

ENHANCING LOCAL JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS IN ILLINOIS

# JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL GUIDEBOOK AND EVALUATION MANUAL



July 2001

ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
INFORMATION AUTHORITY

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**Enhancing Local Juvenile Justice Systems in Illinois:**

**Juvenile Justice Council Guidebook**

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This project was supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Grant #98-JN-FX-0112), awarded to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority by the Justice Research and Statistics Association. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority or the Justice Research and Statistics Association.

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Printed by the authority of the State of Illinois, August 2001  
500 copies  
Printing Order #02-002.1

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This project benefited greatly from the input of many individuals. We wish to acknowledge the contributions of the Ford, McHenry, and Winnebago County Juvenile Justice Councils. We learned a great deal from the challenges they faced as they worked to meet their duties and responsibilities.

In addition, we would like to thank staff of Illinois' State Advisory Group (SAG) on juvenile justice issues, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission. In particular, we wish to thank Carolyn Stahl-Goodrich and Lisa Jacobs for their support and collaboration on this project. We would also like to thank those who reviewed early drafts of this report, Paula Wolff of Chicago Metropolitan 2020, Steven Watts of Knox County's State's Attorney's Office, Megan Alderden and Dr. Gerard Ramker of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, and members of the Continuum of Care workgroup of the Juvenile Justice Forum. Our thanks also go out to Megan Alderden and Alissa M. Clark for their assistance in writing the appendices.

Finally, we are fortunate to work with many intelligent and caring co-workers in the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Research and Analysis Unit. Our work benefits greatly from their diverse backgrounds and perspectives.



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## Introduction

On January 1, 1999, most of the juvenile justice reform provisions outlined in Public Act 90-590 (The Juvenile Justice Reform Act) took effect. While many of the provisions changed the procedures through which minors are handled in the juvenile justice system (e.g., station adjustments, extended jurisdiction juvenile prosecutions, fingerprinting requirements, etc.), other provisions support increasing levels of community participation and local planning. In Article VI of the revised Illinois Juvenile Court Act, individual counties, or groups of smaller counties, are encouraged to convene juvenile justice councils.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of a juvenile justice council is:

*“to provide a forum for the development of a community-based interagency assessment of the local juvenile justice system, to develop a county juvenile justice plan for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, and to make recommendations to the county board, or county boards, for more effectively utilizing community resources in dealing with juveniles who are found to be involved in crime, or who are truant or have been suspended or expelled from school.”<sup>2</sup>*

The statute in Article VI of the Illinois Juvenile Court Act pertaining to juvenile justice councils also describes six duties and responsibilities of councils. By fulfilling these six duties and responsibilities, councils can achieve their intended purpose. However, to this point, little has been done to provide technical or financial assistance for convening juvenile justice councils.<sup>3</sup> With the financial support of the Justice Research and Statistics Association, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) has created this guidebook to assist juvenile justice councils in achieving three of the six duties and responsibilities listed in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act.

- ***This guidebook is intended to be used as a reference manual and information guide for existing councils and for jurisdictions considering convening a council. The guidebook addresses juvenile justice plan development, grant writing, and interagency agreements.***

The guidebook is intended to be used as a reference manual for existing councils that are embarking on these three duties and responsibilities. It is also intended to be used as an information guide for jurisdictions that do not currently have a juvenile justice council, but are considering convening one.

Table 1 lists the six basic duties and responsibilities of juvenile justice councils and the pages in the guidebook where they are addressed. Table 1 also shows that most of the guidebook is devoted to assisting juvenile justice councils in developing an effective

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<sup>1</sup> More specifically, 705 ILCS 405/6-12 (see Appendix A for a copy of the entire juvenile justice council statute, as it appears in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act)

<sup>2</sup> 705 ILCS 405/6-12(2)

<sup>3</sup> Illinois stands in contrast to California, which allocated \$2,000,000 for counties to develop local action plans for reducing the rate of juvenile crime and delinquency (Coolbaugh and Hansel 2000).

juvenile justice plan. The guidebook also addresses writing interagency agreements and applying for grants

**Table 1: Six Basic Duties and Responsibilities of Juvenile Justice Councils**

<b>Duties and Responsibilities<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Where They Are Addressed</b>
<p>Developing a county juvenile justice plan based upon utilization of the resources of law enforcement, school systems, park programs, sports entities, and others in a cooperative and collaborative manner to prevent or discourage juvenile crime.</p>	<p>Strategies for collaborative planning: pp. 8-11</p> <p>Collecting data to identify needs in local juvenile justice system: pp. 12-41, Appendix D, pp. 92-131</p> <p>Writing the plan: pp. 41-49</p> <p>Example plan components: pp. 51-58</p>
<p>Entering into a written county interagency agreement specifying the nature and extent of contributions each signatory agency will make in achieving the goals of the county juvenile justice plan and their commitment to the sharing of information useful in carrying out the goals of the interagency agreement to the extent authorized by law.</p>	<p>Writing the interagency agreement: pp. 49-50</p> <p>Example interagency agreement components: pp. 51-58</p>
<p>Applying for and receiving public or private grants, to be administered by one of the community partners, that support one or more components of the county juvenile justice plan.</p>	<p>Effective programs to support plan components: pp. 59-61, Appendix B, pp. 65-84</p> <p>Elements of effective programs to support plan components: Appendix B, pp. 65-84</p> <p>Tips on grant writing: Appendix C, pp. 85-91</p>
<p>Providing a forum for the presentation of interagency recommendations and the resolution of disagreements relating to the contents of the county interagency agreement or the performance by the parties of their respective obligations under the agreement.</p>	<p>Not addressed in the guidebook</p>

<sup>4</sup> The duties and responsibilities listed in Table 1 are written exactly as they appear in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act (705 ILCS 406/6-12 (3) (a-f)).

**Table 1 (cont.): Six Basic Duties and Responsibilities of  
Juvenile Justice Councils**

<b>Duties and Responsibilities</b>	<b>Where They Are Addressed</b>
Assisting and directing the efforts of local community support organizations and volunteer groups in providing enrichment programs and other support services for clients of local juvenile detention centers.	Not addressed in the guidebook
Developing and making available a county-wide or multi-county resource guide for minors in need of prevention, intervention, psycho-social, educational support, and other services needed to prevent juvenile delinquency.	Not addressed in the guidebook

The decision to only address juvenile justice plan development, interagency agreements, and grant applications was made because, given the mission of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority to improve the administration of criminal and juvenile justice in Illinois, these are the duties and responsibilities for which we are able to offer the most assistance to juvenile justice councils. The ICJIA mission is achieved through efforts in four areas, two of which are grants administration and research and analysis. Our experience funding grant programs and providing technical assistance to grantees enables us to provide councils with assistance in writing grants to support components of juvenile justice plans. Our experience in criminal justice research and analysis enables us to provide guidance in how research can contribute to the development of an effective juvenile justice plan.

- ***The guidebook takes a research-oriented approach to juvenile justice plan development. Tips are offered for easy ways in which data can be used in the development of an effective juvenile justice plan.***

A major premise of this guidebook is that research and analysis should play a large role in the process of developing a juvenile justice plan. The statute in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act pertaining to juvenile justice councils states that juvenile justice plans:

*“shall include relevant portions of local crime prevention and public safety plans, school improvement and school safety plans, and the plans or initiatives of other public and private entities within the county that are concerned with dropout prevention, school safety, the prevention of juvenile crime and criminal activity by youth gangs.”<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> 705 ILCS 405/6-12 (2)

