DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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| **Policy Number:** | **204.005** |
| **Title:** | **General Population Programming – Facilities** |
| **Effective Date:** | **5/18/26** |

**PURPOSE:** To provide programming that targets criminogenic and responsivity needs, skills training, and other quality facility programming to incarcerated people.

**APPLICABILITY:** Minnesota Department of Corrections, All adult prisons

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Cognitive behavioral interventions** – individual or group interventions designed to help people recognize and change harmful thinking patterns, beliefs, and behaviors that lead to criminal activity. These interventions focus on cognitive restructuring (teaching clients to identify and challenge distorted or risky thoughts), skill building (developing problem-solving, decision-making, and coping skills), and behavioral change (encouraging prosocial behavior and replacing harmful habits with constructive actions), and include evidence-based practices as defined in Policy 610.010. Examples of programs in the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) include "Decision Points;" "Thinking for a Change;" "Moving On;" "Habilitation, Empowerment, Accountability Therapy" (HEAT); and "Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) Employment."

**Effective Interventions** – evidence-based interventions aimed at addressing the criminogenic needs of incarcerated people based on the principles of risk, need, and responsivitiy for justice-impacted populations.

**Effective interventions committee** – a committee of DOC staff who are trained in the principles of effective interventions and who review new proposals and requests for providing programming to incarcerated people.

**Evidence-Based practices (EBP)** – See policy 610.010 "Statewide Evidence-Based Practices Training, Coaching, and Quality Assurance."

**Institutional management program** – a structured group, program, or service which has a curriculum that does not use the principles of effective intervention; however is important to offer for out-of-cell time and for meeting other needs of incarcerated people such as creative expression or physical activity.

**Recidivism reduction program (RRP)** – a program that is proven to reduce recidivism for justice-impacted people according to published research. Recidivism reduction programs include such examples as cognitive behavioral programs as determined through the effective interventions committee, substance use disorder treatment, sex offense treatment, "EMPLOY," "Prison Fellowship Academy" (PFA), earning a secondary degree, and earning a post-secondary degree.

**Responsivity program** – a structured program designed to target a responsivity need identified through the comprehensive assessment process.

**PROCEDURES:**

A. The DOC reviews new programs using the principles of effective intervention for corrections programs. If a DOC staff member or community program/partner requests a new program be delivered to incarcerated people, the following review process will be offered:

1. A person submitting a proposal for a new program should be directed to the DOC's public website to submit an application: Doing Business with the DOC/Department of Corrections (mn.gov).

2. The evidence-based practices (EBP) unit staff or designee score the proposal using best practices.

3. If the proposed program fills an identified gap in programming for the incarcerated population or scores within a threshold of evidence-promising practices, the proposal will be submitted to the effective interventions committee for further review.

4. The effective interventions committee reviews new proposals monthly to assess the need, available resources, and program alignment and determines whether the program should be implemented. Facility administration, caseworkers, and other identified stakeholders will be contacted for input as needed.

5. Recommendations for implementation of a new program are shared with facility warden(s)/designee(s) and appropriate shared management teams to determine the capacity to deliver the program.

6. The effective interventions committee determines whether a recommended program meets the definition of recidivism-reduction, institutional management, or responsivitiy.

7. Corrections program directors work with the program proposers to complete an Implementation Plan (attached) identifying, staffing, resources, fidelity monitoring, and sustainability. Implemented programs are subject to review identified in Procedure C of this policy. Completed Implementation Plans should be sent to the EBP unit director or designee who will review and approve for implementation.

8. The EBP Unit supports corrections program directors in the implementation of approved programs.

9. The effective interventions committee chair or designee e-mails program representatives to notify them when a proposal is not recommended for implementation, and documents the decision. A new program proposal may be resubmitted every six months for programs that were not recommended.

B. Cognitive behavioral programs will be provided consistently to general population incarcerated people at all correctional facilities.

1. Facilitators of cognitive behavioral programs must be trained and certified to deliver the program.

2. Facilitators in conjunction with facility corrections program directors should ensure cognitive programming is provided to incarcerated people following the prioritization matrix in Risk and Needs Program Priorities (attached).

C. DOC staff must review facility programs provided to the general population at each facility to determine each program's contribution to the department's mission, values, vision, and strategic goals, as well as their fidelity to curriculum and program delivery.

1. Corrections program directors (CPDs) at each facility must ensure that every program has an assigned staff person responsible for completing the following scheduled reviews:

a) Recididivism reduction programs (RRPs) must be reviewed annually (see attachment B)

b) Institutional management programs must be reviewed once every two years (see attachment C).

c) Review forms must be submitted to the EBP director or designee for review.

2. The CPD must submit requests for full program evaluations or assessments of all recidivism reduction programs to the EBP director or designee at least once every five years (see attachment D).

D. Corrections program directors ensure that approved and implemented programs are listed accurately in the master Minnesota DOC program list used to assist staff and incarcerated people in case planning.

**INTERNAL CONTROLS:**

A. Annually, DOC staff people responsible for each facility's programming review all programs and program components (including associated attachments) for accuracy, program objectives, costs, and relation to the department's overall philosophy and goals. Corrections program directors must submit the program reviews to the evidence-based practices director and retain the program evaluations according to the retention schedule.

**STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY SECURITY AUDIT STANDARDS:** None

**REFERENCES:** Minn. Stat. §§ 241.01 and 244.03
Policy 100.010, "Mission, Values, Vision, and Goals of the Department of Corrections"
Policy 203.0151, "Cognitive Behavioral Programming"
Policy 402.300, "EMPLOY Program"

**REPLACES:** Policy 204.005, "Offender Programming – Facilities," 10/16/18.
All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Five-Year Program Assessment Request (204.005D)
Risk and Needs Program Priorities (204.005E)

New Program Implementation Plan (204.005F)

**APPROVALS:**
Commissioner of Corrections