

# Alternative Sentencing Options that “Work”

*Thursday, June 6, 2019*  
Forum for Children’s Well-Being

PROMOTING COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE, & BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Presented by:

**C.H. “Chuck” Slemp III**

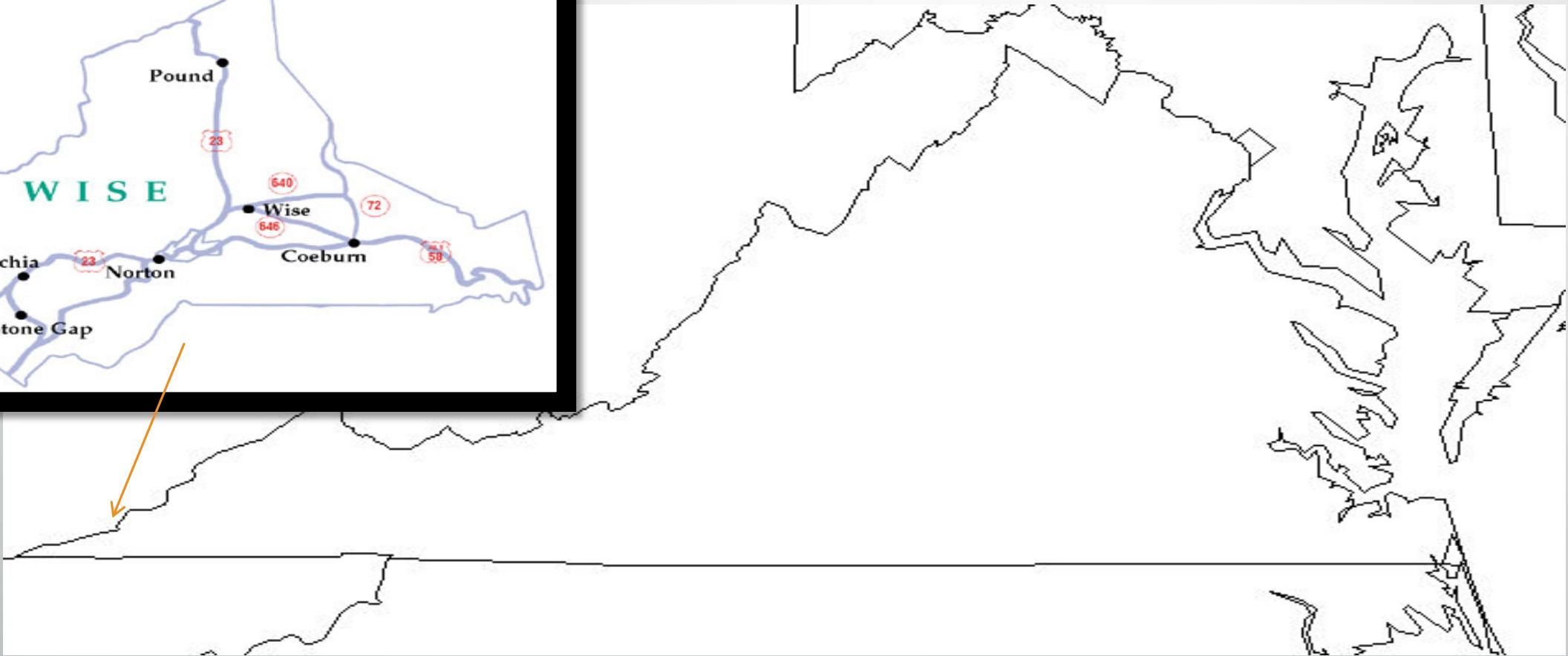
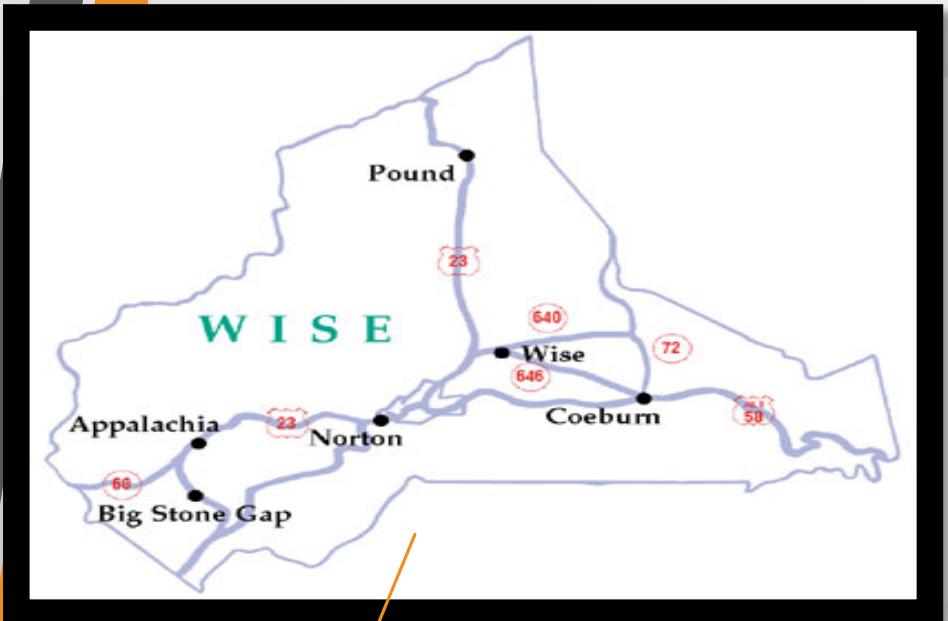
Commonwealth’s Attorney for Wise County & the City of Norton





Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney  
Wise County & the City of Norton

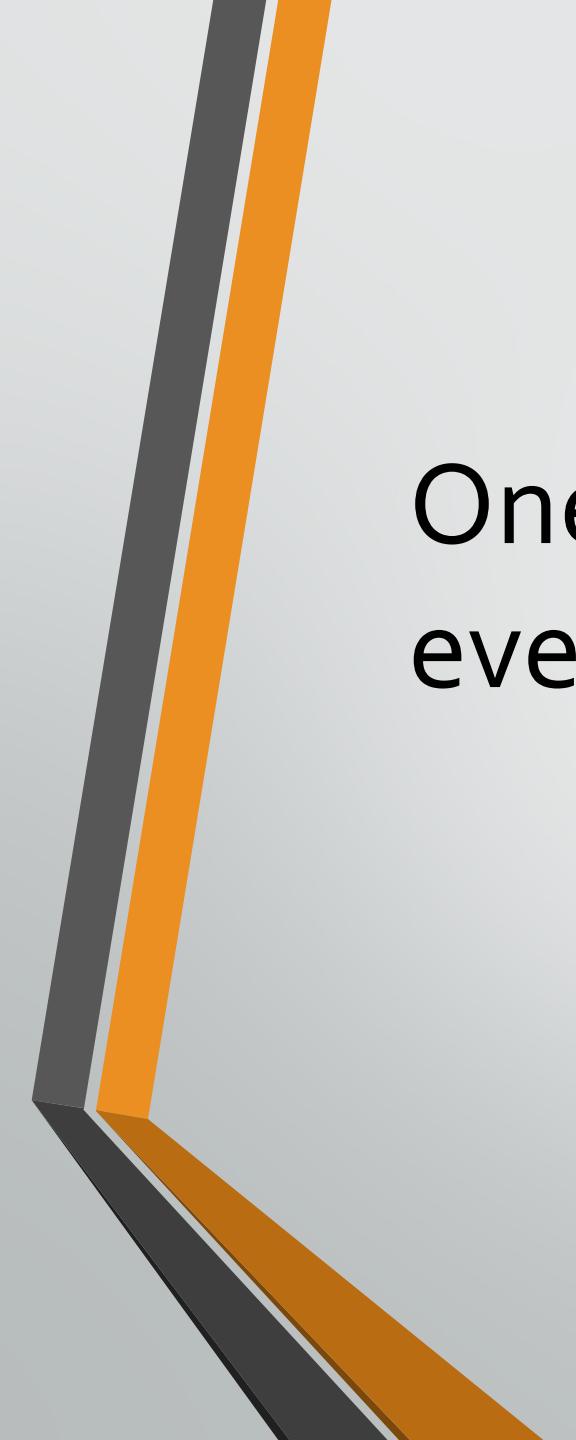
# Wise County / City of Norton





# Children's Well-Being: *Engaging the Public, Families, & Change Agents*





One person can make a difference and  
everyone should try.

