

## A Standardized Approach to Collecting and Processing Multistate Criminal History Information for Statistical Analysis

*This article was written by Matthew R. Durose, Statistician, Bureau of Justice Statistics.*

For more than two decades, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) has utilized official criminal records in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Interstate Identification Index (III) and the state criminal history record repositories to study the recidivism patterns of various offenders, including persons on probation or discharged from prison. *The BJS National Recidivism Study of Released Prisoners* has been the sole source of national-level estimates on the number and types of crimes former inmates commit both prior to their imprisonment as well as after their release. This periodic data collection has helped to inform policy makers, practitioners, and the general public about key issues such as the rate at which sex offenders commit new sex offenses and the extent to which prisoners are involved in criminal activity in states other than the one that released them. The first inmate recidivism study followed a sample of released prisoners selected to represent all those released from prison in 1983 in 11 states. A second study tracked a cohort of state prisoners released from prison in 15 states in 1994. To measure the percentage of released prisoners rearrested, reconvicted, or returned to prison, the collection of criminal history data for both studies was initiated three years after the year of release. Tasks related to collecting, interpreting, and processing the data required signifi-

cant contributions from the participating agencies and took several years to complete.

Historically, multistate criminal history research has been a rather time-consuming and labor intensive process. Until recently, BJS did not have direct access to much of the data held by the repositories and relied on a contractor who was authorized by the FBI to request criminal history records. Each data file generated by the FBI or a state repository in response to these requests required unique and often lengthy computer programs to convert the information

into a single database that could support national-level recidivism research.

The statistics in the BJS publication *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994* currently stand as the most recent national information on recidivism. One of the highest priorities of BJS has been to develop the capacity to conduct criminal history research on a more frequent basis and address the growing demand for timely information on reentry and recidivism. BJS has taken significant steps in that direction through the *Criminal History Records*

*(See Standardized, p. 4)*

## BJS and JRSA Host Seminar on Sentencing and Corrections in the States

The Bureau of Justice Statistics partnered with the Justice Research and Statistics Association to host a seminar on June 8 highlighting current issues in sentencing and corrections in the states and nationwide. The seminar, held in the Office of Justice Program's offices in Washington, DC, focused on a recently published special edition of JRSA's journal, *Justice Research and Policy* (JRP), that contains articles by respected researchers on current sentencing and corrections policies and practices.

Rick Kern, Executive Director of the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, and Bill Bales, Associate Professor in the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University, served as guest editors of the special edition and as primary speakers at the seminar. Dr. Kern is a former Director of the Virginia Criminal Justice Research Center (Virginia's Statistical Analysis Center). Dr. Bales was the Director of Research with the Florida Department of Corrections for more than 10 years before moving to FSU.

*(See BJS and JRSA, p. 6)*

# JRSA Develops Web Site for JJDP Native American Pass-Through Calculations

Many of the formula grant programs administered by Justice Department agencies require states to provide funds to Native American tribes, but often there are little or no tribal data that can be used in the formula calculations mandated by Congress. For example, the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA) has been working with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) for the past 10 years on trying to include tribal data in calculations for the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) program. Recently JRSA formed a similar partnership with these two agencies to develop and document the Native American pass-through amounts for the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Act (also known as the Title II Formula Grants Program). Through the Act, OJJDP provides over \$60 million a year to states and territories to prevent delinquency and improve their juvenile justice systems. The 562 federally recognized Indian tribes are eligible to receive funds under the Act if they have law enforcement functions. For those that do, the Act specifies that they receive a proportion of the state funds equivalent to the proportion of juveniles under 18 in the state that are in areas served by the tribes. When JRSA took over the project, BJS had already located sources of data and carried out preliminary calculations. Data on tribes with law enforcement functions come from a BJS survey of tribes and from a directory of tribal law enforcement agencies published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Data on youth

populations were self-reported by tribes as part of an ongoing data collection by BIA and reported in their American Indian Population and Labor Force reports. JRSA used these data, along with state population data from the Census Bureau, to calculate the formula for the 30 states that have federally recognized tribes with law enforcement functions. The calculations, along with supporting documentation, are available on the Native American Pass-Through Calculation Web site ([www.jrsa.org/napt](http://www.jrsa.org/napt)). JRSA is continuing to work on obtaining more recent and accurate data on tribal youth populations for future years' formula calculations. For more information, contact Lisa Walbolt Wagner at [lwagner@jrsa.org](mailto:lwagner@jrsa.org).

