

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.

Crime Prevention

The Urban Institute recently completed an evaluation of the use of public surveillance cameras to enhance public safety. They conducted a rigorous process and impact evaluation of the implementation and use of public surveillance cameras for crime control purposes in three U.S. cities: Baltimore, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; and Washington, D.C. Researchers sought to explore: the decision-making processes behind public surveillance camera implementation and use; the degree to which camera implementation coincided with a reduction in crime and was associated with the diffusion of crime benefits and the displacement of crime to nearby areas; and the costs associated with camera implementation and use, including monitoring and maintenance expenditures, and how these costs compared to the monetized societal benefits associated with crime reductions. Results of the process evaluation revealed that the police and other stakeholders viewed public surveillance technology as a potentially useful tool for preventing crimes, aiding in arrests, and supporting investigations and prosecutions. These results also showed that stakeholders with a variety of vested interests were generally supportive of public video surveillance. The impact analysis revealed that cameras, when actively monitored, have a cost-beneficial impact on crime with no statistically significant evidence of displacement to neighboring areas. However, in some contexts and locations, these crime reduction benefits did not occur. The authors indicated that possible explanations for the lack of impact on crime in certain study areas were that cameras in those areas were not actively and routinely monitored and that the no-impact areas had relatively few cameras with fewer overlapping viewsheds between cameras (1000-ft buffer surrounding the cameras). Thus, there was reduced ability to capture crimes in progress. The report, "Evaluating the Use of Public Surveillance Cameras for Crime Control and Prevention," is available at: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=412403>

Drug Courts

The Center for Court Innovation recently released an evaluation of Bronx Family Treatment Court (FTC), which is loosely based on the adult drug court model. The FTC serves parents who have been charged with child neglect related to substance abuse or dependence and supervises their treatment process through regular judicial status hearings, drug testing, intensive case management, and graduated sanctions and rewards. FTC participation is voluntary, but requires an admission of "responsible" to the child neglect allegations. The current evaluation assessed the FTC by comparing

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>.

outcomes of respondent children whose parents enrolled in the FTC (n=404) with similar children whose parents participated in traditional family court (n=404) between November 2005 and December 2010. Researchers also conducted structured interviews with FTC and non-FTC parents to assess the court's impact on service experiences; perceptions of the judge, case managers, and court process; and drug use. In addition, researchers conducted staff and stakeholder interviews and a focus group with public defenders that represent the parents, and analyzed FTC court administrative data. The results show that the FTC had little impact on traditional measures of success for family treatment courts, such as, child removal, time to permanency (permanent placement of the child with responsible adult), and permanency outcome (i.e., placement with family member, foster parent, etc.). In fact, FTC participants were equally as likely as participants of the traditional family court to have one or more of their children removed during the course of their case. For both groups, a substantial majority of children (approximately 80%) were removed from the home at some point in the case. Moreover, FTC participation did not result in a higher percentage of parents reunified with their children, nor did participation decrease time to permanency for the children of FTC participants. However, the evaluation did find that children in the FTC group had a higher prevalence of being placed in the care of a relative, which is generally considered to be a preferable outcome to adoption or alternative placement arrangements. In addition to these outcomes, survey results suggested that FTC respondents were more likely to receive needed ancillary services such as family therapy and adult education. However, respondents in both groups appeared to have substantial unmet needs as well. Unfortunately, analysis of the impact of the FTC on drug treatment outcomes (e.g., time to treatment engagement, number of treatment episodes, treatment completion) was not possible due to the lack of data. The full report, "The Bronx Family Treatment Court 2005-2010: Impact on Family Court Outcomes and Participant Experiences and Perceptions," is available at:

http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/Full_Bronx_FTC.pdf

Justice Reinvestment

As discussed in previous months' newsletters, Justice Reinvestment is a data-driven approach to reducing corrections spending and reinvesting savings in evidence-based strategies that can increase public safety while holding offenders accountable. As part of their Public Safety Performance Project, Pew has been involved with Justice Reinvestment by helping states advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections. Recently, Pew released a brief that details the efforts to cut costs and reduce recidivism in Kentucky. The data showed that the increase in incarceration rates was largely driven by several factors, including increases in the number of arrests and incarceration for technical parole violators, and a higher likelihood of offenders in Kentucky being sentenced to prison than the national average. To address these issues, Kentucky enacted the Public Safety and Offender Accountability Act. This law is expected to produce savings of \$422 million over 10 years by focusing on sentencing serious offenders to prison, strengthening parole and probation, and improving the performance of the corrections department. The act requires that a portion of these savings be reinvested to expand interventions in the community and in prison that reduce the likelihood of criminal behavior. Such measures include evidence-based substance abuse and mental health programs. The brief, "2011 Kentucky Reforms Cut Recidivism, Costs: Broad Bill Enacts Evidence-Based Strategies," is available at:

http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/2011_Kentucky_Reforms_Cut_Recidivism.pdf

More information about the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Justice Reinvestment Initiative is available at:

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/topics/justice_reinvestment.html.

Other Reports

The Center for Court Innovation released a resource that focuses on process evaluation. This resource is intended to describe the essential components and methods of conducting a process evaluation of a criminal justice innovation, with a particular focus on problem-solving courts. The topics covered include: documentation of program operations, policies and procedures to include key staff interviews, observations, and participation data; stakeholder perceptions; and participants perceptions. The publication concludes with a brief discussion of the difference between process and impact evaluations and how the information generated from a process evaluation may help shape an impact evaluation by identifying outcomes of interest for an impact evaluation. The resource, "Process Evaluation 101: An Overview for Justice Practitioners," is available at:

http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/Process_Evaluation_101.pdf

Tip of the Month

Given the answers I want, which outcome model is appropriate?

In recent years there has been an increased focus on outcomes. As a result, many different outcome models have been developed to guide outcome thinking. While these models are helpful, understanding the unique advantages of these models can be challenging. In an effort to clarify these outcome models, the Rensselaerville Institute's Center for Outcomes developed a framework to describe eight models for applying outcome-based thinking. This framework is intended to provide practitioners with insights into which model might be appropriate to the particular needs of a program at a given point in time. The models described fall into three main categories: program planning and management, program and resource alignment, and program reporting. Program planning or management tools are outcome models that assist in an effort's proposal, funding, and implementation phases. Program and resource alignment tools help to ensure that resources and effort are expended in support of organizational goals. Program reporting tools enable organizations to capture and communicate the results they have achieved. More information on various outcome models is available at:

<http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluation-methodology/eight-outcome-models>