*~ John F. Kennedy*

# Role of the Commonwealth's Attorney



# STATUTORY DUTIES

“The attorney for the Commonwealth . . . shall be a part of the department of law enforcement of the county or city in which he is elected or appointed, and shall have the duties and powers imposed upon him by general law, including the duty of **prosecuting** all warrants, indictments or informations charging a felony, and he may in his discretion, prosecute Class 1, 2 and 3 misdemeanors, or any other violation, the conviction of which carries a penalty of confinement in jail, or a fine of \$500 or more, or both such confinement and fine. He shall enforce all forfeitures, and carry out all duties imposed upon him by § 2.2-3126.”

Virginia Code § 15.2-1627

- Prosecution of Crime
- Advocacy for Public Safety
- Prevention Strategies
- Pursuing Alternative Sentencing Options

W I S E  
**WORKS**



# Alternative Sentencing Programs

Commonwealth's Attorney Office for Wise County & the City of Norton Virginia

# Sentencing options?

*Our Story*



Meet the Director  
of the Wise Works  
Program



Teddy Bishop

# ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING PROGRAMS?

- Prison/Jail Incarceration?
- Drug Court?
- Treatment?
- Work Release?
- Weekend Jail?
- Community Service?

*Alternative Sentencing Programs include community service programs that allow low-level, low-risk offenders the opportunity to complete community service in lieu of incarceration and give back to the communities they have harmed.*



# What Offenders Qualify?

- Low-Level Offenders with petty crimes. These crimes can include simple drug possession, Driving Under the Influence( 1<sup>st</sup> offense), probation violations, low-level distribution offenses, etc.
- Low-Risk Offenders with no violent criminal charges or any violent criminal history.
- Offenders must be in good health and able to complete physical labor requirements.
- Offenders must also remain drug free.





# What types of community service will be completed?

Participants will complete:

- Litter Pick Up
- Mowing (all types of grounds work)
- Painting
- Construction
- Soup kitchen
- Animal care
- Food Banks
- Etc.

# Where will this community service work be completed?

- Local Litter Control
- Local Housing Authorities
- Local Habitat for Humanity
- Local Churches
- Local Animal Shelters
- Local Towns and Cities
- Any Non-Profit Organization



# W I S E W O R K S

- Wise Co. Litter Control
- Wise Co. Animal Shelter
- Wise Co. Justice Center
- Wise Co. Housing Authority (11 sites)
- Wise Co. Fair Grounds
- Wise Primary School
- Habitat for Humanity
- PAWS of SWVA
- Clinch River Cleanup
- Family Crisis Support Services (3 sites)

## Worksites in Wise County that have Benefited

- Town of Coeburn
- Town of Appalachia
- Town of St. Paul
- Town of Big Stone Gap
- City of Norton
- Pound Little league
- Health Wagon
- Remote Area Medical Event (RAM)
- 4 Local Churches
- Community Helpers



# Benefits to the Participants & Their Families

- Participants learn new job skills that will allow them to gain employment
  - Participants have access to recovery related treatment that gives them the tools to get sober and remain drug free
  - Participants give back to their communities by completing hours of community service throughout the local area that would otherwise not get done
- 

# Benefits to the Participants & Their Families (continued)

- Participants get to remain out of jail in the home with their families
- Participants that have children get to continue providing care for those children that would otherwise fall on family members or the Department of Social Services
- Participants that have children also maintain a home environment of stability in an effort to prevent MEB disorders and promote healthy development
- Participants are given structure and held accountable for their actions
- Participants can complete extra community service work to pay off court costs and fines
- The court system works with participants to help them regain their driver's license
- Participants learn the skills it takes to become a productive citizens in their communities



# Participant Feed Back

Jessica Shuler

Don't just take my word for it.  
Hear from one of our  
participants!!

- Obtain Prescription By Fraud
- Forgery
- Uttering
- Grand Larceny
- Ordered to complete 6 Months (1,440 hours)
- Completed Community Service at Mountain Empire Community College





- Many graduates have gone on to obtain full time employment.
- Several current participants have obtained full or part time employment along with their community service requirements.
- Some are being considered for employment opportunities at their current worksites once they have completed their program requirements.

# Benefits of having an Alternative Sentencing Program



COUNTIES THAT UTILIZE AN ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING PROGRAM SAVE TAX PAYERS MONEY, BY NOT HAVING TO PAY DAILY INCARCERATION FEES.



