

## **TRANSITION TO “FOCUS”**

### **Minnesota Action Plan For Female Offenders: *History, Progress on 2002 Action Plan, New Directions***

Developed by Minnesota Department of Corrections  
Advisory Task Force on the Woman and Juvenile Female Offender in Corrections  
and Interagency Adolescent Female Subcommittee

May 2007

## **INTRODUCTION**

*“Women and girls are at the intersection of numerous social systems such as public health, human services, criminal and juvenile justice, housing, education, employment, and treatment services. The degree to which women’s and girls’ gender and cultural needs are recognized, acknowledged, and met in these systems can either interrupt or perpetuate the intergenerational cycle of crime, poverty, chemical dependency, and abuse.”*

The opening statement to the 2002 “Minnesota Action Plan for Female Offenders” continues to reflect today the salient truth about the connections and impact of the female population in our society. This document explains the recent history of the state’s specific attention to women and girls in its corrections system, in particular:

- the informal Department of Corrections (DOC) task force on women offenders (1978);
- the 1981 statute on parity for women offenders and creation of an advisory task force on the woman and juvenile female offender in corrections (Task Force), as amended (Minn. Stat. §§241.70 - .73 (2006));
- the DOC Planning for Female Offenders Unit (PFO) (1981) and Juvenile Unit (1996);
- the permanent Task Force and the Interagency Adolescent Female Subcommittee (IAFS) (1989);
- the “Minnesota Action Plan for Female Offenders” (February 2002); and
- the Task Force - IAFS Action Work Plan (2005-2006), integrated with “FOCUS on Strategic Planning,” the DOC’s plan for July 2004-December 2006.

Keenly aware of the changes in infrastructure and programming that have developed during the past five years, the Task Force and IAFS have summarized developments in the DOC related to the recommendations in the 2002 Action Plan, and have proposed new directions with a pragmatic eye to the future.

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### I. HISTORY

The Minnesota DOC established an informal task force in 1978 to address women’s issues and allocated an administrative staff position to take on the responsibility of addressing the needs of female offenders on a state-wide basis. Through the leadership of the Minnesota State Legislature, a statute mandating parity for women offenders and establishing an Advisory Task Force on Female Offenders (Task Force) was passed in 1981. (*Appendix 1*) The 1981 “parity” law provided for “a range and quality of programming substantially equivalent to programming offered male persons charged with or convicted of crimes or delinquencies.” It further directed that programs for female offenders shall be based upon their special needs. (*Appendix 2*)

The Planning for Female Offenders (PFO) program was established in 1981. Eventually, the scope and nature of the work demanded additional resources, and the program became a unit of four staff. The PFO was integral in shaping the direction of planning and implementing initiatives for women and girls in Minnesota’s criminal justice systems. Initial efforts were directed toward the construction of a new facility at Shakopee, the women’s prison.

In 1989, the Task Force created the Interagency Adolescent Female Subcommittee (IAFS) to study the issues of that specific population. Through the efforts of that group, the legislature amended the parity statute to include juvenile females (*Appendix 3*) and was encouraged to enact a continuum of care law for juvenile females. (*Appendix 4*) That law mandated that “the commissioner of corrections . . . collaborate with the commissioners of human services, health, jobs and training, planning, education, public safety, and with representatives of the private sector to develop a comprehensive continuum of care to address the gender-specific needs of juvenile female offenders.” This was an appropriations law (H.F. 2351) which included the provision for juvenile females within the DOC’s funding activities but did not appropriate any funds to that item. In 1996, the IAFS issued a Position Statement (revised in 1997) which cited the legislation, listed a Statement of Beliefs and a Statement for Policy Development, and defined gender specific programming for girls as: ‘Comprehensive programming which addresses and supports the psychosocial developmental process of female adolescents, while fostering connection within relationship in the context of a safe and nurturing environment.’ (*Appendix 5*)

The PFO work over the years included: grant-writing; grant review; program evaluation; conference and workshop planning; state wide technical assistance; legislative lobbying; information resources; staffing the Task Force and the IAFS; policy development; community involvement; and networking on both a local and national level. The PFO operated until its elimination in January 2003 because of state budget cutbacks.