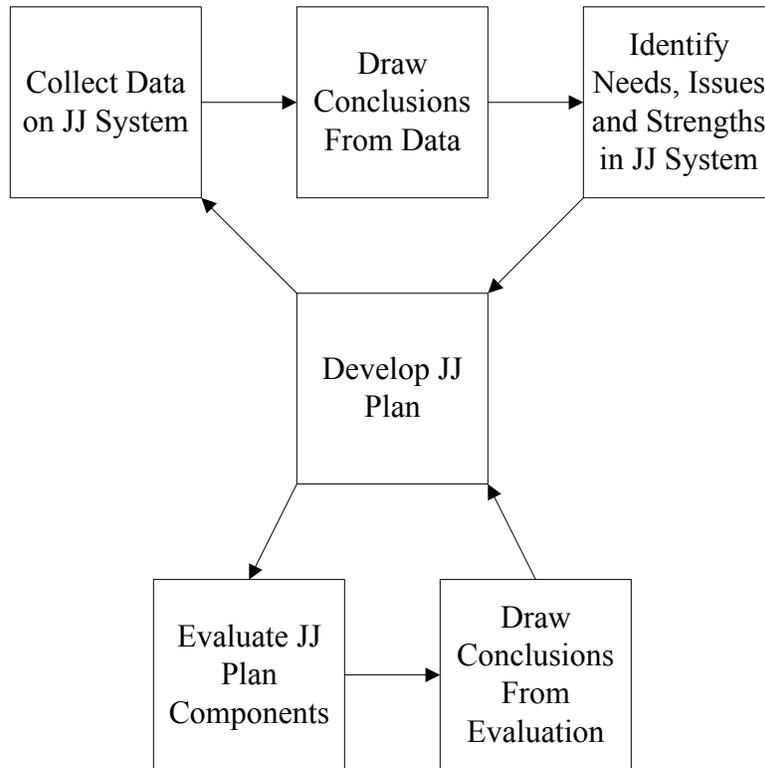
We encourage juvenile justice councils to reference relevant portions of existing plans from other jurisdictions. However, there may be no existing plans pertaining to areas that councils would like to address. Or, councils may wish to add additional plan components in areas that are addressed in existing plans. Stated more generally, councils will likely want to develop a juvenile justice plan catered specifically to their purpose and functions. As such, councils will likely want to closely examine the current state of their juvenile justice system.

Part of this examination can be achieved through research and analysis. The guidebook describes how councils can develop and/or critically assess a *needs assessment* report on their juvenile justice system. A needs assessment report on a juvenile justice system, describes various types of data on the system (e.g., court system data, risk factor data). The needs assessment report should define the juvenile justice system broadly and, hence, could potentially include data from agencies, organizations, and individuals not typically thought of as part of the juvenile justice system (e.g., schools, park districts, families, the community-at-large, etc.) A needs assessment can be used to identify needs, issues, and strengths in a juvenile justice system. These needs, issues, and strengths can, in turn, be incorporated into a juvenile justice plan. By enabling councils to get an accurate indication of the state of their local juvenile justice system, needs assessments (and, more generally, data) can be a major contributing factor to an effective juvenile justice plan.

Figure 1 summarizes the process by which data collection (via the development of a needs assessment or otherwise) can aid in the development of a juvenile justice plan. In addition, Figure 1 suggests that a juvenile justice plan is a fluid document. That is, data collection should continue even after a juvenile justice plan is developed (notice the arrow from “Develop JJ Plan” to “Collect Data on JJ System”). Data trends can change over time and councils will likely want to be aware of these changes and modify their juvenile justice plan accordingly.

Thus, a large part of the guidebook is devoted to the development and/or critical assessment of needs assessment reports. *Councils should not be dissuaded from using research and analysis to guide their planning process because of the time and effort necessary to develop a comprehensive needs assessment.* While we encourage councils to gather data on their juvenile justice system prior to developing a juvenile justice plan, we do not presume that councils or council members will necessarily author their own needs assessment report. We fully recognize that council members likely have busy schedules and will not be able to engage in a detailed data collection and analysis process. There are ways to collect data on juvenile justice systems that will not require as much effort on the part of council members.

**Figure 1: How Research and Analysis Can Aid the Juvenile Justice Council Planning Process**



The section on needs assessments address how councils can employ external authors of needs assessments. Or, in lieu of developing a needs assessment report (or having a needs assessment developed), we describe how councils can use the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority as a resource for information on their juvenile justice system. However, irrespective of whether councils author their own needs assessment, the information contained in the guidebook can be used as a tool for reading needs assessments with a critical eye. Councils that employ external authors to write their needs assessment will need to be able to determine the quality and utility of the report. Or, for councils that obtain some data on their juvenile justice system (e.g., from the ICJIA), but do not plan on developing a needs assessment (internally or externally), the information contained in the guidebook should enable such councils to determine how much emphasis or importance to place on the data elements.

- ***The guidebook includes specific thoughts and suggestions on how to develop a juvenile justice plan and how to develop an interagency agreement.***

After describing how to develop a needs assessment report, the guidebook then provides some thoughts and suggestions on how to write and develop a juvenile justice plan. We also offer suggestions on how to develop an interagency agreement to carry out the juvenile justice plan. In addition, we offer an example juvenile justice plan outline and

two examples of how hypothetical juvenile justice system issues can be addressed in a juvenile justice plan and interagency agreement. The sections on juvenile justice plans and interagency agreements draw upon information obtained from existing juvenile justice councils and the experience of ICJIA staff in criminal justice-related planning.

The juvenile justice council statute in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act implies that the juvenile justice plan and interagency agreement should be treated as interrelated documents. For example, the statute states that the interagency agreement should specify “the nature and extent of contributions each signatory agency will make in achieving the goals of the county juvenile justice plan.”<sup>6</sup> The juvenile justice plan should describe the needs of the county and its local juvenile justice system, as well as the goals and objectives for addressing those needs. The interagency agreement should describe in detail how each goal or objective will be achieved and clearly state the role that each individual and agency represented on the juvenile justice council will play in achieving those goals.

- ***The guidebook includes a listing of programs that have been proven to be effective in reducing juvenile crime, a description of “best practices” in effective programs for minors, and tips on how to write effective grant proposals.***

After councils have determined the issues, needs, and strengths of their juvenile justice system, and incorporated these issues, needs, and strengths into a juvenile justice plan, they must then carry out the plan. Strategies for carrying out juvenile justice plans may involve developing new programs for youths, modifying existing programs for youths, or placing more emphasis on existing programs for youths. The guidebook includes an appendix that may assist councils in these endeavors. Appendix B contains a listing of delinquency prevention and intervention programs that have been proven to be effective by the University of Colorado’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Blueprints Program. This appendix also includes a listing of best practices and core elements for effective programs for minors. The best practices are intended to guide the work of juvenile justice councils in the development of an effective juvenile justice system. In instances when a particular need or issue is identified, but no program currently exists that addresses the need or issue, the “best practices” section can assist with program development. This appendix lists some of the critical elements of effective prevention and intervention programs.

Developing new programs, modifying existing programs, or placing more emphasis on existing programs requires financial resources. To address this, the guidebook also includes an appendix (Appendix C) that offers councils tips on how to write effective grant proposals.

- ***The guidebook is accompanied by an evaluation manual that describes how research and analysis can be used to evaluate juvenile justice plan components.***

The guidebook is accompanied by a companion piece. The companion piece is an evaluation manual. The purpose of the evaluation manual is to provide juvenile justice

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<sup>6</sup> 705 ILCS 405/6-12 (3) (b)

councils with information on how to evaluate juvenile justice plan components themselves or read externally authored evaluations with a critical eye (we do not presume that councils will conduct their own evaluations).

A major premise of the evaluation manual is that research and analysis plays a key role in the planning process that juvenile justice councils engage in. However, as demonstrated in Figure 1, evaluation takes place *after* councils have developed a juvenile justice plan. Juvenile justice plans will likely include goals that the council would like to achieve and strategies for achieving those goals. Evaluation uses research and analysis to determine whether the goals are being achieved and whether the strategies are effective. Figure 1 suggests that a juvenile justice plan is a fluid document. Juvenile justice plans may be revised based on results of evaluations (notice the arrow from “Draw Conclusions From Evaluation” to “Develop JJ Plan”).

- ***The promise of juvenile justice councils lies in their ability to engage in collaborative community planning. The next several sections of the guidebook describe strategies for collaborative planning.***

The promise of juvenile justice councils is found in its cooperative and collaborative nature. When the various individuals and agencies that work with minors in a county or set of counties (i.e., juvenile justice agencies, schools, parents, local businesses, churches, etc.) come together to formulate an internally consistent delinquency prevention and intervention strategy, that strategy has the potential to have a greater overall impact than those undertaken by agencies and individuals in isolation.

By working collaboratively, juvenile justice councils can increase the likelihood of their receiving grant funds, provide a core group of individuals from which additional collaborations can be tailored to the requirements of funding agencies, minimize the effort necessary to convene a new collaborative body in response to each funding opportunity, and provide direction on how grant funds can be used most effectively to address the unique strengths and weaknesses of a jurisdiction.

