



CSOSA

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency  
for the District of Columbia

Fiscal Years 2022 – 2026

# COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY JUSTICE



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# COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY JUSTICE



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In FY21, approximately 9,500 adults were supervised by the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia (CSOSA), primarily serving terms of probation, parole, or supervised release. These individuals enter our supervision with a range of needs and circumstances affecting their likelihood of completing their terms successfully and pose varying degrees of risk to public safety. Effective supervision requires understanding these risks and needs and ensuring the resources and interventions offered by the Agency are well-suited to our offender population. Connecting offenders to interventions based on prioritized need and collaborating with partner agencies to facilitate their successful integration into the community is critical.



The COVID-19 pandemic impacted operations at both the Superior Court for the District of Columbia and the United States Parole Commission, resulting in a temporary increase in parole and supervised release entries to CSOSA supervision in the middle of FY20 when an increased number of offenders were released from incarceration on compassionate release at the start of the pandemic, and a considerable and more sustained decrease in probation entries throughout FY20 and FY21 as the Court conducted considerably fewer hearings following the onset of the pandemic. Although this resulted in fewer offenders under supervision in the latter part of FY20 and throughout FY21, supervised offenders were faced with new challenges as a result of the pandemic, such as limited employment options and reduced treatment offerings. Additionally, the Agency was required to employ new technologies to support virtual supervision, assist offenders in adjusting to this new form of supervision, and manage risk to public safety.

As a member of the District of Columbia's (DC) criminal justice system, CSOSA's role in upholding public safety is grounded in a comprehensive supervision strategy to effectively manage offenders under our jurisdiction. It begins with a full assessment of offender risk and needs using validated instruments, monitoring offenders in the community based on risk, addressing criminogenic needs using evidence-based interventions, integrating offenders into the community by connecting them to stabilizing services and preparing investigations and other reports for sentencing, releasing and corrections authorities.

CSOSA's FY22–26 Strategic Plan was developed in collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders and commits us to continuing to refine and enhance how we execute

our mission in the most efficient and effective manner, taking into consideration the emerging challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It reflects our commitment to evidence-based practices in the field and the evolving realities on the ground – changes in the supervised population and in the larger DC community. We take great pride in the work we do, and, as we look forward over the next five years, expect our interventions to positively impact not only the supervised population, but also the entire DC community.

*Richard S. Lischner*

Director, CSOSA

# ABOUT US

## MISSION STATEMENT

Effectively supervise adults under our jurisdiction to enhance public safety, reduce recidivism, support the fair administration of justice, and promote accountability, inclusion and success through the implementation of evidence-based practices in close collaboration with our criminal justice partners and the community.

## VISION STATEMENT

Be a model community supervision agency that is recognized for positively impacting public safety.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Community

We believe in the value of partnerships with community organizations, local and federal criminal justice agencies, city government, the faith community, and individual citizens in promoting both successful reintegration and public safety.

### Accountability

We believe in the capacity of individuals to change. Offenders will be held accountable through a system of close supervision which includes swift interventions, sanctions, incentives, and support services. CSOSA will strive to enable an environment that is conducive to offenders' success.

### Justice

We support the fair administration of justice through the provision of timely and accurate information and recommendations to criminal justice decision makers. We believe in the efficacy and fairness of our supervision interventions and the implementation of evidence-based practices.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997 established CSOSA to provide community supervision for adult offenders released by the Superior Court for the District of Columbia on probation, those released by the U.S. Parole Commission on parole or supervised release, as well as a smaller number of individuals subject to Deferred Sentencing Agreements (DSA) or Civil Protection Orders (CPOs). In FY 2021, CSOSA supervised approximately 6,700 offenders on any given day. The Agency fulfills its responsibility and strives to achieve its mission by regularly assessing offender risk to public safety, addressing offender needs through evidence-based interventions, responding swiftly to non-compliance, incentivizing positive behavior and progress on supervision, and building strong partnerships with community organizations and other criminal justice partners to provide support services and assist offenders in maintaining law abiding citizenship.

Strategic planning provides regular opportunities to reflect on our progress and recalibrate our course to ensure mission achievement in the face of evolving circumstances. Since finalizing our last strategic plan, we have learned a great deal from our performance through ongoing internal reviews; attention paid to changes in the supervised population and the evolving DC landscape; and literature on evidence-based practices (EBPs) in community corrections. Additionally, we have incorporated elements in support of the President’s Executive Orders (EOs) related to advancing equity through the Federal Government (i.e., EOs 13985, 14019, 14020, and 14035)<sup>1</sup> and improving the Nation’s cybersecurity (EO 14028) into our planning process, as well as complied with requirements of The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (“Evidence Act”), which communicates our commitment to building and using evidence to carry out mission-critical work. The combination of lessons learned and strategies to realize organizational efficiencies are incorporated into our FY22–26 strategic plan, which focuses on our enhanced vision for community supervision and lays the groundwork for future supervision practices.

Over the past several years, we have observed several changes in CSOSA’s supervised population. Although the size of the overall population has declined, the needs of the individuals under supervision remain high and complex. The proliferation of criminogenic needs, mental health challenges, changes in substance use patterns and changes in responsiveness to existing supervision strategies requires a high degree of supervision attention and considerable resources.

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<sup>1</sup> EO 13988, *Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation*, is purposely omitted from this list as CSOSA implemented changes and met requirements of the EO during FY21.



Along with the changing characteristics of the supervised population, there are a number of environmental factors that have shaped our approach to supervision. Socioeconomic changes in DC present new challenges for the supervised population. Increased gentrification resulted in strong and stable economic growth overall over the past several years, however, the supervised population is now faced with more constricted and competitive labor and housing markets. Considering that nearly 30 percent of individuals begin supervision with low levels of achievement (e.g., employment and education) and just under 10 percent do not have stable housing, integrating those under supervision into the community has become increasingly difficult.

As both the supervised population and the DC environment have changed, we have taken a critical look at how we supervise individuals under our jurisdiction and modified our practices as necessary. We have actively followed the literature on effective supervision practices for over two decades and are committed to incorporating EBPs in community corrections to strengthen CSOSA's fundamental supervision framework. These EBPs guide our approach to assessing our population, applying targeted strategies to address needs directly related to criminal behavior, leveraging tools and technologies—including social media, smart devices, and GPS—more effectively to enhance our supervision approach, and connecting supervised persons with the communities in which they reside.

Finally, we take seriously our duty to respond to recent Executive Orders designed to advance equity and improve cybersecurity, as well as mandates of the "Evidence Act" to promote evidence-building and data-driven decision-making. We have engaged in a process of internal reviews and assessments across the enterprise, but specifically related to our supervision strategy. As needed, we are updating and revising policies, realigning organizational structures and personnel and reengineering business processes. This is an ongoing process that will continue throughout the period of this new strategic plan and the result will be a supervision approach designed to improve public safety outcomes while also enhancing resource stewardship. These results are expected to be realized by applying streamlined supervision strategies and utilizing more effective cognitive-behavioral interventions that target, especially, our highest risk offenders; enhancing internal collaboration and improving coordination between interventions and supervision services; and aligning interventions with EBPs to standardize their delivery and ensuring fidelity.

Prepared pursuant to the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-352, this Strategic Plan describes for the President and Congress, as well as the District of Columbia's citizens and criminal justice agencies, how we plan to realize our new direction. It details the strategic goals CSOSA will meet over the next five years to execute its mission, actualize its vision, and fulfill its critical public safety responsibilities.

CSOSA has established four strategic goals for FY22–26:

- 1) Reduce recidivism by targeting criminogenic risk and needs using innovative and evidence-based strategies.
- 2) Integrate offenders into the community by connecting them with resources and interventions.
- 3) Strengthen and promote accountability by ensuring offender compliance and cultivating a culture of continuous measurement and improvement.
- 4) Support the fair administration of justice by providing timely and accurate information to criminal justice decision-makers.

The following sections describe the principles behind effective community supervision that inform the Agency's mission and strategic goals, the structure of the organization, and the supervised population.

## STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

The supervision policies and practices of CSOSA are governed by evidence-based practices (EBPs) in community corrections and values of restorative justice, while promoting accountability and striving for continuous improvement. With these principles in mind, CSOSA developed its FY22–26 Strategic Plan.

The Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections (2009) define EBPs as “the objective, balanced, and responsible use of current research and the best available data to guide policy and practice decisions, such that outcomes for consumers are improved. In the case of corrections, consumers include offenders, victims and survivors, communities, and other key stakeholders” (p. ix). Research suggests adherence to the following eight principles as correctional EBPs:

- Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs
- Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
- Skill Train with Directed Practice (use Cognitive Behavioral treatment methods)
- Increase Positive Reinforcement
- Target Interventions
  - *Risk Principle*: Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders.
  - *Need Principle*: Target interventions to criminogenic needs.<sup>2</sup>
  - *Responsivity Principle*: Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender, gender identity, and other individual factors when assigning programs.
  - *Dosage*: Structure 40-70% of high-risk offenders’ time for 3-9 months.
  - *Treatment Principle*: Integrate treatment into the full sentence/sanction requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> Criminogenic needs are defined as “a [dynamic] subset of an offender’s risk level...[that], when changed, are associated with changes in the probability of recidivism” (Andrews & Bonta, 2010, p. 49). The eight most significant needs are antisocial behavior, antisocial personality, criminal thinking, criminal associates, dysfunctional family, low levels of achievement, lack of prosocial leisure activities, and substance abuse. The first four of these are correlated more strongly with criminal behavior than the others and targeting them is expected to have the greatest impact on reducing recidivism.

- Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities
- Measure Relevant Processes/Practices
- Provide Measurement Feedback

CSOSA utilizes EBPs to effect offender change. The Agency assesses offenders for risk and needs using valid and reliable tools, uses cognitive-behavioral techniques—such as motivational interviewing—to enhance the intrinsic motivation to engage in the supervision process and desist from offending, targets criminogenic needs with effective interventions, directs resources towards higher-risk offenders while recognizing that these interventions must be tailored to the individual, and incentivizes progress on supervision.

In addition to implementing EBPs, CSOSA adheres to values of restorative justice. The Centre for Justice and Reconciliation (2018) defines restorative justice as “a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior.” Because crime causes harm to people and the community, a just response must address not only the person who inflicted the harm, but also those directly affected and the standing of the offender within the community.

CSOSA incorporates restorative justice concepts into supervision by partnering with both community and criminal justice organizations to support offender integration in the community. Community organizations, for example, establish Victim Impact Panels to educate offenders on the consequences of their actions, as well as provide them with opportunities to fulfill community service obligations. The inclusion of both victims and such organizations in the justice process facilitates offender integration into the community. Integration is further strengthened as community partners provide access to resources offenders need to succeed on supervision and adjust to prosocial living. CSOSA’s partnerships with other criminal justice stakeholders are equally important. The Agency prepares and submits comprehensive and timely reports to the releasing authorities to inform sentencing and other supervision-related decisions to ensure that conditions set forth for the offender are fair and restorative so their period of supervision may be maximized.

To support its commitment to effecting offender change and integration, CSOSA is dedicated to promoting accountability and focusing on continuous improvement. By measuring important supervision activities and processes, providing regular feedback on performance to staff and modifying practices and procedures as necessary, CSOSA ensures its ability to carry out its mission.

## ORGANIZATION

CSOSA strives to achieve its goals and realize its mission through the work of dedicated staff. From 2018 to 2021, CSOSA was organized into two primary divisions—the Office of Community Supervision and Intervention Services (OCSIS), which was responsible for offender surveillance and treatment; and the Office of the Director (OD), which included other management and operational support offices.

The OCSIS originally consisted of four divisions with the first division providing operations support (Operations Support Division, OSD), the second responsible for offender monitoring (Accountability and Monitoring Division, AMD), the third focusing on high-risk containment strategies (High Risk Containment Strategies Division, HRCSD), and the fourth providing behavioral interventions (Behavioral Interventions Division, BID). In July 2021, CSOSA leadership relocated the division responsible for coordinating behavioral interventions into an independent program office, known as the Office of Behavioral Interventions (OBI), to provide a streamlined, centralized, and comprehensive continuum of care that includes interventions and restorative justice principles, as well as evaluation and assessment services.

The OSD provides offender intake, screening, and processing services; conducts timely and comprehensive investigations; obtains specimen collections to identify illegal substance abuse; and provides performance and planning support services to staff throughout the OCSIS. Centralizing these functions in one division improves intelligence gathering, analysis and dissemination of information to both internal and external stakeholders.

The AMD is responsible for overseeing offenders on probation, parole, and supervised release, as well as a smaller group with deferred sentencing agreements and civil protection orders. The AMD holds offenders accountable to the conditions of their release, supports the successful completion of supervision, and recommends removal from the community in a timely manner when necessary to protect public safety. This unit is comprised of branches responsible for offenders requiring general supervision, those participating in Traffic and Alcohol Programs (TAP), and interstate cases.

The HRCSD supports the AMD by coordinating and implementing heightened surveillance, intensive interventions, risk containment strategies, and swift non-compliance-based removal from the community for supervisees at the highest risk to public safety. The HRCSD is comprised of units responsible for placing offenders on GPS monitoring, investigating warrant cases, responding quickly to noncompliant high-risk offenders, analyzing and utilizing criminal intelligence to inform supervision practices, and managing the Day Reporting Centers (DRCs), which contain risk by offering cognitive-behavioral interventions and daily structured activities (i.e., skill-building, vocational and educational

supports, and stabilization services). HRSCD is also responsible for supervising offenders with behavioral health conditions, domestic violence offenders, and sex offenders. Focusing these services on the highest risk is expected to improve public safety.

The newly established OBI supports the OCSIS by coordinating and implementing strategies aimed at long-term behavioral change that include interventions and restorative justice components. The OBI conducts specialized assessments and comprehensive evaluations primarily for high-risk offenders to ensure timely and appropriate referrals and placements into internal and external support and cognitive behavioral interventions, and to coordinate and deliver evidence-based interventions targeting both the criminogenic and stabilization needs of the population. The OBI merges staff from CSOSA's former BID with those from the Re-entry and Sanctions Center (RSC). Finally, the OBI focuses on helping offenders recognize the full effects of their criminal behavior on victims and communities by structuring activities aimed at restoring the harm caused by their crimes.

The OD and other management and operational support offices comprising the remainder of the Agency include the offices of:

- Administration (Procurement, Facilities/Property, and Security),
- Alternative Dispute Resolution,
- Equal Employment Opportunity,
- Financial Management,
- General Counsel,
- Human Resources,
- Information Technology,
- Investigations, Compliance and Audits,
- Legislative, Intergovernmental, and Public Affairs,
- Policy Analysis,
- Professional Responsibility,
- Research and Evaluation, and
- Training and Career Development.

## WHO WE SERVE

CSOSA is responsible for supervising offenders serving terms of probation, parole, and supervised release, as well as a smaller group with deferred sentencing agreements (DSAs; i.e., allowing them to plead guilty and defer sentencing pending the completion of certain terms and conditions, and, if met, have their cases dismissed prior to sentencing and thereby avoiding a conviction) and individuals subject to civil protection orders (CPO) in the District of Columbia. In FY21, CSOSA supervised approximately 9,500 unique offenders annually and nearly 6,700 offenders on a typical day. Roughly three out of five persons under supervision are on probation, have DSAs or CPOs, and serve the majority—if not all—of their sentence under community supervision. The remainder serve a post-incarceration sentence on either parole or supervised release. Offenders sentenced to incarceration before parole was abolished in DC<sup>3</sup> are still eligible for parole and may be released from incarceration to serve the balance of their sentence under community supervision at the discretion of the United States Parole Commission. Offenders sentenced to incarceration after parole was abolished must serve a minimum of 85 percent of their sentence in prison and the balance in the community under CSOSA supervision on supervised release.

In FY21, nearly 90 percent of CSOSA entries were male,<sup>4</sup> and nearly 55 percent were aged 35 or younger. Approximately half of entries were assessed as being “high risk” based on their initial risk assessment. Of those assessed as high-risk, 63 percent were aged 35 or younger.

CSOSA’s supervision approach includes monitoring offenders in the community based on the risk they pose to public safety, addressing criminogenic needs using evidence-based interventions, integrating offenders into the community by connecting them to stabilizing services and other resources, and preparing investigations and other reports for sentencing and releasing authorities. Effective supervision requires understanding the risk and needs—particularly those needs directly related to criminal behavior—of supervised offenders, ensuring the resources and interventions offered by the Agency are aligned with what the population requires, and connecting offenders to those interventions based on prioritized need.

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<sup>3</sup> Parole was abolished in the District of Columbia on August 5, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> This refers to gender assigned at birth. CSOSA is committed to supporting the current administration’s priority to advance equity among all people by reducing discrimination against those historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected, including discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. While CSOSA’s data system does not currently allow for capturing information on gender identity, we are exploring options to modify our system to capture and allow for reporting on this construct in the future.

## CRIMINOGENIC NEEDS

Figure 1 shows the concentration of criminogenic needs among offenders beginning supervision in FY21 by assigned gender (hereafter, referred to as “gender”), supervision level and age. Darker shaded areas reflect a greater number of offenders in each gender-risk-age category identified with each need; lighter shaded areas reflect fewer offenders with those needs. Empty (white) cells indicate that no offenders fell into the gender-risk-age category.

The overall needs of offender entries are considerable. Approximately 40 percent of FY21 entries had antisocial attitudes and poor temperament. Just over 25 percent of FY21 entries lacked prosocial leisure activities and a similar percentage had low levels of achievement. These needs are particularly salient in higher-risk men and, because focusing resources on high-risk offenders will have the greatest impact on recidivism, it is important that CSOSA respond to these needs with adequate and effective programming.

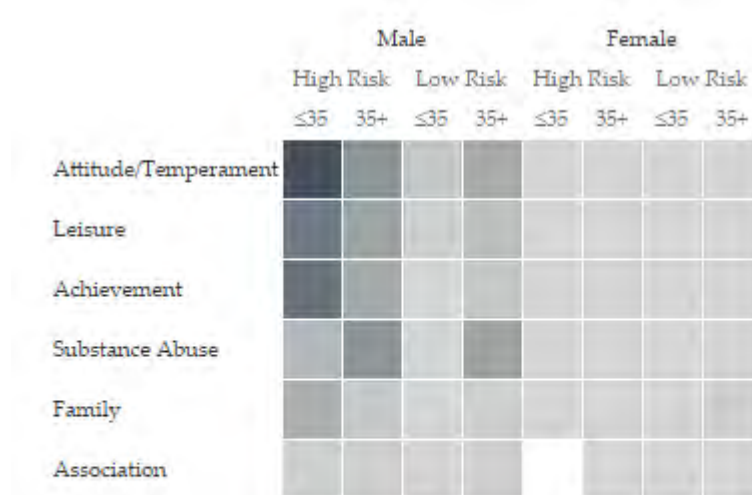


Figure 1. Offender entries with criminogenic needs by gender, supervision level and age, FY21



Because males comprise a substantially larger percentage of the supervised population, the overall summary focuses on their needs. When we consider the needs of male and female offenders separately, as depicted in Figures 2 and 3, important differences emerge.<sup>5</sup> While poor attitude and temperament is a prominent need for both male and female beginning supervision, it is more highly concentrated among younger, high-risk males, and more evenly distributed among females of all risk and age groups. Challenges with

<sup>5</sup> Please note the scales for males and females in Figures 2 and 3 are independent.



prosocial leisure activities are moderately high with young, high-risk males, while they seemingly affect older, low-risk females slightly more than females in other age and risk groups. Substance abuse appears to be more prominent in older offenders across the board, but is of particular concern for older, low-risk females. Negative family influences are considerably more salient for females than males. These differences suggest that distinct programming for males and females may be required to effectively address their needs.