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## II. TASK FORCE / IAFS MISSION AND 2002 ACTION PLAN

Recognizing that neither legislation nor the support of the Commissioner of Corrections could effortlessly institutionalize the mission of the Task Force/IAFS, the group agreed that a role in setting state policy was critical if the direction of culturally- and gender-specific work with women and girls in Minnesota correctional agencies was to be influenced. In its current form, the mission states:

*“The Advisory Task Force on Female Offenders and Interagency Adolescent Female Subcommittee are dedicated to promoting and advocating for gender and culturally-responsive services for women and girls in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.”*

This realization, together with a Task Force commitment to “best practices”, resulted in the drafting of the “Minnesota Action Plan for Female Offenders” in 2002 (*Appendix 6*), based upon the principles of the “Research-Based Practices for Field Services 8 Point Plan,” Minnesota DOC, January 2001 (8 Point Plan). The 8 Point Plan represented the DOC’s effort to apply the theory of “evidence-based practices” to the corrections system by integrating the use of:

1. Automated and Validated Risk Tools
2. Cognitive Behavioral Programming
3. Case Plans
4. Restorative Justice
5. Primary Services
6. Supervision Workload Standards
7. Transition/Aftercare Services
8. Outcome Measures

The underlying premise of the 2002 Plan was the belief that both men and women benefit when corrections systems take into consideration their avenues into and responses to the system as well as their needs for differential programming. To that end, the plan sought “to ensure that the ‘best practices’ included in the Department of Corrections *8 Point Plan* intentionally consider the gender and cultural needs of girls and women, as well as those of boys and men.” Although considerable movement has been made within the DOC on the plan, the loss of the services of the PFO made it difficult for the Task Force to implement its ambitious agenda.

### A. Progress On The 2002 Action Plan

The actions envisioned by the 2002 Plan were in the form of operational recommendations to the state and counties. They were supported by PFO, Task Force and IAFS strategies. In specific terms, the plan envisioned integration of well-

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designed program models into all of the DOC’s strategic planning. Since the publication of the 2002 Plan and the loss of the PFO unit, however, the goal of the Task Force has evolved from promoting and implementing operational changes to strengthening its role in policy development and advocacy.

The following discussion illustrates this fundamental change in the Task Force and IAFS role and identifies the 2002 concerns related to the 8 Point framework. It also describes subsequent activity on the 2002 Action Plan and takes note of related initiatives by other agencies involved in the corrections system.

### 1. Automated and Validated Risk Tools

*Risk assessment tools were deemed inadequate for predicting recidivism and providing effective intervention strategies to meet female needs. They were formulated around males, not using current research on girls and women or reflecting factors related to gender, racial and ethnic differences or to strengths.*

The primary development between 2002 and 2006 was the design and implementation of a research project to develop risk/needs assessments for women offenders. The project was sponsored by the Task Force as part of a larger University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute program funded by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). Directed by Dr. Patricia Van Voorhis, the research also covered the entire state supervision systems of women’s prisons in Missouri and Colorado as well as the island of Maui. Five sites in Minnesota were utilized for collecting risk/needs assessment data by interview questionnaires, to be followed by data collection at six and twelve months on discipline, employment, education, program completion, number of new arrests and convictions, failed urinalysis tests, parole/probation violations and revocation. The Minnesota sites were the Minnesota Correctional Facility (MCF)-Shakopee, Hennepin County Drug Court, and traditional probation supervision programs in the counties of Washington, Dakota and Ramsey. Periodic site visits and presentations were included, and a midway report of findings, entitled “Minnesota Gender Responsive Classification Project,” was summarized in August 2005 and presented to the Task Force in October. (**Appendix 7 and Appendix 8**) While there is no projected completion date, the phase 1 assessment was completed February 28, 2006, and phase 2 reassessments of the sample were scheduled at intervals of the next six and twelve months. Researchers continued to gather follow-up data and expected to do the analysis after the twelve month reassessment. (**Appendix 9 and Appendix 10**)

A female juvenile version of an assessment project was initiated in St. Louis County, but discontinued.

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### 2. Cognitive Behavioral Programming

*Some of the cognitive/behavioral programming for girls and women had not considered current research or been validated for or cognizant of gender, race and ethnicity. The concern was that it could uncover serious therapeutic issues such as abuse, trauma and mental illness without providing corresponding therapeutic intervention and resolution. Moreover, even appropriate programming lacked a comprehensive approach when mandated without appropriate intervention and attention.*

Cognitive behavioral therapy with criminal defendants challenges the criminal thought involved and gives options for behavioral choices. Inherent in this type of intervention is the opportunity for participants to practice the skills learned and to receive feedback from trained facilitators. One positive result of the increasing commitment to Evidence Based Practices is the additional training of staff in the use of cognitive interventions. Another is recognition of the importance of working with trauma issues.