COUNTIES SAVE THOUSANDS OF TAX DOLLARS ON THE COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK THAT IS COMPLETED.



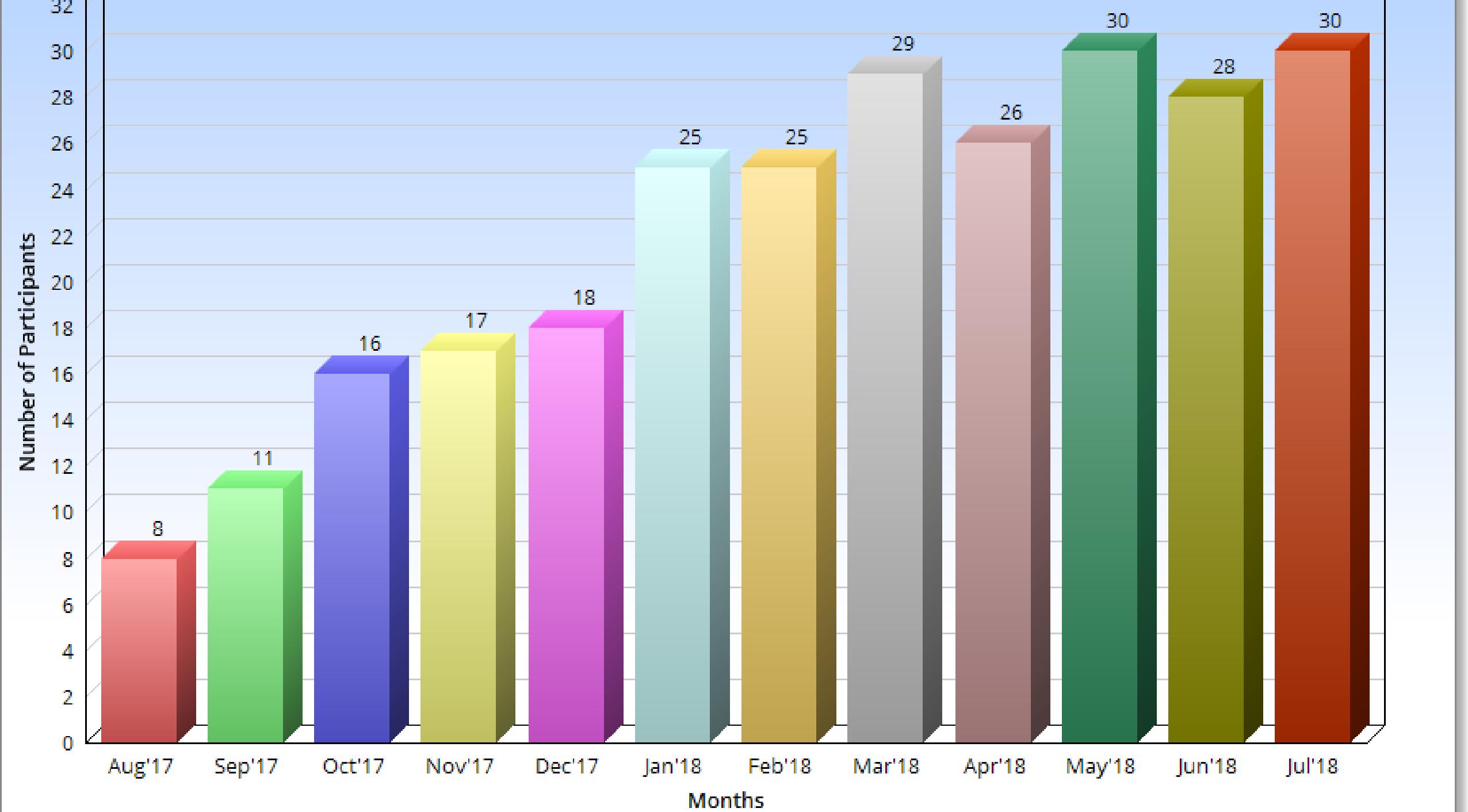
STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT PARTICIPANTS THAT COMPLETE THESE PROGRAMS ARE FAR LESS LIKELY TO COMMIT NEW CRIMES, AND REMAIN DRUG FREE LONGER, THUS CUTTING DOWN ON RECIDIVISM.