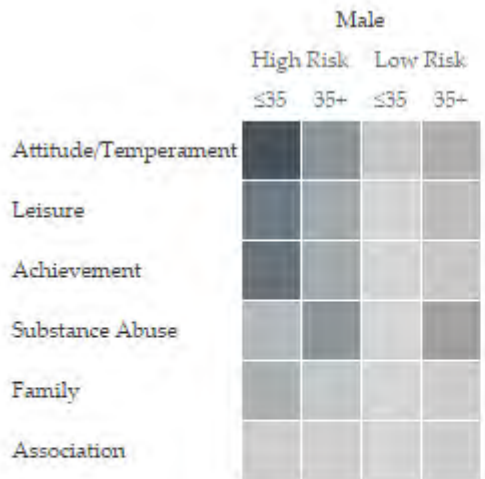


Figure 2. Male entries with criminogenic needs by supervision level and age, FY21

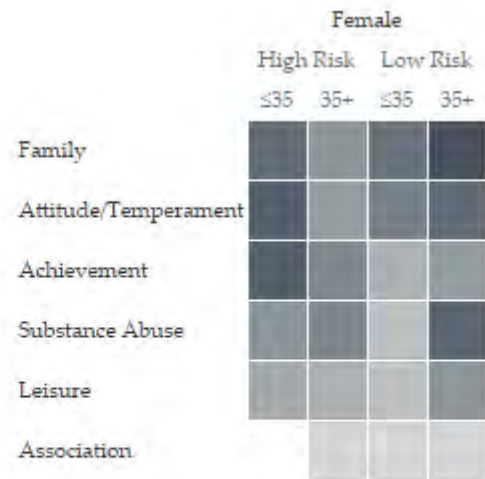


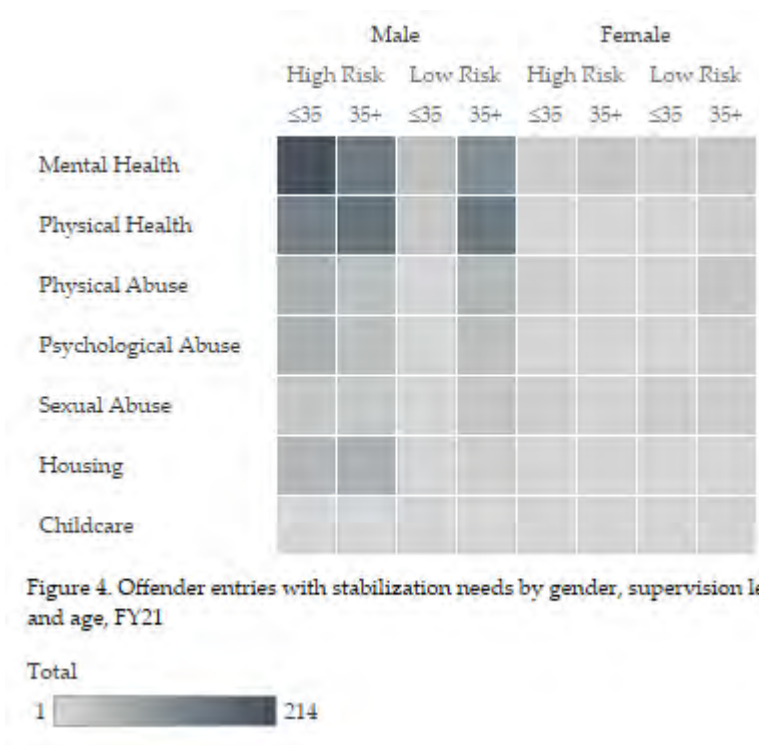
Figure 3. Female entries with criminogenic needs by supervision level and age, FY21



## STABILIZATION NEEDS

While criminogenic needs are directly related to criminality and must be addressed to impact recidivism, offenders under CSOSA supervision often struggle with other, non-criminogenic, needs that may hinder the effectiveness of the supervision program if left unaddressed. Among others, these needs include housing, mental health, victimization, and childcare needs.

Figure 4 shows the concentration of stabilization needs among offenders beginning supervision in FY21 by gender, supervision level and age.



Both mental and physical health issues are common among supervised offenders. Just under 30 percent of FY21 entries had a mental health need, with younger high-risk males most likely to manifest these disorders. Physical health conditions are prominent in high-risk males of all ages, as well as older males at lower risk. These findings support the need for programs addressing health concerns to stabilize individuals of all risk and age levels.

Though fewer numbers of both male and female entrants in FY21 reported victimization (either physical, sexual, or psychological) compared to other health factors, it is important for the Agency to be attentive to these needs. Individuals may be hesitant to report abuse, particularly at the very beginning of supervision before building a rapport with their assigned Community Supervision Officer (CSO). These experiences, however, may impact their stability and success on supervision if left unaddressed.

Offenders also experience housing challenges, with about eight percent of FY21 entries living in unstable conditions at the start of supervision. Unstable housing includes residing in homeless shelters, halfway houses, transitional housing, hotels or motels, or without a fixed address. High-risk males are particularly vulnerable. Many of these offenders are returning to the community from prison on parole or supervised release and assistance from organizations within the community to identify suitable housing in their transition plans is critical.

As with criminogenic needs, the overall summary of stabilization factors largely mirrors that of the male population. Figures 5 and 6, however, show important gender differences

in stabilization needs.<sup>6</sup> Most notably, while mental health conditions primarily impact younger, high-risk males, they are a considerable concern for older, low-risk females. Additionally, a history of sexual abuse victimization is much more common in females beginning supervision than males. Again, this supports distinct programming for males and females to effectively address their varying needs and help them succeed on supervision.

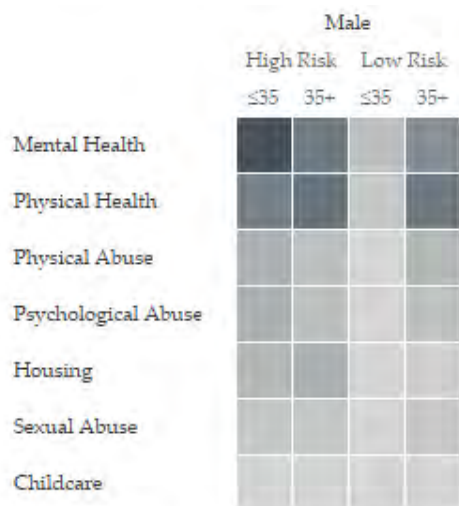


Figure 5. Male entries with stabilization needs by supervision level and age, FY21

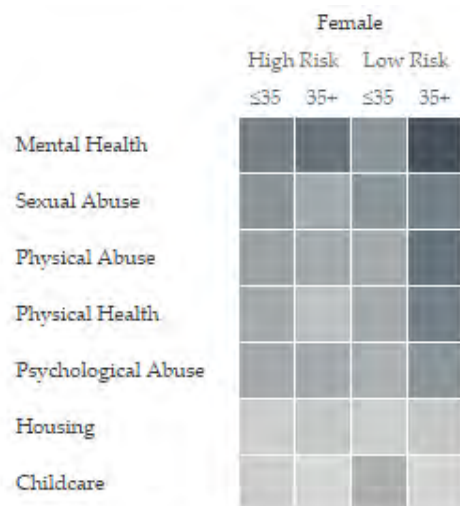


Figure 6. Female entries with stabilization needs by supervision level and age, FY21



The profile of both criminogenic and stabilization needs of the supervised population demonstrates that challenges faced by offenders under CSOSA supervision are considerable. Given these challenges, CSOSA has developed a comprehensive strategy to carry out its mission of reducing recidivism and integrating offenders into the community.

<sup>6</sup> Please note the scales for males and females in Figures 5 and 6 are independent.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

CSOSA has established four strategic goals for FY22–26 to articulate the Agency’s priorities over the next five years. The first goal conceptualizes reducing recidivism by targeting needs that are both known to vary with criminality and that are amenable to treatment; the second goal embodies our appreciation of factors not directly related to criminality but associated with achieving and sustaining the impact of our recidivism-reduction efforts; the third reflects our commitment to holding ourselves accountable for providing supervision and intervention services as intended, affecting offender change, and ensuring offender adherence to release conditions; and, the fourth concerns our responsibility to upholding justice and providing timely and accurate information to criminal justice decision-makers.

The following sections detail each strategic goal and the indicators measured to assess how well the Agency is accomplishing those goals.

