

**BI CASE STUDY:
Wichita, Kansas**

“We took a comprehensive approach to improve our system. The DRC was a first step to get at the root of the problem and manage chronic offenders.”

— Mark Masterson,
Director of Sedgwick County
Department of Corrections

Sedgwick County Day Reporting Center Helps Alleviate Jail Overcrowding and Targets Recidivism**HIGHLIGHTS:**

- The DRC is part of a comprehensive plan by Sedgwick County to reduce jail overcrowding now and in the future
- After one year, the center helped manage approximately 200 participants
- By opening the DRC and adding other alternatives, the county decided to build only 384 beds – 208 beds less than the county’s projected needs
- By building fewer beds, \$26 million in one-time construction costs were avoided and yearly operational savings of \$3.9 million were achieved

THE PROGRAM

Located in south central Kansas, Sedgwick County has a strong agricultural economy and is home to numerous aircraft industries. Sedgwick County's population has grown rapidly in recent decades. In fact, between 1990 and 2000 the population grew more than 12% to reach 452,000 residents. This rapid growth has placed pressure on many county services, including the county's jail system.

Sedgwick County has historically added to its jail capacity on an as needed basis. In 1958, the new county courthouse included 135 beds. By 1986, the jail population had grown to 327 and a federal mandate forced changes. In 1990, the county opened a new jail with 418 beds. Again, in 2000, the jail was expanded to 1,068 beds at a cost of \$37.5 million to meet a swelling inmate population. Just five years later, in 2005, Sedgwick was faced with the need to expand again due to jail overcrowding. As officials noted, the cycle between jail expansions kept getting shorter and shorter while construction costs ballooned. In addition, the reasons for this increased need for jail beds was increasingly influenced by factors outside the control of the county, such as legislative changes that added offenders requiring incarceration and generated longer sentences.

Rather than simply add more beds, in 2005 the county adopted a broader, more comprehensive approach. Sedgwick County convened a Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), a group of more than 20 experts in the local criminal justice system, including judges, corrections and public safety officials, political leaders, law enforcement, academics and others. The group's goal was to answer: "What can be done to create a long-term public safety strategy for our Sedgwick County community?"

The CJCC sought to address several trends and challenges, including:

- Sedgwick County's jail incarceration rate was well above the national average
- Inmates were being housed in surrounding counties, costing the county \$4 million annually
- The jail was holding more than 1,300 inmates in a facility built for 1,068 inmates
- The county projected it would need 1,660 beds by 2010 and 2,400 by 2020 at current incarceration trends
- 80% of the jail was filled with pretrial defendants

The CJCC determined to manage jail overcrowding the jail would need to expand – by 384 beds – but in addition alternative programs were recommended to offer the county more long-term flexibility. The CJCC offered many alternative suggestions, including a day reporting center; mental health programs and a mental health court; DUI/Drug court; expanding pretrial services; a work center; technology enhancements; better case flow; and a streamlined release process.

Sedgwick County selected BI Incorporated to open and operate the Sedgwick County Day Reporting Center (DRC), one of the first of the CJCC's recommendations. The reporting program is highly structured and designed for chronic offenders who are at risk for probation violations and a return to jail. The Sedgwick County DRC manages a mix of participants, including offenders referred by municipal and district courts to the center instead of incarceration; sentenced offenders who are serving out the remainder of their sentences in the community; individuals who have violated probation; and pretrial defendants. The jail is referring appropriate candidates to the center as part of a sentence-reduction plan. A first-year goal for the DRC was to reach 200 participants.

Offenders directed to the center go through a three-phase approach that includes regular reporting to the center, intensive treatment and training, and ongoing testing for drug and alcohol use, which are strictly forbidden while attending the center. Offenders are placed at different levels of treatment and training based on assessed risks and needs, and they typically stay in the program for 90 to 180 days in addition to an aftercare component that can last up to six months. Participants are monitored closely with daily check-ins, advanced drug testing techniques, computerized data collection, use of electronic monitoring and remote alcohol monitoring technology and intensive case management. Participants attend group classes such as:

- Anger management
- Life skills classes
- Cognitive restructuring classes
- Community connections
- GED prep
- Job Club, employment skills building and career development counseling
- Parenting and family classes
- Substance abuse education and treatment

THE RESULTS AT A SNAPSHOT

Sedgwick County officials are pleased with initial outcomes, including:

- After just 81 days of operation, 5,146 days of jail were avoided by diverting offenders to the DRC.
- With an estimated savings of more than \$25 day for an offender moved from jail to the DRC, taxpayers saved \$128,650 in the first three months the DRC was open.
- The DRC enrollment count reached 140 participants in just three months and 210 participants, including 35 in Aftercare, by July 2007.
- Of the 171 participants enrolled in the DRC after 81 days, 61% were still successfully involved; others had been discharged back to probation oversight due to drug screen positives or failures to report.
- The jail's Average Daily Population has stabilized since the DRC opened; long-term goals are to see a drop in the ADP.
- The county was able to build 208 fewer jail beds by adding only 384 beds than its 2010 projected needs by adding the DRC and the other alternatives to incarceration. By building 208 fewer jail beds, a one-time construction savings of \$26 million was achieved in addition to \$3.95 million annual costs to manage those 208 beds.
- Importantly, the DRC has been able to engage offenders who have been deemed resistant to treatment and training previously. Through use of an objective assessment tool, the LSI-R, offenders receive treatment and training appropriate for their risks and needs, an important element of the program's success in changing criminal behavior.

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