The subject of the First Annual Conference on Women Offenders, “A Woman’s Pathway to Crime: Understanding and Overcoming Trauma,” in 2003, sponsored by the Task Force and the Minnesota Community Corrections Association (MCCA), offered direction in melding cognitive practice with trauma theory. Programs in Dakota and Washington counties, respectively entitled “Moving On” and “Helping Women Recover,” were sponsored by the probation departments and further cultivated these skills and knowledge.

A Cognitive Behavioral Network has been established in the 32 counties operating under Minnesota’s Community Corrections Act, Chapter 401, Minnesota Statutes. (**Appendix II**) There is still considerable need for funding of client access to treatment resources and for development of better utilization of existing community resources. While this remains a constant challenge, the value placed on understanding trauma issues and on the success of cognitive interventions makes the situation more hopeful.

### 3. Case Plans

*Case plan models that were being used for girls and women were generally not comprehensive, strength-based or designed for gender and cultural effectiveness. Agent training and collaborating with offenders and community providers on plan development were deemed needed as well as providing plans for high-need, low- and intermediate- risk female offenders.*

A model case plan was created in 2003, then reviewed and redrafted by a subcommittee of the Task Force in 2005. The subcommittee worked diligently on

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designing and publishing a new model for both planning and management, entitled “Female Offender Case Planning & Case Management” and completed in December 2005. (*Appendix 12*) This comprehensive tool is intended to assist field agents responsible for supervising adult female offenders with more effective, individualized planning and gender responsive supervision. The recommendations emphasize client-directed case planning focused by the results of a research-validated risk/needs assessment instrument and combined with motivational interviewing principles. As explained in the Introduction, this model serves as a “starting point” designed around best practices and evidence-based principles and grounded in relevant research on adult female offenders. A critically important attribute is its recognition that “gender and culturally responsive issues must be utilized in planning and implementing supervision services.” The model is intended to be made available for probation and parole agents and was presented to Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties (MACCAC), DOC and the County Probation (CPO) staff by Commissioner of Corrections, Joan Fabian, and Hennepin County Supervised Release Agent, Sharen Southard. The initial presentation to field staff, entitled “Female Offender Case Planning Skills Training,” took place November 7, 2006. The model has been published on the National Institute of Corrections website under “Women Offender Activities: <http://nicic.org/Library/021870>.”

The Third Annual Conference on Women Offenders in September 2006, organized by the Task Force, addressed “The Practical Applications of Gender Specific Case Management. Conference presenter, renowned clinical psychologist Dr. Marilyn Van Dieten, author and consultant with Orbis Partners, Inc. of Toronto, covered the following important topics:

- Case management model from the NIC for women offenders with strategies for successful implementation;
- Summary of relevant literature;
- Current research regarding risk of re-offending, criminogenic needs, assessment and measurement of risk and needs of women as opposed to those of men;
- Importance of gender-responsive assessment for development of a case management plan;
- Exploration of and practice in using motivational strategies consistent with a gender-responsive approach;
- Overview of effective interventions designed to increase personal and social resources; and
- Importance of a collaborative and dynamic approach to providing services to women.

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#### 4. Restorative Justice

*While restorative justice was recognized as a particularly appropriate approach for girls and women involving relationships, healing and community, it was also acknowledged to have the potential to reflect societal bias in gender, race and class. Further, for female communities of color, access may appear to be limited and the “acknowledgment and repair” practices may be different for them and other females as well.*

During the interim since 2002, restorative justice has been implemented with greater frequency in juvenile cases, particularly where treatment and contract programs are in place, e.g., in the Woodland Hills facility for state-commit girls where the nonprofit organization, AMICUS, conducts a restorative justice program.

In 2005, training programs at multiple sites were conducted by Minnesota Restorative Services Coalition (MRSC) with Mankato State University and other sponsors. (**Appendix 13**) The University of Minnesota School of Social Work and the DOC have also pursued activity in this area. (**Appendix 14**) In Olmsted County, family conferencing was undertaken and has been highly recommended as an approach similar to restorative justice.

