

# THE Compiler

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Summer 2004



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## Addressing female offenders in Illinois' criminal justice system

Federal grant programs help meet the needs of an increasing number of adult and juvenile females entering the system

By **Cristin Monti Evans**

The number of women under correctional supervision increased 81 percent in the U.S. between 1990 and 2000, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). And while projections forecast a drop in male incarceration in Illinois over the next several years, the number of female adult and juvenile offenders entering the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) continues to climb.

This trend has fueled efforts to provide gender-specific services to women who are incarcerated, on probation, jailed, or paroled in Illinois.

Research shows women offenders are more likely than their male counterparts to be responsible for minor children, be victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse, and suffer from chronic mental illnesses. They are less likely to be convicted of a violent offense, and are more likely to benefit from nurturing, relationship-based programs. In addition, women are more often unemployed, and grappling with housing and financial problems.

Gender-specific programs to assist this population in Illinois are supported with federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act grant

**"We want to decrease the recidivism rate among these women. We do whatever we can to get rid of the obstacles that lead them to the same behaviors that got them incarcerated."**

**Millicent Lewis-McCoy,**  
IDOC reentry program coordinator

funding, administered by the Authority. To date, a limited number of programs are available, with the bulk of services provided at only one of the state's three women's prisons.

### **Faith in Transition**

Decatur Correctional Center offers community-based transitional services geared to women who are preparing to leave IDOC. Faith in Transition, or FIT, program services include substance abuse treatment, employment assistance, and job skills training, and help in obtaining affordable housing. By combining facility and community-based components, FIT's goal is to end the cycle of dependence, victimization,

and addiction many female inmates endured prior to being incarcerated.

The program also addresses specific needs of offenders in the areas of victimization of self and others, low self-esteem, child care, parenting, sexual abuse, prostitution and exploitation, physical and mental health, assertiveness training, domestic violence, and anger management.

"We want to decrease the recidivism rate among these women," said Millicent Lewis-McCoy, IDOC reentry program coordinator. "We do whatever we can to get rid of the obstacles that lead them to the same behaviors that got them incarcerated."

*(See Grant programs, page 7)*



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Created in 1983, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice. Most of the work of the Authority falls into three major divisions: Research and Analysis; Information Systems and Technology; and Federal and State Grants Administration.

The Authority is governed by a 20-member board comprised of state and local leaders from the criminal justice system and members of the public.

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# Female juvenile data, gender-specific programs needed

By Kimberly Burke

**F**emales account for a small percentage of delinquents entering the juvenile justice system – 27 percent of all juvenile arrests nationwide in 1999 (Snyder, 2000) – and typically commit offenses that are deemed less serious than those committed by their male counterparts. For this reason, they have gone largely unnoticed in the juvenile justice system. Policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners have recently started to focus on the rising number of girls entering the juvenile justice system and the lack of programming geared specifically to the needs of this population.

Little is known about female juvenile delinquents in Illinois. There are few statewide data sources allowing the examination of juvenile offenders by gender, and state level data is also lacking on the characteristics of female delinquents. The only sources currently available with data on sex, race, and ethnicity of offenders in Illinois include admissions to Illinois' temporary detention centers and Illinois Department of Corrections-Illinois Youth Centers.

With this lack of data in mind, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority engaged in several data collection efforts in cooperation with other state and local agencies. These efforts include a statewide arrest data collection project for the years of 1996-1999 and the Authority's Probation Outcome Study, which provided a snapshot of probationers discharged during a four-week period in 2000.

According to data collected by the Authority, in 1999 (the most recent year of data available) an estimated 8,882 girls were arrested, about 23 percent of all estimated juvenile arrests. Of the girls arrested in Illinois, 51 percent were arrested in Cook County, 25 percent in urban counties, 16 percent in collar counties, and 8 percent in rural counties.

Data was collected on the following offenses: violent index offenses (murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault), property index offenses (burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson), unlawful use of weapons offenses, and drug offenses (possession, manufacturing, or delivery of controlled substances). Seventy-four percent of the girls were arrested for property offenses, violent index offenses accounted for 14 percent of arrests, and drug offenses accounted for 11 percent of the arrests.

