



County of Berks
COUNTY OF BERKS
PENNSYLVANIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

BERKS COUNTY ADULT PROBATION & PAROLE

Daniel C. Heydt, Chief

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CHIEF'S NOTE

It is with great pride that I present the 2024 Annual Report of the Berks County Adult Probation and Parole Office. This report reflects the tireless efforts of our department throughout the past year. These efforts focused on protecting public safety, holding individuals accountable, and helping people make meaningful and lasting changes in their lives. Our mission is rooted in both responsibility and hope. Each day, our officers interact with individuals from all walks of life, some struggling with addiction, others reintegrating after incarceration, and many working hard to turn their lives around. These interactions, backed by evidence-based practices and strong community partnerships, are helping build a safer and stronger Berks County.

Overview of Supervision and Services

As of December 31, 2024, our department supervised 4,347 individuals placed on probation, parole, ARD (Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition), or probation with restrictive conditions (formerly intermediate punishment). Our work spans the entire county and includes a wide range of offenses, from non-violent first-time convictions to more serious criminal behavior. Despite the complexity and volume of our caseload, our department continues to achieve positive outcomes.

Focusing on Risk Reduction and Behavior Change

Our approach to supervision is not just about compliance, it's about reducing risk and supporting behavior change. We know from experience and research that behavior change is most successful when it is supported, not just mandated. Our officers use tools like motivational interviewing, individual intervention tools, skill building, case planning, and incentives/sanctions to support progress while maintaining community safety.

Specialized Units for Complex Needs

Certain populations under supervision present unique challenges that require a more focused response. To meet those needs, our department has developed several specialized units:

- Our Treatment Court ensures individuals receive coordinated care and support in partnership with a host of other agencies targeting mental health, drug and alcohol, and veterans' needs.
- The Domestic Violence Unit provides targeted oversight, and referrals to batterer's intervention programs, for individuals convicted of domestic-related offenses.
- The Sex Offender Supervision Unit closely collaborates with treatment providers and the Pennsylvania Sexual Offenders Assessment Board to reduce recidivism among high-risk individuals convicted of a sexual offense.
- The Female Trauma Unit provides a trauma-informed, gender-responsive approach to working with females under supervision.
- The Firearm Suppression Unit employs a combination of suppression efforts and cognitive-behavioral tools and strategies to combat the illegal use and possession of firearms among individuals on supervision.

- The Gang Unit is comprised of a group of specially trained officers who have expansive knowledge on the interactions, behaviors, threats, and needs of those involved in, or at risk of joining, a security threat group.

Each of these specialized units plays a critical role in reducing harm, managing risk, and helping individuals with complex histories navigate successful rehabilitation.

Emphasizing Education, Employment, and Reintegration

We believe that long-term change happens when people have opportunities to succeed. That's why our department continues to invest in services that support education, employment, and reintegration. In 2024, we referred hundreds of individuals to GED preparation programs, job training resources, housing assistance, and outpatient treatment for drug and alcohol dependency. Additionally, we maintained strong partnerships with organizations such as Treatment Access and Services Center (TASC) and Connections Work. These community partners amplify our impact and help individuals break cycles of crime and instability.

Our officers are highly trained professionals who maintain composure, professionalism, and compassion in often unpredictable circumstances. The safety of our officers is paramount. In 2024, staff received regular training in control tactics, firearms, First Aid/CPR, and Narcan administration. We also implemented updated safety protocols for home visits and field work to reduce risk and respond effectively to emergency situations.

A Note of Gratitude

This report would not be possible without the hard work and attention to detail of Dr. Bryanna Davis, our Quality Assurance Supervisor. Dr. Davis has compiled an outstanding, comprehensive report that reflects our operations, successes, and future goals. Her dedication ensures that we remain transparent, data-informed, and progressive. I also want to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation for the officers, supervisors, and support staff of the Berks County Adult Probation and Parole Office. Every day, they walk a difficult line, serving as both monitors and mentors, advocates and problem-solvers. Their work is challenging, often thankless, and yet they show up every day to make a difference.

Moving Forward

Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, we will continue to innovate, evaluate, and strengthen our practices. We are committed to using resources wisely, improving outcomes, and maintaining the highest level of service to the Court and community. We are proud to serve Berks County, and we remain steadfast in our mission to ensure public safety and help those under our supervision make positive behavior change.

Sincerely,

Daniel C. Heydt, M.S., M.P.A.