Nevertheless, this approach is labor intensive and has few resource dollars available to make it a higher priority at least for women and girls.

#### 5. Primary Services

*Without integrated gender and culture, primary services were seen as lacking relevant minimum standards, often requiring detrimental and ineffective coed groups, including education, recreation and counseling in most juvenile residential facilities. Moreover, they were being delivered without adequate training on gender and cultural issues and under problematic supervision by cross-gender staff. The identification of and attention paid to risks, needs and protective factors for females were inadequate, with those failing to succeed being stigmatized as at fault and not amenable to treatment.*

Licensing rules for all sorts of different juvenile programs were placed under a single Umbrella Rule during this period (Chapter 2960, Minnesota Rules Licensure and Certification of Certain Programs for Children), but the considerable lobbying by the PFO, Task Force and IAFS was unsuccessful in obtaining beneficial changes for girls. The single rule covers residential, secure custody, foster/group home, mental health and chemical dependency placements in both Human Services and Corrections. It left in place such troublesome practices as having male staff perform bed checks on juvenile female residents.

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A more positive development was the gender and culturally responsive programming conducted at the state commit facility for girls at Woodland Hills, near Duluth, with the contracted assistance of AMICUS. The Task Force and IAFS participated in the review of the Woodland Hills program (which serves only a very small number of girls) and in the second Request for Proposal that resulted in a renewal of the Woodland Hills contract.

In an effort to expand the knowledge base around comprehensive gender and culturally responsive programming, the Task Force presented its second annual state conference with the MCCA in 2004, entitled “*A New Vision: Guiding Principles for a Gender Responsive Criminal Justice System.*” It also participated in hosting the 11<sup>th</sup> National Workshop on Adult & Juvenile Female Offenders: “*Clearing the Path for Girls and Women – A Call for Action*” in 2005, co-sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Corrections and the Association on Programs for Female Offenders, with support from the NIC.

Despite the increasing knowledge and attention to the issues central to women and girls in the corrections system, there are serious concerns about a decline in even the few gender responsive service programs (e.g., the Challenge Incarceration Program (CIP) boot camp and the Baby Camp for new mothers to reside up to six months with their newborns at a halfway house), that have been implemented in this period. According to an in-depth evaluation released in 2006, the CIP (for both genders) saves taxpayer dollars and reduces recidivism, yet the legislature appropriated funding to double the 90 male offender capacity without funding any increase in the 24 female capacity. In examining chemical dependency services at the MCF-Shakopee in 2006, the Task Force also noted concerns about both the process used for selecting candidates and the availability of services to all inmates who needed them.

While not directly “Primary Services,” the Minnesota Supreme Court established a Task Force on Alcohol and Other Drugs in 2005 to look into the question of establishing a statewide problem-solving court with this focus. The Task Force prepared a presentation delivered on its behalf by retired Associate Justice Esther Tomljanovich. (**Appendix 15**) Given the central importance of chemical dependency in the causes of female criminal activity as well as in the treatment of female offenders, this Supreme Court task force was recognized as a critical audience for information about gender and culturally responsive attention. The task force’s “*Report on the Overall Impact of Alcohol and Other Drugs across All Case Types*” was issued November 17, 2006. Specifically addressing women and girls, it states:

“the Task Force unequivocally reinforces the concerns that the Female Offender Task Force expressed in its testimony regarding the need for gender responsive services. That is, equal treatment does not and should not always

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mean the same services or the same treatment. The research is clear: when services are created that respond to the unique needs of women, women do better. When women do better, children often do better as well” Executive Summary, pp. 17-18. (*Appendix 16*)

The report also recognized trauma as an underlying factor in addiction development and as a recovery barrier.

A glaring lack of services also threatens the possibilities for success of the growing number of short term women offenders on supervised release or probation. These women are committed to the Department of Corrections with less than six months’ stay in local county jails and, consequently, are caught in the net of receiving no services and missing any chance for improvement.

