

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.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement has resources available to provide evaluation-related technical assistance (TA) to states and localities. Technical assistance should help enhance the evaluation or performance measurement capacity of state and local agencies in the area of criminal justice. For example, we can provide assistance with developing logic models or performance measures.

TA can take many forms including on-site trainings and written correspondence. State Administering Agencies and their subgrantees, as well as applicants to BJA, are eligible for technical assistance. For more information on technical assistance please see the TA page on BJA's Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement Web site.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/tech-assistance.htm>

NEWS

On June 8, 2009 Peter R. Orszag, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), addressed evidence-based policy decisions on OMB's Blog. His article, "Building Rigorous Evidence to Drive Policy," details some of the steps the federal government is taking to invest in program evaluation and bolster support for evidence-based programs and policies and. The full article is available at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/blog/09/06/08/BuildingRigorousEvidencetoDrivePolicy/>

CRIME PREVENTION

In this study of the Chicago CeaseFire program, Skogan, Hartnett, Bumb, and Dobois incorporated both process and outcome components to examine the implementation and impact of the program. CeaseFire is a program designed to reduce shootings and killing by using trained "interrupters" to help change the behavior of those individuals with a high chance of being shot or being a shooter. This study examined multiple sites where the program was implemented and comparison sites utilizing analyses examining changes over time, hot spot mapping, and gang network analysis to assess the impact of the program. The study found that CeaseFire was effective in reducing killings and violence in most areas, decreasing the size and intensity of shooting hot spots in more than half of the areas, and reducing gang involvement in killings and retaliatory killings. The full report is available at: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/227181.pdf>

ADJUDICATION

The Pew Center on the States May 2009 issue of their Public Safety Policy Briefing focuses on the courts and evidence-based research. The brief identifies ten evidence-based sentencing strategies that have been shown to control crime and reduce costs. The strategies identified in this brief were adapted from a paper written by Roger Warren that was originally published in a 2007 special issue of the Indiana Law Journal entitled *Evidence-Based Practices and Sentencing Policy: Ten Policy Initiatives to Reduce Recidivism*. The full policy brief is available at: http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Final_EBS_Brief.pdf

Drug Courts

The Sentencing Project has released a report that summarizes what has been learned about efficacy of drug courts. Their analysis found that most evaluations indicate that drug court graduates are less likely to be rearrested than individuals processed through traditional courts. Additionally, many evaluations have found that there is a cost savings benefit associated with drug courts based on costs associated with new arrests, case processing, jail occupancy and victimization costs. Despite the fact that many evaluations have shown that drug courts are beneficial, the authors did identify several concerns raised in the evaluation literature. There is little known about the impacts of various modalities of treatment, drug courts may not be well suited for offenders with more severe drug addiction problems, and that drug courts may actually be increasing the number of individuals being arrested for drug offenses. The full report *Drug Courts: A Review of the Evidence* can be found at: <http://www.sentencingproject.org/PublicationDetails.aspx?PublicationID=638>

CORRECTIONS

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy recently conducted a study to identify evidence-based options to reduce crime and criminal justice costs. The study examined 545 comparison group evaluations of adult corrections, juvenile corrections and prevention programs. The study included two phases. The first phase identified programs that work using meta-analytic procedures to evaluate the evidence. The second phase determined the cost effectiveness of the programs utilizing their economic model. Some of the more effective programs in terms of results and cost benefit were vocational education in prison, intensive supervision-treatment oriented programs, mentally ill offender programs and educational programs. The complete report can be found at: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=09-00-1201>

TIP OF THE MONTH

Are your objectives really objectives? A common problem experienced by those that are new to program evaluation is confusing activities for objectives. A good rule to keep in mind is that anything related to program implementation or a task that is being carried out in order to accomplish something is an activity rather than an objective. For example, 'hire 10 staff members' is an activity that is being carried out in order to accomplish an objective such as 'improve response time for incoming phone calls.' Logic models serve as an excellent tool for understanding the relationships between activities and objectives and for better understanding your program and what you hope to accomplish. Logic models are often developed using graphics or schematics and allow the program manager or evaluator to clearly indicate the theoretical connections among program components: that is, how program activities will lead to the accomplishment of objectives, and how accomplishing objectives will lead to the fulfillment of goals. More information about logic models can be found at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/guide/pe4.htm>