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## SAC NEWS

### ICJIA Staff Work on Research and Other Projects

Staff from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Illinois' Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), have been participating in a number of projects and other activities:

- **Sheridan Correctional Center National Drug Prison and Re-entry Therapeutic Community Recidivism Study**

Sheridan Correctional Center is a medium security prison operated by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) that uses a Therapeutic Community model. Every inmate at Sheridan participates in substance abuse treatment. Before enrolling in the program, inmates agree to participate in the in-prison therapeutic community and 90 days of community substance abuse treatment (aftercare) as

a condition of their parole. Illinois SAC staff are now engaged in a study to evaluate the post-prison outcomes for graduates of Sheridan by interviewing reincarcerated graduates and learning the factors that contribute to failure at reentry. Failure includes a return to drug use or other technical violations, or committing a new crime. Data will be collected beginning this summer through 50 face-to-face interviews and findings will be available by October.

- **Redesign of Criminal Justice DataNet**

The Illinois SAC received funding from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to enhance Web access to and online presentation formats of criminal justice and social risk factor data held by the Authority. Staff are utilizing *InstantAtlas* mapping and graphing software product to create

templates of county-level criminal justice data maps and graphs. Online users (and SAC staff) will be able to access the SAC's holdings of criminal justice data to create county maps and explore relationships among the various data sets. Staff are also developing a SQL database that will allow online users to generate answers to more specific questions, such as, "Which county has the highest violent crime rate?" The data holdings are also being prepared as spreadsheets that can be downloaded directly from the Web site to allow users to perform their own analyses. The second phase of development includes a redesign of the Authority's current Web site, particularly with respect to the publications and data offerings. A page specifically dedicated to the SAC is also being developed.

- **Illinois College Campus Crime and Safety Issues Series**

SAC staff are working on a series of reports on the issues of emergency preparedness on college campuses, and general crime as reported through various sources of data. The first report, *Issues in Illinois College Campus Safety: History and Development of Campus Safety Planning*, was published on the Authority's Web site in March, on the new *College Campus Resource Center* page. Two reports, *Trends in Illinois Campus Crime at Four-Year Colleges, 2005-2008* and *A Comparison of Campus Crime Trends at Illinois Four-Year and Two-Year Colleges, 2003-2007*, are slated for publication in June. Other reports in the series include: arrests and referrals for school disciplinary action for weapons, drugs and alcohol offenses, the prevalence of sexual assault on campus, and hate crimes

(See SAC NEWS, p. 8)



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## JRSA Participates in NCJA Workshops on Evidence-Based Policies and Practices


This spring the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) held a series of Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)-sponsored workshops on evidence-based policies and practices. The workshops, *2010 Regional Workshops on Evidence-Based Policies and Practices*, were held in four locations across the country. They brought together teams of state criminal justice policy makers and decision makers to learn about evidence-based policies and programs and to develop strategies to implement and sustain these policies and practices.

Though the agendas differed somewhat by region in order to highlight

local evidence-based policies and practices, all workshops held sessions on lessons learned and accomplishments in planning and managing federal assistance from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, how to apply evidence-based practices in strategic planning and grant management, and research in action. Many Statistical Analysis Center Directors gave presentations at the workshops.

At the Columbia, South Carolina, workshop, JRSA Senior Research Associate Mary Poulin delivered a lunchtime presentation entitled, "Words, Words, Words: Bringing Clarity to the Language in Evidence-Based

Programs and Practices." The focus of the presentation was on addressing the confusion that sometimes occurs when various terms and concepts related to evidence-based programs and practices are used. In addition to offering definitions of common terms, Dr. Poulin discussed how these terms and concepts relate to each other in practice, and when and how to apply them.