# THE RESULTS

Current stats as of April 2019:

- 67 participants since the program began
- 12 graduates thus far
- 8 removed participants
- 25 current active participants
- Over 2,000 hours worked by each participant at localities and non-profits
- 25 different job sites



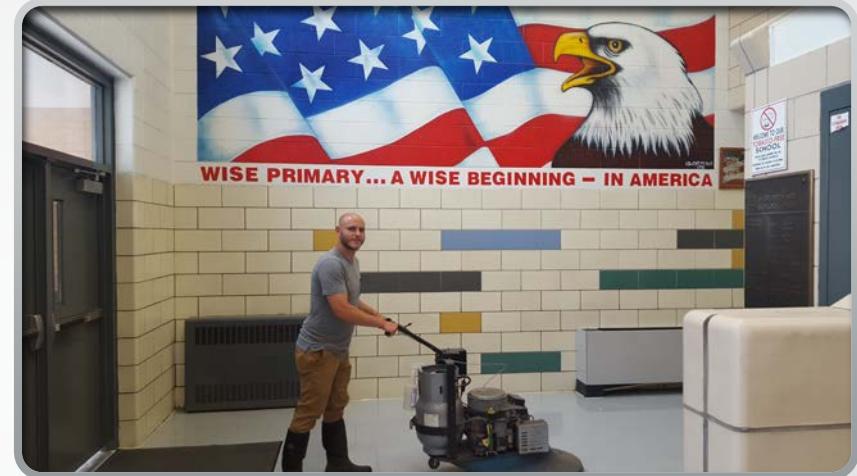


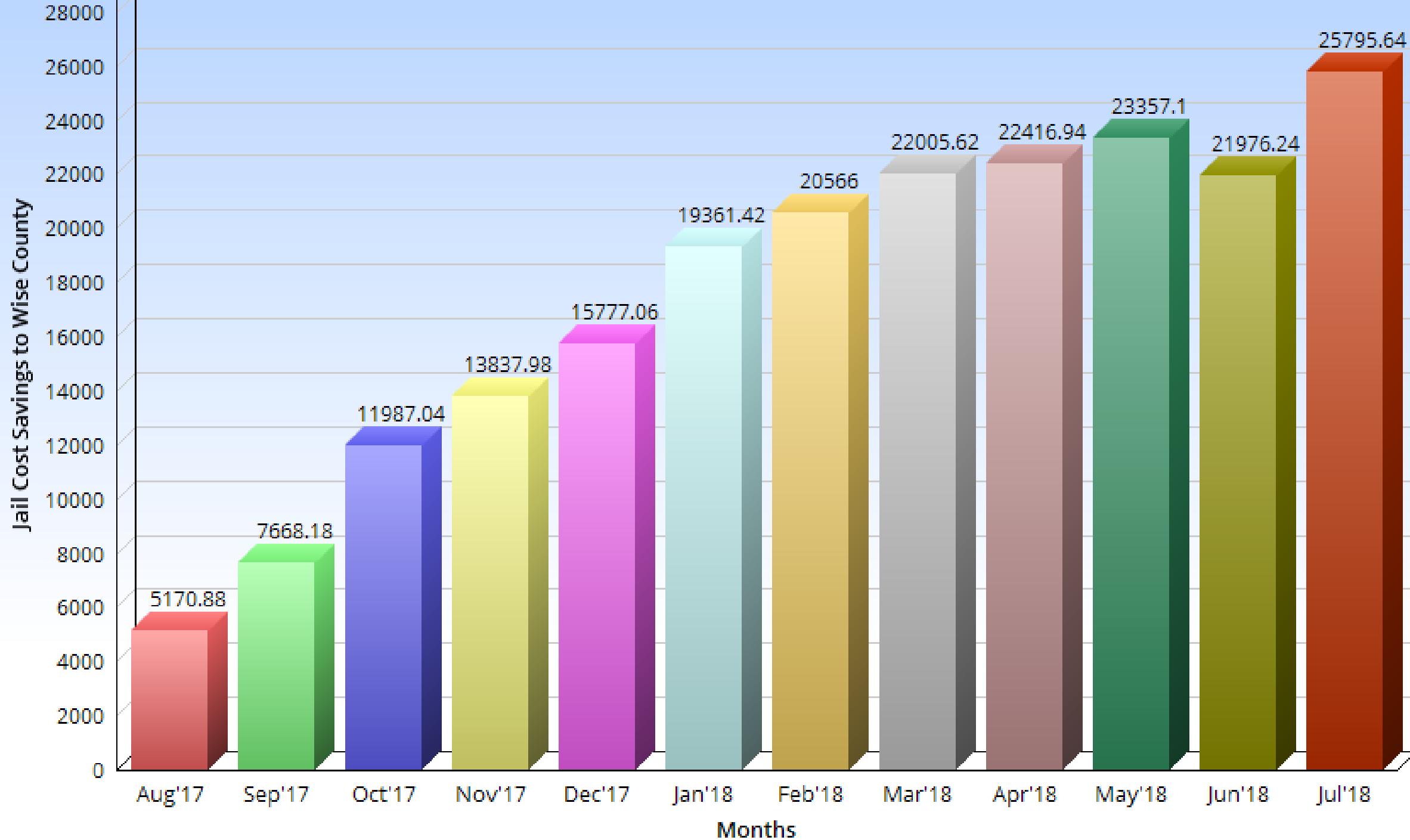
Successful completion rate:

