
Virginia Probationer Survey Results

Spring 2014 Results Statewide

PROJECT STAFF

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Introduction

As a follow-up to the 2012 development of performance measures for local probation in Virginia, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) evaluation team was tasked with creating and piloting a *Probationer Survey* that measures probationer attitudes and experiences while on local probation. The goal was to develop a survey that could be deployed twice a year in local Community Corrections agencies throughout Virginia for a one month period. The survey allows local agencies to collect feedback from all probationers seen within a particular timeframe, providing reasonably up-to-date information about agency operations from the probationers' point of view. The approach to surveying all probationers at a point in time is preferable to surveying only probation completers due to selection bias which may exclude probationers who abscond prior to completion.

The survey the NCSC evaluation team developed includes all of the questions from the revised Dual Role Relationship Inventory (DRI-R). The revised Dual Role Relationship Inventory (DRI-R) is an instrument with 30 psychometrically sound items that assess both therapeutic alliance and procedural justice in the context of the relationship between a probation officer and his or her client (Kennealy et al., 2012). Each of the 30 items is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ("never" = 1 to "always" = 7). The DRI-R has been validated for both the general population under supervision (Kennealy et al., 2012) as well as those who are under supervision who have mental health disorders (Skeem et al., 2007).

The relationship that probation officers establish with their supervisees has been conceptualized as a "dual role relationship" (Trotter, 1999). That is, probation officers must establish a relationship with the individuals they supervise that reflects the dual roles of their profession. The first role is that of a *public safety agent* through their supervision and monitoring of offenders on their caseload. The second role is that of a *caseworker* role. Probation officers are often required to secure needed community resources for their supervisees and work one-on-one with their clients to promote change in behavior and improve their client's behavioral outcomes.

The DRI-R assesses three relationship factors, including "caring and fairness," "trust", and "toughness" (Skeem et al 2007; Skeem and Manchak, 2008; Kennealy, 2012). Past research has found that the DRI-R can help predict recidivism rates based on the type of relationship that the officer has with the client (Skeem, et al., 2007; Kennealy et al., 2012). The "hybrid" or "balanced" approach is marked by "caring, trust and fairness, and an authoritative approach" (Skeem et al 2007; Kennealy et al., 2012), and relationships that are characterized by this approach lead to better outcomes, including a reduction in re-arrest rates (Kennealy et al.,

2012). Klockars (1972) has also found that probation officers who place equal emphasis on changing offenders' behavior and protecting public safety are more effective than officers who place heavy emphasis on only one goal or the other.

Administration of the Survey

The *Probationer Survey* was administered at 36 of 37 local Community Corrections agencies throughout Virginia between February 15, 2014 and March 15, 2014. Each site received coded *Scantron* forms that allowed the NCSC evaluators to track the results at the site level. The survey was scored using *Scantron* software, allowing automated scoring after the surveys were complete. All probationers who reported for an office appointment during the study period were asked to complete the paper survey at the end of their scheduled office visit if the office visit was their third or subsequent visit. Completion of the survey was voluntary. Approximately 86% of the probationers who reported to the probation office during the study period agreed to complete the survey. The rates of voluntary participation varied from 63% to 100% across sites that tracked and reported this data. The survey took approximately ten minutes to complete.

A total of 4,061 surveys were completed statewide during the initial pilot deployment of the survey. Of the 4,061 probationers completing the survey, 680 probationers were reporting for their first or second meeting with their probation officer. The results from these 680 probationers were removed from the sample prior to scoring the DRI-R which required a minimum of three or more office visit. Survey results in this report include the individual site averages as well as the state average on a question by question basis to enable sites to view their scores in context.

Methodology

In order to score the full DRI-R, respondents had to fully answer all 30 questions that comprise the DRI-R instrument. A total of 1,522 surveys could not be scored using the DRI-R scoring template due to missing data leaving a total of 1,858 valid surveys that could be scored. *Figure 1* below shows the number of surveys that were submitted, the number removed because the probationer had not attended more than two office visits and the number of surveys that could not be scored because of missing items.