More information on the workshops is available at [www.ncja.org](http://www.ncja.org). The JRSA presentation is available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/reference/words-words-words-NCJA-2010.pdf>. 

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*Information Sharing (CHRIS) and Conversion of Criminal History Records into Research Databases (CCHRRD)* projects. These projects are expected to simplify the current approach to conducting recidivism research and evaluating the grant programs that support states in improving criminal history records while reducing the reporting burden on the repositories. Through the CHRIS project, BJS has developed a secure system to receive multiple criminal history records from the FBI and state repositories in a uniform format through a single request to the FBI III System and responses received via Nlets.<sup>1</sup> This process will dramatically decrease the time and resources needed to collect data for national criminal history research. The CCHRRD project aims to build on

the uniform record layout designed through the CHRIS project and develop a long-term software solution to convert the state-specific content (e.g., free-field text and offense codes) displayed with the standard layout into a national coding structure for recidivism research.

In 2008, BJS was recognized by the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division as a criminal justice agency and assigned an ORI number (Originating Routing Indicator) to directly access information in the FBI's III database. That year, BJS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the FBI and Nlets that allows BJS to receive state and federal criminal history information through Nlets for data analysis purposes. The data sharing agreement was followed by several meetings between BJS, Nlets, and the FBI to

develop security protocols that meet the necessary data confidentiality and privacy requirements.

During 2010, BJS will utilize the data exchange model developed through the CHRIS project to track a cohort of former inmates for four years following their release from prison in 30 states in 2005. States have been selected for the *2005 National Recidivism Study of Released Prisoners* based on current participation in the *BJS National Corrections Reporting Program* and their ability to provide FBI or state identification numbers for individuals released from adult correctional facilities in 2005. The study will be based on a sample of 70,000 released prisoners selected to represent the more than 400,000 released in the study's 30 states during 2005. On average, the sample will include about 2,000 released prisoners from each

<sup>1</sup> Nlets, the International Justice and Public Safety Network, links together state, local, and federal agencies for the purpose of information exchange. Nlets is a member of the Joint Task Force (JTF) for Rap Sheet Standardization and serves as a custodian of the standardized rap sheet layout and national standard format. The data elements in the CHRIS record layout are modeled after the JTF's interstate criminal history transmission specifications.

state. In June, BJS plans to request criminal history information for the sample of 2005 prison releases using the CHRIS process. Through an automated batch process, BJS will launch queries to the FBI's III to determine which states have criminal history records pertaining to the 70,000 offenders. The CHRIS process developed by Nlets will electronically collate the responses received from the various criminal history repositories. Given the movement of some offenders across state boundaries, the BJS inquiries made on prisoners released in 30 states will likely generate criminal history record requests to all 50 states. The raw data will initially be captured as long strings of text in a format designed to be read by a human being for criminal and non-criminal justice purposes. While the criminal history information transmitted by the FBI and several state repositories is now sent in a standardized, structured XML format, the majority of states still transmit criminal history data as legacy text. Through the CHRIS project, Nlets has developed software logic to interpret the unique content and structure of individual state text files and extract the data elements to conform to the standardized CHRIS record layout. Nlets will merge the released prisoner's "in-state" and "out-of-state" criminal history records into a multi-state rap sheet through an automated

process that requires minimal human intervention. This final merged criminal history record is then extracted into key data elements and exported as a delimited file to BJS for further processing.