## Juvenile probation study results

The Probation Outcome Study included a statewide sample of 189 girls discharged from probation during a four-week period in 2000 (Adams, Olson, and Adkins, 2002). The study revealed that of those girls discharged from probation 69 percent were on probation for misdemeanor offenses and 23 percent were on probation for felony offenses. By type of crime, 39 percent of the sample was on probation for

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Editor

Cristin Monti Evans

E-mail: [cevans@icjia.state.il.us](mailto:cevans@icjia.state.il.us)

Visit the Authority online at: [www.icjia.state.il.us](http://www.icjia.state.il.us)

Write to: The Compiler, ICJIA, 120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1016, Chicago, IL 60606.  
Telephone: 312-793-8550, TDD: 312-793-4170, Fax: 312-793-8422

violent offenses and 6 percent for drug offenses. During the sample period, the average age of girls discharged was 15 years old. Sixty-one percent of the girls were Caucasian, 25 percent were African-American, and 13 percent were Hispanic. The data on female juvenile probationers is limited to the sample collected in 2000.

In Illinois, juveniles can be admitted to temporary detention prior to, during, or after their trial. Based on data available through the Department of Human Services Juvenile Monitoring Information System, between 1998 and 2000, 9,998 girls were admitted to temporary detention (19 percent of all juveniles admitted). Seventy-five percent of these were admitted into temporary detention prior to completion of their trial. Girls from urban counties accounted for the greatest percentage of admissions to detention centers (30 percent), followed by rural counties (27 percent), Cook County (24 percent), and collar counties (19 percent). The average age of girls admitted to temporary detention was 15 years old for this time period. Violent offenses accounted for the greatest percentage of girls admitted to temporary detention (28 percent), followed by property offenses (16 percent), drug offenses (4 percent), and status offenses (2 percent).

Between the state fiscal years (July 1 through June 30) 1993 and 2002, 1,703 girls with the average age of 16 were committed to the Illinois Youth Centers (IYCs), accounting for about 10 percent of all new juvenile court admissions. Girls from urban counties accounted for the largest percentage committed to the IYCs (44 percent), followed by girls from rural counties (29 percent), Cook County (18 percent), and collar counties (9 percent).

## Profiling female delinquents

In 2003, Authority researchers completed a profile of female delinquents committed to IDOC (Alderden and Perez, 2003). This study focused on a sample of girls admitted to IYC-

Warrenville, as well as staff focus groups. The project was implemented to provide juvenile justice practitioners, policymakers, and correctional administrators with specific state-level data on female delinquents to help create programs geared to their specific needs. The researchers also learned more about the experiences of practitioners working with the girls to provide more information needed to develop, implement, and evaluate programs for this population.

The characteristics of the 154 girls in the sample were similar to those in a national profile of female offenders (Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, 1999). The average age of the girls in the sample was about 15.5 years. Caucasian girls accounted for about 45 percent of the residents, as did African-American girls, followed by

Hispanic girls (7 percent), and other races (3 percent). The greatest percentage of girls came from urban counties (47 percent), followed by girls from rural counties (24 percent), Cook County (16 percent), and collar counties (12 percent). The girls had an average of five prior arrests and nearly 75 percent of those were for a violent offense.

Most of the girls in the sample exhibited the risk factors associated with delinquent behavior. They had tried alcohol or drugs, most commonly, marijuana. More than half experienced physical and/or sexual abuse at least once in their lifetime. More than 95 percent of the girls reporting physical, verbal, or emotional abuse knew their abusers, while 75 percent of those reporting sexual abuse knew their abusers.

Many of the girls in the sample had problems in school. Seventy percent had been truant from school, almost 45 percent had been suspended at least once, and nearly 10 percent had been expelled. Just more than 20 percent had dropped out of school. Nearly 75 percent of the girls had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder and more

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Publications

The following summaries and reports are available from the Authority. Most can be found online at [www.icjia.state.il.us](http://www.icjia.state.il.us).

### CAPS at Ten

Northwestern University has completed the last phase of the comprehensive multi-year assessment of the Chicago Police Department's community policing program. Since 1993, the evaluation has surveyed over 48,500 residents and 13,600 police officers. In addition, over 1,000 in-depth personal interviews of police and residents were conducted. Observers attended 1,079 beat meetings, and data on more than 8 million crime reports and 37 million 911-call records were collected and used for the study.