Chief Probation and Parole Officer

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DEPARTMENTAL HISTORY

The Berks County Adult Probation and Parole Department was established in 1920 and provides services to over 5,000 individuals, annually, throughout Berks County. With a population of over 400,000 individuals, Berks County is home to the 4th largest city in Pennsylvania, Reading, which is home to over 95,000 of those residents. The Berks County Probation & Parole Office operates out of the City of Reading. The office is comprised of the following positions, 13 administrators, 59 probation officers, 6 program monitors, and 6 support staff.

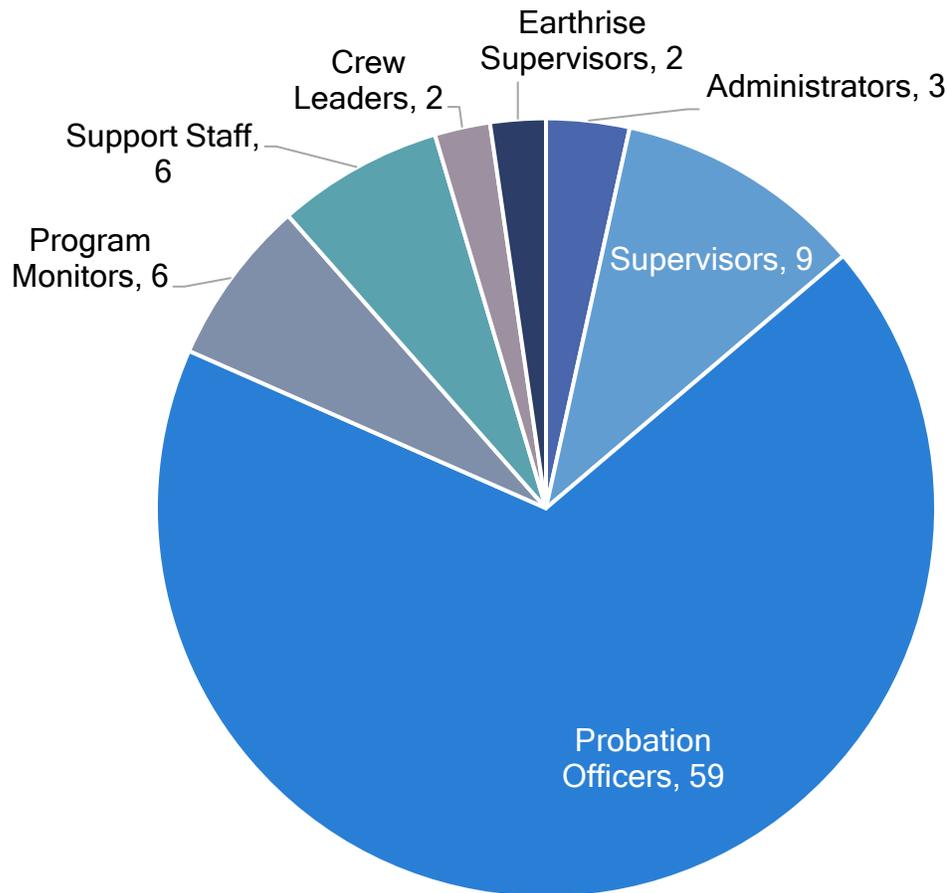
Mission Statement

Through the utilization of evidenced-based practices and data, and without bias, the department is committed to public safety, justice for victims, accountability, and personal development for those under supervision while treating all involved parties in a fair, respectful, and just manner.

Disclaimer. Data contained in this report is based on information extracted from the case management system and was the most accurate data available at the time. The data was checked for completeness and accuracy to the best of the department's ability; however, there may be minor discrepancies due to administrative error when inputting data. Please note individuals may be on multiple types of supervision concurrently and therefore may be accounted for in more than one sentencing data set. Additionally, some numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding. An "*" indicates a point-in-time snapshot of data.

STAFFING

As of December 31, 2024, the department employed three administrators, nine supervisors, 59 probation officers, six program monitors, six support staff, and two crew leaders. The average span of control for a supervisor was seven.



