
**Enhancing and Evaluating Local Juvenile Justice Systems in Illinois:
The Promise of Juvenile Justice Councils**

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Introduction

On January 1, 1999, most of the juvenile justice reform provisions outlined in Public Act 90-590 (The Juvenile Justice Reform Act) took effect. While many of the provisions changed the procedures through which minors are handled in the juvenile justice system (e.g., station adjustments, extended jurisdiction juvenile prosecutions, fingerprinting requirements, etc.), other provisions support increasing levels of community participation and local planning. For example, in Article VI of the revised Juvenile Court Act, individual counties or set of smaller counties are encouraged to convene a juvenile justice council.¹ The purpose of a juvenile justice council is:

“to provide a forum for the development of a community-based interagency assessment of the local juvenile justice system, to develop a county juvenile justice plan for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, and to make recommendations to the county board, or county boards, for more effectively utilizing community resources in dealing with juveniles who are found to be involved in crime, or who are truant or have been suspended or expelled from school. The county juvenile justice plan shall include relevant portions of local crime prevention and public safety plans, school improvement and school safety plans, and the plans or initiatives of other public and private entities within the county that are concerned with dropout prevention, school safety, the prevention of juvenile crime and criminal activity by youth gangs.”²

The promise of juvenile justice councils is found in its cooperative and collaborative nature. When the various individuals and agencies that work with minors in a county or set of counties (i.e., juvenile justice agencies, schools, parents, local businesses, churches, etc.) come together to formulate an internally consistent delinquency prevention and intervention strategy, that strategy has the potential to have a greater overall impact than those undertaken by agencies and individuals in isolation.

¹ More specifically, 705 ILCS 405/6-12

² 705 ILCS 405/6-12(2)

Although the statute above describes the responsibilities of the council, to this point, little has been done at the local level, financially or otherwise, to assist those counties who choose to convene a juvenile justice council with meeting those responsibilities.³ Consistent with the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's dedication to improving the administration of criminal and juvenile justice in Illinois and with the financial support of the Justice Research and Statistics Association, we have created this guidebook to assist juvenile justice councils meet their responsibilities. However, we begin with a discussion of two initiatives that inform the functioning of juvenile justice councils, then continue with a description of how local juvenile justice councils can conduct a needs assessment of their local juvenile justice system. We conclude with recommendations for how to use the needs assessment to develop a juvenile justice plan and the interagency agreements needed to implement the plan. The evaluation manual that accompanies this guidebook describes several different types of evaluations and provides basic information and tools to assist juvenile justice professionals evaluate local prevention and intervention programs.

Juvenile Justice Councils

The members of a juvenile justice council in Illinois are to include, by statute, a representative from the sheriff's office, state's attorney's office, probation department, and county board. The chairperson of the council is also responsible for appointing additional members to the council as is deemed necessary to accomplish its goals. Examples of other organizations from which additional members may be appointed

³ Illinois stands in contrast to California, which allocated \$2,000,000 for counties to develop local action plans for reducing the rate of juvenile crime and delinquency (Coolbaugh and Hansel 2000)

include local law enforcement, juvenile justice agencies, schools, businesses, and community organizations.⁴

An assumption that underlies the convening of juvenile justice councils is that a local collaborative is well informed and well positioned to plan and implement community based juvenile justice prevention and intervention strategies. This is an approach that is shared by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's *Comprehensive Strategy* (Howell, 1998) and the *Communities that Care* program developed by J. David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the University of Washington's Social Development Research Group (Hawkins and Catalano, 1992). Both the *Comprehensive Strategy* and the *Communities that Care* models emphasize the participation of key leaders in the community who have influence over the policies and resources of the organization they represent. Although both OJJDP's *Comprehensive Strategy* and the *Communities That Care* program are quite comprehensive in their recommendations for local juvenile justice systems, the following discussion focuses on the components of these models that address community-based collaboration.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Comprehensive Strategy

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) *Comprehensive Strategy* is based on five general principles: 1) strengthening families, 2) supporting core social institutions, 3) promoting delinquency prevention, 4) immediate and effective intervention when delinquency occurs, and 5) identification and control of the small group of serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders. Table 1 lists the

⁴ 705 ILCS 405/6-12(b)

elements that according to OJJDP are crucial to the successful implementation of this approach.

Table 1: Essential Elements for the Successful Implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy

- ✓ Take a community wide approach
- ✓ Create ownership
- ✓ Reach the diverse groups in the community
- ✓ Include key elected officials and grassroots community leaders
- ✓ Gain the commitment of all stakeholders to a long-term, sustained effort
- ✓ Give priority to risk factors that cause the most problems in the community

Adapted from, “Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders” edited by James C. Howell. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

As can be seen from the table, a local planning group can facilitate the inclusion of almost all the essential elements of the *Comprehensive Strategy* as the group works toward a collaborative, community-based, prevention and intervention plan.

Implicit in the *Comprehensive Strategy* is an approach to delinquency prevention and intervention that is multi-faceted in nature. Proponents of the *Comprehensive Strategy* argue that attention to a particular risk factor will be most effective when addressed by a variety of agencies or organizations (i.e., a community-wide approach).⁵ For example, if a community wants to reduce the rate at which minors drop out of school, those working in the educational system can strive to keep kids in school, but a reduction in dropout rates will be even more likely when families support the academic needs of their children, social service agencies support educational programs in and out of the school setting, and the juvenile justice system works to keep kids in school instead of responding to misbehavior in a manner that removes kids from school setting. In this

example, a comprehensive and collaborative approach brings together entities (i.e., school, family, social service, and juvenile justice) that can impact dropout rates. In contrast, it would be contradictory and counterproductive if some local institutions were working to reduce dropout rates while others were implementing policies that, intentionally or not, were making it more difficult for kids to stay in school. A local collaborative made up of key leaders in the community can help agencies and institutions work together to address a problem and can help prevent counterproductive policies and practices.

In addition to facilitating a holistic approach to addressing risk factors, protective factors, and juvenile crime, the participation of a diverse group of “key leaders” can increase local ownership of a prevention and intervention plan, enhancing the likelihood of its successful implementation. A prevention strategy that combines an informed perspective with local knowledge and participation is more likely to receive “buy-in” from the juvenile justice system and the community, than a strategy in which there has been little or no local input and participation in the process. Other recommendations from OJJDP for the successful implementation of a comprehensive and collaborative juvenile justice plan include focusing on a reasonable number of factors that put minors at risk for delinquency, addressing risk factors whenever possible through programs administered by committed prevention professionals, addressing risk factors through programs that have been proven to be effective, focusing on change over the long term, and by having realistic expectations.

⁵ “Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders.” James C. Howell (ed.).

Communities That Care

Like OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy, *Communities that Care* is a community-based and risk-focused prevention strategy emphasizing collaboration among those working with minors in a community. While this model has its roots in substance abuse prevention, it has been used more broadly as an attempt to prevent delinquency and more generally, adolescent health promotion.

The community collaboration piece of *Communities that Care*, is accomplished through the convening of a Community Prevention Board that brings together community leaders and those working in the field of prevention and intervention. The contributions of the Community Prevention Board include the influence members have over organizational resources and the local knowledge and values each member brings to the Board. As a result, the composition of the Board is crucial. Table 2 lists some of the questions that should be considered when developing a Community Prevention Board, many of which apply to Juvenile Justice Councils in Illinois.

Table 2: Questions to be Considered When Developing a Community Prevention Board

- ✓ How many members should be appointed to the board?
- ✓ Does the Board reflect the racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of the community?
- ✓ Are all the significant areas of a youth's life represented on the board (e.g., home, school, community, and peers)?
- ✓ How many young people should sit on the Board?
- ✓ How will the Board be governed and to whom will it be accountable?
- ✓ How will communication between Board members and key leaders be ensured?
- ✓ How will the Board use the social development strategy as a model in bonding members to the group by providing opportunities, skills, and recognition?

Adapted from, "Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders." Edited by James C. Howell. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Finally, the *Communities that Care* model highlights a formal assessment process that, in addition to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the local juvenile justice system, identifies the specific areas in which enhanced prevention and intervention efforts are needed.

These two models and their emphasis upon community based collaborations and risk and protective focused strategies find empirical support in the groundswell of research on these factors. The social science and criminal justice research communities have made great progress in identifying many of the factors that put minors at risk for delinquency as well as factors that serve to protect minors from delinquency (see Table 3). These factors provide both the *Comprehensive Strategy* and *Communities that Care* models with research based targets of local prevention and intervention efforts.

Table 3: Risk and Protective Factors⁶

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the Community	In the Community
Availability of drugs	
Availability of firearms	
Community norms favoring drug use, firearms, and crime	
Media portrayals of violence	
Residential mobility	
Low neighborhood attachment/community disorganization	
Extreme economic and social deprivation	
In the Family	In the Family
Family history of high-risk behavior	Healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior
Family management problems	
Family conflict	
Parental involvement in problem behaviors and/or attitudes favorable of delinquency	

⁶ It is important to point out that in many cases a protective factor is the absence of a risk factor. For example, easy accessibility of drugs and guns in the community puts kids at risk for drug and violent offending. The converse, the inaccessibility of drugs and guns in the community, can be seen as a factor that protects kids from engaging in drug and violent offending.

Table 3 (cont.): Risk and Protective Factors

In the School	In the School
Early and persistent antisocial behavior	
Academic failure (beginning in late elementary school)	
Lack of commitment to school	
In the Individual and peer group	In the Individual and peer group
Rebelliousness	High intelligence
Friends who engage in problem behaviors	Positive bonds with pro-social others
Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior	Positive social orientation
Early initiation of problem behaviors	
Constitutional factors (Behaviors illustrative of sensation seeking, low-harm avoidance, and lack of impulse control)	Resilient temperament

Adapted from, “Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders” edited by James C. Howell. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

In addition to the ongoing research efforts to identify and understand risk and protective factors, significant financial and intellectual resources have been invested in identifying programs that have proven to be effective, by rigorous scientific standards, at reducing levels of delinquent behavior. Many of the programs and strategies identified by these research initiatives are effective because of the attention paid to risk and protective factors.

One research initiative that has identified effective delinquency prevention and intervention programs is the University of Colorado’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Blueprints Program. All 10 programs identified by the Center as “Blueprints for Violence Prevention,” are those that address risk and/or protective factors (see Table 4). In addition to the programs identified as Blueprints, another 18 programs

have been identified by the Center as “promising.” Many of these “promising” programs also target risk and protective factors.⁷

Other research initiatives, including a National Institute of Justice commissioned study of the relevant scientific literature on prevention and intervention programs headed by Lawrence Sherman of the University of Pennsylvania, and a meta-analysis of prevention and intervention programs headed by Mark Lipsey of Vanderbilt University, have identified programs and strategies that are effective at preventing delinquency.⁸

Table 4: Blueprint Programs

Program	Targeted Risk Factor(s)	Targeted Protective Factor(s)
Midwestern Prevention Project	Availability of drugs and alcohol; Norms favoring drug and alcohol use in the community, school, and the home;	
Multisystemic Therapy	Family management problems; Friends who engage in problem behaviors; Academic failure;	Positive bonds with pro-social others;
Big Brothers/Big Sisters		Positive bonds with pro-social others;
Prenatal and Infancy Home Visitation	Economic and social deprivation; Family history of high-risk behavior; Parental involvement in problem behaviors and/or attitudes favorable of delinquency	

⁷ Summaries of the 10 Blueprint programs and 18 Promising programs are found in Appendix A. For more information about the Blueprints Program you can visit <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints> or contact the program through the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado.

⁸ A summary of the types of programs found to be effective at delinquency prevention and intervention can also be found in Appendix A. Sherman, Lawrence, Denise Gottfredson, Doris MacKenzie, John Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn Bushway. 1998. *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs. Lipsey, Mark and David B. Wilson. 1998. "Effective Intervention for Serious Juvenile Offenders: A Synthesis of Research." *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*. Rolf Loeber and David P. Farrington (eds.). Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Table 4 (cont.): Blueprint Programs

Bullying Prevention Program	Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior; Early initiation of problem behaviors; Friends who engage in problem behaviors	
Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care	Friends who engage in problem behaviors; Family management problems	
Quantum Opportunities	Lack of commitment to school	Positive bonds with pro-social others
Functional Family Therapy	Family management problems; Family conflict	
Life Skills Training	Community norms favoring drug use, firearms, and crime; Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior	Resilient temperament
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies		Resilient temperament; Positive bonds with pro-social others; Positive social orientation

Juvenile Justice Councils in Illinois

The purpose of a juvenile justice council is to provide an interagency forum to assess the local juvenile justice system and to facilitate the reduction of juvenile crime in the county(ies). More specifically, one of the responsibilities of a juvenile justice council is to develop a juvenile justice plan “based upon utilization of the resources of law enforcement, school systems, park programs, sports entities, and others in a cooperative and collaborative manner to prevent or discourage juvenile crime”.⁹ An additional responsibility of council members is to enter into a written interagency agreement “specifying the nature and extent of contributions each signatory agency will make in achieving the goals of the county juvenile justice plan and their commitment to the

sharing of information useful in carrying out the goals of the interagency agreement to the extent authorized by law”.¹⁰

Although this guidebook focuses on conducting needs assessments, developing juvenile justice plans, and creating written interagency agreements, another expectation of juvenile justice councils deserve special comment. Juvenile justice councils are encouraged to apply for “public and private grants, to be administered by one of the community partners, that support one or more components of the county juvenile justice plan.”¹¹ The existence of a juvenile justice council that is knowledgeable about local needs and experienced in working collaboratively can increase the likelihood of a jurisdiction receiving grant funds, provides a core group of individuals from which additional collaborations can be tailored to the requirements of funding agencies, minimizing the effort necessary to convene a new collaborative body in response to each funding opportunity, and provides direction on how grant funds can be used most effectively to address the unique strengths and weaknesses of a jurisdiction.

