

# The Probation Improvement and Incentive and Smart Ohio Grant Programs: Overview and Early Findings

Brian Martin and Steve Van Dine

Bureau of Research and Evaluation

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

## **Background – Probation Improvement and Incentive Grant Program (PIIG):**

- Authorized under HB 86, requiring DRC to administer grants for county probation departments to adopt evidence-based practices to reduce community control violators admitted to prison.
- 23 county probation departments and 2 multi county collaboratives received Probation Improvement Grants during the initial FY 12/FY 13 grant cycle.
- All grant proposals required to identify key problems, propose solutions to those problems, establish goals around reducing commitments and violators, and develop performance metrics.
- 18 recipients performed sufficiently well to receive Probation Incentive awards.
- Funding increased for the FY 14/FY 15 grant cycle, extending involvement in the program to 8 additional counties.

## **Background – Smart Ohio Grant Program:**

- Continued population pressure in 2013 and mixed results from the first PIIG grant cycle led to renewed interest around low level prison diversions.
- Adult RECLAIM concept explored by Justice Reinvestment advisory committee.
- The RECLAIM framework eventually provided the basis for 3 basic funding options to support probation services and increase the use of community alternatives, culminating in an RFQ released in early 2014.

## Descriptions of funding options:

- Option 1: Probation Services Model – funding provided for all community alternative placements (probation, ILC, etc.) and active probation cases, with additional funding for terminations without revocation to prison (**13 counties received Option 1 funding**).
- Option 2: Treatment Services Model – funding model in which a county requests funds to support services focused toward addressing an identified problem relating to a specific offender population, with the expectation that expanded treatment alternatives will reduce low level commitments to prison (**10 counties received Option 2 funding**).
- Option 3: Targeted Diversion Model – funding model in which larger counties are reimbursed on a per offender basis for reductions in non-violent F4/F5 commitments to prison below a baseline average, with smaller additional incentives available for reductions in F4/F5 revocation rates (**5 counties received Option 3 funding**).

# PIIG and Smart Comparison

## PIIG – Pros:

- Provides for an explicit financial incentive component tied to specific performance measures.
- Improvement plans are goal-oriented
- Encourages goals to be focused specifically around successful probation outcomes

## PIIG – Cons:

- Complexity of incentive formula
- Goals potentially address overlapping populations
- Overall mixed results achieved from first grant cycle

## **PIIG and Smart Comparison (continued)**

### **Smart – Pros:**

- 3 options afford greater flexibility
- Funding formulas more straightforward
- Application requirements more relaxed

### **Smart – Cons:**

- Potentially burdensome data requirements for counties
- Funding not explicitly tied to probation “improvement”
- Harder to evaluate effectiveness
- Lack of goal requirement reduces accountability

## Smart Grant Data Requirements:

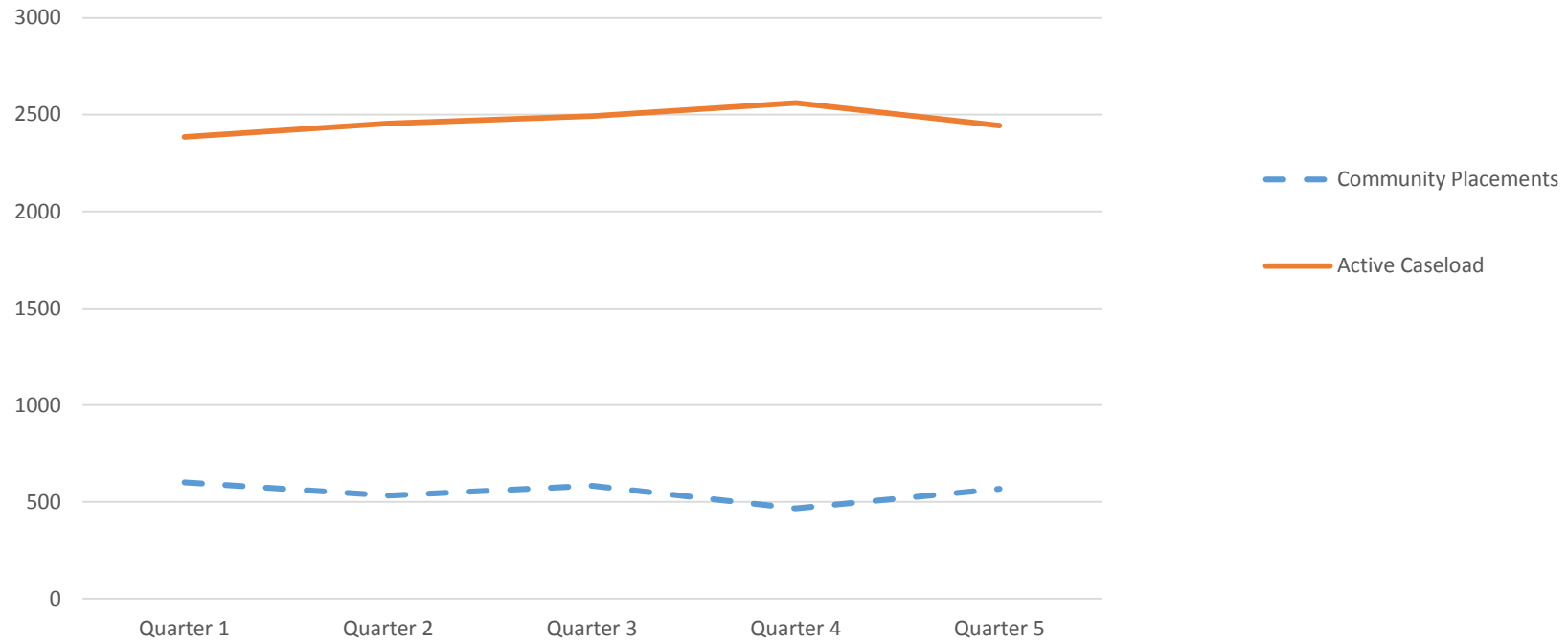
- Baseline data: Historical numbers on court dispositions, active probation population and probation/judicial release terminations
- Ongoing data requirements: quarterly submissions of case-level data identifying offenders on active probation supervision at the start of the grant and felons sentenced by the court (or placed on ILC), along with the following key case attributes:
  - Sentencing date
  - Disposition
  - Length of probation term
  - Judicial Release start date
  - ORAS scores
  - Felony Level
  - Treatment Services provided (Option 2 only)
  - Termination Status
  - Termination Date

### Smart Ohio Option 1 Payment Summary -- 3rd Quarter

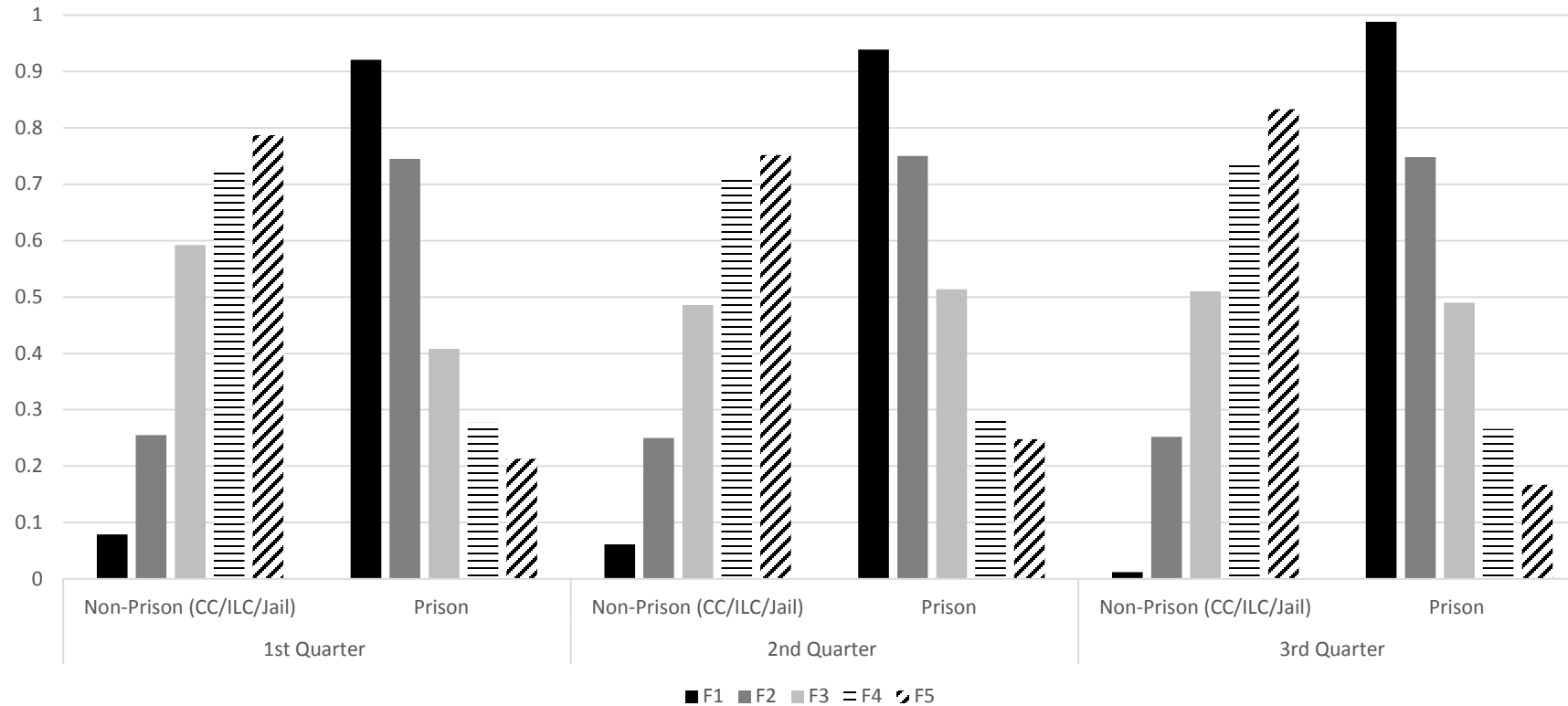
County Name	Funding Option	Start of community alternative (N * \$500)	Active supervision at end of quarter <2yrs (N * \$200)	Case terminated - no prison (N * \$750)	Start of Judicial Release supervision (N * \$300)	Active Judicial Release supervision at end of quarter <2yrs (N * \$100)	Termination of Judicial Release - no prison (N * \$500)	Q3 Grant Payment
County 1	1	20	55	6	0	2	0	\$25,700
County 2	1	23	90	11	0	6	2	\$39,350
County 3	1	52	98	0	0	58	4	\$53,400
County 4	1	92	389	0	0	2	0	\$124,000
County 5	1	24	118	15	0	6	1	\$47,950
County 6	1	86	422	20	0	0	0	\$142,400
County 7	1	46	123	17	1	8	3	\$62,950
County 8	1	10	30	11	2	2	1	\$20,550
County 9	1	3	25	3	2	3	2	\$10,650
County 10	1	13	53	2	2	9	1	\$20,600
County 11	1	39	245	14	7	57	1	\$87,300
County 12	1	91	461	71	11	50	5	\$201,750
County 13	1	84	383	44	14	60	13	\$168,300
<b>Total</b>								<b>\$1,004,900</b>



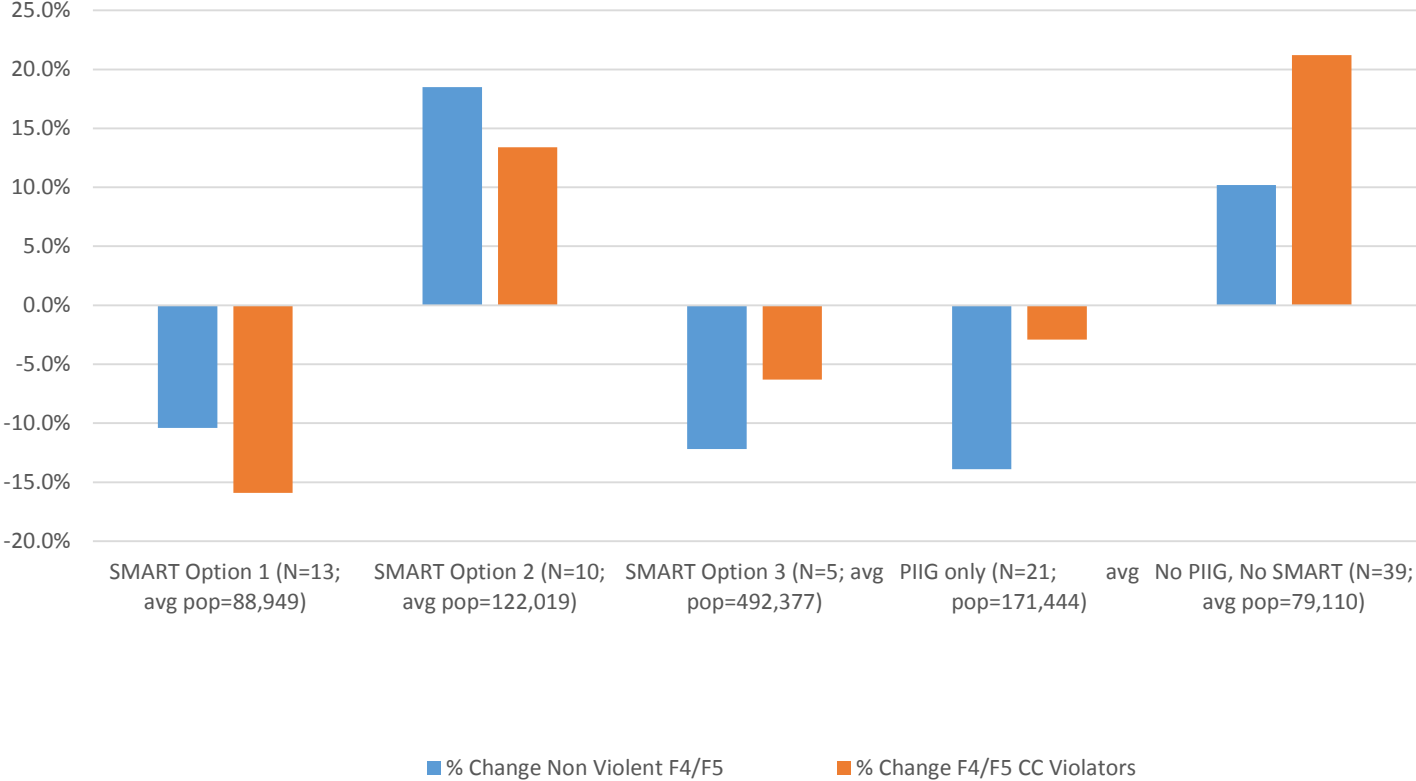
## Smart Ohio Option 1 Counties: Combined Caseloads and Community Placements, March 2014 - May 2015



## Sentence Type Summary, by Quarter: Sample County Illustration



SMART Ohio Grant Impact Summary,  
 Average Quarterly Change from Baseline,  
 March 2014 - May 2015



## Net impact of PIIG/Smart Ohio grant programs:

- In the final step, we used statistical models to show the independent impact of being in the PIIG or Smart grant program.
- These models “controlled” for changes in court case filings in order to hold constant the potential impact of overall court volume on dispositions.
- The results showed that the counties involved in the PIIG program, considered together as a group, had statistically significant reductions in 2014 in both F4/F5 commitments and community control returns.
- Smart program involvement in Options 1 or 3 showed no independent impact, after taking into account whether the county was also receiving PIIG dollars. In other words, the favorable reductions shown on the bar chart for Options 1 and 3 was probably due to their overlapping involvement in PIIG.
- The statistical models indicate that the PIIG program produced a net prison diversionary impact of 300-400 in 2014.

## Summary and early conclusions:

- Overall, both programs were associated with reductions, but the Smart program did not show any independent role in those reductions after taking PIIG involvement into consideration.
- Some counties experienced challenges in implementing Smart grant activities, resulting in delayed expenditures of grant funds (see Lincoln Guthrie's report for more detail on the results of qualitative interviews conducted among county staff).
- The emphasis on probation placements and caseload size in the Option 1 program is less directly tied to reductions in prison commitment levels.
- The specific goal requirements of the PIIG grant program and funding incentives tied to those goals may have helped better organize grant activities around targeted offender populations.