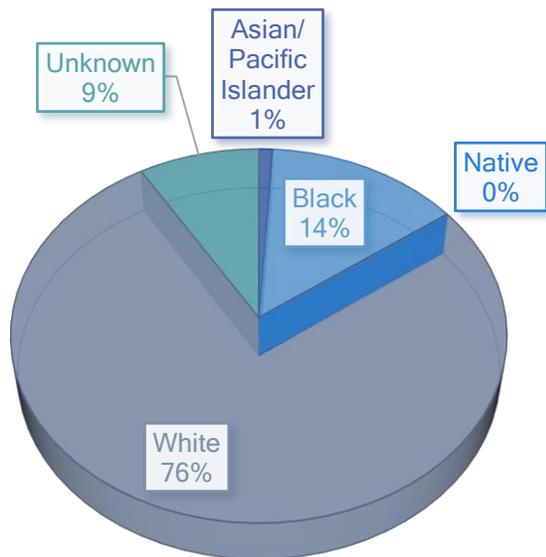
ACCELERATED REHABILITATIVE DISPOSITION

Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition Program (ARD) is a pretrial diversion program for individuals with limited or no prior criminal record. Individuals placed on ARD do not plead guilty, nor does the Court establish a finding of guilt. With acceptance into the ARD program, individuals agree to be placed under supervision of the Court (on probation) for a period of time established by the Court. Individuals may be ordered to complete community service, treatment, and pay fines, cost of prosecution, restitution and complete any other conditions ordered by the Court. The department employs two probation officers who carry ARD caseloads. As of December 31, 2024, there were 688 cases assigned to the ARD caseloads in addition to 614 cases monitored by two program monitors.

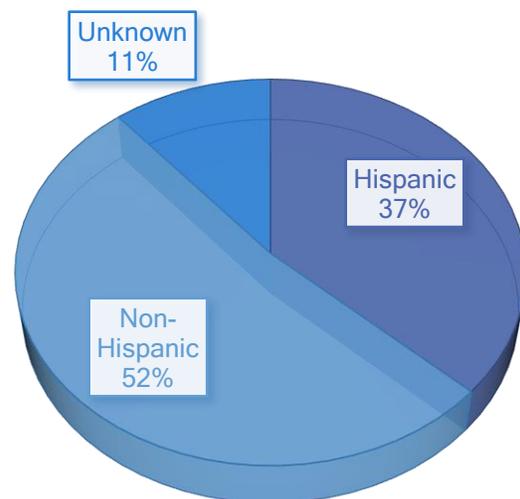
There are three types of ARD supervision that an individual can be placed on including ARD - DUI, ARD - SUD, and General ARD. Individuals who have been charged with a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) offense are placed on the ARD - DUI caseload. The ARD - SUD caseload was created in 2023 and is specifically for individuals, both DUI and non-DUI, who are assessed as having a substance use disorder. All other individuals are placed on general ARD supervision.

In 2024, 1,250 individuals (834 males/416 females) were sentenced to ARD supervision in Berks County.

Race of All Individuals Placed on ARD in 2024



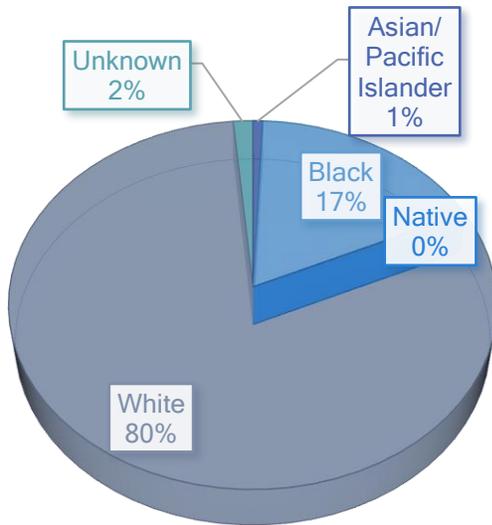
Ethnicity of All Individuals Placed on ARD in 2024



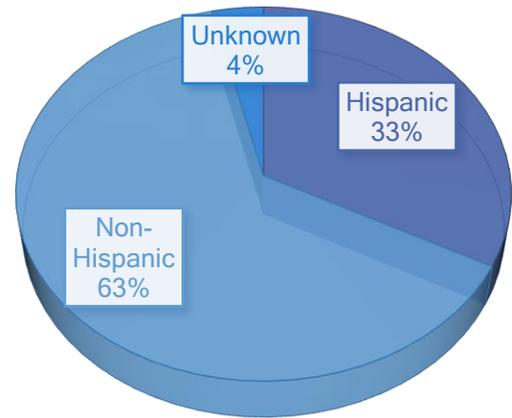
COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

In 2024, there were a total of 2,103 (1,660 males/443 females) individuals sentenced by the Courts to a period of community supervision due to a conviction in Berks County (excludes ARD).