#### 6. Supervision Workload Standards

*It was clear that workloads needed to be reduced to work effectively with women and girls because more time, energy and contacts are required to deal with their multiple issues, especially trauma histories, family relationships and primary caretaker responsibilities. Specialized training and community resources also are required if the intergenerational cycle of crime, poverty, chemical dependency and abuse is to be interrupted.*

In June 2005, the DOC issued new supervision workload standards. (*Appendix 17*) While these have been implemented, the extent to which they are followed in practice has not been determined. Performance measures have yet to be established, but Stearns County in collaboration with NIC is implementing a time study to ensure that outcomes are relevant to standards as defined by correctional administration.

#### 7. Transition/Aftercare Services

*The issue here was that women and many girls primarily need safe, supportive and affordable housing for themselves and their children upon release from incarceration. However, funding for aftercare community services was limited or nonexistent, especially for women serving lengthy sentences. In addition, some counties were removing probation officer oversight when girls were placed in residential care, eliminating the valuable continuity with treatment plans before the girls return to the community.*

In 2005, after the Task Force was alerted to a transitional housing subsidy that was enacted by the state legislature and being applied to sex offenders, it succeeded in obtaining some of those funds for female offenders as well. As announced in March 2006, the DOC Housing Program’s specific fund for female offenders was to be

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operated similarly to the Department’s Emergency Housing Fund. Set aside to provide rental assistance for female offenders who are homeless or inadequately housed – when all other options for housing have been exhausted - the fund is comprised of \$100,000 annually for the 2006-2008 biennium. The assistance can be approved within the first six months after release for a maximum of 90 days (with one extension for good cause). (*Appendix 18*)

DOC efforts that are intended to help prepare women offenders for re-entry from the MCF-Shakopee include mental health and chemical dependency treatment programs. In 2006, the Task Force responded to concerns about the chemical dependency program at the MCF-Shakopee by conducting an on-site visit and personal interviews to explore and report on the program.

On another level, a growing number of resources to aid released female offenders have become available in the private sector. To name a few besides AMICUS, these include Portland Village (supportive housing development); African American Family Services (culturally specific mental health, chemical dependency and family preservation services); Jeremiah Project (assisted living program for single mothers and their children) and a variety of programs for juveniles.

## 8. Outcome Measures

*As with transition and aftercare services, resources for the evaluation of gender-responsive services generally were not available, and existing research rarely did analysis by gender and race. Aggregating data compromises the assessment of salient information about women and girls and the ability to know the impact of assessment tools and services. Importantly, outcome measures rarely account separately for gender specific results such as recidivism, and females are rarely consulted about their programming needs or evaluation of services they receive.*

As cited above, services provided at Woodland Hills have been evaluated in conjunction with the overall review of the first contract program period, and Stearns County is implementing an outcome study of the DOC supervision workload standards. But the tremendous need for careful and specific evaluation of gender-responsive programming still prevails. One objective of the Task Force and IAFS is to identify and examine outcome measures that directly relate to their priorities. As the priorities are focused on achieving effective and sustainable changes in the appropriate attention given to women and girls in the criminal justice system, the resulting outcome measures should track the details as well as the big picture.

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### **B. Study on Alternatives to Incarceration**

One of the most significant achievements of the Task Force developed after it had communicated to the Commissioner of Corrections in 2003 that alternatives to incarceration existed for women committed to the state facility for female offenders. At the Commissioner’s request, a working group analyzed this prison population and prepared a full report with recommendations and directions for further research. (*Appendix 19*)

### **C. Interagency Adolescent Female Subcommittee (IAFS)**

In addition to its early work in fostering the inclusion of juvenile females in the parity concept, the IAFS has concentrated on examining the plight of juvenile female offenders in Minnesota and seeking appropriate and effective “continuum of care” services for them. It has participated actively in presenting the annual Minnesota Conference on Adolescent Females, including the most recent 16<sup>th</sup> conference in March 2006, on “*Rejuvenating the Optimism, Energy, and Personal Power of Working with Girls.*”

The Subcommittee has been involved in examining the program for the extremely small number of state committed juvenile females at the private Woodland Hills facility near Duluth, and has wrestled with the significant problem of limited county resources for serving much larger numbers of girls in local detention facilities and probation systems. The type of full-service programming undertaken at Woodland Hills is sorely needed and largely lacking at the local level throughout the state, and resources are not available to allow counties to send more girls to the state program.

