career appointment with the probationary period shown as completed.

For employees having at least six months but less than three years of continuous federal service – you will be given a career conditional appointment with a probationary period shown as completed if you have completed at least one year of a trial period. If you have not completed a one-year probation, time already served in a trial period will be credited toward the one-year probation.

If you are in one of these two groups, you will be able to apply for other federal positions since this conversion gives you ‘status’ within the federal government.

For employees having less than six months of continuous federal service – you will be given a status quo appointment with a probationary period of one year. Time already served in a trial period will be credited toward the one-year probation. Once you complete three years of continuous federal service, your position will be converted to a career appointment.

In summary, competitive status allows you to apply for government jobs at other federal agencies and provides for a one-year probationary period instead of the two-year trial period that is current CSOSA/PSA practice. Completion of a probationary period provides for appeal rights in adverse actions. Everything else about your employment with PSA specifically and the federal government in general remains the same. This means that the rules on pay, leave, work schedules, benefits, awards, appraisals and promotions are not changed.

If you have questions please e-mail or call Aden Williams at x5752 or me at x5664.

OPERATIONS HIRING AND REASSIGNMENTS FOR MARCH AND APRIL

by Spurgeon Kennedy, Deputy Director

Office of Operations



Spurgeon Kennedy

In March and April, Operations will bring aboard many new employees and complete all outstanding staff reassignments. On March 8, PSA welcomes new Diagnostic Pretrial Services Officers (PSOs) Nsunda Bangudi, Charles Hanik, Sharletta Jackson, Roselyn Norment, Agnes Ossolinski, Tracey Palmer, Atiya Reeves, Marvin Richardson, and Steven Sheffer; New Directions PSOs LaTonya McKellery, Phoebe May, and Veronica Onsurez-Pannell; Social Services and Assessment Center Community Treatment Specialist Roger Hernandez; Evening Unit Assistant PSOs Catina Bryant, Michelle Hare, Jan Jenkins, Charmaine Mitchell, and Renee Toy; Drug Testing and Compliance Unit (DTCU) Assistant PSOs Jeff College, Anthony Davis, Rebecca Gaither; and DTCU Drug Testing Technicians Walter Green, Sheena Hungerford, LaDrica Jenkins, Chris McKenzie, and Britta Williams.

In mid-April, General Supervision (finally!) will welcome aboard PSOs Stephen Crabtree, Devessdra McKoy, Kris Smith, Courtney Weber, Chris Wicecarver, and Michelle Yemc. Robynne Gant-Welborne will move from the Court Representatives Team to Supervision Team One, Vaughn Wilson will join the staff at U.S. District Court, and Sherma Alemeida will move to Heightened Supervision.

The new hires and completed reassignments will put Operations at nearly its full staff capacity and help us complete or begin several initiatives to enhance Office and Branch functioning. I'd like to congratulate all our new hires and thank everyone whose reassignments were delayed until now for your patience and understanding. Now comes the hard part for Janice and me—remembering all these new names and faces!

Let's Celebrate PSA Values!

by Norma Scott, Human Resources Specialist
Training and Career Development



Norma Scott

Webster's Dictionary defines a value as, "Something (as a principle or quality) that is intrinsically valuable or desirable." What is a value but a quality that we treasure in ourselves and others!? How significant values are to how we live! These fundamental concepts that we treasure and the priorities we attach to them quite often determine the path our lives will take. Values determine how we choose our mates and friends, what we do to earn our livelihood, and how we grapple with difficult life challenges. Values are what we as humans are all about. Just as we enjoy individual identities, so organizations have very distinct collective identities—identities that are distinct because of the unique combinations of values adhered to in the group setting.

Imagine the challenge the Director's Staff Communications Advisory Committee (CAC) faced when they began the process of articulating Agency values for use in our new Peer Awards program! They were certain that values are a part of the Agency's success and at the bottom of our deep commitment to what we do. They asked themselves what qualities are present at the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency. They sought out a combination of qualities that:

1. Allow for the Agency's success;
2. Enable people to work together productively;
3. Enrich our lives as working men and women; and
4. Mirror the culture of the Agency as a whole.