### The Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project

An evaluation of the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project is complete. The study, under the direction of Dr. Irving Spergel and the University of Chicago, represents one of the most comprehensive and complete data collection efforts of a gang violence reduction program.

### Driving under the influence: DUI laws and enforcement in Illinois and the U.S.

This Research Bulletin describes significant statistical trends and issues related to driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Data has been collected from a number of national, state, and local sources.

### 2004 Summary of Drug Enforcement Activities Across Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Task Forces

This Research Report provides an overview of the drug and violent crime problem in the jurisdictions covered by Illinois' metropolitan enforcement groups (MEGs) and task forces, and the response to these problems by the units. The report provides information on local police agency participation in a MEG or task force, the impact that participation may have on drug enforcement activity and arrests, types of arrests made, regional variations, and case outcomes.

# Research

## Safe Havens

Staff are evaluating the Chicago Safe Havens demonstration site, a project funded under the Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program. The Safe Havens Program was established by the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 to provide an opportunity for communities to support supervised visitation and safe exchange of children, by and between parents, in situations involving domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. The project enables custodial parents to drop off their children for court ordered visits and exchanges, without having to face the non-custodial parent.

The visit with the non-custodial parent takes place at a visitation center, with social service staff observing and monitoring the visit. The purpose of the supervised visitation program is to enable custodial parents to comply with court ordered visitation, without having to fear that they or their children will be re-victimized. Safe exchange programs also enable custodial parents to drop off their children without having to face the non-custodial parent.

Authority researchers will serve as local evaluators for the demonstration initiative.

## Study of InfoNet data

Two projects will be initiated this spring focusing on the analysis of InfoNet data.

The first project, under the direction of Dr. Susan Grossman and Dr. Marta Lundy, will focus on the analysis of sexual abuse data and will provide much needed information on those that seek help and services for sexual assault in Illinois. Research questions will focus on the adult survivors and victims of sexual assault and abuse and will detail the following: basic demographics and income sources, relationship between the client and abuser, characteristics of the abuser, issues and circumstances of the abuse/assault, special needs, referral sources, experience with medical services, intensity and duration of support and social services, and legal actions taken in response to the abuse/assault. Information collected will not be identifiable to the individual.

In addition, this project will generate a template for victim service centers to use so that they can complete a center-

(Continued on page 5)

than 25 percent of the girls had attempted suicide at least once.

## Treatment barriers

The study included focus groups held with IDOC staff who work with the girls in IYC-Warrenville. The participants reported four significant barriers to working with the girls. They included:

- Family and neighborhood environments that included acceptance of criminal behavior, lack of supervision, and sexual abuse in the home.
- Females' sexual relationships inside the institution as a result of shared cells.
- A lack of reaction from the juvenile justice system and other agencies until the female had committed several offenses or a serious crime.
- Poor communication between facility workers and administrators in the institutional environment.
- A lack of gender-specific programs offered within the facility.

Focus group participants also reported that in their work with the girls they filled many different roles, especially that of a surrogate parent. Participants felt that this was an issue because when the girls became that attached to staff they did not want to leave the institution. The focus group also offered their thoughts on improving the correctional system. Some of their ideas included more mental health treatment options for the seriously ill, more gender-specific training for staff, better screening of staff, and more communication between line staff and the administrators. The participants also noted that more aftercare service options for girls would be useful.

## Conclusion

What is known about girls in the juvenile justice system in Illinois is very limited. First, state level data is needed at each point in the juvenile justice system by gender to determine the extent of female delinquency. Once the data is in place, more research on fe-

male delinquents to determine how females move through the juvenile justice system as compared to the boys, and what types of factors determine this movement, such as the seriousness and types of offenses, and number of offenses. This research could help determine the types and number of programs geared specifically toward girls in the juvenile justice system.

Based on analysis of the data that is available, recommended programs include mentoring and tutoring, anger management and conflict resolution,

**Gender-responsive programming for girls should begin in the community, specifically with mental health programs addressing the needs of girls at risk of entering the juvenile justice system.**

sex education classes, and parenting classes. Gender-responsive programming for girls should begin in the community, specifically with mental health programs addressing the needs of girls at risk of entering the juvenile justice system.