Figure 1: Survey Completion Rates and Scoring Rates by Site

<i>Agency</i>	<i># of Surveys Completed</i>	<i># of Surveys that could be scored</i>	<i># of Surveys w/ Incomplete Data</i>	<i># of Completed DRI-Rs</i>
Alexandria CJS	76	57	32	25
Arlington CCP	19	19	12	7
Blue Ridge Court Services	23	20	8	12
Chesapeake Bay Area CC	8	4	1	3
Chesapeake CC	105	78	31	47
Chesterfield/Colonial Heights CCS	112	90	29	61
Clinch Valley Comm. Action Program	33	26	14	12
Colonial CC	105	89	42	47
Court CC	106	90	47	43
Culpeper County CJS	98	83	25	58
Fairfax County GDC – CSD	122	107	40	67
Fauquier County – Adult Court Svcs.	232	202	100	102
Fifth Judicial District CC	141	127	56	71
Halifax/Pittsylvania Court Svcs.	79	62	32	30
Hampton/NN CJA	160	148	44	104
Hanover CC	307	246	154	92
Henrico County CCP	167	113	63	50
Loudoun County CCP	102	84	38	46
Lynchburg CCS	84	62	19	43
Middle Peninsula P & Pretrial	58	56	33	23
New River CC & PS	118	100	33	67
Norfolk CJS	180	144	91	53
Northern Neck CC	29	22	9	13
OAR/Jefferson Area CC	136	101	35	66
Old Dominion Court Services	83	71	30	41
Petersburg CC	43	29	18	11
Piedmont Court Services	162	140	81	59
Piedmont Court Services - Mecklenburg	23	18	4	14
Portsmouth CC & PT Services	121	98	40	58
Prince William Office of CJS	200	171	60	111
Rappahannock Regional Jail	117	105	45	60
Richmond Div. of Adult Programs	50	41	21	20
Riverside CJA	71	61	33	28
Rockingham-Harrisonburg CSU	51	42	15	27
Southside CC	12	10	2	8
Southwest VA CC	394	347	131	216
Virginia Beach CC & PT Services	133	117	54	63
State	4,061	3,380	1,522	1,858

Survey Respondents

The following section details the profile of survey respondents who fully completed the survey.

Gender

Figure 2 below shows the gender of probationers with surveys that were scored using the DRI-R. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents were male while 33% were female.

Figure 2: Gender of Survey Respondents Completing the DRI-R

Gender	# of Respondents	% of Total
Male	1,252	67%
Female	606	33%

Age

The age of respondents is shown in Figure 3 below. Almost half (47%) of the survey respondents were 25 years or younger in age with the next largest group falling between 31 and 40 years of age.

Figure 3: Age of Survey Respondents Completing the DRI-R

Age	# of Respondents	% of Total
18-21	480	26%
22-25	395	21%
26-30	302	16%
31-40	372	20%
41-50	193	10%
51+	110	6%

Race

Figure 4 shows the race of survey respondents. The majority of survey respondents were white (61%) or black (32%).

Figure 4: Race of Survey Respondents Completing the DRI-R

Race	# of Respondents	% of Total
White	1,115	61%
Black	593	32%
Hispanic (Non-White)	85	5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	32	2%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	12	1%

Length of Time on Supervision at the Time of Survey Completion

Figure 5 shows the length of time the respondent were on probation at the time the survey was completed. The majority of survey respondents (44%) were on supervision between 3 and 6 months at the time the survey was completed.

Figure 5: Length of Time on Supervision at the Time the DRI-R was completed

Length of Time on Supervision	# of Respondents	% of Total
Less than 3 months	240	13%
3-6 months	814	44%
7-11 months	482	26%
12 months or more	305	17%

Prior Probation Supervision

Figure 6 below shows that forty percent (40%) of the survey respondents were on probation prior to their current placement.

Figure 6: Number of Survey Respondents on Previously on Probation

Respondent on Probation Supervision Before?	# of Respondents	% of Total
Yes	736	40%
No	1,106	60%

Prior Supervision Meetings with Current Probation Officer

The majority of respondents (86%) had at least three prior meetings with his or her current probation officer at the time the survey was completed (see *Figure 7* below).

Figure 7: Number of Prior Supervision Meetings with Respondent's Current Probation Officer

<i>Length of Time on Supervision</i>	<i># of Respondents</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Two prior meeting	253	14%
Three to five prior meetings	648	35%
More than five prior meetings	946	51%

DRI-R Scoring

The DRI-R total score is calculated by summing the “Caring and Fairness” and “Trust” scales with the inverse of the “Toughness” scales. The possible scores for the DRI-R range from 29 to 210 with 210 being the highest score a site could attain. The average statewide DRI-R score was 188 with a range of scores from 169 to 209 across all agencies.