First, we are about **customer service**! We are "committed to service to internal and external customers. We strive for effective communications at all levels." We provide reliable, quality service to judges and other officers of the Court. We are committed simultaneously to the Constitutional presumption of innocence of each pretrial defendant and also to public safety. Internally, we pride ourselves for the support we provide to other units and branches and to colleagues in our own unit with whom we work every day. In order to offer the best possible customer service for all of our customers and stakeholders, professional, open communication is critical. We see communication as part of this key PSA value!



Second, comes **initiative**. We are "committed to continuous learning, to proactive problem solving, to a self-starter attitude." Continuous learning is a pillar of PSA's Career Management System. The value "initiative" suggests that we all have the potential to be leaders, to lead in problem solving, to be a self-starter, to represent PSA values to colleagues and our stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System. With leaders at all levels, aligned with our mission and strategic plan, we are bound to be a success, both as an Agency and as individuals.



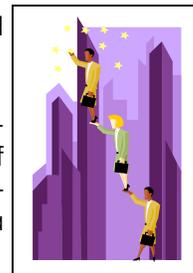
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Let's talk about **integrity!** How important it is that we are honest to ourselves and others! For PSA, integrity is about "honesty, sincerity and a deep commitment to the standards of conduct for employees of a law enforcement agency and the Federal Government."

Respect is another PSA value. For employees serving on the Communications Advisory Committee, this value embodied "commitment to diversity and an open workplace, appreciation of cultural differences, courtesy and professionalism." These are behaviors we expect from others, and behaviors we demonstrate at all times, both to the Court and its officers and to our colleagues and clients.

Next comes **teamwork.** For the Committee, this meant "collaboration, cooperation, praise and positive interaction with colleagues." How valuable all of these behaviors are to all of us! These are values that make our workday enjoyable. Praise strengthens us. Positive interaction makes coming to work a pleasure.



Finally, we all expect a strong **work ethic** in ourselves and others. The Communications Advisory Committee envisioned a work ethic that included "reliability, productivity and efficient use of time and resources," a workplace where everyone pulls their weight and where everyone is engaged in making workflow more efficient!

Here is your challenge, PSA employees! Go forth and find the values we live by! Let's document these values as we see them enhancing the quality of our workplace and helping us realize our collective purpose, the mission and our strategic plan. Let's use the new Peer Awards program! Here's how it works: When you see people excelling at one or more of the PSA values described above, recognize them! Join in the fun, because by recognizing a deserving colleague, you strengthen the team! See the attached job aid that explains the process.

Krauthamer-Continued from page 2

PSA Training Days are April 29th and 30th and, judging from last year's evaluations of the program, expectations are running high. The committee (Sherma Almeida, Annette Bryant, Rae Grice, Jocelyn Harris, Monica James, Samuel Johnson, Serento Jones, Donna Madole, Stephanie McKenzie, Sherry Reed, Angela Simmons, Claudine Thompson, Trudy Van Voorhis, and I) is using its collective brain power and creativity to come up with a curriculum that will be educational, entertaining, and topically diverse yet relevant. According to the evaluations, Norma Scott and "Professor" Terrence Walton have set the bar, as they received consistent rave reviews for the topic, preparation, and presentation of their courses (*Career Management Comes to PSA* and *Co-Occurring Disorders: Double Trouble*, respectively).

Finally, the CSOSA/PSA 2003 Combined Federal Campaign was a resounding success. Once again, we outdid ourselves! CSOSA/PSA had 272 donors, which comprises 27% of the workforce compared to 18% last year; the amount raised totaled \$82,598 compared to \$50,488 last year; in summary we exceeded our goal of \$55,000 by 150%. By all accounts this is a terrific showing for CSOSA/PSA!