63.15%

# THE RESULTS

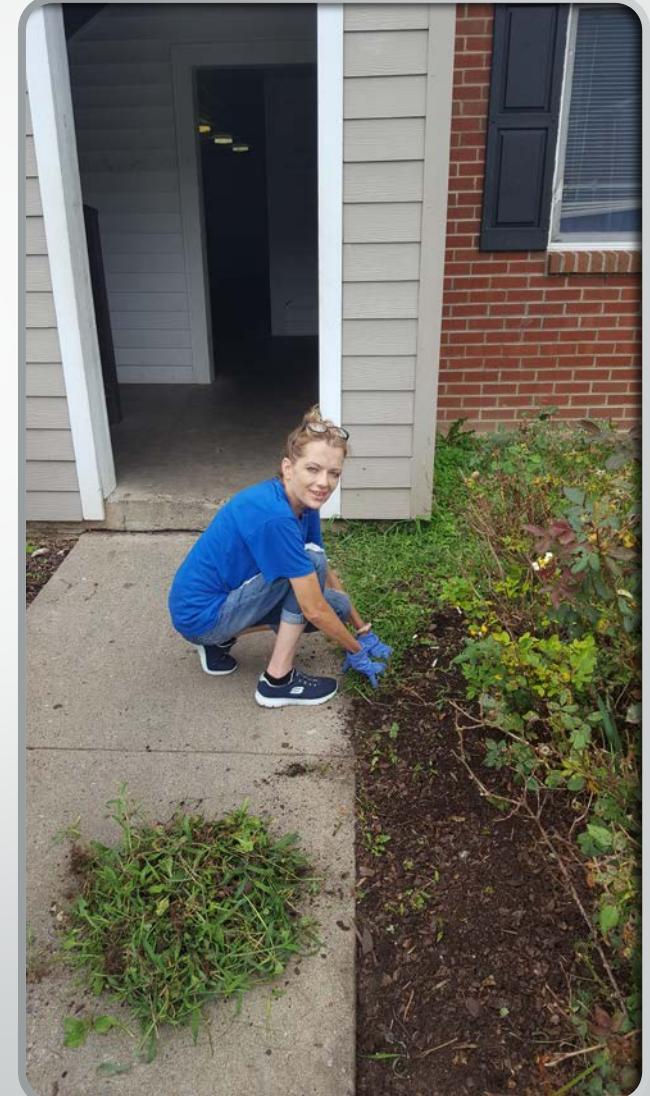
- **16,680** combined days out of jail for participants
- A total of **\$425,334.26** in jail cost savings to Wise County
- In 18+ months, the program has saved our area almost **\$500,000**.
- Last quarter, the jail credited about half of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter payment back to Wise County: an amount of roughly **\$340,000**.