Figure 8: Average DRI-R Score Statewide

<i>Site</i>	<i>Total # of Respondents</i>	<i>Average DRI-R Score</i>
Statewide	1,858	188

Caring-Fairness Scale

For the Caring-Fairness scale, survey respondents were asked to provide their perspective of relationship quality in terms of caring and fairness through a series of twenty questions. The caring and fairness questions seek to assess the respondent’s perception of level of alliance and fairness with staff. The possible scores for the Caring-Fairness scale range from 19 to 140 with 140 being the highest score a site can attain on the sub-scale. The average statewide score on the Caring-Fairness scale was 126, as shown in *Figure 9* below, with a range of scores falling between 113 and 139 across all agencies.

Figure 9: Average Caring-Fairness Score Statewide

<i>Site</i>	<i>Total # of Respondents</i>	<i>Average Caring-Fairness Score</i>
Statewide	1,858	126

The questions that comprise the Caring-Fairness scale include:

- My probation officer cares about me as a person.
- My probation officer explains what I am supposed to do and why it would be good to do it.
- My probation officer tries very hard to do the right thing by me.
- When I have trouble doing what I am supposed to do, my probation officer talks with me and listens to what I have to say.
- If I break the rules, my probation officer calmly explains what has to be done and why.
- My probation officer is enthusiastic and optimistic about me.
- My probation officer encourages me to work together with him/her.
- My probation officer really considers me my situation when deciding what I'm supposed to do.
- My probation officer seems devoted to helping me overcome my problems.
- My probation officer is warm and friendly with me.
- My probation officer treats me fairly.
- My probation officer really cares about my concerns.
- My probation officer praises me for the good things I do.
- If I'm going in a bad direction, my probation officer will talk with me before doing any drastic.
- I know that my probation officer truly wants to help me.
- My probation officer considers my views.
- My probation officer gives me enough of a chance to say what I want to say.
- My probation officer takes enough time to understand me.
- My probation officer takes my needs into account.
- My probation officer shows me respect in absolutely all his/her dealings with me.

Trust Scale

For the Trust scale, respondents were asked to provide their perspective of relationship quality in terms of trust through a series of five questions. The questions on trust sought to gauge the respondent's level of confidence in the staff-client bond. The possible scores for the Trust Scale range from 5 to 35 with 35 being the highest score a site can attain on the sub-scale. The average statewide score on the Trust scale was 31, as shown below in *Figure 10*, with a range of scores between 28 and 35 across all agencies.

Figure 10: Average Trust Scale Score Statewide

<i>Site</i>	<i>Total # of Respondents</i>	<i>Average Trust Score</i>
Statewide	1,858	31

The questions that comprise the Trust scale include:

- I feel free to discuss the things that worry me with my probation officer.
- I feel safe enough to be open and honest with my probation officer.
- My probation officer trusts me to be honest with him/her.
- My probation officer knows that he/she can trust me.
- My probation officer is someone that I trust.

Toughness Scale

For the Toughness Scale, respondents were asked to provide their perspective of relationship quality in terms of toughness through a series of five questions. The questions reflected their attitudes about how they perceived staff on such topics as disciplinary issues and expectations for independence and compliance. The scale is associated with officer confrontation within sessions, probationer mistrust, treatment motivation, and future rule noncompliance. The possible scores for the Toughness scale range from 5 to 35 with 5 being the highest score a site can attain on the sub-scale. Please note that this is the reverse of the scoring for the Trust scale. The average statewide score on the Toughness scale was 9, as shown below in *Figure 11*, with a range of scores between 5 and 13 statewide.

Figure 11: Average Toughness Scale Score

<i>Site</i>	<i>Total # of Respondents</i>	<i>Average Toughness Score</i>
Statewide	1,858	9

The questions that comprise the Tough scale include:

- My probation officer talks down to me.
- My probation officer puts me down when I've done something wrong
- I feel that my probation officer is looking to punish me.
- My probation officer makes unreasonable demands of me.
- My probation officer expects me to do all the work alone and doesn't provide enough help.

Findings

While definitive standards for the total DRI-R score and the scores on the sub-scales do not exist, it is clear that probationers under local supervision in Virginia report that their probation officers treat them fairly, that they care about them, and that they are not unnecessarily tough with them. Average scores for these scales approach the maximum possible scores.

