

THE FORENSIC INTENSIVE RECOVERY (FIR) PROJECT

The FIR project was developed in November 1993, in response to a 1991 federal consent decree to reduce overcrowding in the Philadelphia County Prisons and ultimately to reduce the recidivism rate among substance dependent county inmates.

The Project is a partnership between various Criminal Justice Agencies and the Department of Behavior Health-Office of Addiction Services, which administers and manages all licensed substance abuse treatment facilities in the city and county of Philadelphia. Currently there are over 70 programs, from in-patient to out-patient, providing various levels and types of treatment for males and females who are substance dependent.

FIR ELIGIBILITY

Clinically- clients are eligible for FIR consideration if there is an indication of substance use/abuse prior to incarceration.

Legally- clients determined eligible for potential placement through the FIR Project generally fall in the following categories:

- Serving a Philadelphia County Sentence and is re-entry eligible (this could be early parole, earn time good time parole, minimum parole or parole at any time before the maximum release date) **(custody clients);**
- Released on probation or parole with a court order for a FIR Evaluation **(not in custody);**
- Appears for a Violation of Probation Hearing and FIR evaluation is ordered in lieu of incarceration or a condition of release from incarceration **(may be in or out of custody);**
- Appears for sentencing after a conviction and a FIR Evaluation is ordered as condition of probation or parole **(may be in or out of custody).**

Clients excluded by FIR are sex offenders, Clients charged with Arson, Veterans requiring residential treatment, Clients with severe and persistent mental health disorders, clients who are not residents, etc.

Once the above preliminary screenings are completed referrals are sent to PHMC/FIR Clinical Evaluation Unit at 260 South Broad Street, for the evaluation and funding approval for treatment. Evaluators are now located on the prison grounds to facilitate easier access to clients, medical records and hopefully reduce the delay in getting reports completed.

TO HAVE A FIR EVALUATION COMPLETED

So that all eligible clients in the system will have access to FIR, the Defender Association Adult Social Services Unit identifies and refers all potentially eligible clients for assessment for FIR. Requests for evaluations are received from:

Defender Staff Attorneys - (primary source);

Court Orders - faxed or sent via interoffice mail

Private Attorneys – a letter (mailed or faxed) requesting a FIR Evaluation and some details about the client’s substance abuse history are needed;

Probation/Parole Officers (for clients who are not in custody but a FIR evaluation has been ordered as a condition of probation/parole);

ALL REQUESTS/ORDERS MUST INCLUDE PP#’S AND FORWARDED TO:

**MARILYN STEWART, DIRECTOR
ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES
Defender Association of Philadelphia
1441 Sansom Street
Philadelphia PA 19102
267-765-6998 fax**

FIR Evaluations requested for clients who are present in court on VOPs or for sentencing but who are not in custody;

The procedure for clients who are present in Court for **VOP Hearings** or **who receive probation or time serve and immediate parole** with FIR as a condition can be seen the same day of court in room B-03 of the CJC. A FIR Evaluator is available from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily. Client should be accompanied by the Probation Officer or given a copy of the Court Order requesting the FIR evaluation. The Order should also include the Judge's Name and Courtroom.

Once the evaluations are completed and received by the Defender Association Adult Social Services Unit, reports will be directed to the referring party with recommendations/procedures for having clients released from prison to treatment or accessing treatment from the streets.