



CHALLENGE INCARCERATION PROGRAM

I. Mission

The Challenge Incarceration Program mission is to provide inmates the opportunity to gain the personal resources needed to return to the community, to successfully complete parole/extended supervision, and to remain crime and drug free.

This is to be accomplished in an environment, which affords safety for staff, inmates, and the community, as well as allowing inmates the opportunity to make the needed changes in their lives. These changes will be effectuated through participation in physical exercise, military drill and ceremony, manual labor, personal development counseling, substance abuse treatment, education group interaction and release preparation. The Challenge Incarceration Program also provides an additional alternative to revocation option for Probation and Parole.

The above mission is to be accomplished while maintaining a recidivism rate equal to or better than similar inmate populations that are released through other release mechanisms.

II. Overview

The Challenge Incarceration Program is designed for inmates at both Black River Correctional Center and St. Croix Correctional Center. Black River has male inmates and St. Croix have both males and females. It is also an appropriate program for Probation and Parole clients as an ATR (Alternative to Revocation). The program is designed in a manner in which a participant may successfully complete all program components in a minimum of 180 days. Program components are structured around discipline and treatment. Inmate are given an opportunity to develop life skills needed for successful, crime and drug free return to the community. The program includes rigorous physical activity; manual work assignments; regimentation and discipline; instruction on military bearing; intensive AODA treatment; individualized educational programming; and in depth group interaction addressing rational thinking and responsible behavior.

The Challenge Incarceration Program is voluntary; however, all program elements are mandatory. Many of the existing Administrative Rules governing procedural matters for the general inmate population have been waived by Challenge Incarceration Program participants in order that behaviors and consequences can be dealt with in a manner consistent with our mission.

III. Admission Criteria

The Wisconsin Legislature, Department of Corrections administrators, St. Croix Correctional Center and Black River Correctional Center administrators have established the criteria to determine the appropriateness for participation. Enrollment is subject to the following criteria:

- A. Inmates must volunteer and sign the Memo of Agreement.
- B. Inmate sentenced on or after July 26, 2003 must be under the age of 40 on the date of admission. Inmates sentenced prior to July 26, 2003 must be under the age of 30 on the date of admission.



- C. Inmates must have an identified substance abuse treatment need.
- D. Inmate must not have any physical limitation. They must be medically approved for “any activity” and capable of performing strenuous work and rigorous exercise. Inmates with asthma are not eligible.
- E. Inmates cannot be currently convicted of crimes against life or bodily security (SS 940), crimes involving physical or sexual assault to a child (SS 948.02, 948.025, 948.03, 948.05, 948.055, 948.06, 948.07, 948.075, 948.08, or 948.095).
- F. Offense and Convictions before 12/31/1999 (New Law) convictions – only - Inmates convicted of armed or assaultive offenses will be screened on a case by case basis. TIS convictions – only - Inmates must be deemed eligible for participation by the sentencing judge. If the inmate meets all other requirements, they will be allowed to participate when PRC and Classification deem them appropriate for placement in a minimum-security facility. Both New Law and Truth in Sentencing convictions – Inmates must meet the criteria established for both New Law and TIS convictions.
- G. Inmates must not have any psychological limitations that would preclude participation in a confrontational-style program. Inmates may not currently be on any psychotropic medication. Those previously on such medication must be off of the medication for a minimum of three months and must be cleared by clinical services. Challenge Incarceration program staff will discuss these cases with clinical services for verification. Inmates in need of sex offender treatment, regardless of conviction, are not appropriate for participation.
- H. Inmates with significant dental needs should have these needs resolved prior to transfer to the Challenge Incarceration Program.
- I. All inmates will be reviewed by the Correctional Centers, to maintain consistency in determining eligibility for participation in the Challenge Incarceration Program. The Program Review Committee at their current institution may review inmates, who have been found appropriate for the program. The inmates will then be PRC’d to either St. Croix Correctional Center, or Black River Correctional Center, with a possible temporary placement at Jackson Correctional Institution or Stanley Correctional Institution (for male inmates) or John Burke Correctional Center (for women inmates going to St. Croix), if the Program Review Committee find them as an appropriate candidate for the Challenge Incarceration Program. The Bureau of Offender Classification and Movement will have the final determination of all inmates PRC’d to the Challenge Incarceration Program. Once the Bureau of Offender Classification and Movement has approved an inmate, the inmates’ name will be added to the Challenge Incarceration Program pending transfer list. This list will serve as the waiting list for both St. Croix and Black River Centers. Inmates will be transferred to the Challenge Incarceration Program on a seniority basis with those that have been on the list the longest being transferred first.
- J. Inmates who have poor institution adjustment will need to demonstrate appropriate behavior for being approved for participation in the Challenge Incarceration Program. The Program Review Committee and the Bureau of Offender Classification and Movement will determine when this adjustment has been demonstrated.