These potential benefits of juvenile justice councils overcome a perceived disincentive to the creation of a juvenile justice council—participation on still another committee for already over-extended juvenile justice professionals or other interested individuals. Instead of convening unique collaborative bodies for each funding opportunity, leading to disjointed practices and increased demand on interested individuals’ time, the juvenile justice council can serve as *the* collaborative body on juvenile justice issues in the jurisdiction.<sup>7</sup>

The next several sections of the guidebook describe two well-documented strategies for collaborative community planning: the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s *Comprehensive Strategy*, and the *Communities that Care* program

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<sup>7</sup> For example, the composition of the juvenile justice council and the “juvenile crime enforcement coalition” required of local units of government that receive Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant funds are remarkably similar. Both collaborations require the participation of local law enforcement, prosecutors, probation, judges, educators, and community members, among others.

developed by J. David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the University of Washington's Social Development Research Group.<sup>8</sup> These strategies may assist juvenile justice councils in their collaborative efforts.

The reader will notice that the types of collaborations encouraged by the *Comprehensive Strategy* and *Communities that Care* models are quite consistent with the type of collaboration encouraged by the juvenile justice council statute in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act (e.g., what agencies should collaborate, what the purpose of the collaboration should be, etc.). The ideas developed in the *Comprehensive Strategy* and *Communities that Care* models laid the groundwork for Illinois' juvenile justice council statute. As such, council members may be interested in reading about these two strategies.

In sum, creating an effective juvenile justice council can accomplish two significant goals. First, a council that has broad representation from the juvenile justice system (i.e., law enforcement, probation, courts, etc.) and the community (i.e., public and private educational system, social service agencies, local businesses, general public, etc.), can develop a juvenile justice plan that takes advantage of a local juvenile justice system's strengths while addressing its weaknesses. Second, a strong council has the organizational capacity to implement the juvenile justice plan in a manner consistent with each member's agencies and the community.

### **Models for Collaborative Planning**

By statute, the members of a juvenile justice council in Illinois are to include, a representative from the sheriff's office, state's attorney's office, probation department, and county board. The chairperson of the council is also responsible for appointing additional members to the council as is deemed necessary to accomplish its goals. Examples of other organizations from which additional members may be appointed include local law enforcement, juvenile justice agencies, schools, businesses, and community organizations.<sup>9</sup>

- ***Both the Comprehensive Strategy and Communities that Care models emphasize the participation of key leader in the community who have influence over the policies and resources of the organization they represent.***

An assumption that underlies the convening of juvenile justice councils is that a local collaborative is well informed and well positioned to plan and implement community based juvenile justice prevention and intervention strategies. This is an approach that is shared by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's *Comprehensive Strategy* and the *Communities that Care* program developed by J. David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the University of Washington's Social Development Research

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<sup>8</sup> Howell, James C. 1998. Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Offenders. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Hawkins, J. David and Richard Catalano. 1992. Communities that Care: Action for Drug Abuse Prevention. Jossey Bass Inc. San Francisco: CA.

<sup>9</sup> 705 ILCS 405/6-12(b)

Group. Both the *Comprehensive Strategy* and the *Communities that Care* models emphasize the participation of key leaders in the community who have influence over the policies and resources of the organization they represent. Although both OJJDP’s *Comprehensive Strategy* and the *Communities That Care* program are quite comprehensive in their recommendations for local juvenile justice systems, the following discussion focuses on the components of these models that address community-based collaboration.

*The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Comprehensive Strategy*

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) *Comprehensive Strategy* is based on five general principles: 1) strengthening families, 2) supporting core social institutions, 3) promoting delinquency prevention, 4) immediate and effective intervention when delinquency occurs, and 5) identification and control of the small group of serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders. Table 2 lists the elements that according to OJJDP are crucial to the successful implementation of this approach.

**Table 2: Essential Elements for the Successful Implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Take a community wide approach</li><li>✓ Create ownership</li><li>✓ Reach the diverse groups in the community</li><li>✓ Include key elected officials and grassroots community leaders</li><li>✓ Gain the commitment of all stakeholders to a long-term, sustained effort</li><li>✓ Give priority to risk factors that cause the most problems in the community</li></ul> |
|---|

Adapted from, “Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders” edited by James C. Howell. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

As can be seen from Table 2, a local planning group can facilitate the inclusion of almost all the essential elements of the *Comprehensive Strategy* as the group works toward a collaborative, community-based, prevention and intervention plan.

- ***Proponents of the Comprehensive Strategy argue that attention to a particular risk factor will be most effective when addressed by a variety of agencies or organizations.***

Implicit in the *Comprehensive Strategy* is an approach to delinquency prevention and intervention that is multi-faceted in nature. Proponents of the *Comprehensive Strategy* argue that attention to a particular risk factor will be most effective when addressed by a variety of agencies or organizations (i.e., a community-wide approach). For example, if a

community wants to reduce the rate at which minors drop out of school, those working in the educational system can strive to keep kids in school, but a reduction in dropout rates will be even more likely when families support the academic needs of their children, social service agencies support educational programs in and out of the school setting, and the juvenile justice system works to keep kids in school instead of responding to misbehavior in a manner that removes kids from the school setting. In this example, a comprehensive and collaborative approach brings together entities (i.e., school, family, social service, and juvenile justice) that can impact dropout rates. In contrast, it would be contradictory and counterproductive if some local institutions were working to reduce dropout rates while others were implementing policies that, intentionally or not, were making it more difficult for kids to stay in school. A local collaborative made up of key leaders in the community can help agencies and institutions work together to address a problem and can help prevent counterproductive policies and practices.

In addition to facilitating a holistic approach to addressing risk factors, protective factors, and juvenile crime, the participation of a diverse group of “key leaders” can increase local ownership of a prevention and intervention plan, enhancing the likelihood of its successful implementation. A prevention strategy that combines an informed perspective with local knowledge and participation is more likely to receive “buy-in” from the juvenile justice system and the community, than a strategy in which there has been little or no local input and participation in the process. Other recommendations from OJJDP for the successful implementation of a comprehensive and collaborative juvenile justice plan include focusing on a reasonable number of factors that put minors at risk for delinquency, addressing risk factors whenever possible through programs administered by committed prevention professionals, addressing risk factors through programs that have been proven to be effective, focusing on change over the long term, and having realistic expectations.

### *Communities That Care*

Like OJJDP’s Comprehensive Strategy, *Communities that Care* is a community-based and risk-focused prevention strategy emphasizing collaboration among those working with minors in a community. While this model has its roots in substance abuse prevention, it has been used more broadly as an attempt to prevent delinquency and more generally, adolescent health promotion.

- ***In the Communities that Care strategy, collaboration is achieved through the convening of a Community Prevention Board that brings together community leaders and those working in the field of prevention and intervention.***

The community collaboration piece of *Communities that Care*, is accomplished through the convening of a Community Prevention Board that brings together community leaders and those working in the field of prevention and intervention. The contributions of the Community Prevention Board include the influence members have over organizational

resources and the local knowledge and values each member brings to the Board. As a result, the composition of the Board is crucial. Table 3 lists some of the questions that should be considered when developing a Community Prevention Board, many of which apply to juvenile justice councils in Illinois.

Finally, the *Communities that Care* model highlights a formal assessment process that, in addition to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the local juvenile justice system, identifies the specific areas in which enhanced prevention and intervention efforts are needed.

**Table 3: Questions to be Considered When Developing a Community Prevention Board**

- ✓ How many members should be appointed to the board?
- ✓ Does the Board reflect the racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of the community?
- ✓ Are all the significant areas of a youth's life represented on the board (e.g., home, school, community, and peers)?
- ✓ How many young people should sit on the Board?
- ✓ How will the Board be governed and to whom will it be accountable?
- ✓ How will communication between Board members and key leaders be ensured?
- ✓ How will the Board use the social development strategy as a model in bonding members to the group by providing opportunities, skills, and recognition?

Adapted from, "Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders." Edited by James C. Howell. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

### *Juvenile Delinquency Risk and Protective Factors*

These two models and their emphasis upon community based collaborations and risk and protective focused strategies find empirical support in the groundswell of research on these factors. The social science and criminal justice research communities have made great progress in identifying many of the factors that put minors at risk for delinquency as well as factors that serve to protect minors from delinquency (see Table 4). These factors provide both the *Comprehensive Strategy* and *Communities that Care* models with research based targets of local prevention and intervention efforts.