Under the CCHRRD project, BJS will work with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) to develop an efficient software solution to convert the arrest, court, and supervision records obtained from the CHRIS process into a uniform coding structure that will support national recidivism research. The CCHRRD software will be able to recode large amounts of records in a short amount of time and produce research files that will be uncomplicated to analyze. The software will consist of state-specific conversion programs that will be easy to update when new coding rules are established. JRSA will assist in this effort by obtaining input and documentation from federal and state criminal justice organizations on the assortment of coding structures found in the criminal history data. When completed, the software will be run on the pre-processed criminal history data for the 2005 prison release cohort and the output files will be used to examine each prisoner's "in-state" and "out-of-state" criminal activity prior to entering prison and for the four years following release. The results of the 2005 recidivism study will be summarized in

the BJS report *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 2005*. The report will provide no state-level recidivism statistics; however, the participating agencies may request recidivism data for their own state. BJS hopes that the knowledge base developed through the CCHRRD project (e.g., tables that crosswalk state criminal statutes and charge descriptions into a common coding structure) can be utilized and built upon by other users of official criminal justice records. After completion of the project, BJS expects to use the conversion software to support annual research on the reentry and recidivism of criminal offenders and inform evidence-based policies.

BJS continues to inform the criminal justice community and other stakeholders on the long-term value of the CHRIS and CCHRRD projects. Last month, BJS staff provided status reports to members of the Compact Council and the FBI Advisory Policy Board. BJS also continues to support the improvement and standardization of criminal history records through grant funding, including the Criminal History Information Exchange Format (CHIEF) project and the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP), as well as supporting the continuing efforts of the Joint Task Force (JTF) on Rap Sheet Standardization. ❏

## JRSA Helps Identify and Assess State Offense Coding Schemes


JRSA is working with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) on the *Conversion of Criminal History Records into Research Databases* (CCHRRD) project to develop a database that can be used for recidivism research. JRSA is helping NORC to identify state offense coding schemes so that NORC can translate state-specific offenses into a standardized set of offense codes that can be used by BJS in its recidivism studies. Local law enforcement agencies submit offense information to state criminal record repositories in a variety of formats, including by state statute number, state-specific offense code, and offense literals (i.e., a text description of the offense or state statute). Some states have "crosswalks" that allow for translation among these various elements, or among these elements and nationally standardized codes, such as National Crime Information Center (NCIC) or National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) offense codes. JRSA is in the process of obtaining these crosswalks from SACs along with state contact information that can be used by NORC to address questions that arise once the data translation process begins. For more information, contact JRSA Research Director Stan Orchowsky at [sorchowsky@jrja.org](mailto:sorchowsky@jrja.org).

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The first presentation, based on a corresponding article in *JRP*, was given by Jim Austin, President of JFA Institute, who offered a national perspective on strategies to reduce America's correctional population. The proportionality of punishment greatly exceeds the level of crime committed, Dr. Austin said. The criminal justice system costs roughly \$215 billion to operate, for example, while the corresponding amount of victim losses is estimated at \$19 billion. The crime rate, which rose steadily from 1931 to a peak during the late 1970s through early 1990s, is now about at the same level as in 1969. In contrast, the number of those incarcerated in federal and state institutions has continued to rise since the early 1970s. His key recommendations for reducing the correctional population are: reduce the length of stay (LOS) for prisoners; divert technical parole violators and technical probation violators from prison and reduce their LOS; divert those convicted of victimless crimes from prison; reduce LOS for persons placed on probation or parole; reduce probation and parole revocation rates; and make greater use of fines, restitution, and community service in lieu of probation.

Bill Bales, who coauthored an article on Florida as well as acting as guest editor, spoke next about Florida's experience with determinate sentencing. A dramatic rise in the prison population, coupled with the large number of inmates released each year from prison and the high rate of recidivism, led to dissatisfaction with the state's indeterminate sentencing policies that focused on rehabilitation. A gradual shift occurred to a more determinate policy, culminating, in 1995, with a measure that obligates felons sentenced to prison to serve a minimum of 85% of their sentence. The study concluded that: 1) determinate sentencing and punishment strategies to crime control will not necessarily be more punitive;

JRP Guest Editors



*Rick Kern, Executive Director of the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission*



*Bill Bales, Associate Professor in the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University*

2) increases in the prison population are more a result of the number of offenders convicted of felony crimes rather than determinate sentencing policies; 3) determinate policies will not necessarily cause higher prison populations and higher correctional expenditures; 4) a determinate sentencing policy could result in a decrease in recidivism rates of inmates being released even though the punitiveness and cost of incarceration remains essentially the same.

