

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 1 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) provides programming and practices to create a foundation for successful reentry into society. The ideology with Evidence Based Prisons (EBP) is to embrace practices that have proven to be successful by focusing on personal growth, accountability, and employability skills. Programs focus on a positive cognitive structure or thought processes to establish healthy behavioral traits. For a more holistic approach, offenders are part of peer Mentoring and receive support from community stakeholders. This policy will address the guidelines for the administration Evidence Based Programs for GDC facilities.

II. Authority:

A. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 106.02 Chaplaincy Community Services; 107.01 Purpose & Objectives – Access to Counseling Services and Programs; 107.05 Program Management and Cognitive Behavioral Programs; 107.18 R.I.S.E. The Statewide Offender Mentoring Program; 109.01 Local Management of Volunteer Services; 201.01 Store Vending Account Expenditures in Excess of \$1,500.00; 209.01 Offender Discipline; 220.03 Classification Committee; 227.05 Offender Visitation; 407.02 Offender Store Account Guidelines; 407.04 Contribution Trust Fund Guidelines; and 503.01 Faith and Character Based Initiatives; and

B. A.C.A. Standards: 5-ACI-1G-01; 5-ACI-1G-03; 5-ACI-2B-02; 5-ACI-3D-04; 5-ACI-5E-01; 5-ACI-5E-04; 5-ACI-5E-05; 5-ACI-5E-07, and 5-ACI-7B-13.

III. Definitions:

As used in this SOP, these terms are defined as follows:

A. **Electives** - Are classes that are facilitated by Mentors that have been through the Pathfinders training and in compliance with R.I.S.E Mentor policy.

B. **Evidence Based Facility** - A facility that implements a two (2) year program which uses Evidence Based Practices to determine training and programming for the prison staff and offenders.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 2 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

- C. **Incentives** - As it relates to Evidence Based Program, Incentives are used to motivate or encourage positive behavior. This can be purchases made to incentivize the entire program as a whole such as TV's, video game consoles, or incentive meals.
- D. **Mentor** - An offender who is trained to assist, guide, educate, and support the offender population under staff supervision.
- E. **Moral Recondition Therapy (MRT)** - A structured, cognitive behavioral approach to facilitating change in an offender's behavior. MRT is designed to promote pro-social behavior incorporating the following elements: Confrontation and self-assessment, assessment of current relationships, reinforcement of positive behavior and habits, positive identity formation, enhancement of self-concept, decreasing hedonism, and developing higher stages of moral reasoning.
- F. **Next Generation Assessment (NGA)** - An automated, actuarial assessment of risks and needs created for and used on the Georgia correctional population (offenders and high-risk probationers) that produces risks, needs, and responsivity scores.
- G. **Pathfinders Training** - Provides education for offenders to become a Mentor and facilitate group sessions based on the phases outlined in the curriculum.
- H. **Pathfinders Program** - A course designed to introduce offenders to the skills and knowledge that will prepare them to become productive and effective Mentors.
- I. **Security Threat Group (STG)** - Offenders who have been identified as posing a significant concern to the safety, security, and orderly management of a facility.
- J. **Reentry Assessment Center (RAC)** - Career center located within GDC facilities, staffed with offenders trained as career clerks; contains resources used to build career/ employment plans.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 3 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

K. **TCU Criminal Thinking Scales (TCU-CTS)** - This assessment includes 36 items from 6 scales representing Insensitivity to Impact of Crime, Response Disinhibition, Justification, Power Orientation, Grandiosity, and Social Desirability. This is an assignment tool instrument to be designed to be used as a tool to measure changes in criminal thinking; it is not designed to serve as a measure of criminal risk.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedure:

A. Requirements for participation in a Prison Evidence Based Program:

1. Must have two (2) to five (5) years to Tentative Parole Month (TPM)/Maximum Release Date (MRD).
2. No offenders within 14 days of release date.
3. Disciplinary Referrals (DRs) will be removed from the program with eligibility to reenter the program as follows:
 - a. Classified as Great, 12 months;
 - b. Classified as High six (6) months.
 - c. Classified as Moderate or below will be at the discretion of the Facility Coordinator.
 - i. Justification for removal/reentry is necessary; and
 - ii. Additional sanctions may be required such as extra duty or writing assignments and are at the disposal of all staff and DR Investigator.
4. No extensive medical history.
 - a. No pending medical consults within the past two (2) weeks; and

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 4 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

- b. No health activity profile level classified as 3, 4, or 5.
5. No Mental Health Classified as 3, 4 or 5. Offenders with a Mental Health Classification of 1 or 2 may participate.
6. Offenders who are unable to live in the General Population setting will be excluded from the programming.
7. Completed participation agreement (Attachment 1) by offender is presented to the classification committee for review.
8. The Warden/Superintendent or designee will grant approval or denial for offenders coming directly from classification, the classification committee will follow SOP 220.03, Classification Committee, as indicated by the NGA for placement in the program.
9. Offender will read and sign the Offender Agreement (Attachment 1) during the interview/application process. Interviews are conducted by a panel determined by the Warden/Superintendent.
10. Offenders who are removed from the program will be referred to the Offender Administration for appropriate facility reassignment.
 - a. Removal is justified by violating the terms of the contract; and
 - b. Offenders will be eligible to be reinstated 12 months after the removal date.
11. Once the Participation Agreement has been signed (Attachment 1), offenders will receive three (3) shirts (neon green) and badges that identify them as participants in the program. Facilities will utilize a color system to indicate phase participation. Badges will align with color system that is assigned at the originating facility.
 - a. Receipt of shirts will be indicated on Attachment 1; and

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 5 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

b. Shirts must be returned in the event of removal from the program or transfer to another facility.

i. If the shirt is damaged, lost or altered, protocols for SOP 209.01, Offender Discipline, will be followed.

12. Shirts should be requested from Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) and sent in batch form per facility dorm. Information should include size and amount.

B. General requirements for staffing at Evidence Based Prisons.

1. The Program will be under the direct supervision of the Warden/Superintendent.
2. The Warden/Superintendent or designee and the Facility EPB Program Coordinator will be expected to work in conjunction to assure the program runs as it should. Because collaboration is essential, weekly meetings must be established to discuss goals/outcomes/concerns.
3. The Facility EBP Program Coordinator's general activities are outlined below:
 - a. Managing caseloads, which include offenders who are Mentors in the program.
 - b. Documenting (minutes) monthly meetings with Mentors to discuss progress and concerns of the program.
 - c. Screening of participants for Disciplinary Referrals and other program participation.
 - d. Maintaining monthly class rosters that are to be housed in the EBP file.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 6 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

- e. Observing offender-facilitated programming to include evaluations of peer-instructed classes.
 - i. Observations will be at least once per month per class.
 - ii. Effectiveness of the class will be determined by the following three (3) criteria:
 - (A) Does the class address a criminogenic need?
 - (B) Does the class have measurable outcomes? And
 - (C) Are the outcomes in line with changing participants mindsets from anti-social to pro-social?
- f. Coordinating volunteer recruitment with Chaplin or Volunteer Coordinator for community outreach for career speakers/Mentors and will follow steps outlines in GDC SOP 109.01, Local Management of Volunteer Services.
- g. Coordinating community outreach efforts for donated items that are for the purpose of this initiative. Donations will be monitored in accordance with GDC SOP 407.04, Contribution Trust Funds Guidelines.
- h. Briefing the Warden/Superintendent and Statewide EBP Coordinator on the program.
- i. Producing mandatory weekly reports, (Attachment 5) as advised by Statewide EBP Coordinator.

C. Phase Descriptions:

- 1. Evidence Based Prisons are considered to be a program within the facility which consists of four (4) identified phases. Classes are facilitated by offenders who have completed the four (4) phases and other related programs.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 7 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

2. Best Practices indicate delay entry into the program until facility assignment is completed for those who have time remaining on their sentences. Any offender with two (2) years or less will be placed in programming by need, and not by phase order. This will guarantee participation prior to release eligibility.
3. Curriculum is housed at Central Office and provides objectives and goals of each phase as well as Electives.
4. Participants, unless otherwise determined, will follow the phases in the order listed below:
 - a. Phase 1, Orientation and Groundwork: In this phase the offender will go through an orientation period with staff and peer Mentors. The NGA will be reviewed, and a case plan will be developed. The offender will also do a self-assessment looking at these areas.
 - i. Meaningful personal journaling is a component that is expected in all phases. This is to be self-reflective and provide groundwork or roadmap to self-awareness.
 - ii. The offender will participate in community meetings (these are dormitory specific).
 - iii. If the offender is referred to MRT and has not completed the program, he/she will participate at this time.
 - iv. Education and Vocational Education programming will begin.
 - v. Completion of TCU-CTS (Attachment 3); and
 - vi. The offender will enroll in a minimum of one (1) elective or phase class.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 8 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

- b. Phase 2: Invention Phase: During this phase, the offender will start to re-invent themselves with the idea of promoting self-efficacy, which promotes self-awareness and the ability to adjust thought processes in a more positive nature.
 - i. The offender will continue education and vocational programming.
 - ii. STG programming (Identity Reformation and STG Journaling) will begin if needed.
 - iii. Reentry Assessment Center participation will begin.
 - iv. Elective programs will increase to two (2) minimum; and
 - v. NGA case plan assessed program will continue.
- c. Phase 3: Conversion Phase: This is the phase where change is becoming more apparent in the offender. The offender has begun to display pro-social behaviors based on changed cognitive structure.
 - i. Community Service projects will begin; (examples include arts & crafts for local community/charity programs for offenders that align with facility guidelines and rules).
 - ii. Offender will be assessed for Mentor possibilities.
 - iii. Offender will continue in previous programming; and
 - iv. Offender will engage in peer support groups.
- d. Phase 4: Evolution: This is the phase where the offender is working strongly on family issues as well as community service programming.
 - i. Parenting programming will begin.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 9 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