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- (Kimberly Burke is an Authority research analyst.)

# Examining female domestic violence offenders in Illinois

By Erica N. Morrow

The Illinois State Police (ISP) has collected data on reported domestic offenses in Illinois since April 1996. Illinois law mandates the reporting of all incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation that occur between family or household members to ISP (20 ILCS 2630/5.1). This information has helped develop a picture of the nature and extent of family violence in Illinois.

## Demographics

In 2002, 54,007 domestic offenses were reported to ISP, excluding Chicago. Although men committed the majority of these offenses, women were the offenders in 23 percent of reported cases. Of all offenses reported identifying females as offenders, 59 percent were between 20 and 39 years old. Female offenders younger than 20 years old and older than 40 years old each constituted 20 percent.

Female offenders were identified as white in 68 percent of the cases, while 28 percent were identified as African American. The demographic breakdown of male offenders was very similar to that of female offenders.

Of offenses committed by females, 27 percent were against a boyfriend or girlfriend, and 18 percent were committed against a spouse. Of offenses committed by males 39 percent were

against a boyfriend or girlfriend, while 24 percent were against a spouse.

There were few differences found between the races of victims in terms of male versus female offenders. Caucasians accounted for 67 percent of those victimized by females and 68 percent of those victimized by males, while African Americans accounted for 29 percent of those victimized by females and 27 percent of those victimized by males. Less than 5 percent of those victimized by either males or females were Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Hispanic.

Of the 12,513 reported cases identifying the offender as female, 67 percent identified the victim as male, while of the 41,454 reported cases identifying the offender as male, 85 percent identified the victim as female.

Similar comparisons could not be made when looking at Chicago data as the Chicago Police Department's domestic violence data is not available. However, some information is available through the Chicago Police Department's 2002 Annual Report. According to this report, there were 12,062 domestic-related arrests in 2002 in Chicago. Of those, 91 percent were for domestic battery and 8 percent were for violations of orders of protection.

(See *Domestic violence*, page 7)

## Gender and age breakdown of victims by gender in Illinois 2002\*

Age	Cases identifying female offenders	Cases identifying male offenders
Victim was under 20 years old	22%	20%
Victim was between 20 and 39 years old	48%	58%
Victim was older than 39 years old	28%	21%

\*Chicago figures excluded

## Research continued

level analysis based on the study's statewide and regional analyses.

Another project under the direction of Dr. Karla Fischer will focus on information on those that seek help for domestic violence in Illinois. The study will include a profile of victims, offenders and children, and the types of services they seek and ultimately receive. The profiles will be generated on three levels—the individual service providing agencies, communities and the state. The findings will aid in identifying underserved populations and unmet social service needs in the area of domestic violence services.

InfoNet is a database that maintains information from victim service providers and agencies.

## Study on the impact of methamphetamine on Illinois counties

A study of methamphetamine in two rural Illinois counties will begin in May 2004. Under the direction of Dr. Ralph Weisheit of Illinois State University, the project will assess the magnitude of the methamphetamine problem in Clark and Edgar counties, which are experiencing significant meth activity. The study will note the connection between meth manufacturing and use, and its impact on law enforcement and social service agencies in the area. The study will determine what resources can be brought to bear on the problem of meth and what additional resources might facilitate an effective response to the problem.

## Returning Home: Understanding the challenges of prisoner reentry in Illinois

The Urban Institute will continue their work in the area of offender reentry in Illinois with a project that will build upon their earlier work in Illinois and in conjunction with their national study. The current study will involve the development of a policy briefing synthesizing findings from four waves of prisoner interviews, interviews with family members, focus groups with community residents, and interviews with stakeholders to present the first systematic understanding of the process of prisoner reentry and the specific issues and challenges associated with reentry in Chicago.

# Grants

## Elder abuse conferences slated for June, October

The Authority will host a conference entitled "Combating Elder Abuse: Comprehensive strategies for law enforcement, prosecutors and victim service providers" Thursday, June 10, at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont. The conference will give law enforcement and prosecutors the tools they need to successfully investigate and prosecute elder abuse cases, while giving victim service providers insight into undue influence and the legal tools available to assist elderly victims.

Sponsored by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Illinois Attorney General's Office, and Illinois Department on Aging, the event will feature local and national experts on elder abuse in the areas of law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services.

An October conference will be held downstate for practitioners outside the Chicago metropolitan area. Check the Authority website later this summer for updates and registration information.

## Downstate elder abuse projects initiated

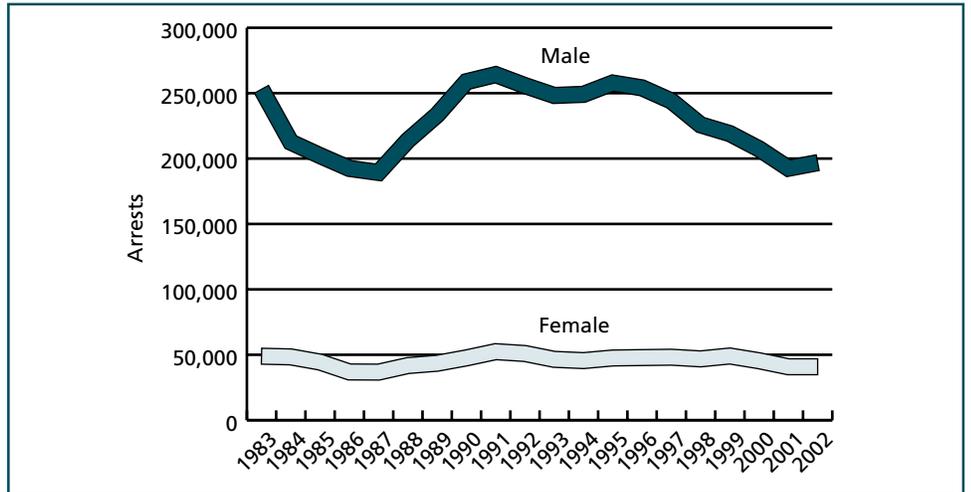
Three new projects were initiated in southeastern Illinois to complement the Illinois Department on Aging's Elder Abuse Neglect and Exploitation services program (ANE).

The Shawnee Alliance for Seniors, Stopping Women Abuse Now (SWAN), and the Effingham City/County Committee for Seniors received Victim of Crime Act funding to implement long-term support services to elder abuse victims. While ANE focuses on investigating reports of elder abuse and establishing the immediate health and safety of elders, it does not provide counseling elders may need to deal with their victimization and remain safe from abusers. This initiative will provide a follow-up elder abuse case-worker for long-term counseling and supportive services for elders whose ANE cases have been closed.

About \$178,000 was allocated to these projects, which will assist elders in Alexander, Gallatin, Hardin, Jackson, Crawford, Edwards, Hamilton, Jasper, Lawrence, Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jefferson, and Marion counties.