**Table 4: Juvenile Delinquency Risk and Protective Factors**

<b>Risk Factors</b>	<b>Protective Factors</b>
<b>In the Community</b>	<b>In the Community</b>
Availability of drugs	Unavailability of drugs
Availability of firearms	Unavailability of firearms
Community norms favoring drug use, firearms, and crime	Community norms disapproving of drug use, firearms, and crime
Media portrayals of violence	
Residential mobility	Residential stability
Low neighborhood attachment/community disorganization	High neighborhood attachment/community organization
Extreme economic and social deprivation	
<b>In the Family</b>	<b>In the Family</b>
Family history of high-risk behavior	Healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior
Family management problems	
Family conflict	
Parental involvement in problem behaviors and/or attitudes favorable of delinquency	
<b>In the School</b>	<b>In the School</b>
Early and persistent antisocial behavior	
Academic failure (beginning in late elementary school)	Academic success
Lack of commitment to school	Strong commitment to school
<b>In the Individual and Peer Group</b>	<b>In the Individual and Peer Group</b>
Rebelliousness	High intelligence
Friends who engage in problem behaviors	Positive bonds with pro-social others
Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior	Positive social orientation
Early initiation of problem behaviors	
Constitutional factors (Behaviors illustrative of sensation seeking, low-harm avoidance, and lack of impulse control)	Resilient temperament

Adapted from, “Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders” edited by James C. Howell. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

### **Conducting a Needs Assessment**

- *Needs assessment reports describe local juvenile justice systems.*

A needs assessment is a report that organizes, describes, and draws conclusions from data. Juvenile justice plans may be more effective if plan components are based at least partly on data that describe the local juvenile justice system. Thus, it is recommended that councils consider developing or seeking assistance in the development of a needs

assessment report that describes their juvenile justice system. Juvenile justice system data may include information pertaining directly to the juvenile court system (e.g., arrests, delinquency petitions), as well as data that may be related to involvement in the juvenile court system (i.e., risk and protective factor data).

- ***Both authors and users of needs assessment reports should understand what constitutes a “good” report.***

Some councils may choose to write their own needs assessment report. Other councils may employ an external agency to write their needs assessment report. The pros and cons of internal and external needs assessments are discussed below. However, even if councils do not write their own needs assessment report, council members should be able to read a needs assessment and determine if the document is comprehensive and if the conclusions drawn in the document seem accurate. In the sections below, all aspects of developing a needs assessment are addressed in detail. The sections are written in a manner that assumes that the reader will subsequently be writing a needs assessment. For councils that intend to write their own needs assessment, the sections below can be used as a writing guide. For councils that intend to employ an external author, the sections below can be used to read their needs assessment report with a critical eye.

The author(s) of a needs assessment must consider what data to collect, how best to organize and describe the data, and how to interpret (i.e., draw conclusions from) the data. This section addresses these issues in three separate sub-sections. However, we begin this section by describing the content of needs assessments in more detail.

#### *What is Included in a Needs Assessment Report?*

- ***Need assessment reports can aid councils in making improvements to their juvenile justice system.***

A needs assessment report of a local juvenile justice system provides the reader with a holistic image of the current state of the system, both the system’s strengths and weaknesses. Needs assessment reports can aid in making juvenile justice councils more responsive in making improvements to the system (i.e., utilizing the strengths and shoring up the weaknesses). Needs assessment reports can help juvenile justice councils in at least two ways. First, they help increase knowledge of the council’s juvenile justice system (which, in turn, can help councils develop a more effective juvenile justice plan). Second, it may be easier for councils to obtain resources to implement a juvenile justice plan if needs, issues, and strengths addressed in the plan are justified by numbers and information.

- ***The basic steps to completing a needs assessment are: (1) collecting data, (2) organizing and examining data, and (3) writing about the data (i.e., writing the report itself).***

To prepare a county needs assessment, one should first collect as much useful county data on the juvenile justice system that is practical and possible (given limitations in time, data availability, etc.). Next, one should organize and examine these data. Finally, one should prepare a written report describing the data. This written report is, in effect, the needs assessment. The needs assessment should include the purpose for collecting the data, a description of how the data were obtained, and a description (written, tabular, and graphic) of the most interesting and informative data that were collected.

Appendix D shows a sample needs assessment report that includes each of the elements described above. Some of the data that are included in the sample report are based on an actual Illinois county. Other data elements are fictitious. The purpose of the report is simply to acquaint readers of the guidebook with a potential organizational structure and potential content of a needs assessment.

- ***A very important part of a needs assessment report is the conclusion section.***

Most importantly, the needs assessment report should be concluded with a section in which all the data included in the report are considered collectively. To the extent possible, an attempt should also be made in this final section to interpret and draw conclusions from the data. The question that should be posed by the author(s) in this concluding section is “What does the data, considered as a whole, tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of the county's juvenile justice system?”

Weaknesses that are identified in the concluding section are essentially the needs and issues facing the juvenile justice system. These needs and issues may be addressed in the council's juvenile justice plan. Basing needs that are addressed in the juvenile justice plan on data can aid in making the plan more effective. Hence, councils may be better able to improve the system's responsiveness to the needs of the juvenile population.

Strengths that are identified in the concluding section can be utilized to address the weaknesses. Alternatively, the council may determine that the strengths are not “strong enough,” and choose to improve existing strengths. In this respect, the goal of improving an existing strength has been identified as a need or issue, and may also be addressed in the council's juvenile justice plan.

#### *Who Should Write the Needs Assessment Report?*

- ***Needs assessment reports can be authored internally or externally. Both choices have advantages and disadvantages.***

The development of a needs assessment report is a time-consuming process. Council members themselves may not have time in their busy schedules to develop a detailed document that describes the needs of their juvenile justice system. However, council members may be able to allocate the task to employees in the agencies they represent. Conversely, councils may prefer to employ an external agency to prepare their needs assessment. Both choices have advantages and disadvantages. The topic of whether to

complete a task internally or employ external assistance is one we revisit in our evaluation manual. The evaluation manual provides additional information on the advantages and disadvantages of internal and external evaluations, as well as what to look for in an external evaluator (evaluation manual, pages 7-8). The example needs assessment in Appendix D assumes that the needs assessment was authored internally.

- ***Internal authors of needs assessments will likely be more cost effective than external authors, but will likely not have as much experience working with data as external authors.***

Internal authors of needs assessments are likely to be more cost effective because councils may need to subsidize external authors. However, internal authors may not have as much experience examining data. Moreover, they may not be as objective and unbiased about the needs of the local juvenile justice system as external authors would be. That is, internal authors may have pre-conceived notions as to the needs of the local justice system and, therefore, may be more prone to unwittingly collecting and examining data in a manner that confirms these pre-conceived notions. We describe this pitfall in more detail below in our sub-section on collecting data for needs assessments.

- ***External authors of needs assessments will likely have more experience working with data than internal authors, but may require money to complete the assessment.***

External authors of needs assessments will likely have more experience working with data. However, in order to gain the maximum benefit from this experience, council members should understand what constitutes a good needs assessment report. This will enable councils to effectively communicate with the external author regarding data they would like to see included in the report, how they would like to see the report written, etc. It is important that councils have a good relationship and develop clear lines of communication with external authors of needs assessments.

Councils seeking external authors may consider contacting professors in the criminal justice or public policy departments of local colleges or universities to inquire whether they or one of their graduate students are willing to complete the needs assessment. In addition, councils may consider issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to local colleges or research institutions. RFPs are essentially open invitations for external researchers to submit research proposals (i.e., a description of how the researcher would conduct the research, if granted the opportunity). RFPs should describe the purpose of the research, as well as what the finished research product should look like. The evaluation manual also addresses RFP's, and describes how to write an RFP for an evaluation project (evaluation manual, pages 4-6).

A disadvantage of contacting local colleges or universities or issuing an RFP is that the requestor must have money at their disposal. However, needs assessments by external authors can vary in cost. In general, an external author obtained through an RFP will be more costly than an external author obtained by contacting local colleges or universities. For example, a council may be required to pay a graduate student at a local college or

university less to complete a needs assessment report than they would have to pay a professional researcher who responds to an RFP. Thus, one factor contributing to variability in the cost of an externally authored needs assessment is the experience of the author.

Another factor contributing to variability in the cost of an externally authored needs assessment is the content of the needs assessment. As we point out in the next subsection on collecting data for needs assessments, some data elements that may be included in a needs assessment are easier to obtain than others. The more difficult the data are to obtain and examine, the more costly an externally authored needs assessment is likely to be.

Councils may obtain necessary funds for needs assessment through grants or from the county board. The evaluation manual lists potential sources for technical and financial resources to complete council functions (evaluation manual, pages 44-46).