Race of All Individuals Sentenced to Supervision in Berks County in 2024

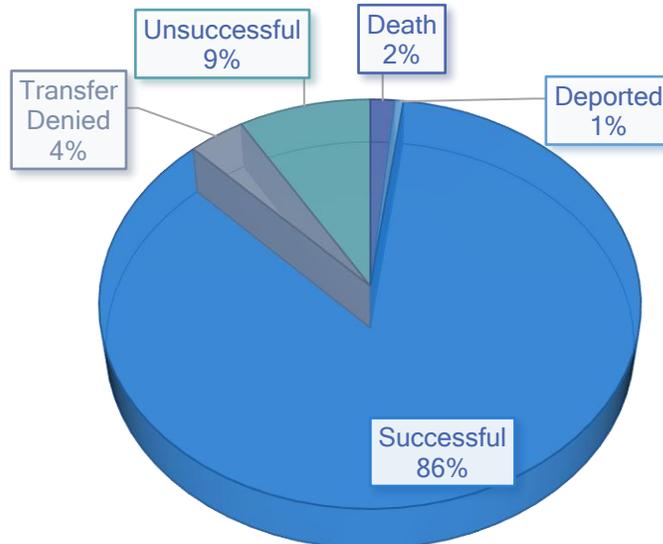


Ethnicity of All Individuals Sentenced to Supervision in Berks County in 2024



If not more appropriate for a specialized caseload, individuals are placed on general caseloads which are divided based on the individual's home address. The County of Berks also supervises individuals who are transferred into the County from others throughout the Commonwealth and monitors those cases transferred out-of-county or out-of-state. As of December 31, 2024, there were 4,562 individuals being supervised or monitored (excludes ARD). A total of 3,207 cases (including community supervision and ARD) were closed out in 2024.

Case Closure Reason for All Cases Closed Out in 2024



TREATMENT COURTS

Over 20 years ago, Berks County implemented treatment court programs within the jurisdiction to address the chemically involved individual through a coordinated interdisciplinary approach that treats the addiction while protecting public safety. The Berks County Treatment Courts provide a judicially supervised regiment of individualized treatment, case management, and intensive probation/parole supervision.

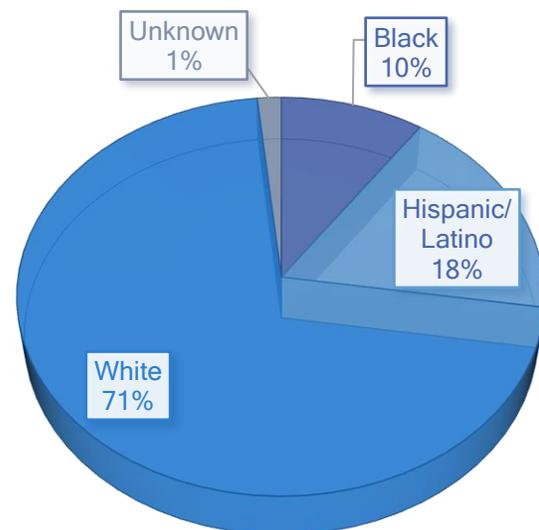
The mission of the Berks County Treatment Court Programs is to integrate substance abuse/mental health treatment with the justice system for the promotion of public safety, individual responsibility, and reduction of drug/alcohol-related recidivism. Currently, Berks County has four courts, including Driving Under the Influence (DUI), Drug, Mental Health, and Veterans. As of December 31, 2024, there were 159 individuals being supervised by all treatment courts.

In 2024, a total of 87 participants were discharged from all four treatment courts, while 78 participants were admitted.

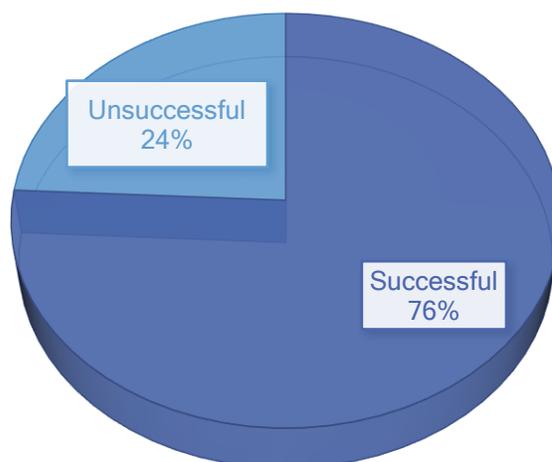
Treatment Court Alumni

Notably, in 2024, the department added a 5th phase to Treatment Court comprised of all recent Treatment Court graduates to further assist in the step-down process to regular supervision. One officer is assigned to the Treatment Court Alumni caseload. As of December 31, 2024, there were 61 individuals on the Treatment Court Alumni caseload.

