

# MFR Milestones

October 2008

## Adult Probation's Managing for Results Experience



*Todd Zweig, Chief Probation Officer*

Pinal County Adult Probation is under the leadership of the Superior Court and its Presiding Judge, Boyd Johnson. Adult Probation seeks to reduce the number of people who re-offend while on or off of probation. The department recently went through the Managing for Results (MFR) program and the journey has been very rewarding, according to Chief Probation Officer Todd Zweig.

"Our staff transforms lives every day by helping people make positive life choices," Zweig said with obvious pride and enthusiasm. "The best way to protect the community is to foster positive long term behavior changes."

He's been working with probationers for 22 years in Pinal County and became Chief Probation Officer about three years ago.

"When I became chief, I went from office to office, person to person and asked staff about departmental goals. I got a lot of different answers. None of them bad, just inconsistent. We needed to get everyone on the same page, working toward the

same goals," Zweig said. "The Managing for Results program is the tool that helped us get there. It's been incredibly useful."

People like doing what they are comfortable doing, Zweig explained. Employees tend to focus on today's work, their specific tasks or what they are delivering. Managing for Results pushes people to look farther down the road. It helps people to consider outcomes, not just the tasks at hand.

By involving many employees in the MFR process, the team developed its own goals, measurements and accountabilities. Once his MFR plan was approved, Zweig took time to visit each office and presented the plan to each unit.

Through the process, Zweig was able to streamline or reorganize some areas for better efficiency.

"Before MFR, I had three managers who were responsible for different types of reports that we prepare for the courts. What made better sense is to have one manager responsible for all the reports," Zweig explained. "As a manager, I have one person to go to for answers. For the customer, there's greater accountability and consistency."

Managing for Results integrates performance management and performance measurement.

"We talked about the issues we think will affect probation in the future and examined our activities and goals. Then we established ways to measure our performance. Finally, we made sure that staff understood these measures and knew that they would be used to measure our progress," he explained.

"No matter how you look at Adult Probation, it's about reducing recidivism, or the rate that someone on probation commits another crime or re-offends," Zweig explained. "Our plan includes

three key measures in that area. If we don't make headway in this area, then we are unlikely to succeed in getting people successfully off probation and contributing to the community."

Adult Probation's three strategic goals are:

- Reducing recidivism.
- Increase the Effectiveness of Probation Services.
- Improving Probationer Treatment and Education.

Adult Probation and the courts have always been interested in performance data and outcomes, Zweig explained. The department collects a variety of data for the Administrative Office of the Courts that is used to analyze trends, obtain funding or assess specific programs.

"Through MFR, we set our own goals and designed measurements so that we can tune our performance to Pinal County," said Zweig. "This data is for our purposes."

Adult Probation will report its data, the measurements will be tied to the budget and the department will be held accountable to meet the stated goals – or provide a reasonable explanation as to why they missed the target.

He said there is no way to dispel the fear that Managing for Results is a huge amount of work, that it's difficult and it takes time.

"The payoff will be in the long-run because you will be able to do more, perform better and deliver services in a way that truly meets the needs of the public. The world of probation is changing because of the availability of good research. We can use evidence from that research to influence the services we deliver and hopefully, improve our success rate. Managing for Results is the same thing, using results to improve our services and drive organizational success."

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Zweig offered some advice to departments that are starting the MFR process:

- Involve as many staff as possible. That way the plan is yours collectively. Focus everyone on the big picture.
- Spend some time thinking and talking about where you would like your department to be in three to five years. Don't focus on what you're doing today or this week, think about what you would like to achieve over time.
- MFR is about being accountable to your own plan. We all have limited resources and unlimited needs. You're putting X amount of money toward a particular effort. That effort has this outcome. This outcome is measured by a particular set of data. That data tells you whether you are doing well or falling short of your goal. With this information you can make better business decisions.
- Remember: It's YOUR plan.

## Success anecdote:

"I was at Home Depot with my daughter. As we were checking out, I heard somebody say 'Hey, Todd, how are you doing?' That's not always a good thing for someone in my line of work," Zweig said. He turned and recognized the person as a former probationer, a former drug user. With his young daughter at his side, he wasn't sure how it would turn out.

As the checker rang up the former probationer's items, the man thanked Zweig.

"He said 'The first time you sent me to inpatient treatment, it didn't work. The second time, when you offered me a chance to go again, it worked. After I got out, I worked to make my marriage better, I bought a house and now I own my own business.' To know that you helped someone change their life, that's huge. That's what I'll always remember."



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