Currently, the program is designed to accommodate 132 inmates at St. Croix and 100 male inmates at Black River and requires a minimum of 180 days program participation. Challenge Incarceration is available for women, but only at St. Croix Correctional. Male inmates will be accepted at both St. Croix



and Black River. Upon successful completion of the program, the inmate is granted parole under New Law convictions and extended supervision under Truth-in-Sentencing convictions. The inmate must further be involved in a high-risk supervision program after release. All Challenge Incarceration Program graduates release on parole shall have AODA aftercare as part of their case planning to the extent possible based on community availability of treatment.

IV. GOALS

- A. Provision of a safe and secure correctional environment for the public, staff and inmates;
- B. Provision of productive inmate programs and work activities that allow inmates the opportunity to gain the resources needed to remain crime and drug free upon release;
- C. Maintenance of a positive correctional institution living and working environment for public, staff, and inmates;
- D. Management of human and fiscal resources allocated to Black River Correctional Center;
- E. Maintenance of a positive impact on overcrowding that exists in Wisconsin's adult correctional institutions;
- F. Maintenance of recidivism rate equal to or better than similar inmate populations released through other prison release mechanisms.

IV. Core Principles

The following statements are the fundamental program principles, which will govern the operation of the Challenge Incarceration Program. The statements are meant to apply equally to staff and inmates.

- Every individual is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.
 - Every individual is responsible for their thoughts, feelings and actions.
 - Every individual is capable of positive change.
 - Every individual needs to identify with a positive reinforcing group.
 - Every individual makes good and poor choices.
 - Positive change occurs in an environment that promotes honesty and risk taking.
 - Role modeling, self-discipline, and self-respect are all components of positive change and responsible behavior.
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- The fundamental components and concepts of the Challenge Incarceration Program are reinforced throughout all program activities and by all staff.

V. Program activity is focused in the following areas:

- A. **Military Bearing:** This includes intensive instruction in military bearing, courtesy, drills and physical exercise. The inmates are oriented to this activity by Drill Instructors; however all staff reinforce concepts that support military bearing.



- B. **Group:** Both individual and group counseling approaches are an integral part of the program. Inmates participate in group activities a minimum of 9.5 hours each week. Group/individual counseling focuses on criminal thinking and rational behavior therapy. At the end of each day, all inmates are required to complete a structured entry in their journals. The social workers are the primary case planners; however, treatment activities are facilitated by both treatment and security staff. Inmates who have completed the majority of their treatment needs and are in their final phase of the Challenge Incarceration Program are utilized in the peer treatment groups established for inmates in the early phases of the Challenge Incarceration Program.

(An added element of the treatment process is that each inmate and the inmates collectively in their squad set individual and group goals to be accomplished while in the Challenge Incarceration Program. The movement towards these individual and group goals will be monitored by treatment and security staff.)

- C. **Education:** A structured education program is part of every inmate's program. Emphasis is on ABE and HSED skill development. Those inmates who are already at or above these levels have individualized educational programs. The education planning is done by the education staff, with supportive services provided by treatment and security staff. Educational activities involve a minimum of 9.5 hours of classroom each week. Each squad is held back two and a half days each week for educational and group counseling. There is also time set aside on the weekend for study time. Finally, due to the nature of the Challenge Incarceration Program education program, inmates with severe learning disabilities are not admitted to Challenge Incarceration Program.
- D. **AODA:** A condition of placement in the Challenge Incarceration Program is a chemical abuse assessment and subsequent treatment and education. Treatment is abstinence oriented. It is provided by certified AODA staff through contract and is facilitated by all staff. A minimum of 9.5 hours each week per inmate is dedicated to AODA treatment. Additional one-to-one and assignment work is completed outside of the group setting.
- E. **Work:** Every inmate involved in Challenge Incarceration Program must also be involved in meaningful work on a daily basis. This work, coordinated by a Supervisor and supervised by a correctional officer, involves a minimum of 10 hours a week for each inmate. It does not include the inmate's requirement to keep his specific personal area neat and clean. It is important for inmates to accept the role as a working member of a community. Such work also enhances their sense of self-worth, group identity, and provides them an opportunity to "pay back" the community in some limited fashion, for the expenses the community has incurred for their past criminal behavior. Work tasks include manual unskilled labor for non-profit organizations.
- F. **Evaluation:** Inmates are closely supervised and rated daily by the following staff: correctional officers, social workers, and AODA counselors. Standardized evaluation forms are used to assess the inmate's overall progress. The results of the evaluations are tabulated on a weekly basis so patterns of behavior can be monitored. Additionally,