Trudy's Tidings

Decisions, and mentors, and years...Oh My!!by **Trudy Van Voorhis, Branch Manager****Court Services Branch**

Decisions...decisions –ever think about the impact of our decisions? Not those of the daily round like, "Do I wear black socks or navy blue? Regular or decaf?" I am thinking about questions of consequence like, "What will I do with this opportunity, my life, my career?" We make decisions all the time, most of which we don't give a second thought, but to every person there comes a pivotal moment when the stakes are high and the decision made strikes a direction for your life. "Two roads diverged in a wood," wrote Robert Frost. "And I chose the one less traveled by, and that made all the difference" (in other words, the more difficult of the two).

I thank the Agency and especially Norma Scott for introducing the Mentor Program to PSA. Norma told us in the beginning that the exchanged reward would most likely be mutual and she was so right. I have received so much from my protégé. This program has brought two people into a relationship that would not have otherwise happened. Our conversations and association have made decisions and provided changes for us both.

In this day and age there are *so many* choices and *so many* perspectives we can get so wrapped up in that we become paralyzed and don't ask if it matters one way or another. We are so bogged down by the little choices that we don't know how to handle the big ones. Instead of deciding on the road less traveled by, we find ourselves following Yogi Berra's advice . . . "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

Being able to have someone to discuss thoughts and daily decisions, large and small, has been rewarding. All of us need to remind each other that our decisions matter greatly. Our lives are formed by the decisions we make. You may think that until you make up your mind on something, that particular facet of your life is on hold. But it really isn't . . . your life moves on. By not deciding, you are deciding. We make up our lives by our choices, and every choice contributes to the fullness or fragility of our existence. I've often thought how changed my life could have been if just one decision had been made differently. Not all of my decisions were sound but even the dumb ones taught me something. Decisions are not neutral; they will make us full or frail.

I recently visited with some college buddies from West Virginia. I cherish these times with my friends because as I age, I have learned that while it is a necessity to have friends when you are young, their importance magnifies when you are older.

Just like the "Big Chill" movie, we friends spoke about visions and plans we had for ourselves when we were first acquainted almost 30 years ago and compared them against what we are today. Those of us who had been more dreamy and hopeful appeared to be more prosperous. Those in our group who had always taken a more serious and earnest outlook we decided now seemed to suffer life's consequences more. "I wish I would have enjoyed life more and been less suspicious of dreams and imagination," one said.

I blame a lot of that thinking on the movie my generation dedicatedly watched each year. The "Wizard of Oz". To this day, I hate the ending. Now I know why Dorothy got lost – she took directions from three men. (!) I remember always leaving the room when those flying monkeys attacked and getting teary when Dorothy said goodbye to her straw, tin, and furry friends, chanting the mantra, "There's no place like home." The reunion with Aunt Em and all the others was touching but I always felt sad after it was over, and could not understand why. I read once that the conclusion of the film gave children the wrong message. The Emerald City, and Dorothy's love of her friends, was not real. Her odyssey was the result of a bang to the brain. It is sad to think that dreams can be so wonderful, but not real. We all must wake up. So it's best not to imagine things that do not exist.

We live in a time that values the rule of facts and figures. The statistical carries more weight than the spiritual. When we say to someone, "You're just imagining things," we are really saying, "You are not seeing things right. What you say has no basis in reality."

Mentoring Program Update-Reflections From Protégés



Left to right: Protégé Annette Bryant and Mentor and Program Coordinator Norma Scott