Race/Ethnicity of Individuals Successfully Discharged from All Treatment Courts in 2024



Discharge Reason for All Individuals Discharged from Treatment Court in 2024



JAIL DIVERSION

The department's goal is to avoid incarcerating individuals and instead utilize rehabilitative efforts and evidence-based practices to encourage compliance with the rules and conditions of supervision. Unfortunately, those efforts are not always equally met by the individual and violations are, at times, necessary to ensure the safety of the individual and the community.

For individuals incarcerated for violations of supervision, jail diversionary options are encouraged. In fact, 409 individuals were referred to treatment by the Adult Probation and Parole Department in 2024. Of those referred, the average time from referral to having an evaluation completed was 9 days, while the average time from evaluation to treatment placement was 23 days. Overall, the average time from referral to treatment placement was 32 days.

351 individuals were **successfully diverted** from jail into drug treatment programs in lieu of continued incarceration.



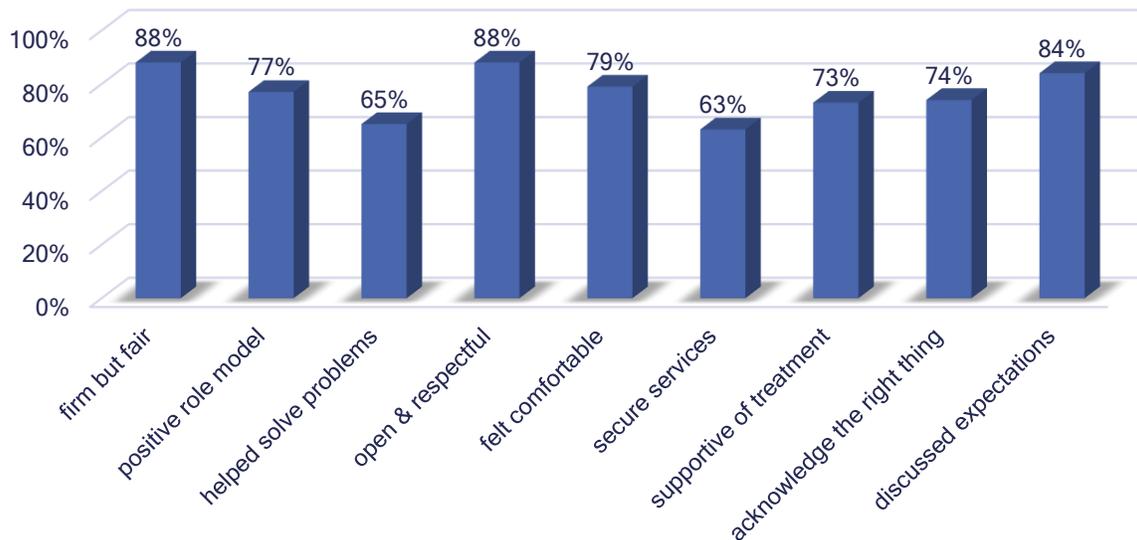
FEEDBACK FROM INDIVIDUALS

Every individual upon case closure (regardless of closure reason) is sent an exit survey by the department which asks questions related to their experience on supervision, relationship with their probation/parole officer, and what types of support were offered. In 2024, 156 total surveys were completed. Of those, 105 (67) agreed to strongly agreed that supervision had a positive effect on their life and 147 (94%) agreed to strongly agreed that the rules of supervision were clearly explained to them.

Additionally, the following agreed to strongly agreed that their probation/parole officer:

- was firm but fair (137 [88%]),
- was a positive role model (120 [77%]),
- helped them learn how to solve problems (102 [65%]),
- communicated openly and respectfully (137 [88%]),
- was someone they felt comfortable talking to about issues, concerns, or problems (124 [79%]),
- helped them secure services such as education, treatment and employment (98 [63%]),
- was supportive of their treatment (114 [73%]),
- acknowledged when they did the right thing (115 [74%]), and
- routinely discussed the expectations relative to completing supervision with them (131 [84%]).

