



NATIONAL CENTER ON INSTITUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

The National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA) was founded in 1977 as a 501(c)(3) corporation for the express purpose of providing timely intervention, education, and unconditional care to all persons who come into contact with the human services or criminal justice systems. NCIA is a national service provider, advocate, and resource for those persons and entities seeking alternatives to institutionalization.

Principal programs include sentencing and capital mitigation services for courts and attorneys; technical assistance and master planning for state and local governments seeking to lower their reliance on institutionalization; residential living units for individuals with special needs; educational and vocational alternatives for the developmentally disabled; mental health counseling for adults; research and consultation on jail suicide and its prevention; and groundbreaking research and timely analysis on criminal and juvenile justice.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

All of NCIA's initiatives are predicated on an understanding of the whole person and all services are designed to fit each individual's unique needs and strengths.

Professional Sentencing Services — Since 1979, NCIA has been the industry leader in providing alternative sentencing and post-conviction services to defendants, attorneys and courts. Under the trademark “Client Specific Planning” (CSP), the Center created and refined a service that provides detailed client information and specific, creative programs for decisionmakers to use at sentencing or parole hearings. NCIA has prepared over 15,000 individual cases for nearly all federal district courts and all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia. NCIA also provides an array of mitigation services.

Residential Services — Over the past decade, NCIA has developed and implemented an innovative residential program for the developmentally disabled, and others requiring intensive supervision and assistance in a community-based setting. Alternative Living Units (ALUs) are moderately-sized residences staffed with 24-hour awake supervision and supported by professional service providers. Staff create individualized treatment and behavior plans that tailor clinical, medical, educational, vocational, and employment services to each individual served.

Educational Services — In 1992, NCIA began providing educational services to young people whose special needs were not being met in mainstream public schools. NCIA has built two state-of-the-art Level V schools that today serves over 100 students. In addition to both diploma and certificate track educational programs, the curriculum offers instruction in life skills/independent living, and vocational training in the fields of organic horticulture, graphic arts, culinary arts, commercial maintenance, woodworking, warehousing and barbering.

Career Development — Day vocational training and supported employment are growing programs at NCIA. Adults with developmental disabilities are trained in a variety of occupations and industries, including food service, building maintenance, horticulture, landscaping, order fulfillment, and simple manufacturing processes. Individuals are prepared for employment in supportive community businesses and are assisted by NCIA job coaches. In addition, the Program maintains full-time staff for clinical, medical and case management support.

Jail Suicide Prevention — Since 1986, NCIA, in partnership with the National Institute of Corrections, has acted as the National Coordinator of the Jail Suicide Prevention Task Force. The project conducts jail suicide prevention seminars; provides technical assistance materials to state officials and individual jail facilities; and disseminates a quarterly newsletter, *Jail Suicide/Mental Health Update*. The project offers training curriculum on suicide prevention in jails and collects data from county jails, city jails, and police lockups on incidences of suicide.

Public Policy Research and Analysis — NCIA researchers and public policy analysts study current criminal and juvenile justice trends and develop effective alternative policy proposals for consideration by communities and elected officials. Staff research and analysis has appeared in major newspapers, magazines, journals, radio, and television. NCIA has organized congressional symposia on sentencing guidelines, written reports to the United Nations, and sponsored international conferences on pressing justice issues. NCIA also sponsored the National Criminal Justice Commission, which published a book entitled *The Real War on Crime*.



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