

‘Back on Track’ Re-engages Post-Prison Clients

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People at risk of arrest due to having active post prison warrants will be offered the opportunity to avoid jail through an innovative pilot program.

“Back on Track” gives individuals who may have committed minor infractions of their parole release conditions access to services to help them successfully complete their parole terms.

To take part, eligible individuals must report in-person to the Clatsop County Community Corrections office during the following dates and times:

- **Monday through Friday, Oct. 17-21, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**
- **Monday through Friday, Oct. 24-28, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Community Corrections is located at 1190 SE 19th Street, Warrenton.

To be eligible, individuals must have an active warrant for absconding post-prison supervision for technical violations (not reporting; moving without permission; drug use; etc.) only. Probation violators are not eligible.

Clatsop County Community Corrections estimates that 155 people could be eligible for the program locally.

“This gets people re-engaged with our services without threat of jail and losing everything they’ve built up so far,” said Lt. Kristen Hanthorn, community corrections director.

Having a parole violation warrant can complicate getting a job and receiving Social Security benefits.

Clatsop County is one of 15 Oregon counties taking part in the state Department of Corrections/Board of Parole initiated event.

Call Community Corrections at 503-861-2875 or the individual’s parole officer for more information including whether you are eligible for this program.

Who’s Eligible for ‘Back on Track’?

The following are scenarios illustrating the kinds of cases and individuals who may be (or may not be) eligible to take part in the Back on Track program:

#1 **Tim** is on post-prison supervision and currently has a warrant for his arrest for contact with his victim and allegations of new law violations. Local law enforcement has been looking for Tim as he has violated his restraining order by calling and threatening his victim.

Tim hears about the Back on Track event and decides to call his PO to find out if he qualifies. **Tim's PO encourages him to turn himself in on his warrant but tells him he will have to go to jail due to the seriousness of the allegations.** Tim doesn't come in and is ultimately arrested by law enforcement and taken to jail.

#2 **John** was on Post-Prison supervision with Clatsop County after serving 14 months in Oregon Department of Corrections. He had an offer to go to Alaska to work on a fishing boat but his parole officer told him he couldn't leave the State of Oregon – John went anyway and got a job fishing. That was three years ago.

John is living in Portland and has a job and family. John wants to return to Clatsop County and see his family/friends but knows he risks getting arrest on his post-prison warrant for “absconding” supervision.

He can't afford to get arrested as he will lose his job. John hears about Back on Track from his mother and calls his old PO finds out he can get his warrant cleared if he shows up and he won't go to jail. John comes in on his day off and meets with his PO. The PO calls the Parole Board and has the warrant cleared from the system.

Over the last three years John has found stability in his life (arrest free, working full time, providing for his family) and he is not the same person that went to prison. His PO thanks him for coming in and congratulates him on the positive changes he's made in his life. His PO allows him to report by phone for the remaining six-month period of his supervision.

3 **Sheri** is arrested on drug charges and placed on probation. Sheri is heavily in her addiction and struggles to comply with her supervision conditions. Ultimately Sheri goes to jail and her probation is revoked. Sheri is released after serving 180 days in jail and is placed on post-prison supervision for 12 months. Sheri never reports to see her PO and a warrant for absconding supervision is issued.

Sheri wants help but doesn't want to go to jail. Sheri is afraid she will be arrested in front of her children and they will go into foster care as she is the primary caregiver.

Sheri sees a flyer for the Back on Track event at the laundromat and makes the decision to call the number on the flyer. She speaks to someone who assures her she won't go to jail if she just reports in person during business hours. Sheri gets a ride to the Community Corrections office and meets with her new PO. Sheri's PO is able to help her get her Oregon Health Plan coverage turned back on and an appointment for an assessment for Medically Assisted Treatment services.

#4 **Chris** has been on supervision off and on for 10 years. Last month they reported to their Parole Officer and had to provide a urine analysis. The UA was positive for alcohol, a violation of their supervision conditions. Chris' PO got them an appointment to update their drug and alcohol assessment.

Chris never went to the appointment and stopped returning their PO's phone calls. Chris received an email from their PO directing them to report by Oct. 1 or they would get a warrant. Chris doesn't want to go into the PO's office as they know they will get a jail sanction because that's what happens nine times out of 10.

Chris hears about the Back on Track event on the radio and decides to call their PO. Chris finds out that they can come into the PO's office before 5 p.m. and the warrant will be removed from the system.

Chris is given eight hours of community service instead of a jail sanction for failing to report to their assessment appointment.

#5 **Michelle** has a post-prison warrant for absconding supervision (she just stopped reporting to see her PO or attending treatment). Michelle hears about the Back on Track event and calls her PO. She learns she does qualify and all she has to do is come into the office between 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. before Oct 28.

Michelle talks about turning herself in so she doesn't go to jail but keeps putting it off. Michelle finally comes in on Nov 1 and argues that she shouldn't have to face a jail sanction since she "turned herself in." Her PO explains the Back On Track event was only for the specified time period and she lost her opportunity to avoid a jail sanction. Michelle is transported to jail to serve a five-day jail sanction.