Percentage of Exit Survey Respondants who Agreed to Strongly Agreed with the Following Statements Regarding Their Probation/Parole Officer



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community Service is used by the Berks County Court of Common Pleas and by the Magisterial District Courts as an alternative sentence for individuals who have committed non-violent offenses. It is seen as a work ethic approach to punishment which is both humane to the individual and highly cost-effective to the community. Community service has been used in Berks County since the late 1980's. Its programming continues to adapt to the needs of the clients, the judicial system, and the community at large.

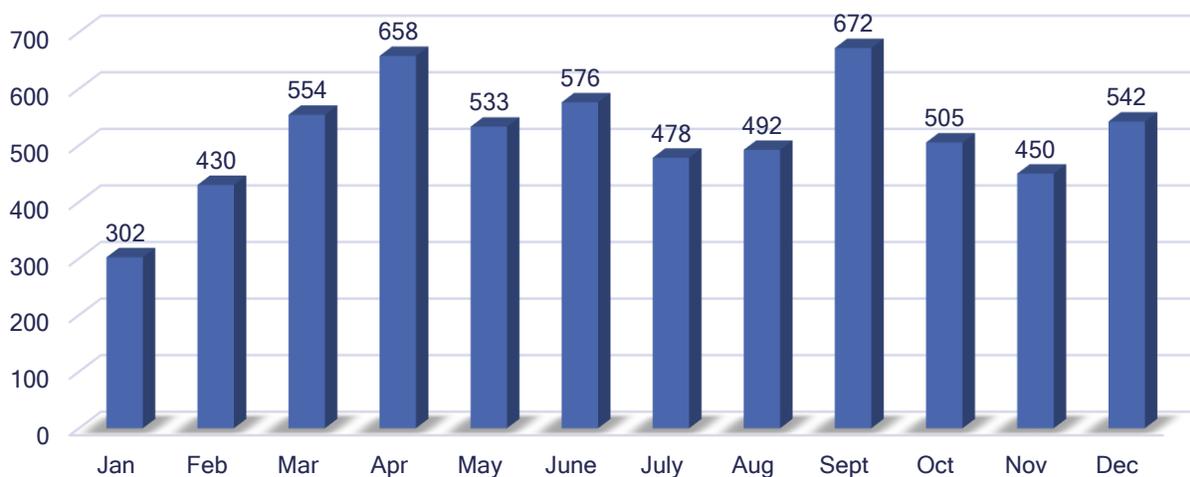
The Community Service Program is responsible for the placement and monitoring of juveniles and adults at non-profit agencies, municipalities, and crews for the completion of court-ordered community service time.

In total, 6,192 hours of community service were completed through the community service work crews in 2024.

Community Service has access to two County special project work crews for placement of community service individuals. One of these crews is based at the Reading Public Museum and assists in the maintenance of the buildings and grounds. The second crew, the Community Service Special Projects Crew, meets at the Aulenbach's Cemetery in Reading and in addition to maintaining cemetery grounds, completes projects for non-profit agencies and municipalities throughout Berks County. Participants may also complete court ordered Community Service hours at local churches, libraries, or community

based programs which are tax exempt (501c3). See figure 27 for the total number of hours worked each month.

Total Community Service Hours Worked by Month in 2024



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Boards

Council on Chemical Abuse

The Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA) provides Berks County, PA with leadership and assistance in preventing substance use, and promoting treatment and recovery from addiction. The COCA Board of Directors is a volunteer Board, consisting of 15 individuals that are representative of the Berks County Community. The responsibilities of the COCA Board include reviewing and approving annual budgets, contracts, provider allocations and staff hiring, as well as overall program oversight. The Chief serves on the COCA board.

Treatment Access & Services Center

The Treatment Access & Services Center, Inc. (TASC) is a drug and alcohol central intake and treatment referral agency. Originally founded in the 1980s, TASCs' mission is to guide as many individuals as possible into substance abuse treatment services. One supervisor serves on the TASC board.

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI Berks County is an affiliate of NAMI PA. NAMI Berks County and dedicated volunteers, members and leaders work tirelessly to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy, and support group programs for people in our community living with mental illness and their loved ones. One supervisor serves as Vice President of the Berks Chapter of NAMI.

Committees, Task Forces & Organizational Memberships

Berks Coalition to End Homelessness

The Berks Coalition to End Homelessness **Continuum of Care (CoC)** membership represents local organizations serving people experiencing homelessness within Berks County and any individual stakeholders engaged in ending and preventing homelessness. The mission of the CoC is to end homelessness throughout Berks County. This includes identifying needs, conducting a system-wide evaluation of existing resources and program activities, and building a system of housing and services that address those needs. The department currently has two staff that serve as CoC members.