Annette Bryant, Receptionist (Office of the Director). I was excited when I learned that I had been chosen to be a protégé in the mentoring program. The Training and Career Development Center launched the mentoring program approximately three months ago. You are placed with a mentor for one year and you sign a Mentor and Protégé Contract. You and your mentor arrange times to meet to discuss your goals and what you would like to accomplish. I meet with my mentor once a week for an hour. Since I have been in this program, my mentor has been a blessing to me. We discuss things that will help me in my job and what steps I need to take for growth. My mentor in-

spired me to work on my career, something that I had not thought about. You get all sorts of new ideas that you would not normally think of. You find out your weaknesses and your strengths. This program has really enlightened me to take control of the things that I would like to do. My mentor came up with a wonderful idea—to keep a journal! As you look back in your journal, you can see what you have accomplished as well as things you may want to go back and work on. One of the most enjoyable things that I have done in the context of my mentoring relationship is interview one of our very own, Mrs. Laura DeVol, of the Training Department! It was very interesting to learn how she started out at PSA as a Pretrial Services Officer in the Diagnostic Unit, and went on from there to other units, was acting supervisor in C-225, and now is the Director of the Training and Career Development Center. The interview helped me to become more motivated. There is so much to learn (and do!) within the Agency. It may take a “minute” but you can do it—like Nike says “JUST DO IT”. This program is a sure thing and I know we all will benefit from it. I would like to thank all the mentors for taking time out to help us accomplish our goals. I advise anyone to at least try it. You will be surprised at the growth you will have as a person.

Pocahontas Carter, Information Support Services Technician (Office of Information Technology). I am honored to have the opportunity to write for the *Advocate* regarding the Mentoring Program. I became a protégé to Mrs. Faye Redding (Human Resource Classification Specialist) in the latter part of November. My journey requires discipline as well as creating an action plan with someone skilled in conveying knowledge regarding HR job functions. Viewing her, in her element during our Focus Group setting, ignited a desire for my impending personal growth. She has given me guidance and insight into career development. Projecting feedback and support when needed, she has become essential in fulfilling my organizational objectives. Mrs. Redding is by far a natural motivator, with leadership qualities. Mrs. Norma Scott said the Mentoring Program would be a rewarding and enriching experience and for me thus far, indeed it has been and will continue to be a pathway toward my future success.



Left to right: Mentor Faye Redding (HR Specialist) and Protégé Pocahontas Carter

Mentoring Program (continued)

Scott Hopkins, Training Officer (Training and Career Development). Though I've only been a protégé three months, I have found the experience thus far to be incredibly rewarding. Not only has my mentor inspired me to go back to school, but he has also given me real life insight as to what it takes to be a leader of people. And on top of those things, he has taught me much about navigating the complexities of the Agency, information which is perhaps more valuable than gold.

A journal I'm keeping allows me to think about how I plan to implement some of the things I've learned. In this journal, I take notes and write my impressions on: conversations between my mentor and me; meetings I attend with my mentor; leadership books I read; scenarios my mentor gives me to test my leadership mettle; interviews I conduct with other members of the Agency; and critical incidents that require further reflection and hindsight. The journal helps my mind convert 'information dump' into action; and in the future I will look back at it to reflect upon how much I've grown as a person.



Left to right: Protégé Scott Hopkins and Mentor Michael Williams, Supervision Branch Manager

If you care about your development as a person, (and not just as a PSA employee), apply for the next round of the Mentoring Program. You will forever reap the benefits.

VAN VOORHIS — Continued from page 6

You may have heard me mention (!!) that I plan on retiring next year. The Agency and most specifically Court Services has been *my home* for over 20 years. While heading out to new adventures sounds exciting, the fact that I am able to do so is an indicator that signals the arrival of middle age. (And yes, I do plan to live to be 100 – thank you.) Another sign for me is that I am spending more time thinking about the past than before. I remember going through the phase when I thought nothing from the past could possibly be as good as what we had in the moment. I would roll my eyes when someone said, "When I was your age..." or "Those were the good old days..." Now I hear myself say those things!

I'm starting to put things into perspective, realizing that lessons learned from the saints (breathing and not) in my past are my compass for tomorrow. It is sheer ignorance to think that we know more about life than those who lived before us. I recently read a statement that really struck me. It said, "Technology renders the older generation ignorant." PRISM 2 has verified that for me! It used to be that living skills and the basics were passed down from the older generation to the younger - the cumulative wisdom of the years given to guide the next generation. But it seems that this has broken down.