These potential benefits of juvenile justice councils overcome a perceived disincentive to the creation of a juvenile justice council—participation on still another committee for already over-extended juvenile justice professionals or other interested individuals. Instead of convening unique collaborative bodies for each funding opportunity, leading to disjointed practices and increased demand on interested

⁹ ILCS 405/6-12 (3) (a)

¹⁰ ILCS 405/6-12 (3) (b)

¹¹ ILCS 405/6-12 (3) (c)

individuals time, the juvenile justice council can serve as *the* collaborative on juvenile justice issues in the jurisdiction.¹²

The juvenile justice council statute in Illinois' revised Juvenile Court Act implies that the juvenile justice plan and interagency agreement should be treated as interrelated documents. More specifically, an assessment of a county's juvenile delinquency problem and its juvenile justice system, broadly defined to include agencies, organizations, and individuals not typically thought of as part of the juvenile justice system (e.g., schools, park districts, families, community-at-large, etc.), will reveal areas of strength, weakness, surplus and need. Subsequently, the juvenile justice plan should describe the needs of the county and its local juvenile justice system, as well as the goals and objectives for addressing those needs. The interagency agreement should describe in detail how each goal or objective will be achieved and clearly state the role that each individual and agency represented on the juvenile justice council will play in achieving those goals.

In sum, creating an effective juvenile justice council can accomplish two significant goals. A council that has broad representation from the juvenile justice system (i.e., law enforcement, probation, courts, etc.) and the community (i.e., public and private educational system, social service agencies, local businesses, general public, etc.), can develop a juvenile justice plan that takes advantage of a local juvenile justice system's strengths while addressing its weaknesses. Secondly, a strong council has the organizational capacity to implement the juvenile justice plan in a consistent manner in each member's agencies and in the community. The starting point for any juvenile

¹² For example, the composition of the juvenile justice council and the "juvenile crime enforcement coalition" required of local units of government that receive Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant funds are remarkably similar. Both collaborations require the participation of local law enforcement, prosecutors, probation, judges, educators, and community members, among others.

justice council in their attempts to develop a comprehensive and consistent juvenile justice plan is an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the county(ies) juvenile justice system.

Conducting a Needs Assessment

The purpose of this section of the guidebook is to assist juvenile justice councils in the development of a needs assessment. A needs assessment is a report that organizes, describes, and draws conclusions from data. Juvenile justice plans may be more effective if plan components are based at least partly on data that describes the local juvenile justice system. Thus, we recommend that councils consider developing or seeking assistance in the development of a needs assessment report that describes their juvenile justice system. Juvenile justice system data may include information pertaining directly to the juvenile court system (e.g., arrests, delinquency petitions), as well as data that may be related to involvement in the juvenile court system (i.e., risk and protective factor data).

The author(s) of a needs assessment must consider what data to collect, how best to organize and describe the data, and how to interpret (i.e., draw conclusions from) the data. This section addresses these issues in three separate sub-sections. However, we begin this section by describing the content of needs assessments in more detail.

What is Included in a Needs Assessment?

A needs assessment of a local juvenile justice system provides the reader with a holistic image of the current state of the system, both the system's strengths and weaknesses. By knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the local juvenile justice system, juvenile justice councils can be more responsive in making improvements to the

system (i.e., utilizing the strengths and shoring up the weaknesses). Moreover, it may be easier to obtain resources to implement a juvenile justice plan if the needs and issues addressed in plan components are justified by “actual numbers” (although, one need not assume that all useful data is quantitative in nature).

To prepare a needs assessment, one should first collect as much useful data on the juvenile justice system that is practical and possible. Next, one should organize and examine this data. Finally, one should prepare a written report describing the data. This written report is, in effect, the needs assessment. The needs assessment should include the purpose for collecting the data, a description of how the data was obtained, and a description (written, tabular, and graphic) of the most interesting and informative data that was collected.

Finally, and most importantly, the needs assessment should be concluded with a section in which all the data included in the report is integrated (i.e., considered collectively). To the extent possible, an attempt should also be made in this final section to interpret and draw conclusions from the data. The question that should be posed by author(s) in this concluding section is “What does the data considered as a whole tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of the juvenile justice system?”.

Weaknesses that are identified in the concluding section are essentially the needs and issues facing the juvenile justice system. These needs and issue may be addressed in the council’s juvenile justice plan. By basing needs that are addressed in the juvenile justice plan on data, the plan may be more effective and, hence, councils may be better able to improve the system’s responsiveness to the needs of the juvenile population.

Strengths that are identified in the concluding section can be utilized to address the weaknesses. Alternatively, the council may determine that the strengths are not “strong enough”, and choose to improve existing strengths. In this respect, the goal of improving an existing strength has been identified as a need or issue and may also be addressed in the council’s juvenile justice plan.

Appendix B shows a sample needs assessment report that includes each of the elements described above. Some of the data that is included in the sample report is based on an actual Illinois county. Other data elements are fictitious. The purpose of the report is simply to acquaint readers of the guidebook with a potential organizational structure and content of a needs assessment.

Who Should Write the Needs Assessment Report?

Realistically, the development of a needs assessment report is a fairly time-consuming process. Council members themselves may not have time in their busy schedules to develop a detailed document that describes the needs of their juvenile justice system.

However, council members may be able to allocate the task to employees in the agencies they represent. Conversely, councils may prefer to employ an external agency to prepare their needs assessment. Both choices have advantages and disadvantages. The topic of whether to complete a task internally or employ external assistance is one we revisit in our evaluation manual. The evaluation manual provides additional information on the advantages and disadvantages of internal and external evaluations, as well as information on what to look for in an external evaluator (pages 7-9). The example needs assessment in Appendix B assumes that the needs assessment was authored internally.

Internal authors of needs assessment are likely to be more cost effective. Councils will likely need to subsidize external authors. However, internal authors may not have as much experience examining data. Moreover, they may not be as objective and unbiased about the needs of the local juvenile justice system as external authors would be. That is, internal authors may have pre-conceived notions as to the needs of the local justice system and, therefore, may be more prone to unwittingly collecting and examining data in a manner that confirms these pre-conceived notions. We describe this pitfall in more detail below in our sub-section on collecting data for needs assessments.

External authors of needs assessments will likely have more experience working with data. Councils seeking external authors may consider contacting professors in the criminal justice or public policy departments of local colleges or universities to inquire whether they or one of their graduate students are willing to complete the needs assessment. In addition, councils may consider issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to local colleges or research institutions. RFPs are essentially open invitations for external researchers to submit research proposals (i.e., a description of how the researcher would conduct the research, if granted the opportunity). RFPs should describe the purpose of the research, as well as what the finished research product should look like. The evaluation manual also addresses RFP's, and describes how to write an RFP for an evaluation project (see pages 4-6).

A disadvantage of contacting local colleges/universities or issuing an RFP is that the requestor must have money at their disposal. However, needs assessments by external authors can vary greatly in cost. In general, an external author obtained through an RFP will be more costly than an external author obtained by contacting local

colleges/universities. For example, a council may be required to pay a graduate student at a local college or university less to complete a needs assessment report than they would have to pay a professional researcher who responds to an RFP. Thus, one factor contributing to variability in the cost of an externally authored needs assessment is the experience of the author.

Another factor contributing to variability in the cost of an externally authored needs assessment is the content of the needs assessment. As we point out in the next subsection on collecting data for needs assessments, some data elements that may be included in a needs assessment are easier to obtain than others. The more difficult the data is to obtain and examine, the more costly an externally authored needs assessment is likely to be.

Councils may obtain necessary funds for needs assessment through grants or from the county board. The evaluation manual lists potential sources for technical and financial resources to complete council functions (pages 43-45).

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) currently offers some publications that, on their own, could provide councils with a minimalistic needs assessment. Specifically, the ICJIA recently published a report entitled “Juvenile Crime and Justice System Activities in Illinois: An Overview of Trends”. This report includes a great deal of court system and risk factor data, broken down by region (rural, urban, collar, and Cook) or by county. In addition, the ICJIA has published criminal justice system profiles for each Illinois county. These county profiles include a great deal of juvenile justice system data. These publications can be ordered free of charge online through the ICJIA website or by calling the ICJIA.

Overall, the information in this section is intended to be applicable to both authors and readers of needs assessments. Thus, should councils allocate the task of writing the needs assessment to a non-council member, they can still use the information in this section to help them read the needs assessment with a critical eye or to make suggestions and recommendations as to what they would like included in the needs assessment (e.g., to help them write an RFP).

Collecting Data

Prior to actually collecting data on the local juvenile justice system, one must first determine what data elements to collect. A list of possible data elements could be quite lengthy and encompass many different types of data. We encourage authors of needs assessments to be broad and comprehensive in the type of data they collect. Of course, data on some topics may be unavailable, thereby limiting the breadth and comprehensiveness of the needs assessment. However, an active attempt on the part of authors to be as broad and comprehensive as possible in the type of data they collect will result in a more accurate, informative, and objective needs assessment.

To demonstrate how this may be the case, imagine a hypothetical county that has higher than average levels of both high school violence and truancy. It is conceivable that these two issues are related. Some students may fail to attend school precisely *because* of the violence (fear of safety, etc.). Further imagine that the juvenile justice council in this hypothetical county intends to collect data for a needs assessment. Several members of the council have noted from their daily experiences working in the county's juvenile justice system that the county may have a high truancy rate. These members suggest that the council make sure to collect data on truancy in the county.

This is certainly a logical suggestion. However if, for whatever reason (e.g., time, available resources), the council does not also attempt to collect data on school violence, then the council will be missing a critical piece of information. Indeed, the council will be missing one of the potential causal factors contributing to the truancy. By sacrificing comprehensiveness, the council's needs assessment will be less informative. Moreover, the conclusions drawn from the needs assessment will be less objective. The conclusions will amount to a "self-fulfilling prophecy". That is, the council opted to collect data on truancy but not on school violence because of pre-conceived notions as to their needs. Data was collected in a manner that maximized the possibility of confirming these pre-conceived notions.

The hypothetical example is an extreme one. However, other, more subtle errors can be made. In an attempt to avoid such mistakes, authors of needs assessments should collect data on a wide range of topics, including both topics that are believed to be important issues and topics that are not believed to be important issues. In so doing, authors will be better able to make connections between data elements (and, hence, avoid the mistake made in the example). In addition, the data may also reveal some surprises. The data may suggest that important issues are not as important as the council initially believed (or vice versa). We address how authors may consider dealing with such discrepancies in our section on drawing conclusions from the data.

What data should be included in a needs assessment report in order to ensure that the report will be comprehensive? There are at least three distinguishable overall types of data that may be useful to include in a needs assessment: demographic data, court system data, and risk and protective factor data. We use this three category distinction to

organize the data in our example needs assessment (see the table of contents in Appendix B). This organizational scheme seems to be exhaustive. That is, each data element that juvenile justice councils might be interested in obtaining seems to fit logically into one of these three overall categories. Councils and/or authors of needs assessments are certainly free to develop their own organizational scheme in which to place data elements. However, for the purposes of this report, we describe some data elements that may be useful to include in each of these three overall categories.

The data elements that we describe vary considerably in the ease with which they can be obtained. Some of the data elements we describe in the court system and risk and protective factor categories can be readily obtained from various state agencies (on their websites, in their publications, etc). In addition, demographic data can be readily obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau.

However, other data elements are less readily available. Of these less readily available data elements, we make a distinction. Some data elements may be available through county-level or local-level agencies. That is, the data elements exist because they have been collected and held by county or local agencies. These data elements may be less readily available than data elements collected by state and federal agencies. It is conceivable that the county and/or local agencies collected the data primarily for internal purposes, whereas state and federal agencies place more emphasis on distributing the data externally. If this is the case, then authors of needs assessments may have to contact the county or local agency and inquire whether the data exists. Should the data exist, then authors may have to seek permission from the county or local agency to release the data. In addition, there may be some data elements that are available at the county or local

level, but which require organization, aggregation, etc. That is, the county or local agency may have some data that they have not examined and, hence, have not organized. Overall, the process of obtaining and examining county or local-level data elements will require more effort and foresight than merely examining the websites of or reading reports published by state and federal agencies.

Other data elements may be even less readily available. In fact, certain data elements that may be useful to the council may not exist at all. In this case, authors of needs assessments would have to collect the data themselves. Such an endeavor may be quite time consuming and, potentially, costly. Thus, authors will need to consider the utility of the information relative to the level of difficulty and cost involved with collecting the data. Certain data elements may be worth the effort, others may not. We describe some data elements that we believe may be worth the effort. In particular, it may be useful to supplement needs assessments with survey data or qualitative data (e.g., interviews or focus groups) on various topics.

Data collected directly by authors of needs assessments may come from the community at large (e.g., high school students, juvenile offenders, parents, other community members). If so, then councils should be aware that such research participants must be afforded special protections and safeguards. Councils that employ external authors from local colleges or universities will likely find that their authors are aware of these special protections and safeguards. Most colleges and universities with faculty and students that conduct research involving the community have developed Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). The general purpose of an IRB is to safeguard the rights of research participants. IRBs review research proposals and determine whether

the researchers have taken sufficient measures to: (1) minimize potential risks to participants that may arise as part of the research, (2) fully inform participants as to the nature and purpose of the research, (3) protect the anonymity of participants, and (4) maintain the confidentiality of the data. Academic researchers are required to obtain IRB approval prior to proceeding with their research. Councils may contact the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority for more information on the functions of IRBs and/or what IRBs typically require of researchers. The evaluation manual also addresses IRB's (see pages 35-36).