### STRATEGIC GOAL 1 | REDUCE RECIDIVISM BY TARGETING CRIMINOGENIC RISK AND NEEDS USING INNOVATIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

To uphold public safety and reduce recidivism, CSOSA focuses on addressing offenders’ criminogenic needs adhering to the risk-needs-responsivity model. Andrews and Bonta (2006, 2010) contend that the risk principle identifies who to target for the most intensive of services and programming and is premised on two bases: 1) criminal behavior is predictable and 2) levels of treatment should be matched to offender risk. Not only should offenders that demonstrate higher risk be placed into appropriate treatment services, but low- and moderate-risk offenders should not receive the same intensity of services because providing intensive interventions for low-risk offenders increases failure rates (Taxman, 2006; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004). The need principle suggests that programmatic interventions must address criminogenic needs in order to most effectively reduce recidivism. The responsivity principle accounts for risk and need in the delivery of effective intervention and is comprised of two elements: general responsivity, which supports the use of cognitive behavioral interventions to foster incremental change among individuals, and specific responsivity, which tailors the intervention to account for individual-level characteristics.

CSOSA empirically determines the risk an offender poses to public safety using validated risk and needs assessment tools and, through assessment, identifies and prioritizes the needs of the supervised population. Interventions offered by the Agency are aligned with these needs, target the highest risk offenders, and are tailored to each offender’s

motivation, learning style and strengths. The impact of these interventions is measured by assessing changes in offender behavior throughout supervision.

## **Risk and Needs Assessment**

The assessment tool developed by CSOSA—the Auto Screener—includes a comprehensive set of questions administered by the CSO in a face-to-face interview with the offender. This is a fourth-generation assessment tool, with questions covering the eight criminogenic needs domains, as well as some stabilization factors, and addresses both static and dynamic indicators of risk and need.<sup>7</sup> Responses are confirmed and supplemented by official records, including prior arrests and incarcerations. They are also statistically weighted based on how strongly each item correlates with four different risk measures: re-arrest for a violent, weapons or sex-related offense, any re-arrest, testing positive for a controlled substance, and the likelihood of an alleged violation report being filed with the releasing authority. A completed Auto Screener generates a recommended supervision level, as well as a Prescriptive Supervision Plan (PSP). The PSP identifies, prioritizes, and tracks completion of an offender’s supervision conditions set by the releasing authority, as well as the needs to be addressed during supervision.

Offenders are assessed at the start of supervision and re-assessed every six months, or upon re-arrest or a life-changing event. Initial assessments determine the appropriate level of supervision and identify appropriate treatment. Reassessment ensures appropriate responsiveness to changes in risk and treatment need. The PSP is updated with each reassessment and allows the CSO to monitor offenders’ progress towards successful completion of supervision.

Because an Auto Screener assessment requires extensive investigation, developing rapport with the offender and a home verification; it may not be completed until the fifth week of supervision. To address the gap between the beginning of the supervision period and the completion of the Auto Screener assessment, CSOSA developed and implemented the Triage Screener, aimed at informing immediate, risk-anticipated supervision-related decisions. The Triage assessment provides an appropriate supervision level on the first day of supervision, is derived exclusively from existing administrative records, and does not require an offender interview. Because this tool distinguishes high- from low-risk offenders at the start of supervision, the Agency directs resources to those posing a greater risk to public safety immediately. Offenders are supervised at the level resulting from the Triage Screener until the full Auto Screener assessment is completed.

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<sup>7</sup> Fourth generation assessment tools include items related to criminal history and other static factors, as well as dynamic factors—such as employment, peer groups, and family relationships—that may change over time. These instruments also integrate systematic intervention and monitoring with the assessment of a broader range of offender risk factors and other personal factors important to treatment (Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2006).

In FY20, the Agency deployed the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR) to supplement its other assessment tools. The DRAOR augments static risk scales by accounting for real-time changes in dynamic and acute risks (i.e., those demonstrated to anticipate an *imminent* supervision failure). Also, unlike many other correctional assessment tools, the DRAOR assesses protective factors that may mitigate the risk of an offender engaging in future criminal behavior. A CSO can complete the DRAOR in 5–10 minutes, a fraction of the time required to complete the Auto Screener. The reduced administrative burden makes it possible to require the DRAOR to be completed at shorter intervals (e.g., approximately monthly for all but the lowest risk cases), yielding updated assessments that are both more frequent and more sensitive to offenders' progress under supervision, thereby allowing CSO's to proactively engage with offenders if they are struggling on supervision or more quickly reward them for positive behavior.

Regularly monitoring assessment tools ensures they remain valid and reliable. CSOSA routinely compares the supervision level output of both the Auto Screener and Triage Screener assessments with observed offender behavior to confirm models accurately differentiate offenders of varying risk and identify treatment needs. Similarly, the models are monitored to ensure the distribution of offenders in each risk category is satisfactory. Additional indicators, such as workload ratios among supervision teams, the percentage of supervision level override requests approved and the percentage of low-risk offenders re-arrested for violent, weapons or sex-related offenses, are also tracked as negative changes in those indicators may signal that the tools are not performing well. CSOSA plans to continue these practices over the next five years and will calibrate or update models if they fall below benchmark targets.

## **Evidence-Based Interventions**

CSOSA is committed to regularly examining the criminogenic needs profile of its offender population and the characteristics of its catalog of available interventions to ensure the Agency adequately addresses its population's needs. As discussed earlier, offenders beginning supervision with CSOSA have considerable needs related to criminality. Techniques and interventions employed by CSOSA to address these needs include cognitive-behavioral interventions to address criminal thinking and attitudes, programs to address achievement-related issues, and substance abuse treatment. The Agency also offers specialized interventions—such as domestic violence, sex offender and high-intensity supervision programs—that are tailored to the unique requirements of those groups.

Like many other organizations, CSOSA was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Agency continued its supervision function with modified contacts and operations, many in-person intervention services and treatment groups were suspended in March 2020 until the Agency adjusted and began offering some programs and interventions virtually. In FY21, the Agency began resuming in-person groups, but has proven its capability to offer

alternatives, such as virtual sessions, both one-on-one and for groups. Moving forward, allowing for both in-person and virtual sessions may broaden CSOSA's reach by allowing more options for offenders to attend groups more regularly, given that traditional issues impeding participation (e.g., transit, financial, etc.) would be alleviated and barriers to compliance would be reduced.

### *Cognitive Behavioral Interventions*

Cognitive behavioral interventions (CBI) are designed to expose offenders to new ways of thinking and making decisions, build positive and healthy relationships, encourage abstinence from substance use, and prepare them for educational and vocational opportunities. CBIs used by CSOSA include Thinking for a Change (T4C), the Violence Reduction Program (VRP), programs offered through Community Engagement and Achievement Centers (CEACs), Day Reporting Centers (DRCs) and motivational interviewing (MI).

T4C, was developed by the National Institute of Corrections. Offenders enrolled in this program learn processes for self-reflection aimed at uncovering antisocial thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs over the course of an eight-week program. They also engage in pro-social interactions including consideration of the impact of their actions on others. Offenders are encouraged to define their feelings and ask questions, and are taught to understand the feelings of others, respond appropriately to anger, and negotiate. They also learn a step-by-step process for addressing challenging and stressful real-life situations and are provided techniques for effective problem-solving which can be used in conjunction with social skills and the skills learned from cognitive self-change components of the program.

Designed to address street-level violence in high-crime neighborhoods, VRP targets males between the ages of 18 and 35 who have histories of violence, weapons, and/or drug distribution offenses. In a group setting, the 24-week program teaches participants to develop non-violent approaches to conflict resolution, increase their problem-solving and communications skills, establish positive peer networks, and apply anxiety-reduction techniques when faced with stressful situations.

CEACs offer stabilization, structure, cognitive-behavioral interventions, skill-building, and support services for offenders. Programs engage primarily high-risk offenders in meaningful pro-social activities that structure their leisure time and identify high risk situations that lead to anti-social engagement. They teach offenders skills that will assist them with achieving lifestyle changes through structured and routine interventions with the goals of promoting responsibility and accomplishing personal success. Additionally, the CEACs integrate tenets of supervision with orientation activities (assessment and case planning), individual and small-group motivational engagement, staged transition support services and interventions at various CSOSA

field sites. Offenders participating in CEAC programs may report up to four times per week, and typically remain engaged in programming from 30 to 90 days, depending on their performance, compliance, and adjustment to the interventions.

In addition to cognitive behavioral programming, the CEACs respond to the individual educational, vocational and employment needs of offenders by providing adult basic education, GED preparation, and Pre-Vocational Skills training at four learning labs staffed by CSOSA Learning Lab Specialists. CSOSA Vocational Development Specialists conduct comprehensive assessments and detailed interviews to prepare offenders for training and/or employment. There is no limit to the amount of time an offender may participate in educational, vocational and employment programming while under supervision, and progress of offenders is tracked and documented throughout their enrollment.

In April 2021, the DRC was launched to provide integrated and wrap-around services to the highest risk individuals who were non-compliant under CSOSA supervision. The DRC more fully integrated supervision, interventions, and programming to assist offenders at increasing compliance with supervision, obtaining meaningful employment, improving their educational level, learning how to problem-solve effectively, and completing supervision successfully. The DRC encompasses five separate interventions: Education, Employment, Thinking for a Change, Interactive Journaling, and Victim Impact Panels. The DRC differs from the CEAC on points of selection, process, and emphasis, including a focus on highest risk individuals, greater focus on evidence-based programming and a higher degree of engagement by the supervision officer.