In an effort to raise the visibility of this problem and foster more attention to improving effective and adequate service programs across the state, the IAFS pursued several objectives in 2006:

- (1) retaining at least one position at DOC dedicated to juvenile offenders and requiring expertise in gender-responsive programming;
- (2) working with DOC to develop a long-range plan for state-committed girls, with extension to counties;
- (3) recommending that a state-designed and operated residential program for girls replace the Woodland Hills arrangement; and
- (4) surveying the county corrections departments regarding services for girls.

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With respect to a dedicated DOC juvenile position, the IAFS and the Task Force advocated for a replacement for the retiring head of Juvenile Services, and a new Manager of Juvenile Services was appointed in June 2006.

The brief survey was sent to directors and juvenile agents in all 32 counties covered by the County Corrections Act and all 29 County Probation programs; and to juvenile agents in all 27 counties under DOC jurisdiction. The results from 50 of the counties indicated that girls were placed at secure detention facilities (county and regional), foster homes (social services, corrections and private), staffed group homes, residential treatment facilities (state and private), shelters, correctional residential facilities (state, private and out-of-state), chemical dependency inpatient programs and halfway houses. The services available covered the gamut, with one county having none and others having shelter or home placement, mental health or chemical dependency treatment and/or access to secure detention. Many services or facilities were lacking. The information will be used in the long-range planning effort.

### III. NEW DIRECTIONS

The Task Force next identified the importance of including women and girls in the overall planning efforts of the DOC and set out to accomplish this goal. At the beginning of Fiscal Year 2003, the DOC undertook a strategic planning process to determine the mission, vision and strategic goals of the agency; identify key strategies to achieve those goals; and develop outcome and performance measures. The Task Force and IAFS once again identified areas of the DOC plan where it could strategically foster attention to women and girls in the corrections system.

#### A. DOC FOCUS on Strategic Planning (July 2004-December 2006)

The DOC built its plan around the concept of a FOCUS acronym:

*Fostering community partnerships;*  
*Optimizing best practices;*  
*Creating a respectful, diverse culture;*  
*Utilizing effective communication;*  
*Strategic and efficient use of resources;*

Utilizing **FOCUS** (*Appendix 20*) as a framework, the Task Force and IAFS brought their mission to a higher level, envisioning it to be the expressly identified inclusion of women and girls in all aspects of the work of the Department. Although the DOC’s specific goals and strategies are broad, the “FOCUS” categories have accommodated an insertion of the gender commitment under “Optimizing best practices” and have fostered Task Force and IAFS planning in the short term. Specifically, the gender commitment in the DOC plan comprises two goals: (1) to “Promote use of evidence-

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*based services throughout the state, including the use of gender and culture-appropriate programming” and (2) to “Promote the use of community-based resources for female offenders.” The first is to be measured by recidivism rates, three years after release: - i.e., new felony conviction and return to prison with new commitment. The second is to be measured by percentage change in beds saved.*

This gender/cultural responsiveness aligns well with the DOC’s broader FOCUS strategies of *community partnering, best practices, respectful and diverse culture, effective communication, and strategic and efficient use of resources*. For example, the effort to develop, implement and promote restorative and reparative programs for women and girls of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds requires partnering with community resources and is consistent with research showing that collaborations designed to integrate evidence-based practices result in reduced recidivism.

Reducing offender risk and monitoring outcomes are the ultimate challenges of *evidence based practices* and begin with an offender assessment of both risk and needs. That is also a strong recommendation in the 2002 Action Plan. (**Appendix 6**) Recognizing that assessment tools may overlook factors which predict recidivism for females from all racial and ethnic communities requires that continuous efforts be undertaken to monitor research and maintain awareness of the existence of structured assessment tools. Stakeholder education is a key to building support for best practices and, ultimately, necessary resource allocation. A significant piece of that education is the role of prevention through addressing low risk, high need offenders who will eventually become high risk offenders. Equally significant is the fact that many of these offenders are also caretakers, and their reduced risk/need levels can positively impact their dependents. (**Appendix 21**)

Education for service providers and effective community supervision foster more successful reentry/transition planning to meet the major needs of physical and mental health, family reunification, housing and employment in a gender- and culturally-specific framework. These link both the community engagement and the evidence based practices components of the DOC plan. The Task Force’s model case plan (**Appendix 12**), newly designed and used for training and management, is described above in Section II (A) (3) on the subject of Progress on the 2002 Action Plan.

