

Probation

Probation, what is it?

Probation is a court order placing an offender under the control, supervision, and care of a probation agent allowing that individual to remain in the community. This is in lieu of imprisonment, as long as the probationer meets certain standards of conduct. The conditions of this community based supervision can vary. It could include jail time, fines, restitution, community service, or other sanctions. Probation can also require a predetermined amount of times an offender reports to their probation agent. If the person does not follow the rules of their probation, they could go back before the judge and be sent to jail or prison.

The probation agents that provide supervision of offenders in Rock and Nobles Counties would be staff of Rock Nobles Community Corrections. By a Joint Powers Resolution, Rock and Nobles Counties, declared to jointly provide local comprehensive correctional programs under the Community Corrections Act of 1973. The two counties share personnel, facilities and financial resources in the development of the community corrections system. The philosophy of community corrections works to keep more offenders in the community and involves various community members, community groups and volunteers. Emphasis is placed on delivering rehabilitative and restorative programming with the intention of assisting offenders to increase competencies while reducing their risk to re-offend. In addition services are offered to victims so that they are restored for their loss and/or gain emotional healing.

The vision of probation is to ensure public safety. Rock Nobles Community Corrections mission is; 'In cooperation with the community, improving lives through public safety, victim restoration and offender change'. Every citizen has the right to be free from fear and harm to their person and property.

Probation began in the United States in 1841, when a shoemaker named John Augustus, known as the "Father of Probation", asked a Boston judge to release a man charged with public drunkenness into his custody. It would be hard for Augustus to recognize probation today, based on it's simple homespun beginning.

What is a probation agent and what do they do?

A probation agent is someone who supervises a person who has been placed on probation. Some of the agents' job duties include: monitoring compliance with court orders, assisting offenders in obtaining needed services, overseeing the rehabilitation of the offenders, conducting offender work and home visits, administering drug tests, providing support, other services and help to victims in securing restitution.

Probation agents must become competent in addressing the following issues: drug and alcohol abuse, sexual deviance, child abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness.

The agents work hand in hand with community groups and social service agencies to provide offenders and victims with the support and services they need. Probation agents maintain partnerships with law enforcement and other justice agencies so the agencies can benefit from the expertise of each other and share information on criminal activity.

Who is on probation?

Offenders who are deemed appropriate for community supervision. At the end of 2003, there were over 4.8 million adult men and women on probation in the United States. The average daily cost to supervise an offender in the community is less than \$4.93; the approximate daily cost to incarcerate an individual is \$62.00. In Minnesota there are 130,000 offenders being supervised in the community, about one out of every 45 individuals. The average age in years of offenders in Minnesota is 34.39. Rock Nobles Community Corrections currently has 999 offenders on community supervision, 855 adults and 144 juveniles. In Nobles County about one out of every 34 individuals is on probation and in Rock County about one out of every 40 individuals.

Sources: Court Services Tracking System, Minnesota Department of Corrections, and Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin.