

TJC Leadership Profile: Chester Cooper



Chester Cooper is Director of the Hennepin County's Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR). He joined DOCCR in 2008, bringing 30 years of law enforcement experience to the position. Director Cooper began his career as a Detention Deputy with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and has held the ranks of Deputy, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, and Inspector as well as Area Director of DOCCR overseeing Adult Services and Deputy Sheriff. In 1994, he was awarded the Medal of Honor by the Minnesota Public Safety Service Awards Committee. A graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, he also holds a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Minnesota (1982). Director Cooper is active in his community serving as church Deacon; in this capacity he reaches out to the community in various ways by assisting those in need.

What is your approach for getting multiple agencies to work collaboratively, getting work done, and accomplishing TJC Initiative goals? The key element of successful partnering is to first identify each agency's goals (recidivism reduction, public safety, other client outcomes such as housing, employment, etc.) and then include representatives from those agencies in the planning process to help ensure their desired outcomes are achieved; it is also critical to work toward a long-term funding strategy. This said, it was beneficial for us to choose a strong lead (United Way) to advise us on community engagement issues. Having established service providers sit on the core TJC team and attend the community TJC meetings were helpful to support and maintain a shared focus and an understanding of TJC's initiatives, goals and outcomes.