

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

Send questions and comments to [bjaeval@jrja.org](mailto:bjaeval@jrja.org).

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

To subscribe or unsubscribe to *Evaluation News*, send an email with your request to [bjaeval@jrja.org](mailto:bjaeval@jrja.org).

*Evaluation News* provides information on the BJA Center for Program Evaluation, 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.

### CORRECTIONS

#### COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

Lowenkamp et al. used a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of Thinking for a Change (TFAC), a cognitive behavior curriculum for offenders used at a community corrections agency. This study found that participation in the TFAC program was associated with a reduction in recidivism. The article, "A *Quasi Experimental Evaluation of Thinking for a Change: A 'Real World' Application*," was published in the February 2009 issue of *Criminal Justice and Behavior*. It is available at: <http://cjb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/2/137>

#### RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION

This RAND report details a research design that was developed to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) in a large urban jail setting. The evaluation design has three components: a process evaluation, short- and long-term outcomes trend analysis, and analyses of costs and benefits. The goals of this research design are to enable the users of RFID systems to assess the performance of the technology and to increase the knowledge of these systems deployed in a correctional setting. This report, "Evaluation Design for the District of Columbia Department of Corrections' Use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Technology with Jail Inmates," is available at: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/225449.pdf>

#### INTERMEDIATE SANCTIONS

"Assessing the Effectiveness of Intermediate Sanctions in Multnomah County, Oregon," published by the Vera Institute of Justice, examines how intermediate sanctions and other formal interventions are used when people on adult probation or under post-prison supervision violate the conditions of their release. This report seeks to answer the following questions: What are the most frequent condition violations among clients on supervision and the most frequent sanctions associated with those violations? What is the incidence and prevalence of jail sanctions? Is there an association between sanctions and short- and long-term outcomes? The study found that most offenders did not receive any type of sanction or intervention during supervision. The most common condition violations were failure to report to the probation officer and changing job or residence without permission. Of those who did receive a sanction, jail was the most frequently used sanction. For the report, go to: [http://www.vera.org/publication\\_pdf/csc\\_multnomah\\_report.pdf](http://www.vera.org/publication_pdf/csc_multnomah_report.pdf)

#### MENTAL HEALTH

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy conducted an evaluation of Washington State's "Dangerous Mentally Ill Offender" (DMIO) program. This program

### **MENTAL HEALTH (CONT.)**

is designed to identify dangerous mentally ill offenders who pose a threat to public safety and provide them with mental health treatment and other services for up to five years after release from prison. The evaluation follows 172 DMIO participants four years after release from prison. The researchers found that participation in the program was associated with a decrease in felony and violent felony recidivism. Further, a cost-benefit analysis indicates that there is a net economic benefit associated with the program. “*The Dangerous Mentally Ill Offender Program: Four-Year Felony Recidivism and Cost Effectiveness*” is available at: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/09-02-1901.pdf>

### **SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT**

In this study Zgoba and colleagues examined the efficacy of Megan’s Law, a community notification and registration law for sex offenders. The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of Megan’s Law on the overall rate of sexual offending over time, the specific deterrence effect on re-offending, and the cost of implementation and annual expenditures of Megan’s Law. The study employed a pre-post test utilizing Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data from 1985 to 2005 for the state of New Jersey. These data were analyzed for each of New Jersey’s 21 counties and the state as a whole. Overall, the study found no evidence that Megan’s Law had any demonstrable effect on sexual offenses while the costs associated with it have continued to grow. The report, “*Megan’s Law: Assessing the Practical and Monetary Efficacy*” is available at: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/225370.pdf>

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

#### **VICTIMS RIGHTS**

The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted an evaluation to determine the effect and efficacy of the implementation of the Crime Victims’ Rights Act (CVRA) on the treatment of crime victims in the federal system as mandated by the Justice for All Act. This report focuses on the provision of the eight CVRA rights, mechanisms used to enforce these rights, and the procedures used by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to promote compliance with the act. Some of the methods used in this evaluation included: a survey of federal crime victims, survey of U.S. Attorneys Office victim-witness professionals, and site visits. GAO found that while DOJ has a strategic objective to address the rights of crime victims, it lacks a performance measurement system to assess progress toward upholding victim rights. The full report can be found at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0954.pdf>

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has released a document titled “*Initial Implementing Guidance for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.*” This document details the initial set of government-wide requirements and guidelines that Federal agencies must immediately implement or prepare for in order to effectively manage activities under this Act. Additionally, it addresses the collection of program spending and performance data requirements associated with the Act. The document is available at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda\\_fy2009/m09-10.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_fy2009/m09-10.pdf)

### **TIP OF THE MONTH**

Are explanations of your performance measures clear? Too often performance measures fail to include an adequate description. This can lead to the collection of improper or inadequate data. A good performance measure description should include the following elements: direction of desired change (if applicable), a target, a time frame for accomplishment, a description of how to calculate it (if applicable), and definitions of key terms, where appropriate. If a calculation is necessary, instructions and examples should be provided.