

# JRSA Electronic News

A periodic briefing for members

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## SAC News

### **Alabama Welcomes a New SAC Director**

As the new Manager of the Crime Statistics and Information Division of the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center (ACJIC), Tracy Townsend became the new Statistical Analysis Center director in December. She has more than 22 years of law enforcement experience working as a corrections officer and then sheriff's deputy with the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office, and as a parole supervisor with the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles prior to joining ACJIC in 2007. She previously served ACJIC as a field agent and as the agency's training manager. Ms. Townsend received her master's degree in criminal justice from Jacksonville (AL) State University. She takes the place of Lynn Childs, who accepted a position with the Alabama Department of Transportation.

## JRSA News

### **Webinar on CrimeSolutions.gov Available for Viewing**

On January 16, JRSA hosted a webinar on the features and information provided by CrimeSolutions.gov. Now in its third year of operation, CrimeSolutions.gov provides program evaluation information about "what works, what doesn't, and what's promising" regarding programs and interventions in criminal justice, juvenile justice, and victim services. The website, which is currently managed by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), also features a "practices" module designed to show which general strategies and categories of interventions are effective. The webinar was presented by Thomas Feucht, Executive Senior Science Advisor and Acting Deputy Director at NIJ, and was funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The webinar is available for viewing [online](#).

### **NCJA, JRSA, and the IJIS Institute to Hold the 2014 National Criminal Justice Forum**

The [2014 National Forum on Criminal Justice](#) will take place on August 10–13 in Breckenridge, Colorado. Building on last year's momentum, this year's conference will continue to focus on the integration of policy, research, and technology to improve public safety. The Forum showcases programs, research, and technologies that help justice practitioners and decision makers in states, local communities, and tribal nations address pressing public safety issues. Sponsored by the [National Criminal Justice Association](#) (NCJA), the [Justice Research and Statistics Association](#) (JRSA), and the [IJIS Institute](#), the Forum brings together leaders from federal, state, tribal, and local criminal justice agencies; top criminal justice practitioners and researchers; and technology specialists from companies providing solutions to justice agencies. Workshops will feature innovative programs and highlight how research and technology can help drive good policy. A complete agenda will be available soon and

conference registration will open in April. Mark your calendar now and plan to join your colleagues for this exciting and unique conference!

## **Publications**

### **Most Recent Issue of JRSA Forum Available**

The latest issue of the [JRSA Forum](#) is available on JRSA's website. The feature article, "[Illinois Task Force Inventories Employment Restrictions for Persons with Criminal Records](#)," describes the process used to identify and catalog the "collateral consequences" of having a criminal record, and provides a summary of findings and recommendations. A second feature, "[Re-Entry Mediation: Reducing Recidivism by Building Relationships](#)" summarizes the methods and results of a recent evaluation of the Re-entry Mediation program, a reentry strategy that actively engages an offender's family as part of a comprehensive, integrated, rehabilitative reentry approach.

### **BJS Reports on Sexual Victimization in Correctional Facilities**

According to the latest in a series of reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), correctional administrators reported 8,763 allegations of sexual victimization in prisons, jails, and other adult correctional facilities in 2011, a statistically significant increase over the number of allegations reported in 2009 (7,855) and 2010 (8,404). About half of all allegations (51%) involved nonconsensual sexual acts or abusive sexual contacts of inmates with other inmates, while the other half (49%) involved staff sexual misconduct or sexual harassment directed toward inmates. These findings are from [Sexual Victimization Reported by Adult Correctional Authorities, 2009–11](#), which presents information gathered from the Survey of Sexual Violence, an annual data collection conducted by BJS since 2004, and one of the many data collections that are conducted to meet the mandates of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA). The report presents counts of sexual acts and harassment reported to correctional authorities in adult prisons, jails, and other adult correctional facilities in 2009, 2010, and 2011.

### **OJJDP Launches Updated Model Programs Guide**

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) [Model Programs Guide \(MPG\)](#) contains information about evidence-based juvenile justice and youth prevention, intervention, and reentry programs. It is a resource for practitioners and communities about what works, what is promising, and what does not work in juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, and child protection and safety. MPG uses expert study reviewers and [CrimeSolutions.gov's](#) program review process, scoring instrument, and evidence ratings. The two sites also share a common database of juvenile-related programs.

### **Vera Institute Releases Brief on Impact of Zero Tolerance Policies**

The Center on Youth Justice at the [Vera Institute of Justice](#) has released [A Generation Later: What We've Learned about Zero Tolerance in Schools](#). This policy brief examines research showing that zero tolerance discipline policies do not make schools more orderly or safe and might have the opposite effect. Policies that push students out of school might increase their involvement in the juvenile justice system

and have negative lifelong effects. The brief describes alternatives to zero tolerance policies that keep young people safer and in school.