The NCSC evaluation team examined whether there was significant variation in DRI-R scores related to the demographic characteristics of probationers, specifically age, race and sex. There was a positive relationship between age and total DRI-R scores indicating that older probationers were more likely to view their relationship with their probation officer positively than younger probationers. This relationship also held for the Caring-Fairness and Trust subscales but not the Toughness subscale. Thus, older (generally, 30 years or older) probationers were more likely than younger probationers to perceive their probation officers as being fair, caring about them and being trustworthy but just as likely not to regard their probation officers as being unnecessarily tough.

Scores varied by race such that white probationers tended to give significantly higher ratings to their probation officers than black probationers on the Caring-Fairness and Trust subscales, and on the total DRI-R score as well. No other racial differences were detected for these subscales and the total score. However, additional racial differences emerged for the Toughness subscale. American Indians, as well as blacks, perceived their POs as being tougher than whites. There were no differences in scores on the DRI-R (or on any subscales) for males and females.

Another source of variation for the DRI-R is the time that the probationer spent on supervision. Time under supervision did not impact probationers perceptions of Caring-Fairness or Toughness but did produce a statistically significant difference on the Trust scale. Probationers who had been under supervision for 7- 11 months tended to give higher ratings than probationers who were supervised for longer or shorter periods of time. This may be because probationers have been under supervision long enough to establish a stable and appropriate relationship with their probation officer that encourages interpersonal trust and yet has not been on supervision too long as to feel like the system is holding him or her back from successful completion. It is also possible that probationers under supervision for a longer period of time may represent cases that require additional intervention and extended periods of supervision.

This report offers results from the initial pilot of the *Probationer Survey*. Future deployments of the survey will focus on improving the survey process by a) providing a Spanish version of the survey to all sites in order to maximize participation; b) extending the survey period to a minimum of six to eight weeks to capture responses from probationers who may be on the lowest level of supervision; c) encouraging systematic participation at all the sites to maximize response rates.

Figure 12: Summary of DRI-R Scores by Agency

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Average of Fairness/Caring Scale</i>	<i>Average of Trust Scale</i>	<i>Average of Tough Scale</i>	<i>Total # of DRI-R's Scale</i>	<i>Average DRI-R Score</i>
4	139	35	5	3	209
34	135	34	7	216	202
3	135	33	7	12	201
27	132	33	8	14	197
23	133	32	8	41	197
7	131	33	9	12	195
5	129	32	8	47	193
18	128	32	7	43	193
28	130	31	9	58	193
12	131	32	10	71	193
30	128	32	8	60	192
26	128	32	8	59	192
22	128	33	9	13	192
32	127	31	7	27	192
33	127	32	7	8	192
19	129	32	10	23	191
6	126	31	8	61	190
29	126	31	9	111	189
14	128	32	12	104	188
11	126	31	9	169	188
State Average	126	31	9		188
20	125	31	8	67	188
24	124	31	7	66	187
2	125	31	9	7	187
13	126	31	11	30	186
9	125	31	11	43	184
8	124	30	10	47	184
1	123	31	10	25	183
17	123	30	10	46	183
10	121	30	9	58	182
21	120	30	13	53	178
31	117	30	9	28	178
25	117	28	11	11	174
15	117	29	13	92	172
36	112	28	10	20	170
16	113	28	12	50	170
35	113	28	12	63	169