To alter a popular song from the seventies, "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know WHO you've got till they're gone?" As I grow older, I find myself appreciating my own mentors more. I think of all the things they taught me. They all are still with me in lessons learned and memories cherished. All of these people were/are part of my life. They helped give my life direction and coherence and meaning. History is bunk? That was then and now is now? The further we go the better we are? The dearly "departed" are dead and gone? Hardly.

The Agency still has some growing pains. They speak of work left undone and work to be done. But in these details, I recognize the "departed" PSA soldiers who helped build this body and moved on to other opportunities and other heavens. Because of their efforts, the Agency continues to grow and flourish.

I've learned to change what I can. I'm beginning to accept what I cannot change, and I'm gaining the wisdom to know the difference. Janice [Bergin] often reminds me to enjoy my "twilight" years at PSA. The mentor program and my work with Jocylin [Stevenson] has been one way to do that.

I am sure when I do reach the fork in the road and head into Emerald City for my ride out of here — it will hit me then that indeed...there is no place like home.

Case Management



by Antoinette M. Williams
Special Assistant, Supervision Branch

Several months ago, I was selected to chair a work group to review current case management practices and procedures of the General Supervision Unit (GSU). The committee and I were charged with the task to develop a comprehensive case management system that would standardize processes for Supervision Pretrial Services Officers (PSOs), specifically those assigned to GSU's teams. This system would allow case managers to efficiently manage their caseloads by identifying and addressing infractions more expeditiously, referring defendants to treatment and/or social services timely, and providing representation to the Court. It would also establish continuity across the teams regarding report writing and PRISM documentations.

The committee also looked at redefining the roles and responsibilities of the Supervision PSOs/Case Managers and Court Representatives (CR). Currently, Supervision PSOs/Case Managers supervise the defendants while CRs provide court representation of defendants' compliance. Over the past months, several discussions ensued in which we looked at ways to give additional responsibilities to the CRs, including having the CRs responsible for closing out cases in PRISM.

Furthermore, the committee reviewed and addressed the following issues:

- Identification of Impediments
- Orientation/PRI
- Monitoring of defendants' compliance
- Interventions when defendants commit infractions
- Interventions when defendants reach violation status
- Closing cases
- Role and responsibilities of the Court Representatives and PSO Case Managers

The Case Management Development Committee consisted of an excellent group of people representing every unit within the Supervision Branch. Sherma Almeida, Jeff Ambush, Saul Atencio, Alisha Glover, Kristin Kainu, Eric Mitchell, LaTonya Lipford-Proctor, Kori Spriggs and Jocelyn Stevenson's commitment to the project was duly noted and appreciated. Linda Linnell, from Strategic Planning, Analysis and Evaluation, was also a participant who provided her expertise and valuable knowledge of performance measures in conjunction with our daily tasks. I applaud each of them for their expertise, hard work and professionalism. This made my job so much easier. 😊

Finally, the committee submitted their recommendations to the Branch Manager, which resulted in the drafting of 3 procedural statements: General Supervision Unit Use of Agent Notification Report; Closing Cases; and GSU Case Management Procedures. These procedural statements are currently being vetted through to the GSU supervisors. Within the next few weeks, staff will also review the statements and provide their feedback. The final draft will then be forwarded to the Operations Director and Deputy Director for approval.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET YOUR FINANCIAL HOUSE IN ORDER

by George Pruden, General Counsel



Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
REPRINT from CSOSA's NEWSLINK, Vol. 3, Issue 10 (Dec. 2003)

One of the more unusual sections in the ethics regulations is the provision relating to “just financial obligations” found at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.809. While it is really a very simple regulation to understand and comply with, it is not a regulation that most federal employees consider. That’s because it deals with behaviors that do not take place in the workplace. First, let me dissect this regulation for you phrase-by-phrase and then I will explain to you why it is important for you to get your financial house in order.