### **“Cultural Shift” Is Among Findings of Second Chance Act Evaluation**

According to an article in the most recent [National Institute of Justice \(NIJ\) Journal](#), the first phase of a two-phase NIJ-funded evaluation of demonstration sites funded under the Second Chance Act (SCA), finds that reentry programs are moving toward a rehabilitative philosophy and an acceptance of evidence-based practices. The SCA legislation was passed by Congress in 2008 to help criminal offenders successfully return to the community after they are released from prison or jail. Through the SCA, the Bureau of Justice Assistance has awarded more than \$250 million to fund reentry initiatives for medium- and high-risk adult and juvenile offenders. This first phase, called an implementation evaluation, was an in-depth examination of 10 state and local government agencies from around the country that were among the first to receive SCA funding. The second phase of the evaluation will be an outcome study that will examine the impact of the SCA on recidivism, and determine the cost-effectiveness of the new reentry programs. The outcome study will be completed in 2015.

### **Report on Homicide Rates Shows Declines**

The U.S. homicide rate declined by nearly half (49%) from 1992 to 2011 according to a report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. [Homicide in the U.S. Known to Law Enforcement, 2011](#) presents data on homicide trends from 1992 to 2011 and explores weapon use, with a focus on trends in firearm use and homicide trends by city size. It also includes special discussions of missing offender data and firearm use in nonfatal violent victimizations. The data are from the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports, with summary data from *Crime in the United States*, for homicide data prior to 1980. Data on nonfatal victimizations are from BJS's National Crime Victimization Survey, 1993 to 1995 and 2008 to 2011.

## **Conferences and Webinars**

### **NCJA to Hold Webinar on Innovations in Substance Abuse Treatment**

The National Criminal Justice Association will hold a webinar on [Innovations in Substance Abuse Treatment and Abstinence Reinforcement](#) on Tuesday, February 25, at 3:00 p.m. ET. Panelists will examine the research and the science behind two innovations in substance abuse treatment that can improve effectiveness and enhance the number of people who receive services. Specifically, this webinar will look at CBT4CBT, a computer-based cognitive behavioral intervention designed for substance treatment. It will also examine how contingency management, a behavioral intervention based on principles of reinforcement, can dramatically improve the ability of individuals to abstain from drug use.

### **What Everyone Who Works with Victims Needs to Know About Offenders**

There are many key research findings that sexual assault victim service providers should know about offenders. Examples include the 60% decline in sexual abuse over the past 20 years, the very low recidivism rates after treatment and the statistical effect size of treatment, information about relationships between offenders and victims, risk factors for reoffense, trauma research, and some of the actual stories

of offenders' understanding of what they did and why they did it. In this two-hour webinar, Dr. David Burton will share disguised clinical stories of offenders from his book in progress, as well as research on the areas noted above. [This webinar](#), which is being hosted by the [Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Centers](#), will be held on March 13 at 1:00 p.m. CT, and should result in a useful tool kit for anyone working with sexual assault survivors. (Continuing Education Credits are available.)

## **Announcements**

### **NCJA Seeks Nominations for Outstanding CJ Programs Awards**

The National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) is seeking nominations for its annual [NCJA Outstanding Criminal Justice Programs Awards](#). These awards honor successful criminal justice programs that use promising practices to address important crime and justice issues in communities. NCJA will honor these winning programs at the 2014 National Forum on Criminal Justice, which is being held in Breckenridge, Colorado, on August 10–13. Travel expenses will be provided for one representative from each winning program. A selection committee will review the nominations and select one program from each NCJA region and one outstanding tribal program to receive the award. The tribal program may be from any region in the country. To see previous award winners, please click [here](#). **Nominations for outstanding programs must be submitted by 5 p.m. ET on Friday, April 18, 2014.** Nominations will be accepted online, or by email to [bbroida@ncja.org](mailto:bbroida@ncja.org), fax (202) 448-1723 or mail to: NCJA, 720 7th St. NW, Third Floor, Washington, DC 20001.

### **What Can We Learn from Failed Criminal Justice Reform?**

The Center for Court Innovation, with the support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), has embarked on a multifaceted inquiry designed to promote trial and error in criminal justice reform. According to [their website](#), the Center is attempting to encourage honest self-reflection and thoughtful risk-taking among criminal justice agencies. Among the products of the Center's efforts are two books: [Trial & Error in Criminal Justice Reform: Learning from Failure](#), which posits that “public policies cannot be neatly divided into successes and failures” and [Daring to Fail: First-Person Stories of Criminal Justice Reform](#), a collection of interviews with leaders in a variety of fields – prosecution, policing, community corrections, indigent defense and others – about leadership, management and innovation.