Similarly, a respectful, diverse culture is just as important, if not more so, for working with women and girls, and effective communication throughout the DOC and community is essential. Last, for the realization of these improvements, the allocation of resources must be specifically geared to meet mission-critical facility needs cost effectively, to increase the number of offenders in valuable programs, to engage the community, to improve safety and to develop academic and vocational skills, all of which must be measured accurately and often.

## **B. 2005-06 Task Force/IAFS Work Plan**

To align more specifically with the DOC FOCUS plan, the Task Force and IAFS created its own work plan for 2005-06, with subcommittees that would be consistent with its longstanding concerns. (*Appendix 22*) Prioritizing objectives, they decided to increase their visibility with communications and outreach and to develop important existing projects. They structured these objectives to fit within the DOC plan’s categories and created corresponding subcommittees whose purpose and progress are summarized below:

### **F FOSTERING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

**Priority:** Restorative Justice for Girls/Woman

**Action Required:** Subcommittee to research current state of affairs for Restorative Justice

#### Restorative Justice Subcommittee

The Task Force and IAFS were educated about restorative justice activities and decided not to pursue this avenue at this time.

### **O OPTIMIZING BEST PRACTICES**

**Priority:** Gender responsive LSI/YLSI tool

**Priority:** Gender responsive case plans

**Action Required:** Complete trailer project. Subcommittee to facilitate individuals using pilot case plan at workplace and provide feedback to TF/IAFS

#### Case Plans Subcommittee

Trailer project was still underway in December 2006, with ongoing implementation and evaluation. The Model Case Plan also was completed, published and distributed in conjunction with a pilot training program in November 2006, and the topic of case plan management was featured at the 2006 annual conference. The model has been published on the NIC website under “Women Offender Activities: <http://nicic.org/Library/021870>.

Further use and implementation of this model plan will be explored in 2007.

### **C CREATING A RESPECTFUL, DIVERSE CULTURE**

**Priority:** Recruit/retain diversity of membership on TF/IAFS

**Action Required:** Subcommittee in charge of recruitment of persons from underrepresented populations to serve on TF and IAFS

#### Recruitment Subcommittee

Greater geographic, social and professional diversity was accomplished. Subcommittee plans to develop an informational brochure or pamphlet for distribution at relevant events.

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### **U UTILIZING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

**Priority:** Develop/sustain website for TF/IAFS (with DOC link)

**Action Required:** Subcommittee to develop and maintain TF/IAFS website

*Website Subcommittee*

Website was successfully launched within the DOC site and is being diligently maintained with ongoing development and expansion.

### **S STRATEGIC AND EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES**

**Priority:** Follow up on findings in “One Less Bed” report (probation/supervised release violations)

**Action Required:** Subcommittee to explore obtaining technical assistance from NIC regarding probation/supervised release violators being committed to Shakopee

*Technical Assistance Subcommittee*

A positive initial response and concept description from NIC resulted in reconsideration of the scope and manageability of the proposed project. A narrower scope and simpler logistics were suggested in a response to the NIC, with the project proceeding in three phases. NIC response and further developments are pending.

In addition to these subcommittees, another was created to bring the 2002 Action Plan up-to-date, resulting in this TRANSITION TO “FOCUS” document. Progress reports on the 2005-2006 Work Plan were issued at the end of each year. (*Appendix 23*)

### **C. Operational Alignment**

Under the highly supportive yet pragmatic leadership of Joan Fabian, Commissioner of Corrections since 2003, the Task Force and IAFS have pulled together constructive ideas for seizing upon the realities of females in the state corrections system. As expressed to the Task Force and IAFS in December 2005, the Commissioner sees gender-responsive policy initiatives as of prime importance, with the DOC responsible for implementing them and standing behind gender-specific strategies and principles in its “best practices.”

Increasing the visibility and understanding of gender-responsive policy as well as visibility of the Task Force and IAFS is key to gaining support from the public and the legislature. Those efforts require open and timely communication with the DOC for consistency in agendas and operations, and they permit the use of administrative, strategic and other assistance from the DOC, including top liaisons from adult and juvenile areas. Above all, continuing to cultivate a smooth and mutually knowledgeable relationship with the DOC itself provides the best opportunity for pursuing the mission.