The regulation begins with the following phrase: “Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those such as Federal, State, or local taxes that are imposed by law.” This is not a difficult concept to understand: you must pay your debts, especially your taxes. There is a perfect quote from the Bible that I could use, but I think you know what it is.

The regulation then goes on to define what constitutes a “just financial obligation.” Basically, it is “any financial obligation acknowledged by the employee or reduced to judgment by a court.” In other words, if you owe a creditor and you know you owe the creditor or a court has determined that you owe the creditor, then you have what is called a “just financial obligation” and you must pay the bill. Some of you may ask the following question: “what happens if I don’t pay the bill?” The answer is easy; the implementation leaves me a bit uneasy. Please let me explain.

I say the answer is easy because if you do not pay a bill that you acknowledged you owe or that has been reduced to a judgment, then you have violated this regulation and you can be subject to discipline. That is the easy part. The uneasy part comes with the implementation of the discipline. Let us just say, for example, that you are suspended for a week for failing to pay this bill. And the reason why you did not pay the bill was because you were in a dire financial situation. Our suspension of you for a week (think one-half of a paycheck) is just going to make your financial circumstances even worse. Sounds somewhat counter intuitive, does it not? Now, back to the regulation.

The next question that you should be thinking about is: “what do the words ‘in good faith’ mean?” “In good faith” means that an employee has an honest intention to pay the creditor “in a timely manner.” The regulation goes on to provide that where a dispute exists between an employee and a creditor, the agency is under no obligation to determine the validity of the claim or to collect the debt on the behalf of the creditor. In other words, this is a fight between you and the creditor and we have no interest in getting in the middle of it.

Now that we have carefully walked through the regulation, let me incorporate why I am so concerned about this area. One reason is that my office has the dubious responsibility of having to review garnishment orders that have been levied against our employees both in CSOSA and PSA. To date, we have reviewed 31 orders. So at least initially, it is a workload issue. I am sure my counterparts in both human resource (HR) operations would agree. The HR staffs have to make the entries into the payroll system that generate the payment to the creditor. The other reason I have concerns about this issue is the personal nature of the information we are required to review. Personally speaking, I take no pleasure in finding out that you are having difficulty paying your bills and I am sure my colleagues in HR would agree with me.

So, as the holiday shopping season comes to a close, please be careful to keep current with your financial obligations.

The View from Government Offices of General Counsel

by Linette A. Lander, Assistant General Counsel

Office of General Counsel, Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency



Interacting regularly with federal sector attorneys assigned to agencies throughout the federal government, I decided to ask some of their views concerning their roles and duties in the government offices of general counsel (OGCs) where they serve. This article is a brief summary of a longer article that will recap those views for staff in OGC.

Some time ago, the following published quote from a general counsel to the Department of Defense drew my attention: “Being general counsel is not just a legal technician job. My view of a good general counsel is someone who helps clients achieve objectives with efficiency and consistency with the law.”

One lawyer described difficulties he had experienced when officials in various agencies wanted to proceed in manners he believed were legally unwise, if not *per se* illegal. He also spoke of the role of agency counsel as a facilitator, rather than an obstructionist. He had witnessed cases where agency officials had failed to involve counsel’s office to avoid prohibitions on their activities, and were ultimately forced to bring the issues to OGC very late after problems occurred when few viable solutions remained available. His approach was always to attempt to find alternative legal ways to accommodate the wishes of agency management, and then to “tee up those options and let the policy makers make the ultimate determination.” The attorney stressed the importance of safeguarding the confidences of those in the agency and always maintaining a neutral position within the agency, in relation to politics, policies and personalities.

An attorney serving as the general counsel at a government entity with a mission similar to CSOSA’s told me that their work was focused on providing prompt responses to headquarters concerning legal, policy and procedural questions, as well as providing litigation support to the attorneys in the U.S. Attorney’s Offices, which manage their litigation. The attorney was acutely aware, however, that the office also had a responsibility to serve and protect the general public and to provide the public with all possible assurances that, regardless of whether the agency’s action favored an individual member of the public, it would be done fairly and in accordance with law and policy.