- ***No time to write a needs assessment? No money to give an external author? The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority may be able to help.***

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) currently offers some publications that, on their own, could provide councils with a minimalistic needs assessment. Specifically, the ICJIA recently published a report entitled “Juvenile Crime and Justice System Activities in Illinois: An Overview of Trends.” This report includes a great deal of court system and risk factor data, broken down by region (rural, urban, collar, and Cook) or by county. The ICJIA has also published criminal justice system profiles for each Illinois county. These county profiles include a great deal of juvenile justice system data. These publications can be ordered free of charge online through the ICJIA website or by calling the ICJIA.

In addition to publishing reports, another function of the ICJIA is to serve as an information clearinghouse for criminal justice data. ICJIA’s information clearinghouse can provide county level juvenile justice system data and information. The next subsection provides more clarification on data elements available through the ICJIA’s information clearinghouse.

### *Collecting Data*

- ***Data collected for needs assessment reports should be broad and comprehensive.***

Prior to collecting data on the local juvenile justice system, one must first determine what data elements to collect. A list of possible data elements could be quite lengthy and encompass many different types of data. We encourage authors of needs assessments to be broad and comprehensive in the type of data they collect. Of course, data on some topics may be unavailable, thereby limiting the breadth and comprehensiveness of the needs assessment. However, an active attempt on the part of authors to be as broad and

comprehensive as possible in the type of data they collect will result in a more accurate, informative, and objective needs assessment.

To demonstrate how this may be the case, imagine a hypothetical county that has higher than average levels of both high school violence and truancy. It is conceivable that these two issues are related. Some students may fail to attend school precisely *because* of the violence (i.e., fear of violence in the school). Further imagine that the juvenile justice council in this hypothetical county intends to collect data for a needs assessment. Several members of the council believe from their daily experiences working in the county’s juvenile justice system that the county may have a high truancy rate. These members suggest that the council make sure to collect data on truancy in the county.

This is certainly a logical suggestion. However, if for whatever reason (e.g., time, available resources), the council does not also attempt to collect data on school violence, then the council will be missing a critical piece of information. Indeed, the council will be missing one of the potential causal factors contributing to the truancy. By sacrificing comprehensiveness, the council’s needs assessment will be less informative. Moreover, the conclusions drawn from the needs assessment will be less objective. The conclusions will amount to a “self-fulfilling prophecy.” That is, the council opted to collect data on truancy but not on school violence because of pre-conceived notions as to their needs. Data was collected in a manner that maximized the possibility of confirming these pre-conceived notions.

The hypothetical example is an extreme one. However, other, more subtle errors can be made. In an attempt to avoid such mistakes, authors of needs assessments should collect data on a wide range of topics, including both topics that are believed to be important issues and topics that are not believed to be as important. In so doing, authors will be better able to make connections between data elements (and, hence, avoid the mistake made in the example). The data may also reveal some surprises. The data may suggest that important issues are not as important as the council initially believed (or vice versa). The section on drawing conclusions from the data addresses how authors may consider dealing with such discrepancies.

- ***At least three types of data can be included in a needs assessment report: demographic data, court system data, and risk and protective factor data.***

What data should be included in a needs assessment report in order to ensure that the report will be comprehensive? There are at least three distinguishable overall types of data that may be useful to include in a needs assessment report: demographic data, court system data, and risk and protective factor data. This three category distinction is used to organize the data in the example needs assessment report (see the table of contents in Appendix D). This organizational scheme seems to be exhaustive. That is, each data element that juvenile justice councils might be interested in obtaining seems to fit logically into one of these three overall categories. However, councils and/or authors of needs assessments are free to develop their own organizational scheme in which to place

data elements. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this report, we describe some data elements that may be useful to include in each of these three overall categories.

- ***Data elements for needs assessment reports vary considerably in the ease with which they may be obtained.***

The data elements described in this section vary considerably in the ease with which they can be obtained. Some of the data elements described in the court system and risk and protective factor categories can be readily obtained from various state agencies (on their websites, in their publications, etc). Demographic data can be readily obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau.

However, other data elements are harder to obtain. Of these data elements that are hard to obtain, a distinction is made. Some data elements may be available through county-level or local-level agencies. That is, the data elements exist because they have been collected and held by county or local agencies. These data elements may be less readily available than data elements collected by state and federal agencies. It is conceivable that the county and/or local agencies collected the data primarily for internal purposes, whereas state and federal agencies place more emphasis on distributing the data externally. If this is the case, then authors of needs assessments may have to contact the county or local agency to inquire whether the data exists. Should the data exist, then authors may have to seek permission from the county or local agency to release the data. There may be some data elements that are available at the county or local level, but which require organization, aggregation, etc. That is, the county or local agency may have some data that they have not examined and, hence, have not organized. Overall, the process of obtaining and examining county or local-level data elements will require more effort and foresight than merely examining the websites of, or reading reports published by, state and federal agencies.

Other data elements may be even harder to obtain, and certain data elements that may be useful to the council may not exist at all. In this case, authors of needs assessments would have to collect the data themselves. Such an endeavor may be quite time consuming and, potentially, costly.

- ***For data elements that are not readily available through government agencies, authors of needs assessment and councils will need to consider the utility of the data relative to the cost and effort of obtaining the data.***

For data elements that are not readily available through government agencies, authors of needs assessments and councils will need to consider the utility of the information relative to the level of difficulty and cost involved with obtaining or collecting the data. Certain data elements may be worth the effort, others may not. Some data elements are described that may be worth the effort. In particular, it may be useful to supplement needs assessments with survey data or qualitative data (e.g., interviews or focus groups) on various topics.

- ***If data is collected from the community at large, then authors of needs assessments and councils should be aware that such participants must be afforded special protections and safeguards by researchers.***

Data collected directly by authors of needs assessments may come from the community at large (e.g., high school students, juvenile offenders, parents, other community members). If so, then councils should be aware that such research participants must be afforded special protections and safeguards. Councils that employ external authors from local colleges or universities may find that their authors are aware of these special protections and safeguards. Most colleges and universities with faculty and students that conduct research involving the community have developed Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). The general purpose of an IRB is to safeguard the rights of research participants. IRBs review research proposals and determine whether the researchers have taken sufficient measures to: (1) minimize potential risks to participants that may arise as part of the research, (2) fully inform participants as to the nature and purpose of the research, (3) protect the anonymity of participants, and (4) maintain the confidentiality of the data. Academic researchers are required to obtain IRB approval prior to proceeding with their research. Councils may contact the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority for more information on the functions of IRBs and/or what IRBs typically require of researchers. The evaluation manual also addresses IRB's (evaluation manual, page 36).

- ***A juvenile justice council administrative assistant may be useful.***

Should councils choose to collect data for planning purposes, employ an external needs assessment author, handle confidential data, etc., then it may be useful to hire a council administrative assistant. The assistant can handle tasks that council members do not have time to complete, such as organizing and maintaining data, and making necessary contacts. However, it should be re-emphasized that, to date, appropriations have not been explicitly set aside for juvenile justice councils in Illinois. Moreover, it may be more difficult to obtain grant funds for a council employee than for programs that serve minors. Thus, it may be difficult for councils to find money to pay for an administrative assistant.

- ***The evaluation manual offers tips on how to collect various types of data (pages 28-33).***

Councils that opt to undertake their own data collection, or encourage authors of their needs assessment to undertake a data collection effort, should be aware of how to collect data in the most effective manner. The evaluation manual offers tips for how to collect various types of data (survey data, interview data, focus group data; evaluation manual, pages 28-33). The evaluation manual also offers an example survey and example interview and focus group questions (see Appendix E in the evaluation manual). While the exact content of data collection instruments for a needs assessment will differ somewhat from data collection for an evaluation, virtually all of the general information in the evaluation manual applies to needs assessments as well.

Data Elements That May Be Included in a Needs Assessment

We have distinguished between three types of data (demographic, court system, and risk and protective factor) and three levels of difficulty in obtaining the data (readily available through federal or state agencies, available through county or local agencies, and data that must be collected by the council or by the author(s) of the needs assessment). Thus, each of the data elements described below can be placed into one of nine “cells,” based on these distinctions. Table 5 shows the placement of the data elements described below. It should be noted that the example needs assessment in Appendix D only includes data elements that are readily available through federal or state agencies. As such, the example needs assessment can be considered a general prototype that councils can expand upon with additional data.