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For example, the Task Force discontinued the Restorative Justice Subcommittee in 2006 based upon the DOC’s expanded activity in that area and the availability of information from its spokesperson. However, the Task Force also established four new subcommittees in September 2006 in response to new information and opportunities. They included: (1) a *Presentation Subcommittee* for strategic partnerships and appearances at conferences and meetings throughout the state; (2) a *Women Incarcerated at the MCF-Shakopee Subcommittee* for exploring programs and issues such as chemical dependency treatment; (3) a *Women Incarcerated at the Local Level Subcommittee* to examine issues with county detentions; and (4) a *Children of Incarcerated Parents Subcommittee* to work with the Council on Crime & Justice on its new initiative. A *Bylaws/Policy Subcommittee* was added in 2007 to develop policies relevant to women and girls as well as to the Task Force and the IAFS themselves. This subcommittee created a governing document for the Task Force (to replace original bylaws) that was adopted in June 2007 and approved by the Commissioner of Corrections in August 2007. (*Appendix 24*) and in the same month absorbed the Action Plan Subcommittee whose work was completed. In addition, the Task Force and IAFS held a very productive joint meeting at the Crow Wing County Judicial Center in Brainerd, expanding its first-hand communication with stakeholders outside the metro area and stimulating the Task Force’s interest in the county level jail experience.

Similarly, the IAFS decided to focus on the state commit girls programming and funding and to establish its own set of priorities from increasing knowledge of the needs and resources across the state regarding gender-responsive services for girls. It is exploring the preparation of a network of resources available and, with the Task Force, has been invited to participate in an extensive AMICUS grant project for statewide assessment of the needs of juvenile female offenders. It has created a subcommittee for this purpose and two other subcommittees on DOC and Interagency systems, money and resources.

***Using a comprehensive and flexible long-term approach that can adjust to DOC strategic directions is both feasible and prudent. The Task Force and IAFS continue to move forward methodically in operational alignment with the DOC. Their work is geared to increasing community and professional visibility of policy concerns; educating and training staff and providers; broadening Task Force and IAFS membership and reach; addressing particular concerns as they rise to the top; and ultimately achieving effective gender-responsive approaches to the intelligent management and reduction of the female offender population in Minnesota – enriching our state with stable and functional women and girls.***

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**APPENDIX**

1. Minn. Stat. §§ 241.70-241.73, as amended (2007)
2. DOC “Parity for Female Offenders,” SOP 102.210, September 2001, DOC Policy Manual, as amended December 2007
3. Minn. Sess. Laws 1991, Chap. 135, §§1-4
4. Minn. Sess. Laws 1994, Chap. 636, Art 1, §5, Subd.7
5. Revised IAFS Position Statement, 1997.
6. “*Minnesota Action Plan for Female Offenders*” (2002 Plan)
7. Summary Report to Task Force, August 2005.
8. Presentation to Task Force, October 2005.
9. DOC “Classification and Assessment” SOP 203, 203.016, DOC Policy Manual, as amended April 2006
10. DOC website, EBP, “Offender Risk and Assessment Network (ORAN).
11. Community Corrections Act (CCA), Minn. Stat. Chapter 401 (2007)
12. “Female Offender Case Planning & Case Management,” December 2005
13. Minnesota Restorative Services Coalition (MRSC), [www.mnrsc.org](http://www.mnrsc.org)
14. “*Gender Responsive Strategies for Women and Girls*”
15. Task Force Presentation delivered by Associate Justice Esther Tomljanovich, retired, May 2006
16. Executive Summary, pp. 17-18, “*Report on the Overall Impact of Alcohol and Other Drugs across All Case Types*,” Minnesota Supreme Court Task Force on Alcohol and Other Drugs, November 17, 2006
17. DOC “Adult Probation and Supervised Release Supervision Standards,” SOP 201.022, DOC Policy Manual, as amended March 2007
18. DOC Housing Program Announcement, March 2006

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19. “*One Less Bed: Report on Alternatives to Incarceration – Female Offenders,*”  
MCF-Shakopee, February 2004
20. DOC *FOCUS on Strategic Planning* (July 2004-December 2006)
21. EBP, DOC website, <http://forums.doc.state.mn.us/ebp/default.aspx>
22. 2005-06 Work Plan
23. Annual Progress Reports on the 2005-2006 Work Plan
24. Charge of the Advisory Task Force on the Woman and Juvenile Female Offender in Corrections, approved by the Commissioner of Corrections, August 2007.