One attorney in the administrative and regulatory section of his agency emphasized that his principal obligation was to promulgate regulations that served the agency’s interests. He recognized that he was also compelled to ensure that the agency’s proposed actions were rationally based, and that the public’s right to notice and an opportunity to comment was duly provided, in recognition of the fact that he and other agency officials had not been elected and were not empowered to unilaterally establish rules that impacted the public without public input. An attorney in one of the agencies whose role is to serve the entire federal government (GSA, OPM, OMB) discussed his agency’s role in promulgating and interpreting regulations that govern federal government operations.

An attorney involved in litigation stressed the fact that government attorneys remain bound by the rules of professional conduct in the jurisdiction(s) where they are admitted to practice law. In the District of Columbia, five of the most important of those rules for purposes of government service are:

Rule 1.3(a): “A lawyer shall represent a client zealously and diligently within the bounds of the law.”

Rule 1.6(A)(1): “[With certain exceptions,] [a] lawyer shall not knowingly reveal a confidence or secret of the lawyer’s client.”

Rule 1.13 Comment 7: “. . .the government agency that employs the government lawyer is the lawyer’s client . . .” (This interpretation varies in different jurisdictions and across various government departments and agencies.)

Rule 3.3(a)(1): “A lawyer shall not knowingly make a false statement of material fact or law to a tribunal.”

Rule 4.2: “During the course of representing a client, a lawyer shall not communicate or cause another to communicate about the subject of the representation with a party known to be represented by another lawyer in the matter, unless the lawyer has the prior consent of the lawyer representing such other party or is authorized by law to do so.”

My Experience in Pretrial Services 1st Substance Abuse Treatment Training Program by Tracey Carson, Supervisor Sanction-Based Treatment Program



Tracey Carson

In November 2001, while working as a Pretrial Services Officer in the Restrictive Supervision Unit, I became inspired to pursue the 1st Substance Abuse Treatment Training Program (SATTP) offered by the Pretrial Services Agency. After a detailed review of my case load and the population to which I provided services, I realized that I was able to be empathetic and encourage clients to participate in drug treatment. However, I realized that I did not possess the required knowledge to educate them about drug addiction, and the recovery process.

One day as I sat and spoke with a client about the benefits of receiving drug treatment, I realized that I truly didn't understand his pain and his cycle of abuse. Having a Master's Degree in Counseling equipped me with the skills to do an excellent job with active listening, but I knew I needed more training in addiction. Strangely, while counseling my client, I received an e-mail from the Training Department announcing its 1st Substance Abuse Treatment Training Program. Already having many tasks at hand, I questioned myself "is this really what I want?" I immediately sent a request to participate.

The program began in January 2002. Here we go.....All of the instructors were great, especially Terrence Walton. (He was like that professor in college you just couldn't forget.) Also, thanks to Trudy Mitchell-Gilkey, I attended my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting (class assignment). Interesting experience!!! And you think you have problems!!! In any event, I completed the program in December 2002, and successfully passed the Criminal Justice Addictions Specialist Exam for the District of Columbia in June 2003. Oh yes, I forgot to mention that in February 2002, while in SATTP, I was blessed to receive a transfer to the Superior Court Drug Intervention Program, where I was able to practice my newly-acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The SATTP was a wonderful and educational experience for me. I encourage all PSA employees to sign-up and learn everything there is to know about alcohol and drug addiction. I know the 2nd Annual Program has just ended, and the 3rd program should be starting soon. Take advantage of it!