regular staff meetings and individual interviews are conducted to review the inmate's progress in meeting program goals. Disciplinary violations, general negative behavioral trends, or refusal to cooperate to the inmate's fullest capabilities in the Challenge Incarceration Program can result in the termination of a participant's enrollment. Prior to the end of the 180-day program, a staffing committee makes a recommendation as to the appropriateness of release. Each inmate successfully completing the program will receive a certification of completion and a formal graduation ceremony.

- G. **Level System:** All inmates entering the Challenge Incarceration Program will move through a level or step system. The level system will be composed of the following stages:

- Orientation - Weeks 1 –2
- Phase I - Weeks 3-10
- Phase II - Weeks 11-20
- Phase III - Weeks 21-26
- Phase IV - Graduates pending release

Specific activities are designed to each phase. Failure to complete a phase can/will result in removal from Challenge Incarceration Program.

As inmates move through the phases, performance expectations placed on them are increased in terms of their military bearing/drill expertise, education/AODA/treatment goals, and their ability to be leaders for the earlier phase inmates. An inmate's phase status is identified by specific clothing characteristics.

- H. **Squad Basics:** Inmates will be admitted in intake groups of 8-15 inmates. Two intake groups will be identified as a squad. Inmates remain with their squad for all Challenge Incarceration Program activities: treatment, education, recreation, etc. The squad becomes the basis for the inmates reference group. It is within this setting that the positive peer activities take place.
- I. **Treatment Teams:** One treatment team will be assigned two inmate squads. Each treatment team will consist of a Supervisor, teacher, Alcohol/Drug counselor, social worker and security staff. Teams will develop individual inmate case plans. Additionally, regular team meetings and individual interviews are conducted to review the inmate's progress in meeting program goals.
- J. **Clinical Services:** Clinical services are available at the Challenge Incarceration Program on a limited basis. Any staff member can refer an inmate for clinical services. All referrals are coordinated through the social worker. The reports of the clinician are considered in staffing decisions.
- K. **Medical:** Significant medical needs are met on an as needed basis. Inmates, due to the nature of the work/exercise required of them will have minor complaints. The complaints cannot serve as the basis for avoiding work assignments. Sick call is held 4 (four) times a week to meet these minor complaints. All authorized medications are given out by staff



and not allowed on the inmate's person. The Challenge Incarceration Program is a non-smoking program.

- L. **Release Planning:** All inmates are involved with their release plans from the onset. Upon release, parole agents conduct sessions to orient the inmate to release obligations and expectations. Upon release each inmate will be subject to high-risk supervision for a minimum of six months. Parole agents provide critical transitional services between Challenge Incarceration Program and the Division Community Corrections.

VI. Location

The St. Croix facility is in the City of New Richmond, WI, located in a farming community, and was styled into the Challenge Incarceration Program in January 1991. The site consists of a 40,000 square foot metal fabricated structure, completed in 1994, which houses the Center's administrative and staff offices, inmate dormitories, food services, combined dining hall/gymnasium, laundry, and general support facilities. The original modular structure, built in 1978 and expanded in 1985, is used for educational programs and housing. A modular structure was also built in 2003 to house female offenders in separate dormitories. The Black River facility opened in January of 2004 and is located 11 miles east of Black River Falls, WI, in the midst of Jackson County Forest and Department of Natural Resources land. The site has been in existence since 1962 and was first used as a Boys Camp for troubled male juvenile offenders. In the 1970's it was adapted to house younger inmates that were 17 to 24 years of age. Education has always been the focus at Black River as well as developing a work ethic with the community work crews. Black River has administrative and staff offices, inmate dormitory, inmate rooms, food services, dining hall, laundry, gymnasium and general support facilities.

Finally, both locations are such that work is readily available for the inmate crews. It is expected that up to 50 inmates at each site will be involved in supervised crew style work details on a daily basis. Communities support in terms of medical, dental and other daily support services are all within reasonable commuting distance from the Centers.

Revised 3/10/05