Dr. Bales also discussed the article on New York State. The author of this article documents the drop in New York's crime rates and prison population over the past decade; describes the decreasing level of violence within the state's prison system; explains how the New York State Department of Correctional Services (NYSDOCS) contributed to the this decline in violence; and describes the changes in drug laws that contributed to the drop in crime and the number of drug offenders incarcerated. Through interviews with correctional administrators and institutional staff as well as empirical data, the author identified four factors associated with the NYSDOCS that contributed to these positive out-

comes.

Rick Kern spoke next about the articles on Pennsylvania, Texas, and California, and about a final Commentary article that considers the other articles in the issue. In Pennsylvania, which has an indeterminate sentencing system with minimum and maximum terms set by the court, a "perfect storm" of events created a crisis in the corrections system; these events included a record correctional growth and prison overcrowding, high profile murders of police officers by parolees, and severe budget constraints due to economic recession. Pennsylvania recently adopted legislation to provide the opportunity for a more sustainable course with a greater focus on public safety. The legislation assigns a single commission responsibility for developing sentencing and parole guidelines, and promotes coordinated sentencing and parole policies to provide: 1) bounded discretion, 2) limited retribution, and 3) risk-based sentencing and release decisions.

In Texas in 2007, the state found that it must either spend a half billion dollars to build and operate new prisons to accommodate an expected surge in the number of people incarcerated

or explore options to control that growth. An analysis conducted by the Council of State Governments Justice Center found that the key factors driving prison growth were: 1) increased probation revocations to prison, 2) lack of in-prison and community-based treatment and diversion programs, and 3) low parole rates. Following the analysis, Texas adopted the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, and approved an increase of \$241 million for the 2008—2009 biennium to fund additional diversion and treatment capacity. This translated into a savings of \$443.9 million by reducing funding for new prison beds. The legislation also reduced probation terms for drug and property felons, provided funds to counties that establish progressive sanction models for probation violations, and expanded drug courts to provide treatment for low-risk offenders.

California has the most overcrowded prison system in the country, at 140% of rated capacity, the author of, “The Not-So-Golden State of Sentencing and Corrections: California’s Lessons for the Nation,” writes. It also is the leader in recidivism; each year 120,000 released offenders reenter from parole revocation. California has many barriers to meaningful sentencing and corrections reform, some of them particular to the state. The author suggests that a logical solution is to create a sentencing commission modeled on successful commissions in other states, but the idea failed politically. Legislators denounced it as allowing an unelected agency to exercise legislative power, it is unpopular with prosecutors, and there is suspicion of “data gathering” as a way to generate statistics in a campaign to reduce sentences and release prisoners. The author offers some general lessons, and observes that in the absence of an actual sentencing commission, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California is the de facto sentencing commission in the state.

The last article of the special journal issue is a commentary on the larger

questions the other articles raise. The author focuses on five topics inspired by his reading of these articles, and recommends the following: 1) more comparative research and policy literature; 2) increased policy focus on “back-end” sentencing authorities; 3) incorporating the use of offender risk assessments in the sentencing process; 4) learning to love second- or third-best solutions; and 5) a greater focus on problems of racial and ethnic disparities in punishment.

The final presentation of the seminar was by Bill Sabol, Chief of the Corrections Statistics Unit at BJS, who focused on national trends in state prison populations. Given the relatively rapid increase in state prison populations during the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., more than 6% per year from 1990-1995) and the correlation between prison population growth and the implementation of sentencing reforms such as the elimination of parole release, implementation of determinate sentencing, mandatory minimums, truth-in-sentencing, and other reforms, Dr. Sabol asked the question: Why did the growth in the state prison population begin to slow

during the late 1990s and 2000s even though the sentencing reforms that were put in place in the 1990s continued to exist in the 2000s? By decomposing prison population growth into the portions due to crime, arrests, prison sentences, and length of stay, he found that the prison system adapted to changes in crime. As violent and property crime declined over the period from 1994 through 2006, the likelihood that arrested violent offenders and arrested property offenders would be admitted into prison increased. Conversely while drug arrests increased by about 50% over this period, the likelihood that an arrested drug offender would be sentenced to prison remained relatively constant. Length of stay remained relatively constant during the 2000s.