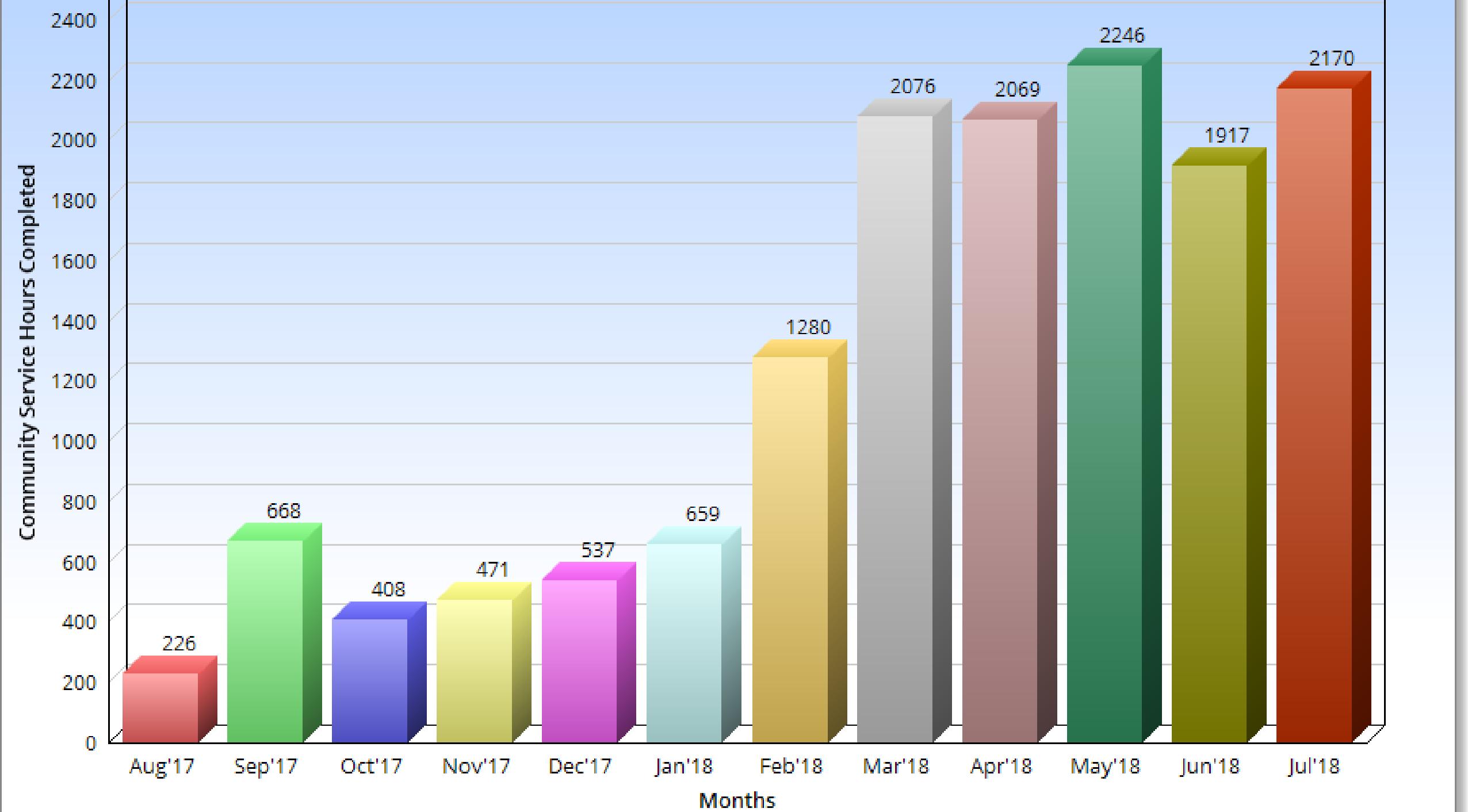




## THE RESULTS

- A total of 30,322 hours of community service has been completed in Wise County.
- Those community service hours equate to a total of \$235,037.75 in labor/cost savings for Wise County.





# TOTAL SAVINGS TO WISE COUNTY (YEAR ONE)

• JAIL COST SAVINGS:	\$ 425,334.26
• LABOR SAVINGS:	\$ 235,037.75
• COURT COST AND FINES PAID:	\$ 2,262.00
• PROGRAM FEES COLLECTED:	\$ 535.00
TOTAL COMBINED SAVINGS:	\$ 663,169.01



## Other Accomplishments:

- The Wise Works Program was selected to take part in a lengthy series on the National Public Radio (NPR) Market Place, that will air later this year.
- The Wise Works Program has been the focus of many newspaper articles.
- The Wise Works Program has been contacted by several other localities thought out the state of Virginia about adding a similar alternative sentencing program to their counties.



# Questions?

More info:

[www.chuckslemp.com](http://www.chuckslemp.com)

[www.wisecwa.com](http://www.wisecwa.com)





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