- *The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority can provide data elements that are readily available from federal or state agencies.*

The information clearinghouse at the ICJIA has obtained and organized the types of data elements listed in Table 5 as “readily available from federal or state agencies”. Research staff working for the clearinghouse respond to inquiries and requests for criminal justice information. The ICJIA can accommodate requests for the readily available data elements listed in Table 5. However, some requests may necessitate contacting the source agency directly. That is, authors of needs assessments may request the data elements in a format not available through the ICJIA (e.g., by race, gender, etc.). Nonetheless, authors of needs assessments and councils are encouraged to contact the ICJIA for data that is readily available from federal or state agencies prior to contacting the source agencies. In so doing, authors of needs assessments may save some of the time and effort involved in contacting source agencies individually.

**Table 5: Data Elements That May Be Included in a Needs Assessment**

Type of Data	Difficulty in Obtaining the Data		
	Readily Available From Federal or State Agencies	May be Available From Local or County Agencies	Must be Collected by the Author(s) and/or the Council
<b>Demographic Data</b>	Juvenile population		
	Gender distribution of juvenile population		
	Racial distribution of juvenile population		
	Age distribution of juvenile population		
	Number of minors living in poverty		

**Table 5 (cont.): Data Elements That May Be Included in a Needs Assessment**

Type of Data	Difficulty in Obtaining the Data		
	Readily Available From Federal or State Agencies	May be Available From Local or County Agencies	Must be Collected by the Author(s) and/or the Council
<b>Demographic Data continued</b>	Median household income		
	Unemployment levels		
<b>Court System Data</b>	Delinquency petitions filed		
	Petitions adjudicated delinquent		
	Cases continued under supervision		
	End of year active probation caseload	Juvenile arrests (by offense type, offender race, offender age, offender's gender, and disposition)	
	Technical probation violations		Feedback from juvenile justice professionals (e.g., interviews, surveys)
	Probation violations for new offenses	Details on readily available court system data (e.g., readily available data by offense type, offender race, offender age, and offender's gender)	Feedback from juvenile offenders, guardians, and victims (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups)
	Community service hours completed		
	Restitution paid		
	Pre-adjudicatory detentions	Offender-level data	
	Post-adjudicatory detentions		
	Commitments to IDOC		
	Automatic transfers to adult court		
Discretionary transfers to adult court			

**Table 5 (cont.): Data Elements That May Be Included in a Needs Assessment**

Type of Data	Difficulty in Obtaining the Data		
	Readily Available From Federal or State Agencies	May be Available From Local or County Agencies	Must be Collected by the Author(s) and/or the Council
<b>Risk and Protective Factor Data</b>	<p>Reported and verified child abuse and neglect</p> <p>Reported and verified child sexual abuse</p> <p>Reported and verified substance affected infants</p> <p>Minors under age 19 receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</p> <p>Minors admitted to treatment facilities funded by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse</p> <p>Births by mothers age 19 or under</p> <p>Minors admitted to emergency rooms for violent injuries</p> <p>High school dropouts</p> <p>School suspensions and expulsions</p> <p>Truancy petitions filed and adjudicated</p> <p>Dependency petitions filed and adjudicated</p> <p>Addiction petitions filed and adjudicated</p> <p>Neglect/abuse petitions filed and adjudicated</p>	<p>Intake data from community service providers and mental health professionals.</p> <p>Standardized test results from local schools</p> <p>Results from student surveys</p>	<p>Feedback from community service providers and mental health professionals (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups)</p> <p>Feedback from students and teachers (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups)</p>

**Table 5 (cont.): Data Elements That May Be Included in a Needs Assessment**

Type of Data	Difficulty in Obtaining the Data		
	Readily Available From Federal or State Agencies	May be Available From Local or County Agencies	Must be Collected by the Author(s) and/or the Council
<b>Risk and Protective Factor Data continued</b>	MRAI petitions filed and adjudicated  Minors placed in foster homes, group homes, residential treatment, or with relatives.		

Demographic Data

- *Demographic data can be used to: (1) gain knowledge on the size of particular demographic groups (e.g., racial or gender groups), and (2) provide a better understanding of court system and risk and protective factor data.*

Demographic data provides a general description of the juvenile population in a county. Demographic data can be useful to include in a needs assessment for at least two reasons. First, the inclusion of juvenile population data in the needs assessment will help identify the size of various juvenile populations that may have unique needs (e.g., minority populations, minors living in poverty). Councils may want to gear juvenile justice plan elements specifically towards minors in particular demographic groups (e.g., African-American minors, female minors, minors living in poverty, etc.).

Second, demographic data can be used to provide a better understanding of court system and risk and protective factor data. This better understanding can be achieved by considering court system and risk and protective factor data elements in light of the size of the juvenile population and/or the size of particular demographic groups. For example, if a needs assessment states that 20 minors in their county were sentenced to probation in a particular year, this number will mean something different if 2,000 minors reside in the county than it would if 20,000 minors reside in the county. By knowing the size of the juvenile population, the probation data can be interpreted more effectively.

Difficulties associated with interpreting absolute numbers (e.g., the number of juveniles on probation) using the size of the juvenile population can be circumvented by also calculating percentages of the overall juvenile population (or percentages of the White juvenile population, female juvenile population, etc.) and/or rates based on the juvenile population. This issue is revisited in the sub-section on writing about the data.

- *Table 6 lists contact information for each federal or state agency that makes demographic or court system data readily available by Illinois county.*

Table 6 lists each federal or state agency that makes either demographic data or court system data available, the agency’s contact information (the agency’s address, phone number, and web address), and some of the data elements available through the agency that may be useful to juvenile justice councils. Again, we encourage authors of needs assessments to contact the ICJIA prior to contacting source agencies. Thus, we also include ICJIA contact information in Table 6.

**Table 6: Information on Government Agencies  
That Make Demographic and Court System Data  
Elements Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available by County
1. Contact the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority		
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority	120 South Riverside Plaza Suite 1016 Chicago, IL 60606 (312) 793-8550 (312) 793-4170 tdd  <a href="http://www.icjia.state.il.us">www.icjia.state.il.us</a>	All data listed below
2. If the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority cannot provide the necessary data, then contact the applicable source agency, using the contact information below		
U.S. Census Bureau	U.S. Census Bureau Washington D.C. 20233 (301) 457-4608  <a href="http://www.census.gov">www.census.gov</a>	Juvenile population  Gender distribution of juvenile population  Racial distribution of juvenile population  Age distribution of juvenile population  Number of minors living in poverty  Median household income

**Table 6 (cont.): Information on Government Agencies  
That Make Demographic and Court System Data  
Elements Available by County**

<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>General Contact Information</b>	<b>Data Elements Available by County</b>
Illinois Department of Employment Security	Chicago: 401 South State Street Chicago, IL 60605 (312) 793-5700 (312) 793-9350 tdd/tty  Springfield: 400 West Monroe #303 Springfield, IL 62704 (217) 785-5069  <a href="http://www.ides.state.il.us">www.ides.state.il.us</a>	Unemployment levels
Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts	840 South Spring Street Springfield, IL 62704-2618 (217) 785-2125  AOIC has no website. General information on AOIC can be obtained through the State of Illinois website:  <a href="http://www.state.il.us">www.state.il.us</a>	Delinquency petitions filed  Petitions adjudicated delinquent  Cases continued under supervision  End of year active probation caseload  Technical probation violations  Probation violations for new offenses  Community service hours completed  Restitution paid  Pre-adjudicatory detentions  Post-adjudicatory detentions  Commitments to IDOC  Automatic transfers to adult court  Discretionary transfers to adult court

**Table 6 (cont.): Information on Government Agencies  
That Make Demographic and Court System Data  
Elements Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available by County
Illinois Department of Corrections	1301 Concordia Court Springfield, IL 62794 (217) 522-2666 1-800-546-0844 tdd  <a href="http://www.state.idoc.il.us">www.state.idoc.il.us</a>	Commitments to IDOC

- *The U.S. Census Bureau website is an excellent source for demographic data.*

Demographic data can be obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. Table 5 lists several data elements that are readily available from the U.S. Census Bureau. Many of these data elements are readily available on the U.S. Census Bureau website ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). The website currently includes useful population data pertaining directly to juveniles. However, should one not be able to find a particular data element that they believe would be useful to obtain, Census Bureau staff may be able to accommodate special data requests.

The Census Bureau website currently makes a number of data sets available. These data sets can be downloaded and imported into spreadsheet and statistical software. An examination of the website revealed several data sets that might be useful to juvenile justice councils. Information from these data sets has been incorporated in the example needs assessment (Appendix D). Of course, councils may deem other information from the website to be just as useful. Nonetheless, the data elements included in the example needs assessment demonstrate the potential utility of demographic information.

