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What Works: Offender Caseload Size

Earlier this year, Abt Associates published the findings of its evaluation of 5th District's offender caseload sizes. Their research focused on offenders of various risk levels in Polk County.

This study is the first in the nation to show that there is an evidence-based optimum for offender caseload size. For higher risk offenders, specialized caseloads providing intensive supervision and treatment (ISP) with 30 offenders per officer is more effective than caseload sizes of 50 offenders per officer. ISP and lower case load size reduces recidivism for new crime by 25.5% overall, and by 45% for property and violent offenses in particular.

The study also found that a caseload size of 50 offenders per officer appears to reduce the rate of criminal recidivism for offenders who are at the margin between assignment to high-normal supervision and moderate-normal supervision (100 offenders per officer). Participation in high-normal supervision reduces criminal recidivism for a drug, property or personal crime by about 50%.

The evaluation findings suggest that community-based offender supervision staff with lower caseloads have more time to administer evidence-based programming for the offenders they supervise. To the extent possible given our limited resources, we can now start to plan to achieve such caseload levels – and lower the number of crime victims.

The full report is available through the *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* at: URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10509671003715987> Jalbert, Sarah Kuck , Rhodes, William , Flygare, Christopher and Kane, Michael(2010) 'Testing Probation Outcomes in an Evidence-Based Practice Setting: Reduced Caseload Size and Intensive Supervision Effectiveness', *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 49: 4, 233 — 253.