

**Minutes from the ARIOB Outreach, Technical Assistance & Communications Committee Meeting**

**Monday, July 25, 2016, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

**ICJIA, 300 W. Adams Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor – Small Conference Room, Chicago**

ARIOB members present: Joe Bruscato, Craig Findley, Cristin Evans (for John Maki)

ARIOB members by phone: Judge James Radcliffe (Ret.), Kathy Saltmarsh

Non-ARIOB present: Naeem Chowdhury, Mary Ann Dyar, Bryant Jackson-Green, Lindsey LaPointe, Nate Steinfeld

Non-ARIOB by phone: Julie Sterr

**Welcome and Introductions**

Kathy Saltmarsh brought the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m., facilitated introductions, and determined there was quorum.

**Approval of Minutes**

Kathy called for a review of the minutes from May 9, 2016 and May 16, 2016. Cristin Evans made a motion to approve minutes for both meetings, and Joe Bruscato seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Minutes approved.

**ARI Status Update and Plans for SFY17**

Mary Ann Dyar opened the discussion on the status of Adult Redeploy Illinois (ARI) and its plans for State Fiscal Year 2017 (SFY17). To review, ARI was one of the few programs included in the stop gap budget approved on June 30, 2016. Through two separate funds, ARI received total appropriations of about \$12.5 million, while the past two years had annual appropriations of \$7 million. With the lower spending rates in SFY16, ARI is able to pay all of the sites' expenses incurred during SFY16 (\$4.7 million, or approximately two-thirds of sites' budgets), as well as cover award amounts for sites continuing into SFY17 as budgeted. Since the funds for ARI in the stop gap budget come from separate sources, some funds will expire December 31, 2016 while others funds can be accessed through June 30, 2017. ARI continues to receive questions from various sites about reimbursement, stemming from concerns about the budget impasse. Program administrators are striving for consistent, transparent communication with sites during the rebuilding efforts.

Site updates: Kane County withdrew from ARI on December 31, 2015; their intensive probation program was dismantled. Kane reported positive experiences and interest in rejoining ARI once funding is restored. Furthermore, two other sites will not renew for SFY17 due to the uncertainty of state funding: Kankakee County and McLean County. However, two additional counties joined ARI as of July 1<sup>st</sup>: DeKalb County will start a mental health court and Kendall County will start a drug court. Therefore, ARI will transition from 22 grants covering 24 programs, to 19 grants covering 22 programs.

Lindsey LaPointe shared information about counties "ramping back up" their programs. For example, Boone County had just started its first drug court with ARI funds, but was forced to scale back its operations and cut staff, such as its recovery coach and treatment provider. In addition, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit (a network of 12 drug courts), which previously employed two mobile substance abuse counselors and a coordinator, was forced to keep only one provider on the grant. The Wells Center, which previously housed these staff members, had to make cutbacks due to the budget impasse as well. Cook County's resource coordinator position left in April due

to lack of funding. Despite these setbacks, many sites have articulated the positive effects from the ARI relationship. Ultimately, ARI plans to initiate conversations with sites, current and discontinued, and utilize the feedback for program improvement.

**Action Item:** ARI staff will create and conduct exit interviews with discontinued sites, such as McLean County, in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the ARI program.

Mary Ann mentioned attending a retreat last week with the Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health and Justice. The retreat focused on collaborative work, including through the use of planning grant funds and implementation funds. Questions arose regarding the lasting impact of the impasse on the ARI network as well as the fidelity of evidence-based practices. While preliminary research shows enrollments this quarter decreased by 43% and participation levels decreased by 17%, further information is needed.

**Action Item:** ARI will collect more information and consult the database on participation levels and other lasting impacts of the budget impasse.

### **Discussion of Communications and Media**

Lindsey remarked that ARI media coverage has increased. Since January, there have been 25 media hits, three-quarters of which have been about the budget impasse. All media hits are saved on the ARI website, under the tab “ARI in the Media.” There is an ongoing need to engage sites and encourage local media coverage for their specific programs. Members agreed that graduation ceremonies and other positive events are effective highlights to share with media and elected officials. Thus far, no programs have had media coverage since the stop-gap budget passed (June 30<sup>th</sup>). Joe Bruscatto suggests editorial board contact and a press release to emphasize the re-start of funding and active programs. Lindsey proposed sending thank-you letters to county board chairs and/or chief judges who made decisions and provided resources to continue with the ARI commitment last year.

**Action Item:** ARI staff will draft thank-you letters to continuing sites. ICJIA will draft a press release and explore editorial board contact.

**Action Item:** ARI staff will continue to discuss media coverage with active sites, highlighting the resilience and growth of the program, despite the budget impasse.

### **Discussion of Eligibility Expansion**

Lindsey briefed the committee on ARI’s current eligibility requirements. The ARI program is restricted to nonviolent offenses per the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Act (RCVWA). A brief survey of sites in the fall of 2015 indicated that many counties are open to expanding the eligibility criteria to all probationable offenses, subject to local control and decision making, which would include offenses currently classified as violent per the RCVWA. Many counties are already serving this population without ARI or other restricted diversion funding, which can result in less services for higher-need individuals. Bryant Jackson-Green shared an Illinois Policy Institute’s poll, which included questions regarding these specific populations. He reported that approximately 86% of Illinois voters were open to “moving beyond the paradigm of violent and nonviolent... to addressing populations with mental health conditions or substance abuse...” Julie Sterr added that some who need ARI program the most are not eligible. The committee

agreed that the objectives are to reduce prison commitments and expand the number of people who can be diverted (with community-based services and supervision), which could include a policy change allowing ARI funding for all probationable offenders.

Mary Ann emphasized that any changes to eligibility will and should be left to the discretion of local sites. ARI reinforces and respects local program decisions within the parameters of ARI. Committee member Joe Bruscato suggested that he reach out to the Illinois State's Attorney's Association on this matter.

### **Publications updates**

The committee agreed to provide comments on the Annual Report executive summary via email. Mary Ann discussed updates on implementation evaluations conducted by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) using data through the end of 2012 on the first ten ARI sites. The evaluations assess the implementation of evidence-based program models, to provide lessons learned to current and future sites. The Performance Measurement Committee (PMC) will critically examine these evaluations. Given that the data is somewhat outdated, and many sites have since implemented enhancements to their programs, it would be best to understand these evaluations as a "snapshot in time" and not as sites' present statuses. These evaluations are available on the ICJIA and ARI websites, with approximately 500 media hits thus far.

**Action Item:** ARI staff will confirm that the finalized evaluation reports are accessible on the "Publications" tab of the ARI website.

### **Old business/new business**

ARI, with the assistance of summer intern Naeem Chowdhury, is planning for a website overhaul to increase the user-friendliness of its website. The objective is to model it after the ICJIA website, which was redesigned in September 2015 and has received positive feedback. One future idea is to include video vignettes of local ARI client success stories.

**Action Step:** ARI staff will engage this committee for feedback on redesigning the ARI website to make it more user-friendly.

### **Adjournment**

Joe Bruscato made a motion for adjournment. Craig Findley seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Meeting adjourned at 4:39 PM.

**(Approved 2/21/17)**