The website currently makes county population estimates available for each year in the 1990's, broken down by various combinations of age, race/ethnicity, and gender. Through these data sets, the estimated overall juvenile population for each year in the 1990's can be calculated, as well as the estimated juvenile population, by race and gender, etc. The website also currently includes data sets on median household income and poverty levels for each Illinois county. For example, data is available on the number of individuals ages 0 to 17 living in poverty.

Finally, the U.S. Census Bureau website currently also provides detailed information on their website regarding how they calculate population estimates, poverty levels, number of individuals living in poverty, etc. Although it is not necessary to provide the reader of a needs assessment with this level of detail, authors of needs assessments that report demographic data ought to, at minimum, be cognizant of how the numbers they report were calculated. It may also be useful to provide readers of the needs assessment with a

rudimentary description of how the numbers were calculated. This was our strategy in the example needs assessment.

In addition to the U.S. Census Bureau, data on labor force demographics can be obtained from the Illinois Department of Employment Security. In particular, data on unemployment levels may be useful for juvenile justice councils. Thus, we included unemployment levels as a readily available data element in Table 5.

### Court System Data

The second overall type of data in the suggested organizational scheme is court system data. It can be quite instructive for juvenile justice councils to have an accurate indication of the number of juveniles that become involved in the court system, the types of offenses that precipitated the involvement, and the dispositions that juveniles receive once they become involved. Such information may assist juvenile justice councils in determining needs. For example, if a council finds that a large number of juveniles have recently been arrested for marijuana possession, then one possible conclusion is that marijuana use among minors is on the rise. The council may then want to address this issue in their juvenile justice plan.

- ***A great deal of useful court system data is readily available in reports published by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts.***

Just as county-level demographic data are readily available through the U.S. Census Bureau, county-level juvenile court system data are available through the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC). AOIC asks every probation department in Illinois to complete monthly data forms. AOIC aggregates these monthly forms for each probation department, then publishes annual statistical summary reports on the Illinois court system. These reports are available upon request and include a great deal of data specifically on the juvenile court system. Table 6 shows contact information for AOIC, as well as the data elements that are readily available through AOIC (see also Table 5). These data elements were also included in the example needs assessment (Appendix D).

Table 6 shows that data on juvenile commitments to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) are available through AOIC. AOIC receives this information from probation departments. However, IDOC can also accommodate requests for aggregate information calculated from their admissions data. Table 6 shows contact information for IDOC.

- ***There are a number of court system data elements that councils may be interested in, but would have to obtain directly from local agencies. For example, councils would have to obtain juvenile arrest data and station adjustment data directly from local law enforcement agencies.***

Thus, a great deal of court system data are available to juvenile justice councils. It should be noted that juvenile arrest data was not included among the data elements that are

readily available. Prior to 1992, law enforcement agencies were required to submit detailed, incident-level information to the Illinois State Police (ISP) on every arrest that occurred in their jurisdiction. However, in 1992, ISP attempted to implement a new reporting system and had difficulties with the new system. As a result, ISP began to request aggregate arrest data from law enforcement agencies. The aggregate data does not distinguish between adult and juvenile offenses.

More recently, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998 mandated that law enforcement agencies submit to ISP fingerprint cards and descriptions of every minor age 10 and older who is arrested for a felony. This mandate encompasses cases in which the minor is referred to court, issued a station adjustment, or released without charging. It is discretionary for law enforcement agencies to submit fingerprint cards and descriptions of minors arrested for misdemeanors.

ISP may soon be able to provide a wealth of juvenile arrest data. Nonetheless, juvenile arrest data statewide are not available for much of the 1990's. Should councils seek arrest data for the years in which they are unavailable from ISP, then they will likely have to request the data from local law enforcement agencies. Data on arrests by offense type, race, age, gender, and disposition (court referral, station adjustment, or dropped charges) may be available from local law enforcement agencies. These data elements appear under "available through county or local agencies" in Table 5.

There are also other court system data elements that may be available through county or local agencies. The AOIC annual reports provide a very useful overview of county court systems. However, the reports lack some detail that may be useful for councils. The reports do not include data on the types of offenses for which juveniles have delinquency petitions filed against them, are adjudicated delinquent, placed on probation, etc. The reports do not include data by race or gender. It may also be useful for councils to obtain more detail on the nature of technical violations or new arrests committed by juvenile probationers.

Moreover, AOIC and the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority are currently collaborating on a report examining the characteristics of probationers (both juvenile and adult) in Illinois. The report will include some additional detail that does not appear in the AOIC annual reports.

An additional limitation of the AOIC reports is that, because AOIC collects and reports aggregated data, their data do not allow one to "track" individual offenders through the court system. For example, the percentage of juveniles who have delinquency petitions filed against who are subsequently adjudicated delinquent, the number of juveniles adjudicated delinquent who are sentenced to supervision, probation, prison, and so on, cannot be accurately calculated from the AOIC annual reports. In order to accurately calculate such percentages, it is necessary to have offender-level data.

Additional detail on juveniles who enter the court system and offender-level data may be available through county circuit court clerk offices and/or probation departments and,

thus, appear in Table 5 under “available through county or local agencies”. Councils may wish to obtain additional court system data elements beyond that which is available from AOIC reports.

- ***Councils may also be interested in directly asking juvenile justice professionals, juvenile offenders, guardians, and victims about the juvenile court system.***

Table 5 also includes some court system data elements that may be useful to juvenile justice councils, but which they will likely have to collect themselves. In particular, it may be worth the effort to obtain the opinions of juvenile justice professionals and others on the juvenile court system. Although various juvenile justice professions will be represented on the council, it may be useful to interview or distribute surveys to juvenile justice professionals who are not members of the council (but who work with juveniles on a regular basis), inquiring about their opinions on the juvenile court system, and/or issues that the juvenile court system should address. Similarly, it may be useful to ask juvenile offenders, their guardians, and victims of juvenile offenders about the court system via interview, survey, or focus group. Such information can provide a nice supplement to the numerical court system data described above. Or, it can help explain the data described above.

#### Risk and Protective Factor Data

Data on risk and protective factors should prove to be useful to juvenile justice councils. Risk and protective factors have an impact on the likelihood of minors committing a crime. By examining risk and protective factors, identifying potential problem areas, and addressing these problem areas in a juvenile justice plan, councils may be able to prevent some minors from committing crimes.

- ***Table 7 lists contact information for state agencies that make risk and protective factor data readily available by Illinois county.***

Several state agencies make risk and protective factor data elements readily available. These data elements are listed in Table 5 and incorporated into the example needs assessment. Each readily available risk and protective factor data element is related to at least one risk or protective factor listed in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) *Comprehensive Strategy* (see Table 3). Table 7 lists each state agency that makes risk and protective factor data elements available, the agency’s general contact information (the agency’s general address, general phone number, and worldwide web address), the data elements available through the agency, and the risk factor(s) available in the *Comprehensive Strategy* that are related to the agency’s data. Again, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority should be used as a resource for information on the data elements listed in Table 7.

**Table 7: Information on Illinois Government Agencies  
That Make Risk and Protective Factor Data Elements  
Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available by County	Related OJJDP Risk Factor(s)
1. Contact the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority			
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority	120 South Riverside Plaza Suite 1016 Chicago, IL 60606 (312) 793-8550 (312) 793-4170 tdd  <a href="http://www.icjia.state.il.us">www.icjia.state.il.us</a>	All data listed below	
2. If the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority cannot provide the necessary data, then contact the applicable source agency, using the contact information below			
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services	100 West Randolph St. Suite 6-200 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 814-4150 (312) 814-8783 ttd  406 East Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62701-1498 (217) 785-2509 (217) 785-6605 ttd  <a href="http://www.state.il.us/dcfs">www.state.il.us/dcfs</a>	Reported and verified child abuse and neglect  Reported and verified child sexual abuse  Reported and verified substance affected infants	Family management problems
Illinois Department of Human Services	401 South Clinton St. Chicago, IL 60607  100 South Grand Ave. East Springfield, IL 62762  Information Line: 1-800-843-6154 1-800-447-6404 tty  <a href="http://www.state.il.us/agency/dhs">www.state.il.us/agency/dhs</a>	Minors under age 19 in families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Extreme economic and social deprivation