- ii. Community Service will increase where the client is taking a leadership role in the projects.
 - iii. All former programming will continue.
 - iv. Leisure Skills will begin. The participants will explore ways to use creativity as a constructive use for their free time.
 - v. When possible, the individual will be paired with a community Mentor/positive reinforcement. The community Mentor (SOP 109.01);
 - vi. The offender will participate in Reentry Skill Building; and
 - vii. The offender will facilitate peer support classes.
 - e. Graduation/Reentry Component: This is an aftercare component of the four (4) phase program which will allow the participant the ability to develop individual release plans while assisting others within the program.
 - i. The offender will participate in Mentoring training.
 - ii. The offender will participate in specialized support group services.
 - iii. Completion of TCU-CTU (Attachment 3).
- D. If a new topic or subject is recommended as an elective, the following steps must be followed:
- 1. Facility EBP Coordinator will establish if the proposed elective meets the objectives of the EBP program.
 - 2. Pathfinder training is permissible; and

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 10 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

3. If it meets the above criteria, the Facility EBP Coordinator will submit the Elective Proposal form (Attachment 4) to the Statewide Program Coordinator.
- E. With the consent of the offender, the Warden/Superintendent or designee will submit the agreement form (Attachment 1) via email to the EBP Coordinator.
- F. Staff Training: Staff and offender relationships or professional rapport has been shown to greatly improve outcomes. When staff model the behaviors we want to see in our offenders, the likelihood of effecting positive change in the offenders is increased. Identified departmental training courses listed below help us in this regard.
 1. Motivational Interviewing: Offender-centered, directive method for enhancing internal motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence.
 2. Effective Communication: Course designed to highlight how cognitive structure drives behavior and uses communication techniques to effect change in offenders.
- G. Incentives: The Evidence Based Program is designed to affect positive behavior change through a change in cognitive structure. One tool to reinforce positive behavioral change is the use of incentives. Incentives, when applied properly, motivate positive behavior change.
 1. Incentives should always be used to reinforce positive behaviors and not as a form of currency or pacification, and
 2. When Incentives are used incorrectly, the impact is less rewarding, and the primary motivation caused by incentivizing behavior will be lost.
- H. Mentors: The choosing of peer Mentors is key to program success. It is intended that 10% of the Evidence Based population should be Mentors. GDC Staff recommend offenders to become Mentors and follow SOP 107.18, R.I.S.E. The

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 11 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

Statewide Offender Mentoring Program, for qualifying criteria and selection process including the completion of the staff led Pathfinders Facilitation training.

- I. Budget: When necessary, purchases may be made for the Evidence Based Program utilizing 10% of the offender commissary profit from the Inmate Benefit Fund. This can be used for incentive purchases or for program elective equipment. (SOP 407.02, Offender Store Account Guidelines) This will be at the discretion of the Warden/Superintendent or designee. No purchases will be made without direct approval and authorization from the Warden/Superintendent or designee.
- J. Housing: For facilities that are not fully EBP integrated, the following housing specifications will be made:
 - 1. Participating offenders must have a signed contract and be actively participating in the program and abiding by the terms of the contract.
 - 2. The Warden or designee (generally the Facility Evidence Based Coordinator) will approve who is allowed to be housed in Evidence based dorms. There is to be no exception to this criterion.
 - 3. If a participant is removed from the program, he/she will be placed in a non-EBP dorm.

NOTE: If the facility is fully integrated and a participant is removed from the program, he/she will be transferred to a non-EPB facility. Reasoning will be violating the terms of EBP contract. This must be indicated on Attachment 1 and placed into SCRIBE as well. A DR must also be attached.

- K. Family days are an integral part of the evidence-based program and focus on the concept of family reunification. When family days are used appropriately, family days can be used to motivate positive behavior change.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 12 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

1. Family Day- Participants must abide by all terms of the contract and cannot receive any DR's, they must participate in all classes assigned according to case plan; and
2. Family Day Frequency- It is recommended that two (2) family days a year are held. However, if circumstances warrant, one (1) per year is allowable. The Warden or designee will decide when and how many participants will participate in family day. It is recommended that family days be planned between two (2) and three (3) months in advance and must be approved at the regional level by the Regional Director. Family member registration must be completed and submitted thirty (30) days prior to the event and will follow SOP 227.05 Visitation of Offenders.

L. Program Evaluation: To maintain the integrity and evaluation of the Project, the facilities and Statewide EBP Coordinator will involve a process (primarily formative), Fidelity of Implementation (FOI), and outcome evaluation components. These components will include but are not limited to:

1. Completed Attachment 1.
2. Disciplinary Reports.
3. Class Rosters.
4. TCU-CTS results (Attachment 3); and
5. Incentives for program (this will include financial reports and inventories of tangible items).

V. Attachments:

Attachment 1: Participation Agreement

Attachment 2: Scoring Instructions

Attachment 3: Scoring Sheet

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Evidence Based Prison Program

Policy Number: 214.04

Effective Date: 02/20/2025

Page Number: 13 of 13

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level 1: All Access

Attachment 4: Elective Proposal

Attachment 5: Weekly Report

VI. Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:

Attachments 1 and 3 will be maintained in Offender's file for two (2) years, or if program completion occurs prior to two years, it may be removed. Attachments 4 and 5 will be maintained by the Statewide EBP Coordinator for two (2) years.