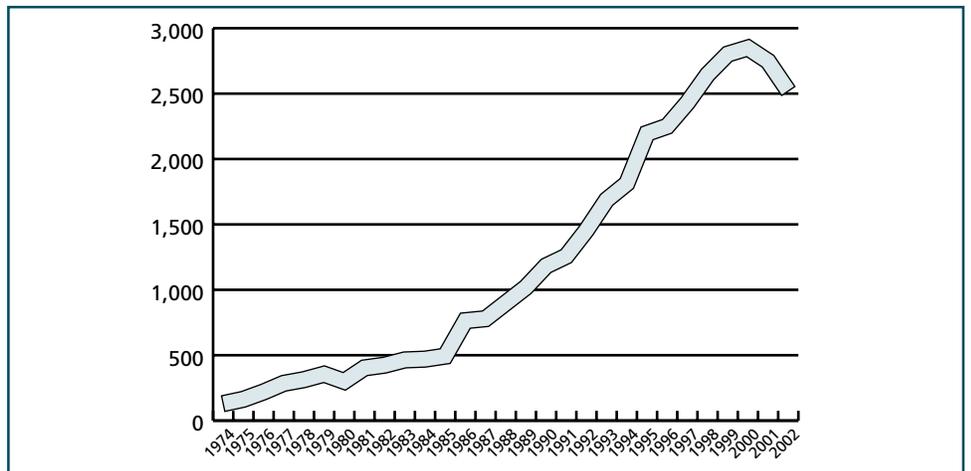
# Tracking women in the system

## Chicago Police Department arrests by gender, 1983-2002



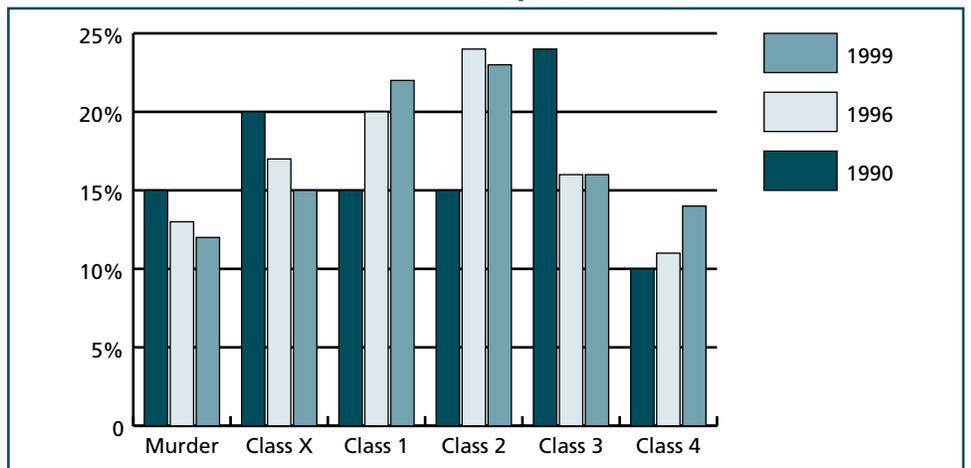
Source: Chicago Police Department

## Female inmates at the IDOC, 1974-2002



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

## Classification of offenses among women at IDOC, 1990-1999



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

## Domestic violence continued

About 260 females and 170 males in Chicago were arrested in 2002 for *offenses committed against family and children*. Most often, female arrestees were black (75 percent), followed by Hispanic (14 percent), then white (10 percent). Over half of both males and females were between 25 and 44 years old. However, females between 21 and 24 years old accounted for 21 percent while males in the same age category accounted for 23 percent.

## Injury statistics

Excluding those in Chicago due to lack of available data, female offenders were slightly less likely than male offenders to cause injury to their victims in 2002. Sixty percent of those victimized by females reported no injuries at all, compared to 54 percent of those victimized by males.

Both male and female offenders more often used personal weapons (hands, fists, and feet) to commit their offenses as opposed to other weapons, such as guns or knives. However, male offenders used personal weapons 73 percent of the time while female offenders used them 62 percent of the time. Twenty-six percent of reported offenses committed by females involved no weapon at all as opposed to 20 percent of male offenders.

*(Erica N. Morrow is an Authority research analyst.)*

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## Grant programs continued

### Juvenile reentry programs

Community-based transitional services also are available to juvenile females at the Illinois Youth Center Chicago. The Youth Offenders Reentry Program offers both male and female inmates services to reduce drug abuse and criminal behavior. The program aims to restore the juvenile's sense of self-worth, revitalize family ties, and encourage social reintegration.

Transitional housing is provided for juveniles who need assistance in reconnecting with the community, including participation in and

responsibility for their families and fellow community residents. Young offenders with drug problems are placed in recovery homes or another substance abuse treatment facility in the community, but outpatient services also are available.

The majority of youth entering IDOC have histories of substance abuse, drug trafficking, or gang affiliation prior to entering the system. A primary goal of the program is to provide a continuum of care between incarceration and release, ultimately closing the gaps that could lead to recidivism.

### Obstacles of reentry

Parolees are at greatest risk of committing technical violations within the first two to three months following release. They often experience obstacles such as a lack of clinical programs, prohibition from public housing, economic hardship, and the stigma of being an ex-offender. But research indicates that effective prison-based treatment can reduce drug or alcohol relapse and recidivism.

While their priorities typically include housing, employment, education, and childcare, financial obstacles are the biggest challenge facing women leaving the system, Lewis-McCoy said.