Finally, CSOs use MI in their day-to-day interactions with offenders. MI is an effective communication method used to engage the clients in the behavior change process. CSOs receive extensive training on MI based on the Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) model<sup>8</sup> and, through meaningful open-ended questions, elicit information from the offender about himself or herself, an important situation or event and identify stage-appropriate interventions. MI helps to establish trust and rapport and encourages the offender to disclose pertinent information and participate in problem-solving and ongoing interventions. The goal of this approach is to help offenders increase their motivation for change; resolve ambivalence about engaging in treatment; improve confidence and strengthen commitment to behavioral change; and encourage their understanding of the differences between their perspective and thought processes versus those that are prosocial and, hence, modeled by their assigned officer.

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<sup>8</sup> The EPICS model, developed by the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute, emphasizes using a social learning, cognitive behavioral approach to interactions between CSOs and offenders to develop a collaborative working relationship between the two. Officers receive three days of training, followed by six to eight months of coaching to hone their skills.



### *Re-entry and Sanctions Center*

The Re-entry and Sanctions Center (RSC), which opened in February 2006, provides intensive assessment and reintegration programming for high-risk offenders/defendants who violate conditions of their release. Until FY19, the program provided intensive assessment, reentry, and treatment readiness counseling program in a 24/7 residential setting. The needs of our offender population have evolved and become more complex, with many offenders suffering from mental health and cognitive disorders. Moreover, the city's violent crime rate, particularly homicides, continues to rise. In April 2019, CSOSA concluded the evaluation of its key substance use disorder programs, which included RSC. The evaluation assessed RSC program adherence to evidence-based practices and the effectiveness of the program relative to a no-treatment condition. As a result, the Agency restructured RSC programming to adhere more closely to evidence-based practices to increase effectiveness. Specifically, RSC programming now focuses on a more comprehensive, empirically driven, treatment continuum of care for our highest-risk offenders.

As a residential setting, the RSC was forced to suspend services in March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic but plans to resume services in FY22.

### *Substance Abuse Treatment*

CSOSA strives to ensure offenders, particularly those that are the highest risk and present with the highest need, receive a continuum of detoxification, residential, and outpatient drug treatment services. CSOSA's Treatment Management Team evaluates them for need, prioritizes placements, and arranges those placements in contracted treatment programs and in-house interventions.

### *Domestic Violence Intervention*

CSOSA provides specialized supervision and domestic violence treatment programming for offenders with domestic violence risks. Some may be court-ordered to participate in either an 18-week Family Violence Intervention Program or a 22-week Domestic Violence Intervention Program. Specialized domestic violence treatment teams provide treatment for individuals ordered to complete domestic violence treatment but who either prefer to attend CSOSA-provided treatment or are unable to afford private treatment.<sup>9</sup> These teams also monitor the provision of treatment services provided by contracted vendors.

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<sup>9</sup> Individuals ordered to domestic violence treatment may complete a private treatment program in lieu of CSOSA-provided treatment. Private treatment must be comparable in length (e.g., number of sessions or hours) to that provided by CSOSA and must be approved in advance by CSOSA to fulfill the court-ordered obligation.

### *Sex Offender Treatment Program*

The Sex Offender Treatment Program uses the containment model, which provides the offender risk avoidance strategies as a component of supervision. Offenders on the Sex Offender Registry and assigned to the Sex Offender Unit (SOU) are assessed for participation in specialized programming, which includes weekly group and individual treatment sessions as well as routinized polygraph screening. SOU therapists collaborate with supervision officers to ensure offenders are meeting their treatment and supervision obligations. In March 2019, CSOSA concluded the evaluation of its sex offender treatment programming and supervision, with a focus on adherence to evidence-based practices and the effectiveness of the program. The evaluation found that the sex offender treatment program produces social benefits, in the form of averted criminal offenses that approximately equal its direct costs and Agency leadership concurred by retaining the intervention.

### *High Intensity Supervision*

In FY19, CSOSA established its High Intensity Supervision Teams (HISTs) to provide close supervision for offenders who pose the greatest risk to public safety and present with greater needs. HIST CSOs supervise a reduced caseload composed exclusively of high-risk offenders, providing more personal attention to and responsive engagement with each offender. HIST CSOs often work nights and weekends assisting DC MPD and other law enforcement partners in special crime initiatives, often in high-crime areas. Officers assigned to the HIST have demonstrated strong supervision and interpersonal skills as their roles require increased collaboration with others, including internal and external partners.

## **Intervention Impact**

CSOSA monitors offender progress during and after treatment to ensure exposure to interventions has the intended effect. Although formal evaluations are required to establish program effectiveness, CSOSA tracks performance indicators that may signal whether a program is working. These include changes in risk and needs scores, engagement in antisocial or criminal behavior, and changes in offender motivation to desist from criminal behavior.

Participation in CBIs is expected to result in reductions in both assessed risks and needs, as well as decreases in antisocial and criminal behavior. Manifestations may include reductions in violations accrued, decreases in re-arrests, longer lag times between arrests, fewer arrests resulting in convictions, and reduced offense severity. Substance abuse treatment should lead to decreases in drug use, including the use of fewer substances and longer lag times between positive urinalysis results. Positive behavioral changes—including

increased motivation, greater trust, and enhanced life skills—should result from participating in evidence-based programming. CSOSA is committed to tracking these indicators to inform program evaluations and assist with making program and policy decisions over the next five years.

While addressing the criminogenic needs of the supervised population through effective interventions is at the core of CSOSA's first strategic goal, eliciting support from and integrating offenders into the community is equally important to ensure their adjustment to prosocial living. This is the focus of the Agency's second strategic goal.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 2 | INTEGRATE OFFENDERS INTO THE COMMUNITY BY CONNECTING THEM WITH RESOURCES AND INTERVENTIONS**

While criminogenic needs are directly related to criminality and programming to address those needs will have the greatest impact on recidivism, offenders under CSOSA supervision often struggle with other, non-criminogenic, needs that, if left unaddressed, may hinder the effectiveness of the supervision program. These include—among other things—housing, mental health, victimization, and childcare needs. CSOSA works to increase offenders' stability, encourage inclusion in the community and promote the successful completion of supervision. Specifically, the Agency builds strong relationships with community partners, connects offenders with resources to address stabilization factors, and provides offenders convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) and Driving While Impaired (DWI) on the consequences of their actions with opportunities to engage with victims as part of the Victim Impact Panel process that is carefully arranged and led by highly trained CSOSA staff in the community to promote restoration.

### **Support Services and Community Resources**

CSOSA addresses offender stabilization factors—including housing, behavioral health, victimization, and gender-specific needs— by connecting offenders to support services and community resources on both an individual basis and through structured events, such as resource fairs and other re-entry events. The Agency regularly examines the non-criminogenic needs of its supervised population as well as the support services and community resources available to treat those needs. To ensure offenders receive appropriate services in a timely manner, we track the number of support service and community resource connections made in relation to the number of needs identified in the population and monitor referral to placement times.

## *Housing*

CSOSA assists offenders struggling with housing needs using multiple means. For offenders being released from incarceration without a place to live, CSOSA collaborates with case managers at the BOP and USPC to place releasees into halfway houses for up to 90 days. If halfway house placements are unavailable, or if an offender is already in the community and does not have permanent housing, CSOSA may place offenders who do not have a current substance abuse treatment need or behavioral health issue in transitional housing for up to 90 days. Finally, CSOSA has an established agreement with the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) permitting eligible offenders to be added to a lease or apply for housing with family members already residing in DCHA public housing properties if space is available. This is an important benefit to offenders who would otherwise be prohibited from residing with supportive family members based on the latter's public housing status. In addition to addressing offenders' housing needs, this partnership facilitates family reunification, thus augmenting their social support networks.

The COVID-19 pandemic restricted housing options for many offenders. CSOSA, however, maintained existing relationships with the city government and community organizations, and forged new relationships with additional community partners to meet the housing needs of offenders during that time. Those collaborations are ongoing as we look to expand and diversify our housing resources to meet this growing need.

## *Victim Services*

CSOSA's Victim Services Program (VSP) assists victims of domestic violence, sexual offenses, traffic/alcohol-related crimes, or property crimes with decreasing their risk factors and developing action plans to address their safety through court orders, community partnerships, criminal justice partnerships, and emergency services. The program also educates victims and the community on victims' rights, provides resources that can assist with healing the pain caused to victims and provides both offenders and victims the opportunity to engage in the restorative justice process. Victim Impact Panels allow victims of crime to express to a group of offenders the impact of the offenders' criminal lifestyles on the victims' lives, enabling offenders to understand the consequences of their actions (Downden, 2011).

For offenders whose crimes involved specific victims, VSP staff collaborates with CSOs to develop case plans, monitor the offender's responses to the victim, and hold the offender accountable to the conditions of their release as set forth by the court (i.e., Stay Away Order).

### *Behavioral Health*

Offenders with behavioral health diagnoses are supervised by specialized supervision teams and are provided with highly structured programming that considers their individual intervention needs. They undergo comprehensive behavioral health assessments by both in-house and contracted behavioral health professionals, and treatment addresses both their mental health and substance use needs. In the event of supervision violations, the specialized supervision team collaborates with the behavioral health team and community behavioral health partners to ensure that needed services are delivered prior to sanctions. Combined with the specialized services offered by the RSC, these unique interventions by CSOSA's Behavioral Health Branch reduce the impact of unmet behavioral health needs.