*JRP’s* Special Issue on Sentencing and Corrections in the States is available at the journal’s Web site: <http://jrja.metapress.com>. A copy of the PowerPoint seminar presentations on the journal articles is posted at [www.jrja.org](http://www.jrja.org). For questions about this issue or other issues of *Justice Research and Policy*, contact Nancy Michel, JRP Managing Editor, at [nmichel@jrja.org](mailto:nmichel@jrja.org). ☞

## ISAR Provides Insight Into the Work of the SACs

Have you ever wondered if there are any state Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs) doing recidivism research or evaluating reentry programs? How many SACs work in the areas of sentencing or disproportionate minority contact (DMC)? The answers to these questions, and many more, lie in JRSA’s Infobase of State Activities and Research (ISAR), a comprehensive, searchable, online collection of information on state criminal justice programs, research, and data collection activities.

The information can be accessed by going to JRSA’s home page ([www.jrja.org](http://www.jrja.org)) and clicking on “ISAR,” which is located on the U.S. map in the center of the page. Users can then type in a key word or phrase, and indicate if they want information from a SAC in a specific state, or all the SACs.

As with all search engines, results will

differ depending on the key words or phrases used. For example, if a user is trying to find information on Disproportionate Minority Contact and enters “dmc,” the result would be three activities and a publication. However, if the key word used is “minority,” the search will yield 10 activities and two publications.

The content in ISAR is provided by the SACs themselves and covers all the work they do, including their research, evaluation, data collection, and information system activities. For more information on SAC publications, users should go to the SAC/State Publication Library, also available on JRSA’s home page. By early fall, ISAR will also include information on SAC characteristics, such as the location of each SAC in its state government (e.g., Department of Public Safety, governor’s office, etc.), types of information each SAC is responsible for, and its relationship to the state’s State Administrative Agency (SAA). For more information or help with a search, contact Karen Maline at [kmaline@jrja.org](mailto:kmaline@jrja.org).

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reported on college campuses compared to the state in general.

- **Hate Crime in Illinois and Across the United States**

SAC staff are working on a report that compares incidences of reported hate crime throughout Illinois and the United States over an 11-year period, 1997-2007. Using Illinois State Police-UCR supplemental case-level data as well as FBI-UCR data, staff are analyzing and evaluating regional and county-level reporting of hate crime throughout Illinois, as well as the specific hate-related offenses (i.e., against persons/property) committed, and the explicit locations where such crimes are occurring. Victim and offender characteristics (e.g., bias motivation, race, gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical/mental handicap, victim type, etc.) are also being compared in an effort to identify relationships between victims and offenders. The report is slated for publication in June.

- **Smarter Solutions for Crime Reduction: The ICJIA Strategic Planning Initiative**

To prepare for a Criminal Justice Planning Summit to be held in Illinois in September 2010, the SAC engaged in several fact-finding strategies to pinpoint critical criminal justice issues and the most effective and efficient evidence-based policies, practices, and programs in Illinois and across the nation. The SAC reviewed existing statewide strategic plans from around the country to identify areas for potential replication and lessons learned, interviewed state justice and human service association leaders to solicit information about critical issues facing their communities, and participated in workgroups with representatives of the academic and policy advocacy

communities. Staff also collected existing needs assessment data, reports, survey findings, and other information reflective of current justice trends in Illinois that could be used to support the development of the summit agenda and the strategic plan. It is hoped that this important initiative will result in a coordinated statewide, data-driven strategic approach to crime reduction and justice system investment.