“Right now there are not a lot of free resources for people once they reenter the community,” she said. “There are not a lot of vendor agencies who are willing to take the chance on an ex-offender who needs employment. We have to do what we can to convince vendors to make that bridge for the lady getting ready to come out.”

### Probation programs

The Lake County Adult Probation Services Division recently implemented community-based transitional services for women to deal with the causes, effects, and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder. The division compiled probationer data, mostly self-reports, to determine that a large percentage of women on probation in the county are survivors of sexual and physical abuse or have suffered other significant traumas.

*(Continued on back page)*

# Technology

## Integrated justice information efforts in Illinois continue

The Illinois Integrated Justice Information System (IIJIS) Implementation Board Annual Report was presented to the governor and General Assembly April 1. The report is available on the IIJIS website at: [www.icjia.state.il.us/iijis](http://www.icjia.state.il.us/iijis).

The IIJIS Planning and Policy Committee, working closely with the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, has convened the Homeland Security Workgroup to begin development of an Illinois Homeland Security Scenario. That scenario will outline the types of data and information exchanges necessary to both prevent and respond to homeland security threats in Illinois.

In other committee news, the Privacy Policy Subcommittee (also under the auspices IIJIS Planning and Policy Committee) is gaining an increased understanding of the privacy issues confronting the integration of justice information systems that will guide policy development. And the IIJIS Technical Committee has renewed its focus on establishing the data, communication, and security standards necessary for inter-agency data sharing and will be taking steps to determine which standards already exist and their suitability for the Illinois justice community.

## ALERTS, ALECS upgrades near completion

Upgrades to the Area-wide Law Enforcement Radio Terminal System (ALERTS) and Automated Law Enforcement Communications System (ALECS) will be complete in June. Both systems received new technology that lays a foundation for future modification, upgrades, and enhancements.

Dubbed ALERTS.net, the new ALERTS runs on web servers. The conversion of 4,000 ALERTS devices in 330 local law enforcement agencies in Illinois is under way.

ALECS was completely redesigned with the updated technology. While the new system looks and operates the same, the upgrade provided added features to enhance officer safety, including the ability to access vehicle “hit lists” and post notes on vehicles entered into the system. More than 90 police departments statewide use ALECS.

National data collected by BJS parallel the trends seen in Lake County. In 1999, 44 percent of women in the system reported that they had been physically or sexually assaulted, according to BJS. Nearly 70 percent of those women reported that an assault had occurred before they were 18.

The division secured a specialized treatment provider to give participants information on how to deal with the trauma they have suffered, and the treatments available to them. Probation officers then oversee the connection of probationers with existing mental health services in the community.

The Cook County Adult Probation Department provides services to women making the transition from jail to the community when released on probation. The department collaborates with a contracted treatment provider and the Cook County Sheriff's Department of Women's Justice Services to provide women with gender-responsive substance abuse treatment, education, and vocational training to increase their chances of obtaining employment while decreasing the risk of recidivism.

All community-based transitional service programs incorporate a zero-tolerance policy on recidivism. Women must also abide by the terms of their probation or parole.

### Social services

The Cook County Social Service Department offers a gender-responsive program to address the needs of women with multiple DUI convictions. The program aims to reduce recidivism and alleviate the mental health symptoms of female DUI offenders.

Participants considered for this program are substance dependent and have been convicted of at least one DUI offense. Women who participate in this program typically report histories of physical and sexual abuse, depression, low self-esteem, and difficulty coping with relationships.

The program provides between 30-75 hours of intensive, outpatient substance abuse treatment, plus follow-up services. CTA fare cards also are provided for women as needed for transportation to and from the required intervention meetings.

### GIRLS LINK

GIRLS LINK is another effort geared toward female juveniles. A collaboration of more than 20 public and private agencies, GIRLS LINK works to improve gender responsive services to girls in Cook County.

A recent GIRLS LINK study of juvenile female offenders in Cook County revealed that abuse and neglect not only increased their likelihood of entry into the system, but also their level of offending, and that girls were more likely to violate the terms of their probation.

Recommendations to address the findings included development of treatment interventions for marginal female offenders that account for variations in the types of offenders, and expansion of gender-specific outcome measures that focus less on recidivism and are more sensitive toward lifestyle consequences.

*(Cristin Monti Evans is a public information officer with the Authority.)*

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