Tips for Enhancing Restitution Collections

Address restitution during every CONTACT with the offender.

• The more you talk about payments, the more payments are made
• When the parole agent makes payment of court ordered restitution a priority, the offender will make payment a priority
• Explain how important that check is every month to that victim, talk about accountability and responsibility
• If the offender made his/her payment, acknowledge and provide positive reinforcement
• If the offender failed to make his/her payment, emphasize the importance of paying restitution.
• Promptly follow up on missed and/or partial payment and obtain a promise to pay date. Follow up to verify that the payment was made on the promised date

Probe all nonpayment excuses with in-depth QUESTIONS.

• What stood in your way of making the payment?

• What can you do to ensure that you make the payment by the date?

Look for and question the offender about assets/lifestyle choices that relate to DISPOSABLE INCOME that can be tapped for payment of restitution.

• Question the offender about lifestyle choices (i.e. cell phone, cable television, smoking, jewelry, acrylic fingernails, designer clothing, new vehicles, vacations, gifts purchased by others for the offender, electronic and/or furniture rentals, non-paying roommates, etc.)

Outline and utilize a SYSTEM of graduated responses for addressing nonpayment.

• Increased reporting, ASCRA groups for financials, conference, GPS, driver license suspension, wage attachment
• When implementing sanctions, provide the offender with limited options (i.e. you can attend budget class, or you can bring in a full payment)
• The more uncomfortable you make it for the offender not to pay, the more likely the offender is to make a payment

Use the BROKEN RECORD technique as a way to challenge offender's excuses for nonpayment.

• Keep the conversation focused on payment of restitution

• Always elicit an agreement to pay and follow up to verify payment was made