Berks County District Attorney's Office

In January of 2024, the DA's office created the **Human Trafficking Task Force**. The mission of the task force is to use all available resources at its disposal to combat human trafficking, use a victim centered approach, provide comprehensive services to victims, and ensure a collaborative partnership with local law enforcement, social services, educational institutions, and community and religious outreach organizations. One probation officer is a member of this task force.

In October of 2024, the Berks County District Attorney's (DA's) Office formed a **Gun Violence Reduction Task Force** including an analyst, local police departments, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) as well as the FSU APOs and their supervisor. The goal of the task force is to trace firearms used in the commission of a crime or illegally possessed back to their original owner to determine how these firearms are ending up in the hands of those misusing them.

County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania

The County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of Pennsylvania (CCAPPOAP) has various workgroups, supported through the Pennsylvania Partnership on Criminal Justice Improvement (PPCJI), composed of Probation and Parole professionals from around the state who are tasked with supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices in county probation and parole departments. The **Communications Workgroup** is responsible for creating content for the website, briefs, and other forms of communication to inform stakeholders of EBP best practices. The **Data and Quality Assurance Workgroup's** objective is to encourage uniform data collection across the state as well as analyze and report data on the annual Caseload Size survey to encourage the use of EBPs to reduce recidivism. Lastly, the **Training Workgroup** focuses on supporting training's in various EBPs across the state through the development of trainer resources, best practices, and trainer fidelity assessments. The department has one supervisor who serves as a member of the Communications Workgroup. A second supervisor serves as co-chair to the Data and Quality Assurance Workgroup, as well as a member of the Training Workgroup.

Criminal Justice Advisory Board

The Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) enables criminal justice and related agencies to work together to improve the quality of life within Berks County. The goals of CJAB include, but are not limited to, developing a system-wide, evidence-based approach to sentencing, supervision, and treatment, developing a systematic approach to reduce/respond to violence and drug-related crime, reduce recidivism, and support technology implementation and enhancements. The Chief serves on the advisory board.

SOS Berks

SOS Berks is a coalition of community members and stakeholders dedicated to reducing overdose deaths in Berks County through education, resources, and training in the prevention, treatment, and recovery of substance use disorder. The **Data Collection and Assessment Committee** focuses on collecting and analyzing data from various entities throughout the County. One supervisor serves as a member of SOS Berks Data Committee.

Community Events

Berks County Probation and Parole participates in community events to develop a strong partnership with those we serve. Our hope is to educate and inform Berks County residents of our mission to reduce recidivism, promote safe and secure neighborhoods and help individuals who are impacted by crime.

Our community relations outreach program is focused on collaborating with community members, business and community leaders, schools, and law enforcement agencies by participating in a variety of community and school events. In 2024, the department participated in 4 National Night Out events, 8 Career Days, and 6 holiday parades.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The mission of the Internship Program at the Berks County Adult Probation Office is to expose the intern to the job of an Adult Probation Officer. The intern will gain knowledge in different aspects of the Adult Justice system and will attain experience, and the skills that are necessary for a future career in Adult Probation/Parole.

The Berks County Adult Probation & Parole Internship Program is designed to provide a “hands-on” learning experience for students working towards a bachelor’s or master’s degree in the fields of criminal justice or social services. Participants are exposed to many different aspects of the criminal justice system including but not limited to; utilization of evidenced based practices; interactions with various law enforcement agencies, counseling agencies, and corrections professionals; observation of the Court system; current technologies; and the core competencies involved in working with individuals. Participants are paired with an officer who acts as their mentor for the duration of the program. The officer is responsible for ensuring the participant is scheduled to observe the various supervision units including specialties, treatment court, court hearings, as well as educating the participant on the criminal justice system and procedures of probation and parole.

An internship is structured and consists of four phases. Phase 1 includes spending 14 hours with the Intake Department, 7 hours with the Parole Unit, and 14 hours with ARD/Community Service Officers. In Phase 2, interns will complete 35 hours with general caseload officers, covering all duties of general supervision functions such as, daily reporting interviews, Gagnon 1 and Gagnon 2 hearings, the warrant process, and risk assessment interviews and scoring. Phase 3 places the intern with specialty units (sex offender, gang, domestic violence, female trauma, and firearms) as well as treatment courts (drug, DUI, mental health, veterans, and treatment court alumni) complete 70 hours of shadowing. This also includes attending police, treatment, and task force meetings. Lastly, if time permits, interns may shadow an assistant chief, deputy chief, or the chief probation officer, observe firearm FIT, range, or tactical training during Phase 4.

