

The agency's program is to present alternative sentence plans to sentencing judges for adult and young offenders. It accepts cases on the basis of three criteria:

- the offender can reasonably expect to receive a prison sentence of three months or more (so the plan serves as a true alternative to prison, not an "add-on");
- the offender has pleaded guilty or intends to do so (the offender must accept responsibility for the offence); and
- the offender has demonstrated a willingness to participate in an alternative sentence plan.

The staff prepares a detailed social and criminal history of the offender and advocates on his or her behalf for such social and treatment services, if any, that may be required and obtained on a voluntary basis. A specific course of action is then prepared (including a statement of what actions have already been taken) and proposed to the sentencing judge:

Typically, such proposals try to provide appropriate reparation or restitution to the victim of the offence or the community, and present to the sentencing judge, options, consistent with recognized sentencing practices, that would satisfactorily resolve the offence and satisfy the Court as being an appropriate sentence for the specific offence. (Brief, p. 6)

Alternative Sentence Planning suggests that victims will be best served:

- by an approach which does not protect the accused from the suffering of the victim;
- when a sentence contains a consequence for the offender that attempts to restore either the physical or emotional damage suffered by that victim; and
- when the sentence enables the offender to deal with the issues that led to the offence.

b. The American Experience

Alternative Sentence Planning is somewhat more widespread in the U.S. where it is known as Client Specific Planning. Herb Hoelter, Director of