### *Gender-Specific Supervision and Support Services*

CSOSA remains committed to providing gender-specific interventions focused on the unique issues faced by female offenders. CSOSA provides comprehensive case management and supervision services to female offenders on dedicated supervision teams. Services include anger management groups that focus on overcoming trauma experienced by women in the criminal justice system, individual anger management therapy sessions, and parenting classes. The RSC's Women's Unit serves female offenders with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Moving into FY22, and in support of the current administration's Executive Orders (EOs) related to advancing equity through the Federal Government (i.e., EOs 13985, 13988 and 14035), CSOSA will strive to expand its program options so they are responsive to sensitivities around offenders' self-identity related to gender, rather than relying solely on constructs tied to gender assignments at birth. We aim to offer services that address the needs of groups who have historically been underserved or marginalized based on gender identity or sexual orientation. Initial efforts will focus on an examination of programs and services offered to our transgendered female population.

## **Community Partnerships**

Offenders are more likely to succeed when they have strong, constructive connections to the communities in which they live. Therefore, a cornerstone of CSOSA's integration strategy is to build robust partnerships with city agencies, social service providers, businesses, the faith community, and individual community members, as well as our partners in the federal government. These partnerships support offenders' successful

integration by leveraging resources to address their needs and help them fulfill conditions imposed by the releasing authority (e.g., community service). They also facilitate offenders' connections with the community and educate and mobilize the community to support them through the identification of needs, resources, and supports to aid in reintegration.

Over the next five years, CSOSA will place increased emphasis on building and monitoring the strength of these partnerships. Specifically, we will obtain feedback from both community partners and internal staff regarding the perceived benefit to offenders receiving services from a community organization, as well as track the impact of services received on reducing offender needs, integrate offenders into the community, and provide opportunities for offenders to fulfill supervision requirements.

In addition to strengthening partnerships CSOSA will also begin researching evidence-based practices on the incorporation of restorative justice principles into our community corrections practice and partnership activities. Because crime causes harm to people and the community, a just response must address not only the person who inflicted the harm, but also the people and communities affected. Currently, CSOSA incorporates restorative justice concepts into supervision through Victim Impact Panels that educate offenders convicted of DUI and DWI offenses on the consequences of their actions. Moving forward, the Agency is considering expanding our use of Victim Impact Panels beyond DUI and DWI charges, reshaping our community service opportunities, and redesigning our mentoring program to better incorporate restorative justice principles.

CSOSA currently partners with community organizations that provide education, employment, and reintegration services, as well as opportunities for offenders to fulfill community service requirements.

### *Education and Employment Partnerships and Opportunities*

Ensuring offenders have training, resources, and support to find and maintain stable employment is one of CSOSA's top priorities. CSOSA initiates and maintains partnerships with government, community-based and private organizations to link offenders with job training and employment opportunities. We also provide opportunities within the Agency for formerly supervised offenders to gain employment experience.

Engaging with both community and government organizations is critical for meeting offenders' educational and training needs, as well as helping them identify job prospects. Our staff collaborates with organizations to place offenders in educational programs, job skill training programs, and connect them with potential employers. Our commitment is to match partners with strong candidates who meet their eligibility criteria and need. Together, these partnerships enhance

reintegration services by broadening the education and employment opportunities available to offenders under supervision.

A common obstacle for some recently incarcerated offenders with obtaining employment is their lack of a government-issued form of identification, which is needed to apply for jobs. Under an agreement with the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), CSOSA verifies the identity and home address of offenders and prepares identification letters to present to the DMV with their application for a non-driver's identification card.

In addition, CSOSA has been partnering with the DC chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) since 2019 to assist offenders seeking employment. At the beginning of FY21, CSOSA and SHRM launched the "Hire One" campaign—a program that connects local employers with justice-involved individuals who are ready, able, and eager to work. CSOSA expects to continue this work with SHRM into FY22.

Finally, CSOSA provides opportunities for formerly supervised offenders to join the federal workforce through their Credible Messenger Fellowship Program. The program invites those who have successfully completed a period of probation, parole, or supervised release to apply for a temporary six-month appointment at CSOSA, using their prior life experiences to provide support to people under supervision. Those hired for Credible Messenger positions perform a variety of support tasks that include assisting current supervisees with articulating their goals for success, helping them to monitor their own progress, modeling effective coping techniques, providing self-help strategies based on their own experience, and assisting supervisees with learning how to seek and obtain effective services within the community. They also provide educational or career guidance, social and emotional support, and serves as an accountability partner. The Credible Messengers' work experience at CSOSA increases their employability and marketability in the next steps of their career paths. This experience is invaluable not only for former supervisees, but also for those currently under supervision.

### *Faith- and Community-Based Reintegration Services*

CSOSA collaborates with faith- and community-based organizations to provide reintegration services for supervised offenders. These activities include trainings for faith-based groups and community organizations about how they can help with offender reintegration. Mentoring has historically been the primary focus of this initiative. Offenders are matched with volunteer mentors who offer support, friendship, and assistance during re-entry. The philosophy of mentoring is to build strong moral values and provide positive role models for offenders returning to our communities through coaching and spiritual guidance. Mentors also help identify

linkages to services that assist in the growth and development of mentees. These services include transitional housing, employment, and substance abuse recovery support.

### ***Community Service Program***

Offenders with court-ordered or sanctioned community service obligations are referred to public and community-based organizations to satisfy obligations through the Community Service Program. Offenders can also serve community service hours at community improvement events, such as park clean-ups, basic landscaping, flyer distribution and other special events. Grounded in restorative justice, CSOSA offers offenders meaningful opportunities to meet supervision conditions while contributing to their communities through this program.

Partnerships established with community organizations are strengthened and the services offered to offenders communicated through video conferencing sessions at Community Resource Days and Community Justice Advisory Network meetings throughout the District.

### ***Community Resource Days***

CSOSA prepares offenders for release from incarceration by linking them with information about community supervision and resources that will be available once they are released, such as job training, mentoring, training, and housing. As one example, the Agency conducts multi-day videoconferences with DC inmates housed in BOP facilities across the country. Representatives from community organizations, local government and law enforcement agencies participate in CSOSA Community Resource Days, where inmates have an opportunity to engage with presenters and learn more about available resources.

### ***Community Justice Advisory Networks***

CSOSA's Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Specialists coordinate meetings with Community Justice Advisory Networks (CJAN) throughout the District of Columbia. They are comprised of residents and key stakeholders, such as Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, faith-based institutions, schools, non-profit and civic organizations, businesses, and local and regulatory law enforcement entities. These networks meet at least once annually in each of the District of Columbia's seven police districts and mobilize resources, identify, and address community public safety issues, share information about offender needs, and educate the community on public safety issues and the work of CSOSA. These meetings provide an



opportunity to resolve community issues and leverage resources to enhance and expand services to support offender reintegration.

Like other services, the COVID-19 pandemic forced CSOSA to adjust the methods used to conduct these community meetings and keep residents apprised of neighborhood-related issues. In Spring 2020, CSOSA began successfully offering CJANs virtually. While in-person meetings may resume as COVID restrictions lift, technology has offered CSOSA another option for maintaining our presence in the community.

### **Support Services and Community Resources Impact**

Similar to the interventions designed to address criminogenic needs, CSOSA monitors a number of indicators to assess the impact of support services received and offenders' adjustment in the community. These indicators include time to employment and duration of unemployment spells for offenders receiving employment services, and housing stability. CSOSA also regularly obtains feedback from offenders to ensure service offerings satisfactorily meet their needs and expectations.

Addressing offender needs and integrating them into the community are essential to effecting positive behavioral change among the supervised population. Ensuring that the Agency carries out its functions as intended, with an eye toward improvement is essential to that outcome. CSOSA's third strategic goal focuses on accountability and improvement.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 3 | STRENGTHEN AND PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY BY ENSURING OFFENDER COMPLIANCE AND CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS MEASUREMENT AND IMPROVEMENT**

Accountability—both at the staff- and offender-level—will be an area of key focus for CSOSA over the next five years. To accomplish the Agency's mission, it is imperative that CSOSA staff complete supervision duties as required. This includes orienting offenders to supervision and informing them of requirements, sanctioning offenders for non-compliance and incentivizing compliant behavior, and supervising offenders at the appropriate risk level and placing them in treatment according to prioritized needs. In addition, it is necessary for the Agency to evaluate its interventions and supervision practices to ensure program offerings are appropriate and effective. If they are not, steps should be taken to either replace or modify programming. Finally, offenders are held accountable for actively engaging in the supervision process and complying with supervision requirements.

## Staff Accountability

CSOSA holds its staff accountable for informing offenders of expectations while under supervision, sanctioning offenders for noncompliance and rewarding compliance. Additionally, the Agency is committed to supervising offenders according to their prescribed risk level, offering interventions and services that have proven treatment effects, and ensuring offenders receive the interventions they need.

### *Accountability Contract*

Staff emphasize compliance with release conditions when supervision commences by outlining supervision roles and expectations in an accountability contract. This document details the general reporting requirements of supervision and informs the offender that they will be subject to sanctions, and possibly revocation, for not complying with those conditions. The contract is reviewed with and signed by the offender before being memorialized in the case management system to be used as a reference throughout the term of supervision as necessary.

### *Sanctions and Incentives*

After release conditions are fully articulated and offenders sign the accountability contract, staff monitor offender behaviors and impose sanctions for noncompliance and provide rewards for compliance.