In 2024, the department hosted four interns from Albright College and Alvernia University totaling 750 hours of experience.

EARTHRISE ENTERPRISES, INC.

Earthrise Enterprises, Inc. is a non-profit Schedule C business entity that was conceived by the Berks County Juvenile Probation Office and is now managed by the Berks County Adult Probation Office. It was established in 1992 and continues to be managed by a volunteer Board of Directors that meet on a quarterly basis. The purpose of the program is to provide youthful adult re-entrants with the opportunity to learn employment skills while earning money. The program allows participants to experience the responsibilities of having a job including wearing a uniform, reporting for their scheduled shifts, understanding respect for customers, supervisors, and co-workers, and being open to taking direction.

Earthrise Enterprises, Inc. is a café operating out of the Berks County Services Center. The café is a full-time operation that can employ participants working in two shifts, from 7:30 am to 11:00 am and 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. The café not only serves breakfast and lunch to County employees and visitors of the Services Center but also caters local meetings.

For many of the participants, this is their first job. The participants are guided through this new experience with assistance from two full-time supervisors, which offer the participants the ability to work under differing supervisory techniques.

The participants receive wages that align with similar local businesses in the fast-food industry, with the opportunity to earn raises and other incentives, such as gift certificates, for positive work performance.

The participants are evaluated daily in key areas such as attendance, quality of work, quantity of work, initiative and dependability. It is the goal of the program to introduce the participants to basic business practices, including banking, inventory management, and ordering supplies.

On average, the participants remain employed with Earthrise for approximately 3 to 6 months. Most of the participants complete their probation requirements and their cases are closed. Other participants obtain outside employment based upon the skills they acquired at Earthrise.

Earthrise employed six individuals throughout 2024.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Grants

Bar Association

The department was awarded \$4,500.00 to use for the startup and continued replenishment of a treatment court store where participants can utilize Treatment Court dollars (named after Treatment Court Judges) which are earned through successful completion of conditions, compliance with supervision, and phase completion. Participants can purchase items they would otherwise not have the funds to buy themselves. A portion of the award also went towards the purchase of a locked cabinet to keep the items in.

Continuing Probation and Parole

The Continuing Probation and Parole grant program, through Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), has a goal of improving adult probation and parole services by providing funding to counties who offer adult probation and parole services. This grant supports staffing needs and supports the improvement of probation services and evidence-based programming for individuals. Additionally, these grant funds are directly tied to a county's compliance with PCCD's Operating Standards for Adult Probation and Parole Departments in Pennsylvania. Berks County received \$454,448 for fiscal year 2023-2024 and \$453,462 for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Intermediate Punishment Treatment Programs

The Intermediate Punishment Treatment Programs grant, through PCCD, provides funding to counties in support of the continuation or implementation of activities in compliance with Act 115 of 2019 related to sentences of probation with restrictive conditions. This grant additionally supports diversion, specifically for treatment alternatives to incarceration (i.e. Treatment Courts mentioned above). Berks County received \$409,921 for fiscal year 2023-2024 and \$409,723 for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Violence Intervention and Prevention

In July of 2024, the department was awarded nearly \$950,000 through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's (PCCD) Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) grant. This grant spans three years and supports the implementation of two firearm-specific caseloads with a focus on conducting firearm suppression details and utilizing evidence-based practices such as individual intervention tools, skill building, case planning, and a homegrown cognitive behavioral program. The goal of this project is to reduce reoffending; specifically, firearm-related re-offending, the number of violent victimizations as a result of gun violence, and the number of illegally possessed firearms in/by those on supervision in Berks County. We also aim to improve decision-making and long-term positive behavior change in those on supervision who are convicted of a firearm-related offense.

Awards

Berks/Etchberger Challenge Coin

The Berks County Department of Veterans Affairs coined Adult Probation Officer Paige McBain on July 10th, 2024, with the Berks/Etchberger Challenge Coin to honor her support and commitment to supporting Veterans in Berks County.

Honorable Service Award

The Berks Lodge #71 Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) awarded Susan Halbeisen with the Honorable Service Award for her work as a Probation Officer. The FOP recognized her work with local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, and her role in helping to develop Operation Night Light.

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