

Orange County California Uses Electronic Monitoring for Array of Offenders

Sentinel Offender-Funded Program is FREE to County and Taxpayers

The Issues

Many law enforcement, probation and correctional agencies face a similar challenge today: limited funds and a growing list of legislative mandates and court-ordered activities. These agencies are searching for ways to cut costs without compromising public safety. Many have found that our offender-funded programs can reduce all costs, positively impact public safety and ensure that offenders are held accountable. Sentinel Offender Services created the successful funding process and has continued & expanded the program for over 15 years.

The Challenges

Orange County California's Probation Department initial program grew directly from the need to cut costs of existing probation services, while continuing the close supervision of probationers. The Probation Department developed a Supervised Electronic Confinement (SEC) program, the goal of which was to electronically monitor low-risk adult offenders already on probation.

Background

Sentinel Offender Services has provided a valuable partnership to Orange County since 1993. This was a multi-vendor contract until Orange County chose Sentinel Offender Services as its sole provider, due to our experience and high quality of service provision. Under the SEC program, Sentinel offers the Orange County Probation Department electronic monitoring, case management, breath-alcohol testing and drug testing services all at no cost to county taxpayers.

Approach

Sentinel Offender Services assesses offenders a daily fee for this program using a sliding-fee scale. Sentinel Offender Services operates similar programs throughout Southern California in neighboring Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. Orange County designates a cap on the size of this program and uses a set ratio of probation officers to offender cases. As part of the program, Sentinel provides full-service case management for the program based on direct instructions from the probation officers and courts.

Solution

Sentinel Offender Services provides a means for Orange County Probation to work with low-risk offenders in a meaningful way by providing a proven house-arrest program made effective through remote electronic monitoring. By allowing these probationers to participate in this program, Orange County avoids daily jail costs for these participants; some have estimated at least as high as \$75 per day per offender. This program has grown to 200 daily participants for whom we provide electronic monitoring, case management and Breath Alcohol Testing (BAT).



About 50 percent of the SEC program population undergoes daily BAT as a result of current or prior Driving Under the Influence (DUI) convictions.

The Orange County program uses a highly accurate electro-chemical breath alcohol tester providing a color picture of the probationer that is used for facial recognition with each test. The program involves scheduled, random or on-demand testing.

Sentinel also has a contract with Orange County Probation for tracking of sex offenders using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology.

The Sentinel-Orange County office operates Monday through Friday and dispatches field installers to participant offender’s homes for installations.

The Outlook

Orange County has measured the effectiveness of these programs, equipment and technology as well as the role expected system enhancements will play in delivering additional benefits. Additional probation populations will include GPS monitoring, include stalkers, domestic violence perpetrators, gang members, violent criminals and felons who are known to commit serious crimes.

Offender Funded Services: Sentinel created the program model 15 years ago, where all electronic monitoring and case management responsibilities were paid for by the offender themselves, saving millions upon millions of taxpayer dollars for the Courts and Law Enforcement.

For more information, contact:

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