Thanks PSA/SATTP for the educational and career opportunities. I'm still smiling.☺

LANDER—Continued from previous page

In closing, some words of advice from one prominent, though long-deceased, federal attorney may serve government workers generally, as well as government lawyers:

"The leading rule for the lawyer, as for the man of every other calling, is diligence. Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today. Never let your correspondence fall behind. Whatever piece of business you have in hand, before stopping, do all the labor pertaining to it which can then be done This course has a triple advantage; it avoids omissions and neglect, saves your labor when once done, [and] performs the labor out of court when you have leisure, rather than in court when you have not."^{1/}

^{1/} Notes for a Law Lecture written by Abraham Lincoln (July 1, 1850), in The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln, at 328-330 (Philip Van Doren Stern ed., 1940)(quoted in American Bar Association magazine for the section on public sector practice).

ON THE USE OF AGENCY AND PRIVATELY-OWNED VEHICLES

by Lisa V. Terry, Assistant General Counsel

Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency

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It seems that little causes as much confusion, and unease, as the use of agency vehicles and privately-owned vehicles to conduct agency business. For that reason, this article will address some of the questions and concerns we have heard voiced on this topic, and will try to allay some of the concerns you have about using agency vehicles or your own vehicle to perform your duties.

First, the topic of liability. Many employees want to know, “Will I be held financially responsible if an agency vehicle is damaged while I am conducting official agency business?” In the great majority of cases, the answer will be a resounding, “No.” You will not be held financially responsible as long as: (1) you had approval to use the vehicle; and (2) you were performing official agency business at the time of the accident. If, however, damage to an agency vehicle was caused by your negligence or recklessness, the Agency has the discretion to seek reimbursement from you to recover for such damage, as well as to take disciplinary action. This is no different than any other agency-owned or leased property issued to employees to conduct agency business, such as cell phones, body armor, laptops, jackets, or even a badge. In each instance, employees are required to exercise prudent care in safeguarding the property. The Agency will evaluate each situation on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, if you did not have proper approval or were not performing agency business (e.g., you made the unfortunate decision to run personal errands using the agency vehicle and an accident occurred), you could be held responsible not only for damage to the agency vehicle, but also damage to the other vehicle and injury to anyone else involved. This would *not* be the case if you were acting within the “scope of your employment” at the time of the accident and exercised prudent care to safeguard the property. Generally speaking, you are acting within the scope of your employment if your conduct is being carried out for the purpose of serving the Agency.

So, the best advice is to follow proper procedure, drive carefully, and to go from “Point A” to “Point B” while conducting agency business, without detouring. The same applies while using your own vehicle.

Second, the topic of proper use of an agency vehicle. This is not an elusive concept: the use of agency vehicles is limited to conducting official agency business only. Also note that agency vehicles are to be used for local travel only, meaning travel that is within the Washington Metropolitan Area, including Baltimore, Maryland and Lorton, Virginia. You must also have a valid driver’s license in order to operate an agency vehicle. Pursuant to federal law, employees who willfully misuse agency vehicles will, *at a minimum*, be subject to a 30-day suspension from work.

Finally, the topic of insuring your own vehicle. This can be a little tricky because the burden is on you, the car-owner, to ensure that you have adequate insurance to cover any damage to your vehicle caused *while in the performance of your job*. This is the critical language that you want to discuss with your insurance provider. You do not want to discover, after the fact, that your insurance *does not* cover damage to your vehicle that occurred while you were performing your job. CSOSA is not responsible for damage to your vehicle under such circumstances. CSOSA will, however, reimburse you in the amount of your deductible if your claim is substantiated and the damage was not caused by your negligence or a wrongful act. Please remember that you are not *required* to use your own vehicle to perform agency business. If you do decide to use your personal vehicle, you are entitled to reimbursement of 37.5 cents per mile and parking if you paid to park in a commercial lot while conducting agency business.

The Agency is in the process of finalizing policies on the use of agency and privately-owned vehicles.*/ These policies will address more specifically the topics raised here, as well as other procedural issues, such as traffic fines and parking, transporting passengers, and accident reporting procedures.

*/ The D.C. Pretrial Services Agency’s policy on Government Owned Vehicles (No. 2001.09) is posted on PSA’s Intranet site.

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