

Evaluation News is produced by BJA's Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement at the Justice Research and Statistics Association.

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Evaluation News provides information on the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, promotes the exchange of information on evaluation and performance measurement, and publicizes criminal justice research and evaluation reports for use by state and local criminal justice agencies.

Research Summaries

Policing

The Campbell Collaboration recently released a systematic review of “pulling levers” focused deterrence strategies. These strategies incorporate core deterrence ideas, such as increasing risks faced by offenders, while finding new and creative ways of deploying traditional and non-traditional law enforcement tools to do so, such as directly communicating incentives and disincentives to targeted offenders. To be eligible for inclusion in the systematic review, studies must have evaluated the effects of a focused deterrence intervention on official recorded levels of crime. They must also have utilized a comparison group design, experimental or quasi-experimental, involving before and after measures. While strategic interventions developed from community and problem-oriented policing initiatives may have been present in certain control areas, none of the comparison areas implemented focused deterrence strategies to address crime problems. Of the 93 studies selected for further review, a total of ten studies met the criteria for inclusion in this systematic review. Nine of these ten studies reported strong and statistically significant crime reductions associated with the “pulling levers” approach. The results of this meta-analysis suggest that pulling levers deterrence strategies are associated with an overall statistically-significant, medium-sized crime reduction effect. However, the authors expressed caution, noting that none of the eligible studies employed randomized controlled trials. The systematic review, *The Effects of “Pulling Levers” Focused Deterrence Strategies on Crime*, is available at:

<http://campbellcollaboration.org/lib/download/1918/>

Drug Courts

NPC Research recently published a report detailing the results of an evaluation of the Benton County Adult Drug Treatment Court (BCADTC). This report details the results of a process, outcome and cost-benefit evaluation. The process portion of this evaluation focused on assessing whether the program had the basic components needed to implement an effective drug court. Specifically it examined the extent to which the program had implemented the 10 Key Components of drug courts as identified by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the best practices that research indicates are related to positive outcomes. Overall, the process findings indicate that the BCADTC was implemented within the guidelines of the 10 Key Components and has implemented many of the research based best practices of drug treatment courts. The outcome portion of this evaluation assessed both short-term and long-term outcomes. These included graduation rates and what participant characteristics predicted whether or not they successfully complete the program, as well as whether drug treatment court participants reduced their drug use and whether drug treatment court

Useful resources for criminal justice program evaluation and performance measurement are available at the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement web site:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation>.

participants were re-arrested less often than similar individuals who did not participate in drug treatment court. Overall, the outcome findings indicate that the BCADTC has been successful at reducing drug use and recidivism among its participants. The cost evaluation portion of this report was designed to examine the program costs and the cost impact of sending offenders through drug treatment court compared to traditional court processing. In other words, does the BCADTC save money? Overall, the three-year cost evaluation findings indicate that BCADTC participants, regardless of whether they graduated from the program, cost less (i.e., save money) at years one, two, and three. The full report, "Oregon Drug Courts Benton County Adult Drug Treatment Court: Process, Outcome, and Cost Evaluation Final Report" is available at: http://www.npcresearch.com/Files/Benton_County_Adult_Drug_Treatment_Court_Final_Report_1211.pdf

Other Reports

Public Private Ventures and Child Trends recently released a report that is designed to help collaborating organizations anticipate and address the most common challenges associated with multi-agency performance management systems. The first section, "Getting Started," offers practical advice about launching such a system, including clarifying the purpose of the collaboration and of the data collection effort, determining what data to collect, choosing a system to use and conducting initial staff training. The second section, "Making It Work" suggests strategies for helping partners work together to collect accurate and complete data. The third section, "Using Data to Improve the Initiative" focuses on how data from multiple agencies can be mined and acted on to strengthen programming. The final section, "Sustaining the System" provides tips for ensuring that a multi-agency data collection effort thrives over time. The report, *Using Data in Multi-Agency Collaborations: Guiding Performance to Ensure Accountability and Improve Programs*, is available at: http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/338_publication.pdf

Policy Exchange and The Centre for Justice Innovation recently released a report that summarizes 10 innovative criminal justice projects across the United Kingdom and the United States. The report focuses on small-scale demonstration projects and it seeks to identify best practices for criminal justice pilot projects by highlighting a handful of lessons from pilot projects at various stages of development. The report focuses on three distinct phases – planning, implementation, and sustainment. The goal is to increase awareness and understanding among criminal justice policy-makers and practitioners about what makes demonstration projects work and how to improve the chances of future success. The report, *From the Ground Up: Promising Criminal Justice Projects in the U.S. and the U.K.*, is available at: <http://www.courtinnovation.org/research/ground-promising-criminal-justice-projects-us-and-uk>

Tip of the Month

Are your program's goals SMART?

When assessing your program's goals it is useful to consider whether or not these goals are SMART. This acronym stands for Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Results-focused, and Timely. Good goals are: Specific, meaning that they are clearly defined and easy to understand; Measureable, meaning that it is possible to demonstrate tangible evidence that a goal has been achieved; Achievable, meaning that your organization should have the knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve the goals; Results-focused, meaning that should measure outcomes, not activities; and Timely, meaning that they are time bound, time specific and trackable. For more information about developing SMART goals see:

Western Michigan University's Evaluation Center

http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Evaluation_Myths_Misconceptions-for-web.pdf

University of Virginia Department of Human Resources

http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing_SMART_Goals.pdf