Sanctions have been shown to be most effective when they involve certainty (i.e., each violation elicits a sanction), swiftness (i.e., sanctions are imposed soon after the violation) and severity (i.e., sanctions are severe enough to deter misbehavior but not so severe to preclude more serious sanctions in the future) (Paternoster & Piquero, 1995). Offenders who violate supervision conditions are subject to swift sanctions, and CSOSA regularly tracks both the intensity and duration of sanction administration following a violation. Sanctions are expected to be graduated, depending on the severity and number of violations. They can range from a verbal reprimand by the CSO for less severe or first-time violations to placement on GPS monitoring or revocation of supervision for consistent and serious violations.<sup>10</sup>

For issues that require immediate attention—such as GPS tampers or prematurely leaving residential treatment and treatment readiness programs—the RET may be deployed to quickly connect with high-risk offenders to encourage them to return to compliance. Created in July 2017, this unit works during expanded business hours to address critical issues. The RET's swift engagements with offenders in the

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<sup>10</sup> Recommendations for supervision revocation are documented in Alleged Violation Reports (AVRs) that are sent from CSOSA to the releasing authority.

community are expected to increase the accountability of the supervised population by providing additional support for offenders, addressing service gaps in supervision, and engaging with community and criminal justice partners.

Equally important, CSOSA rewards offenders for consistent and sustained compliant behavior to encourage continued positive performance. CSOSA monitors milestones achieved and tracks incentive offerings. Incentives include certificates of achievement, recommendations for removal of certain supervision conditions, or, where appropriate, recommendations for early termination of supervision. CSOSA monitors milestones achieved and incentives offered for doing well.

### *Risk-Based Supervision*

At the beginning of supervision, offenders are assessed for risk and needs and prescribed a supervision level based on the risk they pose to public safety. Offenders are monitored at levels consistent with that risk; high-risk offenders are supervised more intensely than low-risk offenders. Contact standards and drug testing requirements vary based on supervision level.

CSOSA monitors offenders through a combination of in-person contacts, including office visits by the offender, home visits by the CSO to the offender's residence, and other community contacts. CSOSA also maintains collateral contact with the offender's family members and associates. Supervision contacts range from a minimum of eight per month for the highest risk offenders to one contact every three months for the lowest risk offenders.

Offender monitoring also includes drug testing. All offenders are required to report to CSOSA's Illegal Substance Collection Unit at the start of supervision to screen for a range of substances, including illicit and prescription drugs as well as alcohol. After initial testing, offenders are placed on drug testing schedules,<sup>11</sup> which vary by substance abuse history and public safety risk. As offenders demonstrate abstinence, testing requirements are relaxed. Conversely, if offenders consistently test positive, the frequency of their drug testing may be increased. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, drug testing is currently limited to spot tests of the highest-risk offenders. The purpose of spot testing is to confirm drug use among those believed to be using illicit substances so they can be referred for and placed in treatment. CSOSA expects to return to regular drug testing once it is deemed safe to do so.

Ensuring offenders are supervised at the proper level is essential to their success, as misaligning supervision may have adverse effects. Intensive monitoring of low-risk

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<sup>11</sup> Offenders supervised at the minimum level do not have regular drug testing schedules but, rather, are only required to test if it is suspected they may be using illicit substances.

offenders, for example, may increase re-offending by creating obstacles to their employment or schooling, participation in prosocial leisure activities, and maintaining stable relationships with non-criminal peers (Taxman, 2006; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004). CSOSA monitors the extent to which CSOs supervise offenders at their prescribed risk levels.

### *Prioritized Interventions*

In addition to assessing public safety risk, it is important to identify and prioritize the needs of offenders, as well as be attentive to their readiness for, and response to, treatment, so they may be placed in appropriate interventions. Information from the Auto Screener and other sources is used to generate a Prescribed Supervision Plan (PSP), which provides a guide for the CSO and offender to follow during supervision. From the PSP, the CSO refers offenders for evaluation and placement in interventions to address their most salient needs.

The PSP identifies, prioritizes, and tracks completion of supervision conditions set by the releasing authority, as well as prioritizes an offender's needs. Currently, the CSO can manually add and prioritize items in the PSP in response to changing events. For example, an offender identified as having both substance abuse treatment and employment needs, might be instructed by the CSO to obtain substance abuse treatment before obtaining employment or vocational training. This manual process for updating the PSP is cumbersome and potentially problematic, as it is based on the CSO subjectively prioritizing the needs of the offender. The Agency plans to enhance the PSP during FY22-26 to address this limitation.

CSOs refer offenders to Agency-provided services and public and private resources to ensure release conditions are met and the needs identified in the PSP are addressed. Offenders referred for an intervention received a formal evaluation by trained staff, who place them based on objective criteria for each program. CSOSA currently tracks the duration for an offender to begin an intervention from the time of referral, and the Agency plans to track additional measures in FY22-26 to determine how well it addresses prioritized needs.

While the current PSP is a useful tool for tracking offender progress on supervision, enhancements planned for FY22-26 include automatically prioritizing needs and generating referrals for interventions, thereby eliminating the subjectivity of the current process. The Agency will also begin to assess the extent to which staff address prioritized needs by examining the number of referrals made for prioritized needs and the number of evaluations completed for high priority needs. The next step is ensuring the Agency has the correct programming in place to address offender needs.

## *Portfolio of Evidence*

CSOSA is committed to delivering quality interventions that have demonstrated treatment effects to address the needs of its supervised population. CSOSA must build a portfolio of evidence through program evaluations to establish the effectiveness of its programming and use that evidence to determine which interventions to keep as is, which to keep with modification, and which to replace with other promising programs. CSOSA considers both the cost and value of a program to the Agency to determine the level of rigor required for an evaluation and the impact that must be realized for an intervention to be maintained.

While randomized controlled trials have often been touted as the 'gold standard' for research, not all programs require the level of rigor required by such an evaluation to establish effect. Interventions that require fewer resources or have less value to the Agency may require less rigorous evaluation. Similarly, those requiring fewer resources or that have high value to the Agency may not require high effect sizes in order to be maintained. Importantly, though, if the interventions implemented by CSOSA do not demonstrate the effect needed based on the cost and value to the Agency, they are to be modified or replaced with other effective or promising programs.

Holding the Agency responsible for offering effective interventions is fiscally responsible and demonstrates CSOSA's commitment to building and using evidence to carry out mission-critical work. Further, it sets the stage for establishing CSOSA as a model community supervision agency contributing to the advancement of evidence-based practice.

To hold itself accountable for establishing a portfolio of evidence, CSOSA tracks the number of program evaluations in progress, as well as those completed at the level of rigor required. For programs that have been evaluated but determined to be ineffective at reducing criminogenic need, CSOSA calculates the amount of time it takes to modify and/or replace the program with another effective or promising program.

## **Offender Accountability**

As offenders progress through supervision, they are expected to adhere to conditions of release, participate in the interventions as directed, and complete supervision successfully. Offenders are held accountable for actively engaging in the interventions in which they are placed. CSOSA monitors this by assessing offender attendance and active participation in interventions, minimizing both the number of offenders who do not report for treatment as well as those who leave programs before completing the entire curriculum, and increasing successful completion of programs.

CSOSA also regularly monitors offender compliance on supervision through its Compliance Monitoring and Intelligence Center, including reporting for scheduled visits (including office visits, home visits, drug testing, and evaluation appointments), fulfillment of special conditions and abstinence from drug use. These factors are used to develop a 'compliance score' for offenders, which allows the Agency to determine how well the offender is progressing on supervision.

For staff to properly perform their duties and position offenders for success, sentencing and supervision-related decisions must be based on unbiased and accurate information. Ensuring the timeliness of reports to the releasing authorities and supporting the fair administration of justice is the focus of CSOSA's fourth strategic goal.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 4 | SUPPORT THE FAIR ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE BY PROVIDING TIMELY AND ACCURATE INFORMATION TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE DECISION-MAKERS**

Maintaining public safety involves collaboration among DC criminal justice partners, including CSOSA, the Pretrial Services Agency (PSA), DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), DC Superior Court (DCSC), DC Department of Corrections (DOC), DC Public Defender Service (PDS), the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia (OAG) and the DC Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), as well as the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), U.S. Parole Commission (USPC), U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO), U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), and states participating in the Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS). CSOSA engages in both information and resource sharing efforts with our partners to facilitate decision-making on individual offenders, maximize law enforcement resources in the District, and build meaningful relationships with our partners with whom we share public safety-related goals.

CSOSA's strategic goal of supporting the fair administration of justice assesses our ability to provide timely and accurate information to our law enforcement partners, as well as the overall strength of these partnerships.

### **Information Sharing**

Criminal justice decision-makers require information from CSOSA to ensure decisions and dispositions for offenders or inmates in their charge are fair. The Agency is committed to providing timely, accurate, and complete information to these entities. CSOSA conducts both pre- and post-sentence investigations and sends reports to releasing authorities to support sentencing, custodial, and release decisions, as well as interstate investigations for offenders whose terms of supervision originated in other jurisdictions but request relocation to the District. We also provide regular reports throughout an offender's period

of supervision to keep authorities informed of offender compliance. These investigations and reports are detailed in the following sections.

### *Investigations*

CSOSA conducts Pre-Sentence Investigations (PSIs) to assist releasing authorities in determining appropriate sentences given D.C.'s sentencing guidelines, as well as understanding the treatment and supervision needs and risk potential of offenders. For PSIs, CSOs collect information about the history and characteristics of the offender including his/her/their family, criminal, employment, health, substance abuse and addictions, lifestyle, living environment, and finances. This comprehensive assessment of offender characteristics facilitates decision-making by providing releasing authorities with details about expected offender behaviors while serving sentences in the community.