Appendix B

Figure 13: Local Probationer Survey Statewide Results

	Never ▼ 1		Rarely ▼ 2		Occasionally ▼ 3		Sometimes ▼ 4		Often ▼ 5		Very Often ▼ 6		Always ▼ 7		Average Rating
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
My probation officer cares about me as a person.	44	1%	47	1%	80	3%	137	4%	399	13%	408	13%	2,068	65%	6.2
I feel free to discuss the things that worry me with my probation officer.	79	2%	94	3%	87	3%	271	8%	427	13%	439	14%	1,793	56%	5.9
My probation officer explains what I am supposed to do and why.	13	0%	23	1%	44	1%	71	2%	263	8%	338	11%	2,429	76%	6.5
My probation officer tries very hard to do the right thing by me.	30	1%	37	1%	49	2%	125	4%	297	10%	364	12%	2,222	71%	6.4
When I have trouble doing what I am supposed to do, my probation officer talks to me and listens to what I have to say.	68	2%	48	2%	58	2%	155	5%	334	11%	393	12%	2,107	67%	6.2
If I break the rules, my probation officer calmly explains what has to be done and why.	81	3%	47	2%	59	2%	132	4%	305	10%	387	12%	2,119	68%	6.2
My probation officer is enthusiastic and optimistic with me.	56	2%	73	2%	81	3%	174	6%	355	11%	467	15%	1,929	62%	6.1
I feel safe enough to be open and honest with my probation officer.	134	4%	66	2%	64	2%	141	5%	276	9%	384	13%	1,914	64%	6.1
My probation officer talks down to me.	2,317	75%	171	6%	50	2%	84	3%	76	2%	81	3%	298	10%	2.0
My probation officer encourages me to work together with him/her.	52	2%	49	2%	71	2%	150	5%	342	11%	439	14%	2,053	65%	6.2
My probation officer trust me to be honest with him/her.	20	1%	32	1%	40	1%	116	4%	327	11%	406	13%	2,155	70%	6.4
My probation officer really considers my situation when deciding what I'm supposed to do.	67	2%	58	2%	71	2%	158	5%	300	9%	478	15%	2,032	64%	6.2
My probation officer seems devoted to helping me overcome my problems.	136	5%	64	2%	83	3%	130	4%	282	9%	413	14%	1,913	63%	6.1
My probation officer puts me down when I've done something wrong.	2,299	75%	199	7%	79	3%	90	3%	69	2%	69	2%	250	8%	1.9
My probation officer is warm and friendly with me.	53	2%	54	2%	99	3%	183	6%	321	10%	404	13%	2,041	65%	6.2
My probation officer treats me fairly.	24	1%	43	1%	49	2%	115	4%	264	8%	376	12%	2,293	72%	6.4
My probation officer really cares about my problems.	77	2%	85	3%	85	3%	188	6%	299	9%	458	15%	1,957	62%	6.1
My probation officer praises me for the good things I do.	109	3%	79	3%	112	4%	198	6%	305	10%	460	15%	1,868	60%	6.0
If I'm going in a bad direction, my probation officer will talk with me before doing anything drastic.	94	3%	68	2%	92	3%	156	5%	289	9%	414	13%	2,024	65%	6.1
I know that my probation officer truly wants to help me.	50	2%	60	2%	62	2%	152	5%	268	8%	397	13%	2,180	69%	6.3
My probation officer considers my views.	100	3%	74	2%	95	3%	189	6%	315	10%	451	15%	1,796	59%	6.0
I feel that my probation officer is looking to punish me.	2,321	75%	223	7%	66	2%	117	4%	84	3%	71	2%	213	7%	1.9

My probation officer gives me enough of a chance to say what I want to say.	102	3%	42	1%	71	2%	133	4%	278	9%	419	13%	2,059	66%	6.2
My probation officer makes unreasonable demands of me.	2,429	78%	221	7%	65	2%	79	3%	60	2%	64	2%	190	6%	1.7
My probation officer expects me to do all the work alone and doesn't provide enough help.	2,158	70%	222	7%	75	2%	114	4%	93	3%	102	3%	315	10%	2.1
My probation officer knows that he/she can trust me.	51	2%	39	1%	68	2%	188	6%	326	10%	452	14%	2,026	64%	6.2
My probation officer is someone I trust.	77	2%	67	2%	78	2%	173	5%	284	9%	386	12%	2,109	66%	6.2
My probation officer takes enough time to understand me.	53	2%	72	2%	65	2%	146	5%	293	9%	440	14%	2,113	66%	6.2
My probation officer takes my needs into account.	56	2%	60	2%	77	2%	159	5%	288	9%	430	14%	2,019	65%	6.2
My probation officer shows me respect in absolutely all his/her dealings with me.	33	1%	34	1%	52	2%	92	3%	204	7%	306	10%	2,381	77%	6.5

Your Gender?

	Count	%
Male	2,125	67%
Female	1,063	33%

What is your current age?

	Count	%
18-21	819	26%
22-25	660	21%
26-30	517	16%
31-40	619	19%
41-50	369	12%
51+	219	7%

Your Race/ethnicity?

	Count	%
Am. Ind./Alaskan Native	22	1%
Black	1,120	36%
Asian/Pac. Islander	58	2%
White	1,764	56%
Hispanic (Not White)	163	5%

How long have you been on probation for your current offense?

	Count	%
Less than 3 mo.	439	14%
3-6 mo.	1,396	44%
7-11 mo.	779	25%
12 mo.+	552	17%

Have you ever been on probation before?

	Count	%
Yes	1,286	40%
No	1,898	60%

How many times have you met with your current probation officer?

	Count	%
This is my first meeting	0	0%
Once before	0	0%
Twice before	450	14%
Three to five times before	1,119	35%
More than five times	1,667	52%

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