**Table 7 (cont.): Information on Illinois Government Agencies  
That Make Risk and Protective Factor Data Elements  
Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available at the County Level	Related OJJDP Risk Factor(s)
Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse	Same as Illinois Department of Human Services	Minors admitted to treatment facilities funded by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse	Availability of drugs  Community norms favoring drug use, firearms, and crime  Early initiation of problem behaviors
Illinois Department of Public Health	535 West Jefferson St. Springfield, IL 62761 (217) 782-4977 1-800-547-0466 tty  <a href="http://www.idph.state.il.us">www.idph.state.il.us</a>	Births to mothers age 19 or under  Minors admitted to emergency rooms for violent injuries	Constitutional factors (Behaviors illustrative of sensation seeking, low-harm avoidance, and lack of impulse control)
Illinois State Board of Education	100 W. Randolph, Suite 14-300 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 814-2220 (312) 814-5821 tty  100 North 1 <sup>st</sup> Street Springfield, IL 62777 (217) 782-4321 (217) 782-1900 tty  123 South 10 <sup>th</sup> Street Suite 200 Mt. Vernon, IL 62864 (618) 244-8383	School dropouts  Truancy  School suspensions  School expulsions	Academic failure  Lack of commitment to school
Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts	840 South Spring Street Springfield, IL 62704-2618 (217) 785-2125  AOIC has no website. General information on AOIC can be obtained through the State of Illinois website: <a href="http://www.state.il.us">www.state.il.us</a>	Neglect/abuse petitions filed and adjudicated  Dependency petitions filed and adjudicated  MRAI petitions filed and adjudicated  Truancy petitions filed and adjudicated	Availability of drugs  Community norms favoring drug use, firearms, and crime  Family management problems  Family conflict

**Table 7 (cont.): Information on Illinois Government Agencies  
That Make Risk and Protective Factor Data Elements  
Available by County**

Name of Agency	General Contact Information	Data Elements Available at the County Level	Related OJJDP Risk Factor(s)
Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts continued		Number of minors placed in foster homes, group homes, residential treatment, and with relatives.  Addiction petitions filed and adjudicated	Parental involvement in problem behaviors and/or attitudes favorable of delinquency  Academic failure  Lack of commitment to school  Rebelliousness

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) makes county level data available on reported and verified (i.e., inspected and confirmed) child abuse and neglect and child sexual abuse. DCFS also makes data on substance affected infants available. DCFS publishes annual reports each state fiscal year that includes some county-level data on these data elements.

The Illinois Department of Human Services makes county-level data on the number of minors under age 19 in families that are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) available. TANF replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) on July 1, 1997. The change occurred as a result of federal and state efforts to modify the welfare system. The main distinction between TANF and AFDC is that TANF focuses more heavily on services that will facilitate the likelihood of the recipient returning to the work force. In order to receive cash assistance, TANF recipients must hold a job or participate in work-related programs (e.g., job search or job readiness programs). There are also limits to the number of months that recipients can receive TANF benefits.

Councils can also receive information from the Illinois Department of Human Services on the number of minors under 19 that were in families receiving AFDC funds. However, because of the changes to the Illinois welfare system, councils should be cautious in comparing data elements on public assistance prior to TANF to those after TANF.

The Illinois Department of Human Services oversees several smaller, more specialized state agencies. One such agency is the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA). OASA makes county-level data available on minors admitted to OASA-funded alcohol and/or drug treatment facilities from 1994 to 1999. However, the minors for

whom OASA has data available were served by the facility through OASA funds. There may be important differences between minors served through OASA funds and those not served through OASA funds. For example, OASA states that, in accordance with state grant and funding initiatives, they give funding priority to the following populations: pregnant injecting drug users, pregnant and post-partum women, injecting drug users and known HIV-infected persons, persons eligible for TANF, DCFS referrals, other women with children, and specific criminal justice patients.

The OASA data set includes non-identifiable individual-level data on every individual who is admitted to an OASA-funded facility. This enables OASA to provide demographic data on individuals admitted to OASA-funded facilities. OASA can also provide information about the general nature of the admission (e.g., the drug that precipitated the admission, the source of the minor's referral to the treatment facility). OASA publishes annual reports in which they provide demographic and general admissions data for the state of Illinois as a whole. Councils can use these annual reports to determine the demographic variables that OASA has available.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) makes county-level data on the number of births by mothers ages 19 or under available. A great deal of data on births to young mothers and various other health-related topics is currently available on the IDPH website ([www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us)).

IDPH was also mandated by the Illinois General Assembly to collect data on violent injuries. Specifically, effective March 10, 1998, all hospitals in Illinois with emergency departments were mandated to report every violent injury that resulted in a hospital admission to IDPH. Hospitals with emergency departments are provided with a comprehensive list of injury codes. Reporting of violent injuries not resulting in a hospital admission is optional. Hospitals with emergency departments are required to report every instance of child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence, irrespective of whether or not the patient is admitted to the hospital. IDPH collects and compiles this information in the Illinois Violent Injury Registry. Some information that councils may be interested in obtaining from the Illinois Violent Injury Registry includes rapes committed against minors, teen suicide attempts, and assaults perpetrated against minors. For more information on the Illinois Violent Injury Registry, contact IDPH or the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

The Illinois State Board of Education makes data available on school dropouts, school suspensions, school expulsions, and truancy. These data may be available both by county and individual school.

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts also reports some data elements that involve the juvenile court system, but may reasonably be classified as risk factors. Specifically, in addition to delinquency petitions, the Juvenile Court Act allows interested parties or the court (through the State's Attorney's office) to file various other types of juvenile petitions. The Juvenile Court Act describes five other types of petitions: neglected or abused minors, dependent minors, minors requiring authoritative

intervention, truant minors in need of supervision, and addicted minors. These five types of juvenile petitions are filed against minors either because their current social situation places them at high risk for harm or because they have exhibited maladaptive behaviors which may hinder their development. Neglected minors are under 18 and have not received necessary support or have been abandoned by their parent(s) or guardian(s). Abused minors are under 18 and have been physically or sexually abused by their parent(s), guardian(s), other individuals residing in the minor's household, or a paramour of the minor's parent or guardian. Minors requiring authoritative intervention (MRAI) are under 18 and have run away or are beyond the control of their parent(s) or guardian(s) so that their physical safety is in immediate danger. Truant minors in need of supervision are chronically absent students. Addicted minors are under 18 and addicted to alcohol or drugs, as defined under Illinois' Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependency Act.

AOIC also reports the number of minors who, after presumably having one of these types of petitions filed against them, are referred to foster homes, group homes, residential treatment, or placed with a relative.

It may be fairly stated that minors who have these types of petitions filed against them or who receive these types of referrals face some instability in their lives and may be at risk for future criminal behavior. AOIC's annual reports include some data on the number of minors who had each of these five types of petitions filed against them, the number of minors who were adjudicated for each of these types of petitions, and the number of minors receiving each of these types of referrals. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority has data on these types of petitions and referrals that have been included in the AOIC annual reports. Other data on these petitions and referrals may be obtained by contacting AOIC directly.

- ***Councils may be interested in obtaining additional risk and protective factor data that is available from local community agencies, schools, or hospitals.***

On the whole, a great deal of data on risk factors can be obtained from state agencies. Moreover, the readily available data encompasses a large number of risk areas. However, there is also a great deal of additional data elements which may be useful to include in a needs assessment. Again, some of these data elements may already exist at the county-level. For others, it may be necessary for councils to collect the data themselves. These data elements appear in Table 5, and can be obtained from community agencies, mental health professionals, schools, or hospitals.

Various community agencies and mental health professionals that provide services to minors likely collect data that would be useful for councils. For example, it may be useful to receive information from community agencies that service runaway teens. Or, it may be useful to receive information from community agencies that provide drug and alcohol treatment, but do not receive OASA funds. It may also be useful to receive information from professionals that provide counseling and/or mental health services to minors.

Community agencies and mental health professionals likely collect basic information on each client upon initiation of services. Community agencies and mental health professionals may be willing to release some of this information at the aggregate level. Councils may be interested in data elements on the reasons for the initiation of services, the number of minors being served, how minors are being referred to the agencies, and demographic information on the minors being served.

Additional county-level data may also be available from local high schools. We have already noted that data on school dropouts, truancy, suspensions, and expulsions may be available from the Illinois State Board of Education. In addition, local high schools may have administered standardized tests to their students. If so, then schools may be able to provide councils with information on standardized test results.

Moreover, local high schools may have distributed surveys to their students or allowed outside researchers to distribute surveys. Survey results obtained from students can be a valuable source of information for councils. