

SENTENCING TO SERVICE

A GOOD IDEA

Sentencing to Service (STS) provides a sentencing alternative for courts throughout Minnesota that puts carefully selected nonviolent offenders to work on community improvement projects. Judges sentence offenders to STS as an alternative to jail or fines, in combination with jail time, or as a probation sanction.

Established in 1986, STS is operated by the Minnesota Department of Corrections in partnership with sheriff's departments, community corrections, courts, and local governments.

Closely supervised offender crews work in parks and other public areas.

Projects vary widely and include work such as litter pickup in parks and on roadsides, river cleanup, trail development, flood control and storm damage cleanup, and work for public senior citizen housing.

STS projects are not included in scheduled work by government agencies; they are projects that without STS would not get done.

BENEFITS

The STS program in Minnesota provides benefits to the:

- ❑ Court by creating a good sentencing option that may be used as an alternative to jail.
- ❑ Corrections system by reducing jail crowding and reserving space for dangerous offenders who require incarceration.
- ❑ Offender by providing him or her with a positive way to repay the community for offenses.
- ❑ Taxpayer by improving public parks and other areas.

HOW IT WORKS

Selection of STS participants is a cooperative effort of STS and court staff.

Judges order offenders to be placed on STS work crews and the number of hours to be worked.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, local county and other agencies identify work activities and supply equipment.

Crew leaders arrange transportation and are responsible for supervision of offenders at work sites.

There are approximately 150 state and county crews working on projects throughout the state.

Fiscal year 2005 program data indicates that more than 30,000 offenders participate in STS annually, working over one million hours.

Minnesota's STS program is a shining success.

- Alexandria-Lake
Region Echo

"...the program will make the state a better place to live — at least for those of us on the outside."

- St. Paul Pioneer Press
Outdoors Editor

"...a refreshing example of the state and county sharing resources to efficiently achieve important social goals."

- Faribault Daily News

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DOLLAR BENEFIT

If STS workers were actually paid an hourly wage of \$6, the estimated dollar benefit of their labor each year would be over \$6 million (STS workers are not paid).

The program also estimates that the value of projects completed is over \$9 million a year.

Because offenders are out working on crews rather than occupying jail beds, STS saves an estimated 55,000 jail days worth about \$2.9 million annually, based on a \$55 per day cost.

STS was initially funded with the assistance of private foundation grants in response to a severe jail crowding problem in the state. This problem has since been alleviated in some areas.

Now, STS is operated with a combination of state and local dollars. Counties provide one-half of local program costs.

WHERE

STS is operated throughout Minnesota with over 85 percent of the state's counties participating. District offices are located in Albert Lea, Bemidji, Center City, Chaska, Detroit Lakes, Grand Rapids, Litchfield, Mankato, Marshall, Moorhead, St. Cloud, and Winona. Each office has a supervisor and crew leaders.

INFORMATION

For additional information on the STS program, visit www.doc.state.mn.us or contact:

Sentencing to Service Program
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651/642-0200



Contributing to a safer Minnesota

This information will be made available in alternative format upon request.
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It makes sense... the inmates need the experience. The parks and the waterways need the cleaning. And the crowded jails need emptying."

-Brainerd Daily Dispatch