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness/Chicago Police Department Juvenile Crisis Intervention Training Fidelity Assessment**

Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) is an evidence-based practice for training law enforcement personnel in crisis de-escalation for individuals who are in a mental health crisis. The philosophy of the program is that the safety of law enforcement personnel and citizens is enhanced when officers understand the signs and symptoms of mental illness and have the skills to safely and securely diffuse a crisis situation. Although CIT is an established practice when intervening with adults, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) have worked in partnership to develop a module for a Juvenile CIT. The Illinois SAC staff attended the 40-hour training and identified the project's goals and research design. The SAC's research and analysis staff will measure the extent to which the training curriculum was helpful for officers when intervening with youth in a mental health crisis. The project aims to: (1) measure officers' pre- and post-training knowledge, (2) learn officer intentions to use the training curriculum, (3) measure officer satisfaction with the training, (3) learn officer use of the curriculum in the field, (4) and measure officer retention of the curriculum. The findings will be conveyed to NAMI

and CPD in a way that allows them to improve and enhance their training practices. This evaluation offers the opportunity to develop a new evidence-based training strategy for law enforcement that can be generalized and replicated to other police departments in Illinois and nationally.

- **Will County River Valley Detention Center Impact Evaluation**

The Will County River Valley Detention Center (RVDC) is a nationally accredited facility. It serves both Will and Kankakee counties and includes 102 beds, as well as a 24-hour on-site medical unit. RVDC is located in Joliet, and serves as a temporary placement center for juveniles between the ages of 10 and 16 awaiting court decisions on their cases. Only minors who have allegedly committed a delinquent offense and are determined to be a danger to the community or themselves may be detained. In 2008, a total of 911 juveniles were admitted and received medical and mental health care. In addition, the mental health staff conducts psychological evaluations on approximately 40% of the youth detained, as they are court-ordered to receive such service. RVJDC mental health staff plan to expand their program by increasing the number of psychological evaluations to 100%. The psychological evaluations assist the court by providing it with an extensive report on the youths' background. Illinois SAC staff have been working in partnership with RVJDC staff and are in the final stages of developing an evaluation plan. SAC staff and RVJDC mental health staff have identified the goals of the evaluation project to be: (1) measuring the extent to which juveniles are satisfied with the mental health services provided at the RVJDC, and (2) the extent to which the psychological

evaluations have resulted in an increase in treatment and sentencing compliance and a decrease in reoffending and readmission into the facility. Data collection will begin this summer, so that the impact the mental health program has had on client outcomes can be conceptualized.

- **Sentencing Policy Advisory Council Technical Assistance**

The Sentencing Policy Advisory Council (SPAC), which was created by Public Act 96-0711, will draw on criminal justice information collected by state and local justice agencies and use that information to explore sentencing issues and how these practices impact the criminal justice system as a whole. The Council consists of a nonpartisan group of 18 key stakeholders from across the state and local criminal justice systems, including members from all three branches of government: legislators (from both political parties and houses), retired judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, corrections officials, administrators of the court, law enforcement, victims' rights advocates and academics. There are also ex-officio members from the agencies providing data to SPAC (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, and Illinois Department of Corrections). The SAC began assisting the SPAC in reviewing Illinois criminal justice data availability for sentencing policy research. A presentation was made to the Council regarding these issues, and a larger report that documents current data collection practices and examines information gaps at each stage of the system is to be completed by July. This document is being produced in partnership with the Illinois State Police, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, and the Illinois Department of Corrections.