In rare cases when an offender is sentenced without a PSI and is to serve a period of incarceration, CSOSA may conduct a post-sentence investigation at the request of the BOP. The content of the report is similar to that of the PSI and informs security classifications and other supervision decisions to ensure offenders are monitored properly and receive appropriate services while incarcerated.

CSOSA conducts pre-release investigations for inmates soon to be released to the community through our Transitional Intervention for Parole Supervision (TIPS) Program. Release plan investigations require a thorough examination of an offender's prior criminal record, substance abuse, supervision, and social history. The purpose of the investigation is to develop a comprehensive supervision, housing, and employment plan, which requires the officers to collaborate with community service providers and partner agencies. These release plans help prepare inmates for release from prison by connecting them with resources to assist in their transition to the community.

Finally, in accordance with ICAOS regulations,<sup>12</sup> officers conduct interstate investigations for all offenders whose offenses or convictions occurred outside of DC, but who wish to live in the District. These investigations include verifying the residence and employment plans of offenders, as well as obtaining information on any special conditions while these offenders are under CSOSA supervision. The information obtained during this process allows officers to effectively plan for and manage offenders in their new community.

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<sup>12</sup> The purpose of ICAOS is to manage the supervision of offenders who are approved to reside in a jurisdiction other than the community or state where their originating offense or conviction occurred.

## *Compliance Reporting*

In addition to investigation reports, CSOSA shares condition compliance information with releasing authorities to ensure behavior that threatens public safety, such as re-arrest, repeated technical violations or absconding from supervision, can be addressed by either CSOSA or the releasing authority. CSOSA verifies compliance through records checks, office and field contacts, and drug testing. CSOSA sanctions offenders and prepares Alleged Violation Reports (AVRs) when appropriate, depending on the severity and frequency of the noncompliance. This report notifies releasing authorities of infractions and, depending on the severity of the violation, may include recommendations for supervision revocation or other disciplinary actions.

CSOSA also sends annual progress reports to the releasing authority describing compliance. When offenders have satisfactorily completed all general and special release conditions and are deemed not to pose a threat to public safety, CSOSA may recommend early termination of supervision in the annual progress report, where appropriate.

Through our provision of investigation and compliance reports, CSOSA equips criminal justice partners with well-prepared and useful information to make sentencing and supervision-related decisions. However, CSOSA also requires information from our partners to best serve offenders in the community and uphold public safety in the District. Access to arrest records from DC, Maryland, and Virginia, for example, allow us to monitor offender engagement in criminal behavior and address public safety issues, and information from BOP's DNA collection ensures we comply with the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 to aid crime-solving efforts and reduces duplicating efforts to obtain samples. Further information regarding these information sharing agreements is detailed in the following sections.

## *Arrest Records*

Having access to arrest records is crucial for CSOSA to evaluate the impact its supervision practices and programming have on recidivism. Those records, to a certain extent, allow the Agency to track offender involvement in criminal behavior while under supervision, lags between arrest events, and specialization in offending. CSOSA has long had access to arrest records from MPD but, until FY09, was unable to determine offenders' criminal involvement outside the District. Beginning in FY09, data sharing agreements with Maryland and Virginia allowed the Agency to also track arrests of supervisees in those jurisdictions. Additionally, in FY12, improved charge data from the MPD made it possible for CSOSA to distinguish between arrests made in DC for new crime, as opposed to arrests made for parole or



probation violations. These data inform Agency staff of offender involvement in continued criminal behavior, allowing them to address critical public safety issues.

## **DNA**

In accordance with the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000, CSOSA collects DNA samples from offenders convicted of a qualifying District of Columbia offense, such as any felony or conviction where the sentence is more than one year of imprisonment.<sup>13</sup> The collected samples are sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for analysis and recorded in the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). CSOSA is allowed access into BOP's database system to verify BOP's DNA collection data and documents in our proprietary case management—Supervision and Management Automated Record Tracking (SMART)—system the date the sample was collected by BOP so as not to unnecessarily test an offender who already provided a DNA sample. CSOSA's DNA Collection Program assists our federal law enforcement and corrections partners in crime-solving efforts.

## **Resource Sharing**

In addition to sharing information, CSOSA partners with other criminal justice agencies to share custodial responsibilities and demonstrate to both offenders and the citizens of DC that they are united in their mission to enhance public safety. These partnerships include cooperative orientation sessions with the USAO and MPD; joint community home visits (i.e., accountability tours) with MPD; collaboration with DYRS on dually supervised cases; working with the USMS on joint investigations that inform the apprehension strategy for offenders with outstanding warrants; and serving as a key partner in the DC Superior Court's Safe Surrender program, which allows individuals to resolve misdemeanor bench warrants.

### ***Accountability Tours***

CSOSA and the law enforcement officers at MPD collaborate to conduct accountability tours, which are visits to the residences of high-risk offenders under community supervision. The purpose is to increase awareness of the collaboration between MPD and CSOSA to offenders and other citizens in the community. For maximum and intensive supervision offenders, accountability tours are required once in the first 90 days of supervision.

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<sup>13</sup> See, <https://casetext.com/statute/district-of-columbia-official-code/division-iv-criminal-law-and-procedure-and-prisoners/title-22-criminal-offenses-and-penalties/subtitle-iii-a-dna-testing/chapter-41b-dna-sample-collection/section-22-4151-qualifying-offenses>.

### *Dually Supervised Cases*

CSOSA has an established agreement with DYRS whereby select supervision information on persons who are simultaneously under the supervision of both agencies is shared weekly. Typically, such persons are young adults, aged 18 to 21, whose supervision obligations from their juvenile matters extended past the age of majority and who subsequently incurred a supervision term for a criminal offense as an adult. The information exchange allows CSOs to collaborate with case workers from DYRS to develop supervision plans that reduce duplicate efforts from the agencies. For example, office visits and drug testing criteria may be imposed by one agency, with the expectation that the information will be shared with the other.

### *Warrants*

CSOSA has dedicated staff to monitor offenders with outstanding warrants. As part of a specialized supervision team, CSOs perform record checks and work closely with the USMS to provide critical information leading to the safe apprehension of offenders with outstanding warrants.

In addition, CSOSA serves as a key partner in the DC Superior Court's Safe Surrender program, a multi-day initiative coordinated with several law enforcement agencies and faith-based organizations during which persons wanted for outstanding misdemeanor bench warrants in the District may surrender voluntarily.

While CSOSA has expanded both information and resource sharing among criminal justice partners since its inception, over the next five years, the Agency is committed to building upon and strengthening these relationships. By obtaining feedback from our partners on the impact of collaboration with CSOSA on public safety, feedback from CSOSA staff on the impact of collaboration with other agencies on effective offender supervision with, and assessing CSO awareness of dually supervised cases, CSOSA will be able to quantify the strength of their partnerships and identify areas for improvement.

## **Management Objectives**

In addition to its four strategic goals, CSOSA has established seven objectives reflecting its management priorities for its administrative functions, which exert vital indirect effects on the Agency's mission success and readiness. These management objectives focus on human capital, information technology, fiscal oversight, procurement and facilities, security and resilience, transparency, and performance management. These objectives align with the main duties of the Agency's support offices and will be contributing factors to appraisals of executive performance.

## AGENCY PRIORITY QUESTIONS

For FY22–26, CSOSA identified four following priority questions:

<b>Priority Question</b>	<b>Strategic Alignment</b>
1) To what extent does CSOSA avert crime?	SGs 1 and 2
2) How do CSOSA's decisions impact public safety?	SGs 1, 2, 3, and 4
3) Do stakeholders believe CSOSA has the ability to achieve its mission?	SGs 3 and 4
4) How can CSOSA advance its organizational maturation?	SG 3

## EVIDENCE-BUILDING AND NEXT STEPS

Building evidence and using it to make data-driven decisions are cornerstones of CSOSA's practices. The Agency engages in evidence-building activities, such as performance management, foundational fact finding, and program evaluation to inform its business practices and advance its mission.

CSOSA developed a comprehensive performance management system to track progress on strategic goals and has developed interactive dashboards to enable the routine discovery of challenges and monitoring of success rates. We use this information to develop strategies to improve program performance and operations efficiency, as well as to identify and promote evidence-based practices.

CSOSA also conducts exploratory analyses, examines routine statistical reports and performs other foundational fact finding to learn more about the business processes underlying our supervision activities and programmatic interventions. Results from these activities often serve as the basis for larger projects and program evaluations.

Program evaluation is another key component of CSOSA's strategy. In FY 2019, CSOSA completed evaluations focused on the Agency's sex offender programming, its key substance use disorder programs, and its vocational training, education and employment programs. Some of the recommendations, such as those resulting from our evaluation of substance use disorder programs, have been implemented.

While these evaluations were fruitful, they also uncovered considerable limitations in CSOSA's data holdings. These limitations led the Agency to focus on building internal capacity and advancing data maturity to establish the foundational components needed to routinize program evaluation.

CSOSA plans to emphasize and commit resources during the early part of the FY22-26 planning period to building data capacity. Doing so will enable future program evaluations of higher quality to be completed more quickly and at less cost.

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## **APPENDIX A | STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

CSOSA's FY22–26 Strategic Plan was developed with the active engagement of stakeholders throughout the Agency. To identify the priority questions for this planning period, CSOSA conducted two independent data collections in FY21 to elicit feedback from staff and senior leaders regarding data needs and key priorities from each organizational unit.