Councils that opt to undertake their own data collection or encourage authors of their needs assessment to undertake a data collection effort should be aware of how to collect data in the most effective manner. The evaluation manual offers tips for how to collect various types of data (survey data, interview data, focus group data; see pages 28-33). The evaluation manual also offers an example survey and example interview and focus group questions (see Appendix A in the evaluation manual). While the exact content of data collection instruments for a needs assessment will differ somewhat from data collection for an evaluation, virtually all of the general information in the evaluation manual applies to needs assessments as well.

Overall, we have distinguished between three types of data (demographic, court system, and risk and protective factor) and three levels of difficulty in obtaining the data (readily available through federal or state agencies, available through county or local agencies, must be collected by the council or by the author(s) of the needs assessment). Thus, we place each of the data elements described below into one of nine "cells", based on these distinctions. Table 5 shows our placement of the data elements described below.

It should be noted that the example needs assessment in Appendix B only includes data elements that are readily available through federal or state agencies. As such, the example needs assessment can be considered a general prototype that councils can expand upon with additional data.

One function of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) is to serve as an information clearinghouse for criminal justice data. In this capacity, the Research and Analysis Unit at the ICJIA has obtained and organized the types of data elements listed in Table 5 as “readily available from federal or state agencies”. Research staff working for the clearinghouse respond to inquiries and requests for criminal justice information. Thus, the ICJIA can accommodate requests for the readily available data elements listed in Table 5. However, some requests may necessitate contacting the source agency directly. That is, authors of needs assessments may request the data elements in a format not available through the ICJIA (e.g., by race, gender, etc.). Nonetheless, we encourage authors of needs assessments to contact the ICJIA for data that is readily available from federal or state agencies prior to contacting the source agencies. In so doing, authors of needs assessments may save some of the time and effort involved in contacting source agencies individually.

**Table 5: Data Elements That May Be Included
in a Needs Assessment**

Type of Data	Difficulty in Obtaining the Data		
	Readily Available From Federal or State Agencies	May be Available From Local or County Agencies	Must be Collected by the Author(s) and/or the Council
Demographic Data	Juvenile population		
	Gender distribution of juvenile population		
	Racial distribution of juvenile population		
	Age distribution of juvenile population		
	Number of minors living in poverty		
	Median household income		
	Unemployment levels		
Court System Data	Delinquency petitions filed		
	Petitions adjudicated delinquent		
	Cases continued under supervision	Juvenile arrests (by offense type, offender race, offender age, offender's gender, and disposition)	Feedback from juvenile justice professionals (e.g., interviews, surveys)
	End of year active probation caseload		
	Technical probation violations	Details on readily available court system data (e.g., readily available data by offense type, offender race, offender age, and offender's gender)	Feedback from juvenile offenders, guardians, and victims (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups)
	Probation violations for new offenses		
	Community service hours completed	Offender-level data	
	Restitution paid		
	Pre-adjudicatory detentions		
	Post-adjudicatory detentions		

**Table 5 (cont.): Data Elements That May Be Included
in a Needs Assessment**

Type of Data	Difficulty in Obtaining the Data		
	Readily Available From Federal or State Agencies	May be Available From Local or County Agencies	Must be Collected by the Author(s) and/or the Council
Court System Data Continued	Commitments to IDOC Automatic transfers to adult court Discretionary transfers to adult court		
Risk and Protective Factor Data	Reported and verified child abuse and neglect Reported and verified child sexual abuse Reported and verified substance affected infants Minors under age 19 receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Minors admitted to treatment facilities funded by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Births by mothers age 19 or under Minors admitted to emergency rooms for violent injuries High school dropouts School suspensions and expulsions Truancy petitions filed and adjudicated Dependency petitions filed and adjudicated	Intake data from community service providers Standardized test results from local schools Results from student surveys	Feedback from community service providers (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups) Feedback from students (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups)

**Table 5 (cont.): Data Elements That May Be Included
in a Needs Assessment**

Type of Data	Difficulty in Obtaining the Data		
	Readily Available From Federal or State Agencies	May be Available From Local or County Agencies	Must be Collected by the Author(s) and/or the Council
Risk and Protective Factor Data continued	Addiction petitions filed and adjudicated Neglect/abuse petitions filed and adjudicated MRAI petitions filed and adjudicated		

Demographic data. Demographic data provides a general description of the juvenile population in a county. Demographic data can be useful to include in a needs assessment for at least two reasons. First, the inclusion of juvenile population data in the needs assessment will help identify the size of various juvenile populations that may have unique needs (e.g., minority populations, minors living in poverty). Councils may want to gear juvenile justice plan elements specifically towards minors in particular demographic groups.

Second, even if demographic data is not used to directly guide juvenile justice plan elements, it can be used to provide a better understanding of court system and risk and protective factor data. This better understanding can be achieved by considering court system and risk and protective factor data elements in light of the size of the juvenile population and/or the size of particular demographic groups. As a simple example, if a needs assessment states that 20 minors in their county were sentenced to probation in a particular year, this number will mean something different if 2000 minors

reside in the county than it would if 20,000 minors reside in the county. By knowing the size of the juvenile population, the probation data can be interpreted more effectively.

Difficulties associated with interpreting absolute numbers (e.g., the number of juveniles on probation) vis a vis the size of the juvenile population can be circumvented by also calculating percentages of the overall juvenile population (or percentages of the White juvenile population, female juvenile population, etc.) and/or rates based on the juvenile population. This issue is revisited in the sub-section on writing about the data.

For the most part, demographic data can be readily obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. Thus, Table 5 lists several data elements that are readily available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

In addition, Table 6 lists each federal or state agency that makes either demographic data or court system data available (including the U.S. Census Bureau), the agency's general contact information (the agency's general address, general phone number, and worldwide web address), and some of the data elements available through the agency that may be useful to juvenile justice councils. Again, we encourage authors of needs assessments to contact the ICJIA prior to contacting source agencies. Thus, we also include ICJIA contact information in Table 6.

**Table 6: Information on Government Agencies
That Make Demographic and Court System Data
Elements Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available by County
1. Contact the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority		
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority	120 South Riverside Plaza Suite 1016 Chicago, IL 60606 (312) 793-8550 (312) 793-4170 tdd www.icjia.state.il.us	All data listed below
2. If the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority cannot provide the necessary data, then contact the applicable source agency, using the contact information below		
U.S. Census Bureau	U.S. Census Bureau Washington D.C. 20233 (301) 457-4608 www.census.gov	Juvenile population Gender distribution of juvenile population Racial distribution of juvenile population Age distribution of juvenile population Number of minors living in poverty Median household income
Illinois Department of Employment Security	Chicago: 401 South State Street Chicago, IL 60605 (312) 793-5700 (312) 793-9350 tdd/tty Springfield: 400 West Monroe #303 Springfield, IL 62704 (217) 785-5069 www.ides.state.il.us	Unemployment levels

**Table 6 (cont.): Information on Government Agencies
That Make Demographic and Court System Data
Elements Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available by County
<p>Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts</p>	<p>840 South Spring Street Springfield, IL 62704-2618 (217) 785-2125</p> <p>AOIC has no website. General information on AOIC can be obtained through the State of Illinois website: www.state.il.us</p>	<p>Delinquency petitions filed</p> <p>Petitions adjudicated delinquent</p> <p>Cases continued under supervision</p> <p>End of year active probation caseload</p> <p>Technical probation violations</p> <p>Probation violations for new offenses</p> <p>Community service hours completed</p> <p>Restitution paid</p> <p>Pre-adjudicatory detentions</p> <p>Post-adjudicatory detentions</p> <p>Commitments to IDOC</p> <p>Automatic transfers to adult court</p> <p>Discretionary transfers to adult court</p>
<p>Illinois Department of Corrections</p>	<p>1301 Concordia Court Springfield, IL 62794 (217) 522-2666 1-800-546-0844 tdd</p> <p>www.state.idoc.il.us</p>	<p>Commitments to IDOC</p>

The U.S. Census Bureau website (www.census.gov) makes a great deal of population data on every county in the United States very accessible. The website currently includes useful population data pertaining directly to juveniles. However, should one not be able to find a particular data element that they believe would be useful to obtain, Census Bureau staff may be able to accommodate special data requests.

The Census Bureau website currently makes a number of data sets available. These data sets can be downloaded and imported into spreadsheet and statistical software quite easily. An examination of the website revealed several data sets that might be particularly useful to juvenile justice councils. Information from these data sets has been incorporated in the example needs assessment. Of course, councils may deem other information from the website to be just as useful. Nonetheless, the data elements included in the example needs assessment demonstrate the potential utility of demographic information.

The website currently makes county population estimates available for each year in the 1990's, broken down by various combinations of age, race/ethnicity, and gender. Through these data sets, the estimated overall juvenile population for each year in the 1990's can be calculated, as well as the estimated White juvenile population, female juvenile population, etc.

The website also currently includes data sets on median household income and poverty levels for each Illinois county. One potentially useful data element available in each of these data sets is the number of individuals age 0 to 17 living in poverty.

Finally, the U.S. Census Bureau website currently also provides detailed information on their website regarding how they calculate population estimates, poverty

levels, number of individuals living in poverty, etc. While it is not necessary to provide the reader of a needs assessment with this level of detail, authors of needs assessments that report demographic data ought to, at minimum, be cognizant of how the numbers they report were calculated. It may also be useful to provide readers of the needs assessment with a rudimentary description of how the numbers were calculated. This was our strategy in the example needs assessment.

In addition to the U.S. Census Bureau, data on labor force demographics can be obtained from the Illinois Department of Employment Security. In particular, data on unemployment levels may be useful for juvenile justice councils. Thus, we included unemployment levels as a readily available data element in Table 5.

Court system data. The second overall type of data in our organizational scheme is court system data. It can be quite instructive for juvenile justice councils to have an accurate indication of the number of juveniles that become involved in the court system, the types of offenses that precipitated the involvement, and the dispositions that juveniles receive once they become involved. Such information may assist juvenile justice councils in determining needs. For example, if a council finds that a large number of juveniles have recently been arrested for marijuana possession and local law enforcement agencies have not “stepped up” efforts to arrest drug users, then the data may suggest that marijuana use among minors is on the rise. The council may then want to address this issue in their juvenile justice plan.

Just as county-level demographic data is readily available through the U.S. Census Bureau, county-level juvenile court system data is readily available through the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC). AOIC asks every probation

department in Illinois to complete monthly data forms. AOIC aggregates these monthly forms for each probation department, then publishes annual statistical summary reports on the Illinois court system. These reports are available upon request and include a great deal of data specifically on the juvenile court system. Table 6 shows contact information for AOIC, as well as the data elements that are readily available through AOIC (see also Table 5). These data elements were also included in the example needs assessment (Appendix B).

Table 6 shows that data on juvenile commitments to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) is readily available through AOIC. AOIC receives this information from probation departments. However, IDOC can also accommodate requests for aggregate information calculated from their admissions data. Table 6 shows contact information for IDOC.

Thus, a great deal of court system data is readily available to juvenile justice councils. It should be noted that we did not include juvenile arrest data among the data elements that are readily available. Prior to 1992, law enforcement agencies were required to submit detailed, incident-level information to the Illinois State Police (ISP) on every arrest that occurred in their jurisdiction. However, in 1992, ISP attempted to implement a new reporting system and had difficulties with the new system. As a result, ISP began to request aggregate arrest data from law enforcement agencies. Of most importance for juvenile justice councils, the aggregate data did not distinguish between adult and juvenile offenses.

More recently, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998 mandated that law enforcement agencies submit to ISP fingerprint cards and descriptions of every minor age

10 and older who is arrested for a felony. This mandate encompasses cases in which the minor is referred to court, issued a station adjustment, or released without charging. It is discretionary for law enforcement agencies to submit fingerprint cards and descriptions of minors arrested for misdemeanors.

Thus, it may reasonably be expected that ISP will be able to provide a wealth of juvenile arrest data if not at present, then in the near future. Nonetheless, juvenile arrest data statewide is not available for much of the 1990's. Should councils seek arrest data for these for the years in which it is unavailable from ISP, then they will likely have to request the data from local law enforcement agencies. Data on arrests by offense type, race, age, gender, and disposition (court referral, station adjustment, or dropped charges) may be available from local law enforcement agencies. These data elements appear under "available through county or local agencies" in Table 5.

There are also other court system data elements that may be available through county or local agencies. The AOIC annual reports provide a very useful overview of county court systems. However, the reports lack some detail that may be useful for councils. The reports do not include data on the types of offenses for which juveniles have delinquency petitions filed against them, are adjudicated delinquent, placed on probation, etc. The reports do not include data by race or gender. It may also be useful for councils to obtain more detail on the nature of technical violations or new arrests committed by juvenile probationers.

Moreover, AOIC and the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority are currently collaborating on a report examining the characteristics of probationers (both

juvenile and adult) in Illinois. The report will include some additional detail that does not appear in the AOIC annual reports.

An additional limitation of the AOIC reports is that, because AOIC collects and reports aggregated data, their data does not allow one to “track” individual offenders through the court system. For example, the percentage of juveniles who have delinquency petitions filed against who are subsequently adjudicated delinquent, the number of juveniles adjudicated delinquent who are sentenced to supervision, probation, prison, and so on, cannot be accurately calculated from the AOIC annual reports. In order to accurately calculate such percentages, it is necessary to have offender-level data.

Additional details on juveniles who enter the court system and offender-level data may be available through county circuit court clerk offices and/or probation departments and, thus, appear in Table 5 under “available through county or local agencies”. Councils may wish to obtain additional court system data elements beyond that which is available from AOIC reports.

Finally, Table 5 also includes some court system data elements that may be useful to juvenile justice councils, but which they will likely have to collect themselves. In particular, it may be worth the effort to obtain the opinions of juvenile justice professionals and others on the juvenile court system. Certainly, various juvenile justice professions will be represented on the council. However, it may be useful to interview or distribute surveys to juvenile justice professionals who are not members of the council (but who work with juveniles on a regular basis), inquiring about their opinions on the court system and/or issues that the court system should address. Similarly, it may be

useful to ask juvenile offenders, their guardians, and victims of juvenile offenders about the court system via interview, survey, or focus group.

Risk and protective factor data. Data on risk and protective factors should prove to be particularly useful to juvenile justice councils. Risk and protective factors have an impact on the likelihood of minors committing a crime. By examining risk and protective factors, identifying potential problem areas, and addressing these problem areas in a juvenile justice plan, councils may be able to prevent some minors from committing crimes.

Several state agencies make risk and protective factor data elements readily available. These data elements are listed in Table 5 and incorporated into the example needs assessment. Each readily available risk and protective factor data element is related to at least one risk or protective factor listed in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) *Comprehensive Strategy* (see Table 3). Table 7 lists each state agency that makes risk and protective factor data elements available, the agency's general contact information (the agency's general address, general phone number, and worldwide web address), the data elements available through the agency, and the risk factor(s) available in the *Comprehensive Strategy* that are related to the agency's data. Again, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority should be used as a resource for information on the data elements listed in Table 7.

**Table 7: Information on Illinois Government Agencies
That Make Risk and Protective Factor Data Elements
Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available by County	Related OJJDP Risk Factor(s)
1. Contact the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority			
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority	120 South Riverside Plaza Suite 1016 Chicago, IL 60606 (312) 793-8550 (312) 793-4170 tdd www.icjia.state.il.us	All data listed below	
2. If the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority cannot provide the necessary data, then contact the applicable source agency, using the contact information below			
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services	Chicago: 100 West Randolph St. Suite 6-200 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 814-4150 (312) 814-8783 ttd Springfield: 406 East Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62701-1498 (217) 785-2509 (217) 785-6605 ttd www.state.il.us/dcfs	Reported and verified child abuse and neglect Reported and verified child sexual abuse Reported and verified substance affected infants	Family management problems
Illinois Department of Human Services	Chicago: 401 South Clinton St. Chicago, IL 60607 Springfield: 100 South Grand Ave. East Springfield, IL 62762 Information Line: 1-800-843-6154 1-800-447-6404 tty www.state.il.us/agency/dhs	Minors under age 19 in families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Extreme economic and social deprivation

**Table 7 (cont.): Information on Illinois Government Agencies
That Make Risk and Protective Factor Data Elements
Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available at the County Level	Related OJJDP Risk Factor(s)
Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse	Same as Illinois Department of Human Services	Minors admitted to treatment facilities funded by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse	Availability of drugs Community norms favoring drug use, firearms, and crime Early initiation of problem behaviors
Illinois Department of Public Health	535 West Jefferson St. Springfield, IL 62761 (217) 782-4977 1-800-547-0466 tty www.idph.state.il.us	Births to mothers age 19 or under Minors admitted to emergency rooms for violent injuries	Constitutional factors
Illinois State Board of Education	Chicago: 100 W. Randolph, Suite 14-300 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 814-2220 (312) 814-5821 tty Springfield: 100 North 1 st Street Springfield, IL 62777 (217) 782-4321 (217) 782-1900 tty Mt. Vernon: 123 South 10 th Street Suite 200 Mt. Vernon, IL 62864 (618) 244-8383	School dropouts Truancy School suspensions School expulsions	Academic failure Lack of commitment to school
Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts	840 South Spring Street Springfield, IL 62704-2618 (217) 785-2125 AOIC has no website. General information on AOIC can be obtained through the State of Illinois website: www.state.il.us	Neglect/abuse petitions filed and adjudicated Dependency petitions filed and adjudicated MRAI petitions filed and adjudicated Truancy petitions filed and adjudicated	Availability of drugs Community norms favoring drug use, firearms, and crime Family management problems Family conflict

**Table 7 (cont.): Information on Illinois Government Agencies
That Make Risk and Protective Factor Data Elements
Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available at the County Level	Related OJJDP Risk Factor(s)
Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts continued		Addiction petitions filed and adjudicated	Parental involvement in problem behaviors and/or attitudes favorable of delinquency Academic failure Lack of commitment to school Rebelliousness

First, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) makes county level data on reported and verified (i.e., inspected and confirmed) child abuse and neglect and child sexual abuse. DCFS also makes data on substance affected infants available. DCFS publishes annual reports each state fiscal year that includes some county-level data on these data elements.

The Illinois Department of Human Services makes county-level data on the number of minors under age 19 in families that are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) available. TANF replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) on July 1, 1997. The change occurred as a result of federal and state efforts to modify the welfare system. The main distinction between TANF and AFDC is that TANF focuses more heavily on services that will facilitate the likelihood of the recipient returning to the work force. In order to receive cash assistance, TANF recipients must hold a job or participate in work-related programs (e.g., job search or job

readiness programs). There are also limits to the number of months that recipients can receive TANF benefits.

Councils can also receive information from the Illinois Department of Human Services on the number of minors under 19 that were in families receiving AFDC funds. However, because of the changes to the Illinois welfare system, councils should be cautious in comparing data elements on public assistance prior to TANF to those after TANF.

The Illinois Department of Human Services oversees several smaller, more specialized state agencies. One such agency is the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA). OASA makes county-level data available on minors admitted to OASA-funded alcohol and/or drug treatment facilities from 1994 to 1999. However, the minors for whom OASA has data available received OASA funds. There may be important differences between minors who received OASA funds and those who did not. For example, OASA states that, in accordance with state grant and funding initiatives, they give funding priority to the following populations: pregnant injecting drug users, pregnant and post-partum women, injecting drug users and known HIV-infected persons, persons eligible for TANF, DCFS referrals, other women with children, and specific criminal justice patients.

The overall OASA data set includes non-identifiable individual-level data on every individual who is admitted to an OASA-funded facility. This enables OASA to provide demographic data on individuals admitted to OASA-funded facilities. OASA can also provide information about the general nature of the admission (e.g., the drug that precipitated the admission, the source of the minor's referral to the treatment facility).

OASA publishes annual reports in which they provide demographic and general admissions data for the state of Illinois as a whole. Councils can use these annual reports to determine the demographic variables that OASA has available.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) makes county-level data on the number of births by mothers age 19 or under available. A great deal of data on births to young mothers and various other health-related topics is currently available on the IDPH website (www.idph.state.il.us).

In addition, IDPH was mandated by the Illinois General Assembly to collect data on violent injuries. Specifically, effective March 10, 1998, all hospitals in Illinois with emergency departments were mandated to report every violent injury that resulted in a hospital admission to IDPH. Hospitals with emergency departments are provided with a very comprehensive list of injury codes. Reporting of violent injuries not resulting in a hospital admission is optional. In addition, hospitals with emergency departments are required to report every instance of child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence, irrespective of whether or not the patient is admitted to the hospital. IDPH collects and compiles this information in the Illinois Violent Injury Registry.

Some information that councils may be particularly interested in obtaining from the Illinois Violent Injury Registry includes rapes committed against minors, teen suicide attempts, and assaults perpetrated against minors. For more information on the Illinois Violent Injury Registry, contact IDPH or the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

The Illinois State Board of Education makes data available on school dropouts, school suspensions, school expulsions, and truancy. This data may be available both by county and individual school.

Finally, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts also includes some data elements that involve the juvenile court system, but may reasonably be classified as risk factors. Specifically, in addition to delinquency petitions, the Juvenile Court Act allows interested parties or the court (through the State's Attorney's office) to file various other types of juvenile petitions. The Juvenile Court Act describes five other types of petitions: neglected or abused minors, dependent minors, minors requiring authoritative intervention, truant minors in need of supervision, and addicted minors. These five types of juvenile petitions are filed against minors either because their current social situation places them at high risk for harm or because they have exhibited maladaptive behaviors which may hinder their development. Neglected minors are under 18 and have not received necessary support or have been abandoned by their parent(s) or guardian(s). Abused minors are under 18 and have been physically or sexually abused by their parent(s), guardian(s), other individuals residing in the minor's household, or a paramour of the minor's parent or guardian. Minors requiring authoritative intervention (MRAI) are under 18 and have run away or are beyond the control of their parent(s) or guardian(s) so that their physical safety is in immediate danger. Truant minors in need of supervision are chronically absent students. Addicted minors are under 18 and addicted to alcohol or drugs, as defined under Illinois' Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependency Act.

It may be fairly stated that minors who have these types of petitions filed against them are at risk for future criminal behavior. Some data on the number of minors who

had each of these five types of petitions filed against them and the number of minors who were adjudicated for each of these types of petitions appears in the AOIC annual reports. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority has organized data on these five types of petitions that have been included in the AOIC annual reports. Other data on these petitions may be obtained by contacting AOIC directly.

Thus, on the whole, a great deal of data on risk factors can be readily obtained from state agencies. Moreover, the readily available data encompasses a large number of risk areas. However, there is also a great deal of additional data elements which may be useful to include in a needs assessment. Again, some of these data elements may already exist at the county-level. For others, it may be necessary for councils to collect the data themselves. These data elements appear in Table 5, and can be obtained from community agencies, schools, or hospitals.

First, various community agencies that provide services to minors likely collect data that would be useful for councils. For example, it may be useful to receive information from community agencies that service runaway teens. Or, it may be useful to receive information from community agencies that provide drug and alcohol treatment, but do not receive OASA funds. It may also be useful to receive information from community agencies that provide counseling and/or mental health services to minors.

Such community agencies very likely collect basic information on each client upon initiation of services. Community agencies may be willing to release some of this information. Councils may be interested in data elements on the reasons for the initiation of services, the number of minors being served, how minors are being referred to the agencies, and demographic information on the minors being served.

Additional county-level data may also be available from local high schools. We have already noted that data on school dropouts, truancy, suspensions, and expulsions may be available from the Illinois State Board of Education. In addition, local high schools may have administered standardized tests to their students. If so, then schools may be able to provide councils with information on standardized test results.

Moreover, local high schools may have distributed surveys to their students or allowed outside researchers to distribute surveys. Survey results obtained directly from students can be a very valuable source of information for councils. Surveys may have been distributed to students for various reasons, including to identify the prevalence of risk factors exhibited by students or to learn student's perceptions of the school (e.g., school safety, overall school environment). Local high schools may have developed and distributed surveys on their own. Alternatively, local high schools may have sought information from students, but brought in outside assistance to distribute the surveys. Finally, local high schools may merely have granted outside researchers permission to collect survey data from students for their own purposes.

The last source for existing county-level data that we include in Table 5 is county hospitals. The Illinois Violent Injury Registry is designed to include a great deal of information on injuries that are associated with risk factors. If county hospitals are complying with the mandate, then the registry should include a great deal of useful information for councils. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) estimated fairly high compliance rates, but also noted that it took some time after the March 10, 1998 startup date for hospitals to begin complying. Moreover, IDPH was collecting 1999 data well into the year 2000. These delays may be partly associated with the

comprehensiveness of the data that is being collected by IDPH. In particular, the coding scheme for violent injuries is quite detailed. Moreover, the coding scheme for violent injuries requires some judgment on the part of individuals who gather data for the registry. In some instances, the exact same physical injury can be coded in several ways, depending on whether the individual recording the injury for the registry determines that the injury was a suicide attempt, an assault, or is unsure whether the injury is a suicide attempt or an assault.

Councils may want to contact administrators of local hospitals to inquire whether they are submitting data to IDPH and, if they are, then they may want ask questions regarding how the hospital is using the IDPH injury coding scheme (e.g., how they are determining in the emergency room that an injury is a suicide attempt as opposed to an assault). If it is the case that hospitals are not reporting violent injury data to IDPH, then the council may want to inquire whether the hospital has injury data available that they are willing to release to the council.

Finally, Table 5 also includes some risk and protective factor data elements that we believe may be useful to juvenile justice councils, but which they will likely have to collect themselves. As with the court system data, we suggest that it may be useful to obtain survey, interview, or focus group data. For risk and protective factors, this type of data may be useful to obtain from individuals who work with at-risk minors (e.g., individuals who work at community agencies, teachers), inquiring about the difficulties they face when dealing with at-risk minors, the problems directly facing at-risk minors, etc.

In addition, it may be the case that local high schools have not distributed surveys to minors. Or, local high schools may have distributed surveys that lack some information that councils deem important. In such instances, authors of needs assessments may want to consider collecting their own data from minors. Self-report data from minors can prove to be a very informative, useful, and perhaps even vital, source of information for councils. Councils would likely benefit from efforts to collect their own data from minors, should adequate self-report data from minors not already exist. However, authors of needs assessments will have to pay special attention to the rights of minors who participate.

A final note on data collection. As a final note on collecting data, it should be emphasized that data collection is an ongoing process. Councils should periodically update their needs assessment with the most recent data. For data that is readily available from federal or state agencies, it may be relatively easy to update data elements annually, as the agency makes new data available through their website, annual reports, etc. Similarly, some data elements available from county-level agencies may be relatively easy to update. Of course, other data elements will be more difficult to update on a regular basis.

Finally, related to the notion that data collection is a fluid process, there is one other type of data that councils may want to collect: data elements meant to resolve ambiguities or to elaborate on issues that emerge from other data elements. An unfortunate paradox of data collection is that more data does not always result in the ability to draw clear conclusions. Instead, data may result in more questions than answers. For example, two data elements may contradict each other. Additional data

may be required to resolve the ambiguity. On the other hand, data may clearly indicate a pattern that the council had previously not expected. If so, the council may want to follow up on the unexpected result with further data collection.

Writing About the Data

Some useful strategies. The example needs assessment in Appendix B adopts several strategies that can enhance the informativeness of a needs assessment. Specifically, the strategies will better enable readers of the needs assessment to understand what constitutes a “high” or “low” level of some data element.

First, it is recommended that authors of needs assessments attempt to examine trends. That is, to the extent possible, needs assessments should examine the same data element across several years. This will allow councils to examine increases or decreases across time, thereby allowing councils to better identify problem areas.

Second, it is recommended that authors of needs assessments select and utilize a comparison group for as many data elements as possible. For the purposes of the needs assessment, an appropriate comparison group would be a county or jurisdiction that is comparable to the council’s county or jurisdiction in as many respects as possible. In particular, the comparison group should be comparable to the council’s county or jurisdiction on factors that would contribute to differences in the data elements included in the needs assessment (e.g., demographic factors).

The purpose of using a comparison group is to determine whether a level of some data element is normative, or comparable to levels in similar counties or jurisdictions. In the example needs assessment, our hypothetical county was classified as a rural county by the U.S. Census Bureau. Thus, we compared the hypothetical county to the average of

other Illinois counties classified as rural. This may not be the perfect approach, as there may be differences among rural counties. Thus, another purpose of the demographic section in our example needs assessment is to determine whether the other rural counties constitute an appropriate comparison group. Authors of needs assessments can select other comparison groups that they deem appropriate, such as a neighboring county or jurisdiction, other rural counties with similar populations, etc. Comparison data may not be available for every data element. However, it is available for many of the readily available data elements that appear in Table 5.

Should authors elect to include a comparison group in the needs assessment, then another issue arises. It was mentioned above that demographic data can be used to provide greater insight into data elements by allowing readers to consider the data elements presented as absolute numbers in light of juvenile population size. It was also suggested that authors of needs assessments can circumvent difficulties associated with interpreting absolute numbers by also reporting percentages of the juvenile population and/or rates based on the juvenile population. This issue becomes quite important should authors of needs assessment choose to utilize a comparison group. The size of the juvenile population in the council's county or jurisdiction will likely differ from the size of the juvenile population in the comparison county or jurisdiction. To compare absolute numbers may be misleading. Thus, when making direct comparisons between the council's county or jurisdiction and the comparison group, percentages or rates should be used. In the example needs assessment, absolute numbers are generally reported (and are always reported for the council's county), but direct comparisons are made based on rates per 100,000 juveniles in the population.

Together, trends and comparison groups allow for more flexibility in what one can report in the text of a needs assessment. Authors of needs assessments can go beyond simply describing levels of data elements and make statements regarding percentage change over time, percent difference between the council's county or jurisdiction and the comparison county or jurisdiction, the extent to which trends differ in the council's county or jurisdiction and the comparison county or jurisdiction, etc.

Content of the report. One suggestion regarding the content of a needs assessment report is that the author consider using figures and tables liberally. In general, it is easier to interpret and understand figures and tables than it is to interpret and understand text describing data. Figures and tables can be beneficial in conveying the “big picture” without requiring the reader to get bogged down in numbers. This can be beneficial to council members who want to understand the juvenile justice system as completely as possible, but have a limited amount of time. The example needs assessment includes a figure or table for most types of data elements. The text in the example needs assessment is generally used to note the most interesting aspects of the figure or table or to describe additional calculations based on the data included in the figure or table (e.g., percent change over time, differences between the hypothetical county and the comparison county).

Drawing Conclusions From the Data

It was recommended that needs assessments be concluded with a section that integrates all the data included in the report and, to the extent possible, interprets and draws conclusions from the data. This section provides some suggestions as to how to draw conclusions from data.

First, it should be clearly emphasized that there are limitations to the utility of the type of data we are encouraging councils to include in a needs assessment. Here it is useful to understand the distinction between descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The purpose of descriptive statistics is to describe, summarize, or display data elements. Examples of descriptive statistics include frequencies, percentages, rates, and averages. The data elements that we have suggested authors include in a needs assessment are descriptive statistics.

Inferential statistics are more sophisticated. Researchers from various disciplines use inferential statistics to test hypotheses. One beneficial aspect of inferential statistics is that they allow researchers to take a sample (e.g., 20 juvenile offenders in County A) and make relatively firm statements about a population (every juvenile offender in County A). In so doing, the researcher can also, with a relatively strong degree of certainty, draw conclusions from data.

The point to be made is not that councils should learn how to use inferential statistics. Rather, the point is merely to suggest that, because needs assessments are comprised of descriptive statistics, councils should be cautious when drawing conclusions from the data. For each data element that seems to clearly suggest a particular conclusion, there may be viable alternative conclusions.

Nonetheless, descriptive statistics can be informative and useful. One factor that should be considered when determining how much emphasis to place on data elements that seem to suggest a particular conclusion is the reliability of the data. A data element is reliable when the researcher who collected the data is able to repeat the exact same data

collection procedure and obtain the same result. Should the same data collection procedure yield discrepant results, the data element is less reliable and, hence, less useful.

Authors of needs assessments or councils can get an indication of how reliable a data element is by considering the procedures involved in collecting the data. For data elements obtained from federal, state, and county agencies, this may mean contacting researchers at the agencies and inquiring how they arrived at their numbers. In addition, several of the data elements that are available from state agencies involve county-level agencies filling out a data collection instrument and sending it to the state agency.

Authors of needs assessments or councils may want to consider finding out whether all the agencies in their county or jurisdiction have been filling out data collection instruments distributed by state agencies. If certain county agencies are not sending data to the state agency or are sending data on an irregular basis, it can have a large impact on the data reported by the state agency (and, hence, the reliability of the data).

In addition, it is possible that county level agencies are mistakenly completing parts of the data collection instrument in a manner not intended by the state agency. Perhaps authors of needs assessments or councils could ask state agencies for a blank copy of their data collection instrument. This will enable authors and/or councils to consider whether there may be aspects of the data collection instrument that county agencies are interpreting differently. It is very likely that the state agency has already considered the issue. Nonetheless, it is useful to be aware of issues that may sacrifice the reliability of data elements.

As a final note on reliability, the examination of trends over time can serve as an indication of reliability. Should the authors of needs assessments and/or councils detect large, inexplicable increases or decreases over time in levels of a data element, it may be a product of how the data was collected. An attempt should be made to find out the cause of the fluctuation as opposed to assuming that the data accurately reflects reality.

Thus, when examining individual data elements, authors of needs assessments and councils should consider reliability. However, stronger conclusions can be drawn from descriptive data by considering multiple data elements. If multiple data elements lead to the same conclusion, it increases the likelihood that the conclusion is accurate. For example, if juvenile arrest data indicates that a large percentage of juvenile arrests are for alcohol or drug related offenses and school survey data indicates that a large percentage of high school students admit to drinking and/or using drugs, then it strengthens the interpretation that alcohol and drug use is an issue that the council should address.

Related to the notion that multiple data elements should be considered, we encourage council members to consider whether data elements are consistent with their personal experiences working in the juvenile justice system. In effect, personal experience can serve as a “data element”. Thus, strong conclusions can be drawn from a needs assessment by examining whether data elements corroborate personal experiences of council members.

It is possible that multiple data elements will lead to contradictory conclusions. Or, two data elements may not directly contradict each other, but still fail to corroborate each other. Or, a data element may run counter to or not be consistent with personal experience. Should any of these scenarios arise, councils have several options. First,

they can assume that the conclusion is not strong enough to warrant considering a particular issue any further (or potentially addressing it in the juvenile justice plan). Second, they can collect more data to determine which conclusion is more accurate. Third, they can decide that a particular issue should be addressed, but because the evidence is equivocal, they will make the issue less of a priority than other, less ambiguous issues (and, presumably, allocate fewer resources toward the issue).

Developing a Juvenile Justice Plan

Once councils have identified needs and issues facing their juvenile justice system, then they should be in a position to begin developing a juvenile justice plan. In this section, we attempt to provide some guidance for councils who are attempting to develop a juvenile justice plan. In particular, we propose one way that a juvenile justice plan may be structured. This proposed structure is partially based on our examination of two existing juvenile justice plans.

Plan Structure

It can be a difficult task developing a comprehensive, polished, well-structured document that describes how to address the most pressing needs and issues of a juvenile justice system. There is certainly no single correct way to complete such a task. Thus, the purpose of this section is not to propose the “right” way to develop a plan. Instead, this section describes one possible way in which a juvenile justice plan can be structured, as well as the content of each structural component. We base this possible plan structure not only on our own experience in criminal justice-related policy planning, but also on two existing juvenile justice plans that we were able to obtain. To the best of our knowledge, relatively few juvenile justice plans have been developed in Illinois. Given

that many juvenile justice councils in Illinois may currently be attempting to develop a plan for the first time, a description of existing plans may be useful.

We obtained the two existing plans in the following manner. The ICJIA is currently working on a research project examining how The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998 is being implemented throughout Illinois. Part of this project involved surveying juvenile justice professionals about The Juvenile Justice Reform Act. We attempted to survey professionals from every Illinois county. As part of this survey research, we asked state's attorneys or assistant state's attorneys whether their county had developed a juvenile justice council and, if so, whether the council had developed a juvenile justice plan. Of the 75 State's Attorneys that responded to our survey, 16 stated that their county had a juvenile justice council. Of these 16 State's Attorneys, 3 stated that the council had developed a plan. We contacted these three State's Attorneys. One of these three State's Attorneys made his council's plan available for us to examine. This State's Attorney noted that, when his council was attempting to develop a juvenile justice plan, they also sought example plans. However, they knew of no other juvenile justice council in Illinois that had developed a plan. Thus, he sought plans from juvenile justice councils in Florida, which has statutes regarding the formation and functions of juvenile justice councils that are very similar to those in Illinois. He was able to obtain one existing plan from a Florida council. Thus, we were able to obtain two example plans: one from an Illinois juvenile justice council and one from a Florida juvenile justice council. The plans have a similar structure, perhaps because the Illinois juvenile justice council used the Florida juvenile justice plan to guide the formation of their plan.

Table 8 provides a possible juvenile justice plan outline, based both on our suggestions and on the two existing plans. Table 8 shows that a juvenile justice plan may include five basic sections: an introduction, a mission or philosophy statement, a description of the needs facing the local juvenile justice system, goals and objectives, and action steps to carry out the goals and objectives. Below, a more detailed written description of what may be included in these basic sections is provided.

Table 8: A Possible Juvenile Justice Plan Outline

1) Introduction

- a) Purpose and function of the council
- b) Description of legislation providing authority for councils
- c) Council committees (if applicable)

2) Mission or Philosophy Statement

- a) Mission or philosophy of local juvenile justice system and juvenile justice council
- b) Priorities/emphases of local juvenile justice system and juvenile justice council

3) Needs of the Local Juvenile Justice System

- a) General description of completed needs assessment (if applicable)
- b) List of needs and issues facing local juvenile justice system

4) Goals and Objectives

- a) Specific, difficult goals for each identified need or issue
- b) Specific, difficult objectives for each identified goal

5) Action Steps

- a) Specific action steps for each identified objective

In the section above on developing a needs assessment (pages xx-xx) and in the evaluation manual (pages xx-xx) we address the question of whether the task should be completed internally (i.e., by council members or employees in agencies represented on the council) or externally (i.e., by agencies not represented on the council). This question could apply to juvenile justice plans as well.

Because council members work in the local juvenile justice system on a daily basis, they are likely in the best position to determine the needs and issues facing their system. Moreover, the development of objectives and action steps may involve knowledge of existing programs that are available to minors. Council members may be more likely to be aware of existing programs than an external plan author would be. Thus, council members may possess experience and knowledge that makes their contribution to a juvenile justice plan indispensable.

However, just as councils may not have time to develop their own needs assessment or complete their own evaluations, they may also not have time to write their own juvenile justice plan. We recommend that councils begin the process of developing a juvenile justice plan by determining how the plan will be structured (our proposed structure or otherwise). Then, the council should determine who will write each section of the plan. Should the council opt to have any non-council member contribute to the writing of the plan, then they should ensure that the agreed upon author is in attendance at all meetings in which relevant plan content is discussed. Depending on the rationale for selecting the author, he or she could either attend merely in the capacity of a notetaker (with the goal of preparing to write his or her plan sections) or to also make substantive contributions to relevant plan sections. After plan structure and authorship is determined, then subsequent council meetings can be, in effect, brainstorming sessions in which the council determines the content of each plan section.

Plan introduction. Councils may be interested in distributing their completed juvenile justice plan fairly widely. Councils may want the public to be aware of their activities. If so, then the plan should be written in a manner that makes it accessible to

the public at large. Moreover, in order to implement the plan, it may be necessary for councils to collaborate with agencies that are not represented on the council. Such agencies may not be entirely aware of the purpose and functions of the council.

Thus, it may be useful for councils to begin their plan with an introduction that does not assume any knowledge on the part of the reader regarding the purpose and functions of juvenile justice councils (e.g., to provide an interagency forum for the assessment of the juvenile justice system, to develop a juvenile justice plan, etc.). As such, the introduction could acquaint readers with juvenile justice councils. Consistent with this, the introduction could acquaint readers with the legislative statute in the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998 authorizing the formation of juvenile justice councils.¹³ In fact, both of the existing plans directly cite the legislative statute at various points in the introduction.

The Juvenile Justice Reform Act requires councils to be comprised of representatives from certain agencies: the sheriff's office, state's attorney's office, probation department, and county board. However, the Act also allows councils a great deal of flexibility in selecting council participants. For example, the statute states that "The chairperson shall appoint additional members of the council as is deemed necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Article . . .".¹⁴ It may be useful to give the reader a sense of what agencies and types of individuals the council will attempt to include as members. Such information need not be specific or absolute, but should simply give the reader a sense of who is carrying out action steps that are described in the plan. An interested reader may want to make inquiries to council members about plan goals,

¹³ 705 ILCS 405/6-12

¹⁴ 705 ILCS 405/6-12 (b))

objectives, or action steps. A general list of the agencies or individuals represented on the council will make this easier to accomplish.

One additional strategy that councils may want to consider is developing committees to carry on various functions of the council. This strategy was adopted by one of the councils whose plan we obtained. For example, this council created a public relations committee, an evaluation committee, and a grants review committee. Should councils choose to develop such committees, it may be worth noting their existence in the introduction to the juvenile justice plan.

Mission or Philosophy Statement. After describing their functions and purposes, councils may want to describe the mission or philosophy that guides their local juvenile justice system. This mission or philosophy can guide the nature of the goals, objectives, and action steps that are included in the plan. Both existing plans make explicit statements regarding their mission or philosophy, then proceed to describe the emphases and priorities of the mission or philosophy. Including a mission or philosophy statement may help facilitate the formation of plan goals, objectives, and action steps by ensuring that the council is collectively operating under the same set of assumptions.

Needs of the Local Juvenile Justice System. The purpose of this section of a juvenile justice plan is to describe the needs and issues facing the local juvenile justice system. If the council has conducted a needs assessment, then data and conclusions from the assessment can be included in this section. Councils that have completed a needs assessment may consider introducing the assessment to readers. Such an introduction could include the author(s) of the needs assessment, the types of data elements that were included in the needs assessment, and notable methodological strategies that were

employed in the needs assessment (e.g., the use of a comparison group). After introducing the needs assessment, results and conclusions from the needs assessment can be briefly summarized. Both of the existing plans that we obtained make reference to relevant data pertaining to their juvenile justice system.

One possible strategy is to follow up a description of the needs assessment with a numbered list of the issues and needs facing the local juvenile justice system. Presumably, this list would, at least in part, follow directly from the results and conclusions drawn from the needs assessment. For issues and needs that do not follow directly from a needs assessment (because the council was unable to conduct a needs assessment, was unable to obtain data on a particular topic, etc.), it may be useful to describe why the issue or need has been identified. The issues and needs that the council identifies at this point can be developed into goals, objectives, and action steps in subsequent sections of the plan.

It may also be useful for councils to prioritize issues and needs. Councils will likely want their plan to be comprehensive and, therefore, may want to identify as many issues and needs as they believe will contribute to the reduction of juvenile crime. However, councils may want to determine which issues and needs they will place more emphasis on addressing. Prioritizing issues may assist in determining how to allocate resources that will be used to implement the plan. This may be particularly useful if councils believe that they will have difficulty obtaining resources for implementing the plan. Factors that councils may want to consider as they prioritize issues and needs include the importance of the issue or need, the ease with which the issue or need can be

addressed, the resources that will be necessary to address the issue or need, and how long it will take to address the issue or need.

Goals and Objectives. After issues and needs have been identified, then the next step is to develop goals and objectives for addressing each issue or need. These goals and objectives comprise the “heart” of the juvenile justice plan. They describe what the council would like to achieve in order to reduce juvenile crime. They are the elements of the plan.

Goals should precede objectives. In effect, goals transform issues and needs into action statements. For example, the Baird County needs assessment showed that the number of high school dropouts in Baird County increased throughout the 1990’s. Imagine that the Baird County juvenile justice council decides to identify this as an issue that should be addressed in their plan. A corresponding goal may be “To reduce the number of high school dropouts by 25% by January, 2003”.

We suggest that councils attempt to make their goals as specific as possible. This can be achieved by including a specific level of increase or decrease to be achieved and a specific timeline. By including specificity in goals, it is easier for councils to measure success or failure. Related to this, by stating a desired outcome, specificity makes plan elements more evaluatable.

When writing specific levels of increase or decrease and specific timelines, we suggest that councils challenge themselves. Social scientific research has indicated that, for a variety of reasons, goal-related performance increases as goal difficulty increases. The limitation to this is that goal difficulty must not exceed ability. Thus, we suggest that councils should develop challenging goals, but not impossible goals.

Once councils have developed goals, then the next step is to develop one or more objectives for each goal. Objectives are developed in an attempt to address the potential causal factor(s) contributing to each need or issue. Each objective provides a more molecular goal, intended to address one factor that contributes to the need or issue. For example, adolescent drug use, gang activity, perceptions of school safety, the nature of the school curriculum, opportunities for advanced education, and academic motivation may all be related to the number of students that drop out of high school. Councils will need to determine the factor(s) that they believe are causing the need or issue, then develop objectives that address the potential causal factor(s). Objectives may be written in a manner similar to that which we suggested for goals. That is, objectives should be written with as much specificity as possible and should provide a challenge for the council. As an example, if a council has developed a goal pertaining to high school dropouts and has determined that academic motivation may be a contributing factor, then one objective may be “To increase voluntary enrollment in the school system’s college preparatory program by 25% by the end of the year”.

The assumption is that, by achieving the objectives, one will also achieve the goal. This approach has the advantage of allowing councils to gain a better understanding of the factors that are the strongest contributors to needs and issues that have been identified. Should a council achieve both an objective and the related goal, then it may be the case that there is an actual relationship between the factor being addressed in the objective and the issue being addressed in the goal. For example, if enrollment in a college preparatory program increases and the number of high school dropouts decreases, then there may be an actual relationship between the two variables.

Councils will certainly want to keep these relationships in mind. However, councils will still want to be cautious in placing too much emphasis on the relationship.

This is because, by the term relationship, we mean that there may be a *correlational* relationship between the factor addressed in the objective and the issue addressed in the goal. A correlational relationship between two variables means that as levels of one variable changes, levels of the other variable changes as well. However, very few correlational relationships are perfect. Moreover, a basic credo emphasized by social scientists is that “correlation is not causation”. In other words, even if a council achieves both a goal and an objective, it cannot be assumed that changes in the factor addressed in the objective *caused* changes in the issue addressed in the goal. Thus, continued emphasis on the objective may not result in continued goal achievement. Instead, there may be other, previously unconsidered, factors that led to successful goal achievement.

Finally, this section has assumed that juvenile justice plan elements should be written to address problem areas in the local juvenile justice system. This need not necessarily be the case. Instead, plan elements may also be written to bolster existing strengths. Similarly, plan elements may be written to strengthen protective factors. For example, councils may want to help create job opportunities for minors. Consistent with this, one of the existing plans identifies several protective factors that the council intends to address.

Action Steps. After goals and objectives have been identified, then the final section of the juvenile justice plan can be devoted to describing the steps that councils will take to achieve each of the objectives (and, hence, to achieve each of the goals). As

with goals and objectives, we suggest that action steps be as specific as possible. The purpose of such specificity should be to ensure that the council is clear on what they will be doing in order to carry out the objective.

To continue with the high school dropout example, one potential action step to increase voluntary enrollment in a college preparatory program may be to “Enlist guest speakers to discuss the importance of a college education”. Another may be to “Develop strategies for more effectively marketing the college preparatory program curriculum to students”. Other action steps may be more preliminary or preparatory, such as “Contact high school principals to discuss reasons for low enrollment in the college preparatory program”. This last action step may be followed up with further action that will directly affect completion of the objective.

Interagency Agreements

Once a juvenile justice plan has been developed that contains a description of the needs of a local juvenile justice system and the goals and objectives designed to meet those needs, a strategy for implementing the plan is the next logical step. This section of the guidebook describes how interagency agreements can lead to a unified and internally consistent strategy for addressing the needs identified by a juvenile justice council.

It is the explicit responsibility of juvenile justice councils to develop a written interagency agreement that specifies the contributions each member agency will make toward achieving the goals of the juvenile justice plan.¹⁵ The role that each agency plays in addressing a need becomes their “contribution” to achieving the goals of the juvenile justice plan.

¹⁵ 705 ILCS 405/6-12 (3) (b)

The focus of the juvenile justice plan is on the needs identified by a comprehensive assessment of the local juvenile justice system and the communities served by the juvenile justice council. Consistent with the ideal of a holistic, comprehensive, and collaborative juvenile justice council, every member can contribute to each objective in the plan. The form that this contribution takes will vary depending on the impact that an agency can have on a stated objective. For example, if reducing the school drop out rate is the objective (as it is in Baird County), schools are likely to play a more significant role than a county's juvenile justice agencies. While the local educational system can help minors stay in school through specific initiatives (e.g., through alternative educational opportunities for troubled youth, attendance incentives, bullying prevention programs, tutoring programs, etc.), other agencies can support their mission. For example, social service agencies can work with educators to provide supplementary services to minors who are struggling with school, probation departments can monitor minors in a way that does not disrupt their educational experience, law enforcement agencies can share information with the schools regarding minors picked up for truancy, and the courts can develop responses to juvenile offenders that encourages them to attend school. Less obvious is the contribution that the general public can make toward reducing the drop out rate. Parents and the public more generally can take an active interest in the schools that serve their communities. This interest could be in the academic, athletic, intramural, and/or extramural pursuits of students. Local newspapers can publicize the efforts of the students in their communities.

One of the promises of a holistic, comprehensive, and collaborative effort to address the needs of the juvenile justice system is that not only is the problem addressed,

but there are also likely to be auxiliary benefits to a comprehensive juvenile justice plan in which all parties participate. In the example of reducing drop out rates, not only is the drop out rate addressed in a well-coordinated manner, but the strategies that are developed are also likely to result in stronger communities.

There are two important points to this discussion. First, there are few needs of a local juvenile justice system that cannot be addressed by all parties participating on a juvenile justice council. The challenge may be to think about juvenile delinquency not as a problem that only juvenile justice professionals must attend to, but a problem that we all can, and should, work together to solve. Secondly, a holistic, comprehensive, and collaborative approach to addressing a specific need is likely to have benefits that extend beyond the need being addressed.

Interagency agreements can also hold juvenile justice council agencies and entities accountable for their contributions. The content of interagency agreements should be specific about the contribution each signatory agency will make in addressing the identified problem. Interagency agreements are both public declarations of the contributions being made by council members and the agencies they represent and explicit statements of the specific aspects of the problem being addressed by each participant. This is important to other council members as they come to understand their role in the bigger picture, but is also crucial in evaluating the efficacy of the juvenile justice plan. Returning to the example of reducing drop out rates, if the drop out rate is not reduced, each agency's contribution can be evaluated separately in an attempt to understand where efforts need to be strengthened.

This process of identifying the contribution that each agency can make in addressing the needs of the local juvenile justice system is aided by an understanding of the local resources that are available to the communities affected by the juvenile justice plan. This suggests that an assessment of available resources would be a productive enterprise. Whether this is a task that needs to be conducted formally by an assessment team or informally through dialogue between council members is best determined by the juvenile justice council (in smaller jurisdictions, juvenile justice council members together may be aware of all of the programs and services available in their communities).

Identifying the absence of needed programs and services in a community is still another benefit of the juvenile justice council planning process. Focusing on a community's needs frees council members to develop comprehensive solutions to their needs. Although this process may identify programs and services that are unavailable in a community, knowing what a community is missing is important to the building of a continuum of care for minors in need. For example, if bullying is a problem in a school, but no bullying prevention programs exist, working to develop a bullying prevention program or replicating an existing program fills the gap in a local continuum of care. Finally, because many funding opportunities are need based, knowing a local juvenile justice system's needs and having the data to support the identification of those needs can go a long way to receiving needs based funding.

In sum, interagency agreements grow out of the process by which goals, objectives, and action steps are identified. The interagency agreement is the section of the juvenile justice plan that lists the specific contributions that each signatory agency

will make toward helping the county or set of counties address their needs. In our view, interagency agreements are not legally binding contracts, but instead are public declarations of the efforts council members and the agencies they represent will make toward achieving their goals.

Throughout the text on juvenile justice plan components and interagency agreements, we have used high school dropout levels in Baird County as an example. Table 9 puts the steps together. That is, Table 9 begins with the data from the Baird County needs assessment that led the decision by the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council to address their high school dropout level in their juvenile justice plan. From there, Table 9 states the need that was identified based on the data, as well as the corresponding juvenile justice plan goal, objective, and action steps.

In addition, Table 9 shows potential components of an interagency agreement that the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council could develop to address enrollment in the college preparatory program or, more generally, to address academic motivation. Table 9 could be used as a format for the part of the interagency agreement that addresses this objective. The distinction between the example in Table 9 and the complete interagency agreement is that the complete interagency agreement should summarize *all* of the contributions that each signatory agency is making toward meeting *all* of the needs identified by the juvenile justice council, as opposed to each need having its own interagency agreement. As a result, the interagency agreement will state the contributions that each signatory agency will make toward achieving all of the goals of the juvenile justice plan and should be signed by all council members.

For the purpose of Table 9, we assume that the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council is composed of the following types of participants: several representatives from local law enforcement, at least one representative from the state's attorney's office, at least one juvenile court judge, at least one public defender, at least one county board member, several representatives from social services agencies that serve minors, at least one representative from the school system, and at least one citizen representing the community at large.

**Table 9: Example Goal, Objective, Action Steps,
and Interagency Agreement to Address an Increase
in the Number of High School Dropouts**

Needs Assessment Data Suggesting the Need (from Appendix B)

- There was a tendency for the number of high school dropouts in Baird County to increase throughout the 1990's. For example, there were 23 high school dropouts during the 1990-1991 school year (2.9% of the high school population) and 37 high school dropouts during the 1998-1999 school year (4.6% of the high school population).

Need Identified from Data

- School system representatives on the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council have also noticed that academic motivation has been a problem in Baird County high schools. The council decides that the increase in the number of high school dropouts, while not necessarily extreme in absolute terms (the number of high school dropouts is still fairly low and high school dropout rates in Baird County are lower than in the other 73 Illinois rural counties), corroborates the observations of the school system representatives. Thus, the council decides to address the high school dropout level in their juvenile justice plan. They hypothesize that increasing academic motivation will reduce the number of high school dropouts in Baird County.

Goal

- Reduce the number of high school dropouts by 25% by January, 2003.

Objective

- Increase voluntary enrollment in the school system's college preparatory program by 25% by the end of the year.

**Table 9 (cont.): Example Goal, Objective, Action Steps,
and Interagency Agreement to Address an Increase
in the Number of High School Dropouts**

Action Steps

- Enlist guest speakers to discuss the importance of a college education.
- Develop strategies for more effectively marketing the college preparatory program curriculum to students.
- Contact high school principals to discuss reasons for low enrollment in the college preparatory program.

Components of the interagency agreement specific to achieving the objective or more generally related to the goal of increasing academic motivation

Law Enforcement

- Share information with the schools and the council regarding minors picked up for truancy (i.e., at risk for dropping out of school and currently exhibiting low academic motivation).

Judges, State's Attorneys, Public Defenders

- Share information with the council regarding minors who have truancy petitions filed against them and minors adjudicated truant.
- Work together to place truant minors in county programs that will start to increase their level of academic motivation and reintegrate them into the school system (e.g., placements in alternative schools, after school tutoring programs, etc.).

County Board

- Assess financial resources available for guest speakers in schools.
- Support the college preparatory program and other programs aimed at keeping minors in school and/or increasing academic motivation.

Probation

- Assist in obtaining information on potential guest speakers addressing the importance of a college education.
- Assist in developing and carrying out strategies for marketing the college preparatory program in schools (e.g., making parents more aware of the program, having school guidance counselors describe the program curriculum to students).
- Assist in obtaining information on additional programs aimed at keeping minors in school and/or increasing academic motivation.
- Develop probation plans that support the educational needs of juvenile offenders.

**Table 9 (cont.): Example Goal, Objective, Action Steps,
and Interagency Agreement to Address an Increase
in the Number of High School Dropouts**

Components of the interagency agreement specific to achieving the objective or more generally related to the goal of increasing academic motivation continued

Social Services

- Assist in obtaining information on potential guest speakers addressing the importance of a college education.
- Assist in developing and carrying out strategies for marketing the college preparatory program in schools (e.g., making parents more aware of the program, having school guidance counselors describe the program curriculum to students).
- Attend meetings with high school principals regarding problems with the college preparatory program and developing/implementing a program marketing strategy.
- Provide input on additional programs aimed at keeping minors in school and/or increasing academic motivation.

Schools

- Assist in obtaining information on potential guest speakers addressing the importance of a college education.
- Contact guest speakers and coordinate the speaking engagements into school schedules.
- Attend meetings with high school principals regarding problems with the college preparatory program and developing/implementing a program marketing strategy.
- Share information from meetings with high school principals at a council meeting.
- Address other school based factors that impede a students ability to learn (e.g., bullying).

Citizens

- Assist in making parents aware of the college preparatory program (at civic organizations, during informal discussions, etc.)
- Support the local schools and their students, both traditional and non-traditional.
- Participate in the monitoring of minors who are not in school.

A Final Example

In this sub-section we describe one final example that attempts to integrate much of the information in the guidebook. The example illustrates how a council may want to consider writing goals, objectives, action steps, and interagency agreements. Table 10 shows the hypothetical need or issue and the corresponding goal, objectives, action steps, and interagency agreement.

The example needs assessment (Appendix B) showed that Baird County has more juvenile court system activity than the other 73 Illinois rural counties. The Baird County Juvenile Justice Council determined that this increased court system activity is occurring because the county currently does not have an effective program in place that diverts minors who commit crimes from the Baird County court system. Thus, the council decides that one issue that should be addressed in their juvenile justice plan is the lack of an effective non-court system outlet for juveniles who commit less serious offenses. The council decides to target first time juvenile offenders who commit less serious offenses, and who seem to be at risk for future antisocial behavior. Table 10 shows the data from the needs assessment that suggested this need, then shows the need as it may be written in a juvenile justice plan.

Table 10 also shows the goal that Baird County developed based on this issue. Note that this goal is slightly different from the goal based on the high school dropout example. Specifically, we assumed in the high school dropout example that a program already existed. In this example, we are assuming that there is a need for a new program. This may impact the degree of specificity that may be included in the goal. However, we still attempted to make the goal as specific as possible by including a timeline.

The nature of the issue also impacts the nature of the objectives. We suggested above that objectives should target the causal factors contributing to the need or issue that is addressed in the goal. This example is no exception. However, because no program currently exists, the content of the objectives differs somewhat. Instead of determining how to improve an existing program, councils must determine why no program currently exists. The Baird County Juvenile Justice Council determined that financial resources are a contributing factor. They also determine that they need to educate themselves on the types of diversion programs that work, as well as how to develop such programs. The council develops objectives, then action steps based on these causal factors.

Of course, should the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council succeed in developing and implementing a diversion program, this will lend itself to a new set of goals and objectives. A new goal may be developed that is more directly related to the issue that led to development of the diversion program: higher than expected levels of court system activity.

Finally, Table 10 shows how each type of agency or participant represented on the council can contribute to the achievement of the goal. These contributions can be incorporated into an interagency agreement.

Table 10: An Example Need With Corresponding Juvenile Justice Plan and Interagency Agreement Components

Needs Assessment Data Suggesting the Need (from Appendix B)

- For each year in the 1990's, delinquency petition filing and adjudication rates in Baird County exceeded those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.
- Juvenile probation caseload rates in Baird County slightly exceeded those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

Need Identified from Data

- There is currently no diversion program for first time juvenile offenders who commit less serious offenses, and may be at risk for future antisocial behavior.

Goal

- Within the next year, develop a diversion program that targets first time offenders who commit less serious offenses.

Objective #1

- Learn about existing diversion programs that are effective, as well as how to implement the programs.

Action Steps – Objective #1

- Contact / check websites of Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Institute of Justice, and Blueprints Program for information on diversion programs.
- Find jurisdictions that are implementing programs which have been demonstrated to be effective and contact them to ask questions.

Objective #2

- Begin to seek potential financial resources for a diversion program.

Action Steps – Objective #2

- Contact / check websites of federal and state agencies that monitor or administer grant money, such as the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Examine current availability of financial resources.

Table 10 (cont.): An Additional Example Need With Corresponding Juvenile Justice Plan and Interagency Agreement Components

Components of the interagency agreement specific to achieving the objectives or more generally related to the development of a successful diversion program

Law Enforcement

- Begin to determine how minors who are arrested will be screened for diversion program eligibility
- Keep the council updated on the recent juvenile arrest data, particularly data pertaining to the population targeted for the diversion program.

Judges, State's Attorneys, Public Defenders

- Begin to make others in the court system aware that a diversion program is being developed
- Collaborate with law enforcement on diversion program eligibility criteria
- Keep the council updated on the recent juvenile court data, particularly data pertaining to the population targeted for the diversion program.

County Board

- Assess current financial resources
- Assist in seeking additional financial resources for a diversion program (by contacting / checking websites of federal and state agencies that monitor or administer grant money, such as the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).

Probation

- Assist in obtaining information on effective diversion programs by contacting / check websites of Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Institute of Justice, and Blueprints Program for information on diversion programs.
- Assist in obtaining information on effective diversion programs by finding jurisdictions that are implementing programs which have been demonstrated to be effective and contact them to ask questions.
- Assist in seeking additional financial resources for a diversion program (by contacting / checking websites of federal and state agencies that monitor or administer grant money, such as the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).

Table 10 (cont.): An Additional Example Need With Corresponding Juvenile Justice Plan and Interagency Agreement Components

Components of the interagency agreement specific to achieving the objectives or more generally related to the development of a successful diversion program continued

Social Services

- Provide input on effective diversion programs and/or assist probation in obtaining information on effective diversion programs.
- Assist in obtaining information on effective diversion programs by contacting / check websites of Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Institute of Justice, and Blueprints Program for information on diversion programs.
- Assist in obtaining information on effective diversion programs by finding jurisdictions that are implementing programs which have been demonstrated to be effective and contact them to ask questions.
- Assist in seeking additional financial resources for a diversion program (by contacting / checking websites of federal and state agencies that monitor or administer grant money, such as the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).
- Write grant applications if necessary

Schools

- Keep the council updated on the recent school data pertaining to at risk minors (e.g., dropouts, suspensions, expulsions).

Citizens

- Read and summarize information on effective diversion programs
- Present information on effective diversion programs at a council meeting

Entire Council

- Discuss what diversion program to develop and implement

Appendix A: Program Listing

Programs recommended by The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, at the University of Colorado.¹⁶

The programs listed below are those that have met rigorous selection criteria for inclusion by The University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence BLUEPRINTS project. The purpose of the BLUEPRINTS Project was to identify a core set of programs, based on a very high scientific standard of program effectiveness, which could serve as a nucleus for a national violence prevention initiative.

The four selection criteria for the BLUEPRINT programs are:

- 1) A strong research design used for evaluating the program, specifically experimental design with random assignment;
- 2) Evidence of significant prevention or deterrent effects;
- 3) Multiple site replication, and
- 4) Sustained effects.

BLUEPRINT PROGRAMS

Functional Family Therapy (FFT)-An empirically grounded intervention program that targets youth between the ages of 11-18, although younger siblings of referred adolescents are also treated. FFT is a family centered, short-term intervention with, on average, 8-12 one-hour sessions for mild cases and 26-30 hours of direct service for more difficult situations.

Midwestern Prevention Project (MPP)-A comprehensive community-based drug abuse intervention program that uses school, mass media, parent, community organization, and health policy programming to reduce or prevent gateway drug use (i.e., tobacco, alcohol, marijuana) and other drug use by adolescents and, secondarily, drug use by their parents and other community residents.

Multisystemic Therapy (MST)-A goal oriented treatment that specifically targets those factors in each youth's social network that are contributing to his or her antisocial behavior. MST interventions typically aim to improve caregiver discipline practices, enhance family affective relations, decrease youth association with delinquent peers, increase youth association with pro-social peers, improve youth school or vocational performance, engage youth in pro-social recreational outlets, and develop an indigenous support network of extended family, neighbors, and friends to help caregivers achieve and maintain such changes.

¹⁶ All program summaries are taken from The University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence website at, <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv>.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA)-A community mentoring program which matches an adult volunteer, known as a Big Brother or Big Sister, to a child, known as a Little Brother or Little Sister, with the expectation that a caring and supportive long-term relationship will develop.

Nurse Home Visitation Program-A program of home visitation beginning during pregnancy and continues through the child's second birthday. Each family is assigned a nurse who visits families about once every other week during pregnancy and the first two years of the child's life. The nurses use program protocols that are designed to accomplish three overriding goals: 1) the improvement of pregnancy outcomes, 2) the improvement of the child's health and development, and 3) the improvement of the mothers' own personal development.

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC)-In MTFC, adolescents are placed, usually singly or at most in twos, in a family setting for six to nine months. Community families are recruited, trained, and supported to provide well-supervised placements and treatments. MTFC parents implement a structured, individualized program for each youth that is designed to simultaneously build on the youngster's strengths and to set clear rules, expectations, and limits.

Quantum Opportunities (QOP)-QOP is a four-year, year round program that provides a balanced sequence of education opportunities, development opportunities, and service opportunities to small groups of youth from families receiving public assistance. QOP youth, from grade nine through high school graduation, are given an opportunity to receive annually, 250 hours of education activities (e.g., computer assisted instruction, peer tutoring, etc.), 250 hours of development activities (e.g., cultural and development activities, acquiring life/family planning skills, planning for college and advanced training, and job preparation), and 250 hours of service activities (e.g., community service projects, helping with public events, and working as a volunteer in various agencies).

Bullying Prevention Program (BPP)-Adult behavior is crucial to the success of the BPP, and in order to achieve the program's goals the following two conditions must be met. First, the adults at school and, to some degree, at home must become aware of the extent of bully/victim problems in their own school. Secondly, the adults must engage themselves, with some degree of seriousness, in changing the situation. These principles are then translated into specific measures that are used at the school, class, and individual levels, and taking action at all of these levels is vital to counteract bully/victim situations. In this way, students are consistently exposed to the message, from different persons/sources and in different contexts, that bullying is not accepted in the class/school, and the adults will see to it that it comes to an end.

Life Skills Training (LST)-The LST program is a three-year intervention designed to be conducted in school classrooms. The LST program was developed to impact drug-related knowledge, attitudes, and norms; teach skills for resisting social influences to use drugs; and promote the development of general personal self-management skills and social skills. The LST prevention program can best be conceptualized as consisting of three major components: 1) teach students a set of general self-management skills; 2) teach students general social skills; and 3) provide information and skills that are specifically related to the problem of drug abuse (e.g., drug resistance skills, anti-drug attitudes, anti-drug norms).

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)-The goal of PATHS is focused on delinquency prevention through the development of essential developmental skills in emotional literacy, positive peer relations, and problem solving. The curriculum is designed to be taught by elementary school teachers from grade K through grade 5. PATHS is divided into three major units: 1) lessons that focus on readiness and self-control; 2) lessons that focus on teaching emotional and interpersonal understanding; and 3) lessons that cover eleven steps for formal interpersonal problem-solving.

PROMISING PROGRAMS

These programs did not fit all of the criteria for a BLUEPRINT program designation. Yet, these programs have demonstrated significant prevention of deterrent effects. Programs that have failed to show a sustained effect are not eligible for classification as a PROMISING program, although those that have not yet demonstrated a sustained effect are eligible to remain in the PROMISING category. PROMISING programs can also be single site, unreplicated projects or have a small effect on delinquency/crime, violence, drug use, and pre-delinquent aggression. As more data becomes available, some or all of these PROMISING programs may move up to the BLUEPRINT category.

FAST Track-FAST Track is a comprehensive and long-term prevention program that aims to prevent chronic and severe conduct problems for high-risk children. It is based on the view that antisocial behavior stems from the interaction of multiple influences, and it includes the school, the home, and the individual in its intervention. FAST Track's main goals are to increase communication and bonds between these three domains, enhance children's social, cognitive, and problem-solving skills, improve peer relationships, and ultimately decrease disruptive behavior in the home and school.

Preventive Treatment Program-The Preventive Treatment Program is designed to prevent antisocial behavior of boys who display early, problem behavior. It provides training for both parents and youth to decrease delinquency, substance use, and gang involvement. This program combines parent training with individual social skills training. Parents receive an average of 17 sessions that focus on monitoring their children's behavior, giving positive reinforcement for pro-social behavior, using punishment effectively, and managing family crises. The boys receive 19 sessions aimed at improving pro-social skills and self-control. The training is implemented in small groups containing both disruptive and non-disruptive boys, and it utilizes coaching, peer modeling, self-instruction, reinforcement contingency, and role playing to build skills.

Perry Preschool-The Perry Preschool Program provides high-quality early childhood education to disadvantaged children in order to improve their later school and life performances. The intervention combats the relationship between childhood poverty and school failure by promoting young children's intellectual, social and physical development. By increasing academic success, the Perry Preschool Program is also able to improve employment opportunities and wages, as well as decrease crime, teenage pregnancy, and welfare use. The Perry Preschool Program is a two-year intervention that operates 2.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, for seven months per year, and includes weekly home visitations by teachers.

Project PATHE-Project PATHE is a comprehensive program implemented in secondary schools that reduces school disorder and improves the school environment to enhance students' experiences and attitudes about school. More specifically, it increases students' bonding to the school, self-concept, and educational and occupational attainment which, in turn, reduces juvenile delinquency. Project PATHE helps all students attending middle and high schools that serve high numbers of minority students in both inner-city and rural, impoverished areas. It provides additional treatment for low-achieving and disruptive students.

Parent Child Development Center-This intervention targets low-income families and provides multidimensional treatment to help mothers become more effective in child rearing. The programs have been successful in combating some of the educational and occupational problems associated with poverty and have demonstrated beneficial effects for both caregivers and their children. The Parent Child Development Programs target low-income families in which mothers are primary caregivers and children are aged 2 months to 3 years. Mothers are educated in socio-emotional, intellectual, and physical aspects of infant and child development through practical experiences and group discussions with staff and other mothers; care-givers' personal development is enhanced through training in home management and exposure to community resources and continuing education classes; and the needs of the entire family are addressed by providing transportation to services, some meals, health and social services, programs for siblings, and small stipends for participants.

School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)-STEP is based on the Transitional Life Events model, which theorizes that stressful life events such as making transitions between schools, places children at risk for maladaptive behavior. By reducing school disorganization and restructuring the role of the homeroom teacher, STEP aims to reduce the complexity of school environments, increase peer and teacher support, and decrease students' vulnerability to academic and emotional difficulties. Students are assigned to homerooms in which all classmates are STEP participants. Teachers in these classrooms act as administrators and guidance counselors, helping students choose classes, counseling them regarding school and personal problems, explaining the Project to parents, and notifying parents of student absences. This increased attention reduces student anonymity, increases student accountability, and enhances students' abilities to learn school rules and exceptions.

The Syracuse Family Development Research Program (FDRP)-FDRP bolsters child and family functioning and affective, interpersonal relationships through home visitations, parent training and individualized daycare. The intervention targets economically disadvantaged families in order to improve children's cognitive and emotional functioning, foster children's positive outlooks, and decrease juvenile delinquency. Mothers receive individualized training and support from paraprofessional child development trainers who make weekly home visitations. These trainers help mothers create developmentally appropriate and interactive games for their children, act as liaisons between participants and other support services, foster mothers' involvement in children's educational attainment, and model appropriate interactions with children.

The Childcare Center provides families with 5 years of daycare services run by highly trained staff. The Center offers cognitive and social interactive games, uses praise and positive reinforcement to encourage children to undertake challenges, and emphasizes both cooperation and concern for others by teaching participants how their behavior impacts others.

Preventive Intervention-This school-based intervention helps prevent juvenile delinquency, substance use, and school failure for high-risk adolescents. It targets juvenile cynicism about the world and the accompanying lack of self-efficacy to deal with problems. Preventive Intervention provides a school environment that allows students to realize that their actions can bring about desired consequences, and it reinforces this belief by eliciting participation from teachers, parents, and individuals. The two-year intervention begins when participants are in seventh grade and includes monitoring student actions, rewarding appropriate behavior, and increasing communication between teachers, students, and parents.

Yale Child Welfare Project-The Yale Child Welfare Project offers team-based, personalized family support to help disadvantaged parents support their children's development. The Project is based on the theory that improving bonds between parents and their offspring will result in better social and school adjustment for the children. It specifically targets impoverished families who lack adequate resources for their children and seeks to improve the quality of family life by providing medical, educational, social, and psychological services. The success of the Project lies in its ability to furnish constant, dependable, and personalized care in a variety of areas. The intervention begins when mothers are pregnant and continues until the infants are 30 months old.

Baltimore Mastery Learning/Good Behavior Game-The Mastery Learning (ML) and Good Behavior Game (GBG) interventions seek to improve children's psychological well-being and social task performance. The ML focuses on strengthening reading achievement to reduce the risk of depression later in life, while GBG aims to decrease early aggressive and shy behaviors to prevent later criminality. Both are implemented when children are in early elementary grades in order to provide students with the skills they need to respond to later, possibly negative, life experiences and societal influences.

Intensive Protective Supervision (IPS)-IPS removes juvenile offenders from criminal justice institutions and provides them with more proactive and extensive community supervision than they would otherwise receive. Its primary goals are to reduce undisciplined acts, decrease the likelihood of future, serious delinquency, and increase socially acceptable behaviors. IPS can be used for any youth under age 16 who is adjudicated as a status offender and who receives a protective supervision disposition. Offenders assigned to IPS are closely monitored by project counselors who have fewer cases and interact more extensively with the youth and his/her family than traditional parole officers. The counselors make frequent home visitations to assess family and youth needs, provide support for parents, and role model appropriate behavior.

Project STATUS-Project STATUS is a school-based program that helps students become active, responsible members of their community. Based on the belief that isolating students in book-learning environments fails to inspire commitment to schools and belief in social rules, the Project provides a more challenging and relevant educational experience. It increases students' pro-social behaviors by providing contact with positive adult role models, enhancing stakes in conformity, and altering peer relationships. The school climate intervention allows students, school personnel, parents, and community members to work together for change and is comprised of four components: a youth committee/leadership training class in which students identify and help solve school problems; staff development training to improve student discipline procedures and increase positive and supportive interactions between staff and students; action committees in which citizens makes community resources available to students and serve as positive role models; and parent meetings that allow parents to contribute to school decision-making and improves awareness of their children's educational activities.

Project Northland-Project Northland is a community-wide intervention designed to reduce adolescent alcohol use. The program spans three years and is multi-level, involving individual students, parents, peers, and community members, businesses, and organizations. Project Northland is a universal intervention designed for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. In sixth grade, student and parent communication is targeted by requiring parents and children to complete homework assignments together that describe adolescent alcohol use. In seventh grade, a peer- and teacher-led classroom curriculum focuses on resistance skills and normative expectations regarding teen alcohol use and is implemented using discussions, games, problem solving, and role plays. In eighth grade, students are encouraged to become active citizens. They interview influential community members about their beliefs and activities concerning adolescent drinking and conduct town meetings to make recommendations for the community's help in preventing alcohol use.

Iowa Strengthening Families (ISFP)-ISFP is a universal, family-based intervention which enhances parents' general child management skills, parent-child affective relationships, and family communication. Based on a developmental model, ISFP assumes that increasing the family's protective processes while decreasing its potential risk factors can alter a child's future, so that problem behaviors can be reduced or avoided. In addition, the program seeks to delay the onset of adolescent alcohol and substance use by improving family practices. ISFP is designed for use with all sixth-grade students and their families. The seven-week intervention utilizes a biopsychosocial model in which parents and children learn individual skills, then are brought together to improve family communication and practices.

Seattle Social Development Project-This universal, multidimensional intervention decreases juveniles' problem behaviors by working with parents, teachers, and children. It incorporates both social control and social learning theories and intervenes early in children's development to increase pro-social bonds, strengthen attachment and commitment to schools, and decrease delinquency. Teachers receive instruction that emphasizes proactive classroom management, interactive teaching, and cooperative

learning. When implemented, these techniques minimize classroom disturbances by establishing clear rules and rewards for compliance; increase children's academic performance; and allow students to work in small, heterogeneous groups to increase their social skills and contact with pro-social peers.

Preparing for the Drug Free Years (PDFY)-PDFY is a family competency training program that promotes healthy, protective parent-child interactions and reduces children's risk for early substance use initiation. It is based on the social development model, which theorizes that enhancing protective factors such as effective parenting practices will decrease the likelihood that children will engage in problem behaviors. While most sessions are focused on improving parenting skills and parents' self-efficacy, the program also provides students with peer pressure refusal skills and has demonstrated reductions in children's alcohol initiation. PDFY is a weekly, five-session multimedia program that strengthens parents' child-rearing techniques, parent-child bonding, and children's peer resistance skills.

I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)-ICPS is a school-based intervention that trains children in generating a variety of solutions to interpersonal problems, considering the consequences of these solutions, and recognizing thoughts, feelings, and motives that generate problem situations. By teaching children *to* think, rather than *what* to think, the program changes thinking styles and, as a result, enhances children's social adjustment, promotes pro-social behavior, and decreases impulsivity and inhibition. Although the program is appropriate for all children, it is especially effective for young (age 4-5), poor, and urban students who may be at highest risk for behavioral dysfunctions and interpersonal maladjustment. Throughout the intervention, instructors utilize pictures, role-playing, puppets, and group interaction to help develop students' thinking skills, and children's own lives and problems are used as examples when teachers demonstrate problem-solving techniques.

CASASTART-The CASASTART program targets youth in high-risk environments, and seeks to reduce their exposure to drugs and criminal activity. The program seeks to decrease individual, peer group, family and neighborhood risk factors through case management services, after-school and summer activities, and increased police involvement. CASASTART also works to improve attachment to adults, attachment to pro-social norms, school performance, and participation in pro-social activities/peer groups.

Recommended programs based on an independent review of prevention programs funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.¹⁷

Based on the scientific strength and substantive findings of available evaluations, programs were classified into one of four categories: 1) What works; 2) what doesn't; 3) what's promising; 4) what's unknown. Programs included in the "what works" category are those that reviewers are reasonably certain prevent crime or reduce risk factors for crime. Programs included in the "what doesn't" category are those that reviewers are reasonably certain fail to prevent crime or reduce risk factors for crime. Programs included in the "what's promising" category are those for which there is some evidence of success, but lacks the evidence necessary to support generalizable conclusions. The "unknown" category is for those programs that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in any of the other categories.

What Works

In Families

- Frequent home visits to infants aged 0-2 by trained nurses and other helpers.
- Preschool and weekly home visits by teachers for children under 5.
- Family Therapy and parent training about delinquent and at-risk preadolescents.

In Schools

- Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school teams or other organizational development strategies.
- Clarifying and communicating norms about behavior through rules, reinforcement of positive behavior, and school-wide initiatives (such as anti-bullying campaigns).
- Social competency skills curriculum, such as Life Skills Training which teach skills such as stress management, problem solving, self-control, and emotional intelligence.
- Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth using behavior modification techniques and punishments.

In Places

- Nuisance abatement (e.g., threatening civil action against landlords for not addressing drug problems on the premises).

By Police

- Extra police patrols in high-crime "hot spots."

¹⁷ A group from the University of Maryland's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice were selected as the independent reviewers. Program summaries are taken from, "Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising," authored by Lawrence Sherman, Denise C. Gottfredson, Doris L. McKenzie, John Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn D. Bushway.

- Repeat offender units that reduce the time on the streets of known high-risk repeat offenders by monitoring them and returning them to prison more quickly than when they are not monitored.
- Arresting domestic abusers.

By Criminal Justice Agencies After Arrest

- Incarceration of offenders who will continue to commit crime prevents crimes they would commit on the street, but the number of crimes prevented by locking up each additional offender declines with diminishing returns as less active or serious offenders are incarcerated.
- Rehabilitation programs for adult and juvenile offenders using treatments appropriate to their risk factors.
- Drug treatment in prison in therapeutic community programs.

What's Promising

In Communities

- Gang offender monitoring by community workers and probation and police officers.
- Community-based mentoring by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America.
- Community-based after school recreation programs. Similar programs based in schools, however, have failed to prevent crime.

In Families

- Battered women's shelters.

In Schools

- "Schools within schools" programs such as Student Training Through Urban Strategies that group students into smaller units for more supportive interaction or flexibility in instruction.
- Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth using behavior modification techniques or rewards and punishments.
- Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school teams or other organizational development strategies.
- Improved classroom management and instructional techniques.

In Labor Markets

- Job Corps, and intensive residential training program for at-risk youth.
- Dispersing inner-city public housing residents to scattered-site suburban public housing by rental of single units in middle-income neighborhoods.
- Enterprise zones with tax break incentives in areas of extremely high unemployment.

In Places

- Adding a second clerk in stores that have been robbed at least once.
- Redesigning the layout of retail stores.
- Metal detectors in schools.
- Street closures, barricades, and rerouting.
- “Target Hardening” (i.e., making a potential target of crime more resistant)
- “Problem-solving” analysis addressed to the specific situation at each location.

By Police

- Proactive arrests for carrying concealed weapons made by officers on directed patrols in gun crime “hot spots,” using traffic enforcement and field interrogations.
- Community policing with meetings to set priorities.
- Policing with greater respect to offenders.

By Criminal Justice Agencies After Arrest

- Drug Courts that ordered and monitored a combination of rehabilitation and drug treatment.
- Drug testing in jails followed by urine testing in the community.
- Intensive supervision and aftercare of minor juvenile offenders.
- Intensive supervision and aftercare of serious juvenile offenders.