- **Utilization-Focused Evaluation of Adult Redeploy Illinois**

The Illinois Crime Reduction Act (Public Act 96-0761 effective on January 1, 2010) establishes the Adult Redeploy Illinois program, which provides financial incentives to local jurisdictions for designing community-based programs to treat offenders in the community instead of sending them to state prisons. Under the Act, financial incentives will be offered to counties/groups of counties/judicial circuits to increase programming in their areas in exchange for reducing the number of people they send to the Illinois Department of Corrections (with penalties if they do not meet the reduction goal). In Phase I, counties or judicial circuits will craft local program plans that specify how to reduce commitments of non-violent offenders to prison and implement these plans in Phase II. The counties or judicial circuits must negotiate an agreement with the Adult Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board (AROIB) to limit the number of Adult Redeploy Illinois-eligible commitments from that area to 75% of the average number of commitments of the three previous calendar years. Illinois SAC staff are working closely with staff from the AROIB, the Illinois Department of Corrections, and the Illinois Department of Human Services to track the policy implementation process, guide the development of performance and outcome measures, and provide relevant technical assistance toward insuring the program model aligns with the language describing the initiative in the Crime Reduction Act. The implementation evaluation will commence in October 2010. As part of its technical assistance to AROIB, SAC staff also developed a new Web site to simplify and standardize access to county-level data required for the planning process. The seven counties and one judicial circuit

(encompassing 12 counties) currently accepting planning grants can access the county census and criminal justice system data available through the Authority's Web site. This information is to be used to guide their identification of target populations eligible for the program, and serve as a starting point for the community corrections and service gap analysis to be conducted in the planning process. Data for all 102 counties are also available as print-friendly PDF documents.

- **Mental Health Courts in Illinois**

The Illinois SAC has contracted with Loyola University Chicago to conduct the assessment and evaluation of mental health courts in Illinois. The project inventories the operating courts in Illinois and assesses what barriers were in place for those courts that did not materialize. A more thorough evaluation is being conducted on specific courts in an effort to gauge their operations, effectiveness, and outcomes. Loyola's methodology and study design use a mixed methods approach, including quantitative data from program operations and client outcomes, as well as qualitative data stemming from interviews and focus groups with the court stakeholders. A component of the study that includes client surveys assesses the perceptions of those that participate in the courts. Loyola is collecting data and assessing the implementation and operation of each court in Illinois, including those that are in the planning stages. An in-depth analysis of three courts will be conducted. This analysis will involve a thorough assessment as to the operation, impact, and outcomes of the courts. Special attention will be paid to the multi-disciplinary roles of the Mental Health Court teams and the "boundary-spanning"

(See SAC NEWS, p. 10)

The JRSA Forum is supported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. JRSA is a national nonprofit organization. For membership or other information, call (202) 842-9330, e-mail [cjinfor@jrja.org](mailto:cjinfor@jrja.org), or visit our Web site: <http://www.jrja.org>.

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(SAC NEWS, from p. 9)

that they are required to do. A final report is due in September.

#### • **Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Recidivism Study**

SAC staff are conducting a research study, funded by the American Statistical Association/Bureau of Justice Statistics Small Grants program, on recidivism of juveniles admitted to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. This study will employ various statistical techniques, including multilevel modeling, survival analysis, and markov modeling, to examine recidivism in depth. Further, recidivism will be measured through readmission to either juvenile or adult correctional custody (derived from Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and Illinois Department of Corrections admis-

sions data) and through rearrest (derived from criminal history record information). Recidivism will be compared across various demographic and offense-type subgroups, with special attention paid to "neighborhood of release" indicators using U.S. Bureau of the Census data. The study period will end in July 2011.

#### **WYSAC Project Surveys Wind River Indian Reservation**

The Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC) is conducting the Wind River Indian Needs Determination Survey. The third in a recurring series of surveys conducted on the Wind River Indian Reservation in the past 20 years, its goal is to

assemble an accurate picture of the lives of more than 7,500 Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho living on the 2.2 million-acre reservation in west-central Wyoming. WYSAC-trained Native interviewers will go door-to-door to approximately 2,000 households gathering data on the conditions of life on the reservation—covering topics such as crime and law enforcement, personal safety, drugs, alcohol, existing and needed social services, public transportation, health, employment, job training, and child care. WYSAC Research Scientists Steve Butler and Tom Furgeson and Survey Research Manager Bistra Anatchkova are leading the data gathering, data analysis, and reporting. Interviews should be completed by September and the first report available in January 2011. ❏