

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

Send questions and comments to bjaeval@jrsa.org

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)
Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement at the Justice Research and Statistics Association
777 N. Capitol St., NE, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 842-9330

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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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please Give Us Feedback

If you have not already provided your feedback on the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, we would like to invite you again to do so by answering a few questions. Your participation in this effort is voluntary and your responses will be confidential. We anticipate that it will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to answer these questions. Thank you for your input; we appreciate your assistance in this effort. To answer the questions, please click on the link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BNBGV75>

SEX OFFENDERS

This study examined the impact of South Carolina's sex offender registration and notification (SORN) policy on judicial decision making. Specifically, it examined whether SORN was associated with changes in judicial decision making concerning adult sex crime cases. The study examined three time periods of interest: the 5 years immediately preceding enactment of SORN (1990–1994), the first 4 years of SORN implementation (1995–1998), and the subsequent 6 years of SORN implementation, which included Internet notification (1999–2004). The study examined both charging decisions and judicial disposition outcomes. Results indicate that following SORN and its modification, the percentage of cases with sex offense charges at the time of initial filing but non-sex offense charges at adjudication doubled over time. This suggests that following SORN and its modification, prosecutors and judges became more willing to permit defendants to plead down to non-sex offenses. The examination of final case dispositions for sex crime cases indicated that guilty findings increased in the years immediately following SORN enactment and then declined in the years following the modification of SORN to include broad online notification. The study, *The Effects of Sex Offender Registration and Notification on Judicial Decisions*, was published in *Criminal Justice Review* and it is available at: <http://cjr.sagepub.com/content/35/3/295>

Tewksbury and Jennings examined the impact of sex offender registration and notification (SORN) on sex offender recidivism. The authors utilized a matched sample consisting of a cohort of Iowa prisoners released pre-SORN and a cohort of Iowa prisoners released post-SORN. The data were provided by the Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) and included all sex offenders (n=1582) released from prison 5 years pre-SORN (1992-1996) and 5 years post-SORN (1997-2001). The analysis revealed that there were three distinct trajectories for both the pre and post-SORN cohorts — non-recidivating, low-rate recidivating, and initially high and then decreasing rate of offending. The results of this study suggest that SORN has not reduced the rate of sex offender recidivism, nor has it led to a decrease in the number of offenses committed by recidivating sex offenders. Additionally, the distribution of sex offend-

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>.

ers across the trajectory groups showed no differences in sex offender behavior before and after the implementation of SORN in Iowa. The results of this study are similar to other recent studies that examined SORN. The study, *Assessing the Impact of Sex Offender Registration and Community Notification On Sex-Offending Trajectories*, was published in *Criminal Justice and Behavior* and it is available at: <http://cjb.sagepub.com/content/37/5/570>

CRIME PREVENTION

The Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center recently released an evaluation of Target's Safe City Initiative. In 2003 the Target Corporation implemented its Safe City Initiative in the United States. The initiative is a retail area-based crime prevention initiative modeled after a similar initiative employed in England. The Safe City Model brings together local law enforcement, retailers, community leaders, and civic organizations in an effort to increase safety in and around designated Safe City areas. Two of the four jurisdictions successfully implemented the model. Communities with a strong grounding in community policing and past experiences engaging in partnerships between law enforcement and local businesses were the most successful in reducing crime, increasing public perceptions of safety and increasing participation. Further, successful sites incorporated both technology and traditional problem-solving, such as the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures. The evaluation results appear to confirm the theory that strong police-community partnerships can yield effective interventions. The findings also emphasize the value of engaging in a problem-solving process grounded in Situational Crime Prevention theory, guiding the development of responses through a careful analysis of ways in which to increase the effort and risk and reduce the rewards of committing crime. The report, *Evaluation of Target's Safe City Initiative: Implementing Public-Private Partnerships to Address Crime in Retail Settings*, is available at: <http://www.urban.org/publications/412081.html>

CORRECTIONS

The Pew Center on the States recently released an issue brief detailing South Carolina's efforts to implement research-based strategies to cut prison growth and the associated costs. In 2010, South Carolina enacted a comprehensive package of legislation that puts the state at the forefront of states advancing research-driven criminal justice policies designed to produce a greater public safety return on corrections spending. A bipartisan, inter-branch Commission produced a set of reforms designed to ensure that there is more prison space for the state's violent and career criminals while helping stop the revolving door for lower-risk, non-violent offenders. The brief, *South Carolina's Public Safety Reform Legislation Enacts Research-based Strategies to Cut Prison Growth and Costs*, is available at: http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=59864

TIP OF THE MONTH

Is your evaluation generating actionable answers?

While many evaluations generate information that is nice to know, far too many fail to produce actionable information. This is often because they do not provide the client with the information that they need to know. To produce actionable answers, evaluators need to consider the big picture issues and ask the right questions. Questions to ask include: What was the quality of the program's content/design and how well was it implemented?; What influenced successful and unsuccessful implementation and outcomes?; What else was learned and what went right or wrong?; and Was the program worth implementing? Answering questions such as these will ensure that the evaluation is producing information that the client can act upon. To learn more, see *Improving evaluation questions and answers: Getting actionable answers for real-world decision makers* at: <http://comm.eval.org/EVAL/EVAL/Resources/ViewDocument/Default.aspx?DocumentKey=e5bac388-f1e6-45ab-9e78-10e60cea0666>