

Questions Regarding Two Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Requests for Proposals:

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is currently soliciting research proposals for the following two projects:

- ❑ *Evaluation of the Jackson County School-Based Probation Program*
Project Duration: 18 months, beginning approximately March 1, 2003
Funding Available: Up to \$75,000

- ❑ *Evaluation of Moral Reconciliation Therapy in the Franklin/Jefferson County Evening Reporting Center Program*
Project Duration: 18 months, beginning approximately March 1, 2003
Funding Available: Up to \$75,000

Potential applicants have contacted the Authority and asked questions regarding these two projects. What follows is a list of questions asked by these potential applicants, and responses to the questions provided by Authority staff.

Questions regarding “Evaluation of the Jackson County School-Based Probation Program”:

1. Q: Will data be available from Jackson County schools?

A: A representative of the Jackson County Regional Board of Education has provided verbal permission for the evaluator to access school records. Records are available directly through the regional board of education offices. Other school-related data will likely have to be obtained directly from individual schools within the Jackson County school system. The representative of the Regional Board of Education verbally stated that they will support the collection of data from individual schools and are willing to convey this to the schools, but that individual schools will still reserve the right not to participate in the evaluation. Thus, with the exception of school records, the evaluator may not receive data from every individual school. Prior to obtaining any data from schools, the evaluator must engage in all necessary activities to ensure that their school data collection plan is in compliance with generally accepted principles and standards regarding the use of human subjects in social science research.

2. Q: Will the evaluator be allowed to obtain data directly from program participants and their parents/guardians?

A: Yes, provided that the evaluator has engaged in all necessary activities to ensure that their data collection plan is in compliance with generally accepted principles and standards regarding the use of human subjects in social science research. Program staff has been informed that the evaluator may be interested in obtaining data directly from program participants and parents. Evaluators will have access to probation

records, which should include contact information for program participants and parents.

3. Q: What are some possible control or comparison groups?

A: The evaluator may propose any reasonable control or comparison group, with sufficient justification as to why the group was selected. Should the group, upon further exploration, be unavailable, then AGENCY and program staff will assist the evaluator in finding an alternate group. One possible control or comparison group may be minors who are sentenced to probation in other counties within the First Judicial Circuit of Illinois. Jackson County is in the First Judicial Circuit. The Deputy Administrator for First Judicial Circuit Probation has verbally stated that it would be possible to obtain data from juvenile probationers in other counties within the First Circuit.

4. Q: Do program staff hand out written information to program participants and parents/guardians that could be made available to applicants?

A: No. The program is explained verbally to program participants and parents/guardians. The verbal description is not supplemented with written materials.

5. Q: To date, how many program participants have been discharged from the program?

A: The number of program participants who have been discharged affects the ability of an evaluator to examine program impact. The program has been in effect since March 2001, but has been fully operational for approximately one year. As a result, to date, few minors have been discharged from the program. The evaluator should attempt to provide an initial indication of program impact, in part by examining discharges as of and during the evaluation period. However, it is not expected that the evaluator will be able to complete a full impact evaluation based on data available as of and during the evaluation period.

6. Q: Do the school-based probation officers develop and implement programs or activities within the schools that are available to all students, or do they simply monitor juvenile probationers in the school setting?

A: Program staff has discussed the possibility of having school-based probation officers develop and implement school programs. However, to date, the duties of school-based probation officers have been limited to monitoring juvenile probationers in the school setting.

7. Q: Do the school-based probation officers meet with traditional line probation officers to discuss cases that they are both monitoring? If yes, then do school personnel attend these meetings as well?

A: School-based probation officers and traditional line officers are required to meet once a month to share information on cases that they are both monitoring. No other individuals outside of the probation department attend these meetings. School personnel do not attend the meetings because confidential information (e.g., pertaining to treatment or mental health) may be discussed.

8. Q: Did program staff develop specific program goals, objectives, and performance indicators that can be made available to applicants?

A: Yes. The goals, taken verbatim from program descriptions included in the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Grant applications submitted by Jackson County, are as follows:

1. Juvenile Recognition of Probation Monitoring

This goal will be acquired through juveniles seeing their school-based officers weekly in the school setting, and by teachers and guidance counselors regularly referring to their contact with the officers when talking to the juveniles. As a performance indicator, management can monitor the log books, case notes, and mileage reports, compiled by the officers to verify regular school contacts in all schools in the jurisdiction.

2. More Immediate Remedial Attention to Potential Violations

This goal will have as its objective the development of closer relationships between probation and the school personnel who have day to day contact with probationers. There will be a more intensive monitoring of the juvenile's home and school performance, with a greater probability of recognizing precursors to failure before they result in violations. Statistics regarding the percentage of juveniles who fail probation will provide a verification of any successes in this area.

3. Decreases in Juvenile Offenses

When all the elements of the program coordinate together, juveniles may see the probation experience as intensive, serious, and directed toward requiring success. The increased visibility of the school-based program may serve as a deterrent to discourage other juveniles from subsequent violations. The objective would be to decrease juvenile offenses 20% during the first year. Caseload statistics and juvenile crime statistics will provide verification of any such successes.

4. Improvements in the Quality of Education

This goal will seek to assist the schools in their goals of providing a higher quality of education by reducing disruptive behavior. This goal will benefit not only the juvenile probationers, but to all the students at each school in the jurisdiction. Objectives will be a 20% decrease in drop-out rates, 10% increase in school attendance, 20% decrease in school disciplinary measures, 20% decrease in school calls to the police, and increases in grade point averages for 20% of juvenile probationers served by the program. Performance indicators would include monitoring of school attendance records, decreased drop-out rates, decreases in the frequency of school disciplinary measures, and decreases in the need for police calls to the schools, and increases in grade point averages for juveniles served through the program.

Questions regarding “Evaluation of Moral Reconciliation Therapy in the Franklin/Jefferson County Evening Reporting Center Program”:

1. Q: Can the AGENCY provide applicants with a copy of the Moral Reconciliation Therapy workbook that program participants use?

A: No. The workbook is copyrighted. The AGENCY contacted the publishing company to receive permission to distribute the workbook. A representative of the publishing company stated that the company would not allow the AGENCY to distribute the workbook to potential applicants. The publishing company only sells copies of the workbook to those who have been trained in MRT through the authors and have signed a training agreement.

2. Q: Did program staff develop specific program goals, objectives, and performance indicators that can be made available to applicants?

A: Yes. The goals, taken verbatim from program descriptions included in the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Grant applications submitted by Franklin/Jefferson Counties, are as follows:

GOAL A: To reduce the number of juvenile detentions in Franklin and Jefferson counties.

OBJECTIVE 1: Reduce juvenile detentions by 10% per year.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR: Number of juveniles detained in a nine-month period by county.

OBJECTIVE 2: 50% of evening reporting center (ERC) program participants will successfully complete intensive services and supervision through ERC sites.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR: Number of juveniles admitted to the ERC each month by county; and the number of ERC participants successfully completing program each month by county.

GOAL B: To reduce gang affiliation of at-risk juveniles in Jefferson County.

OBJECTIVE: Reduce by 20% the number of Jefferson County ERC participants in gangs in a nine-month period.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR: Number of Jefferson County ERC participants involved in gangs each month; and the number of Jefferson County ERC participants not involved in gangs each month.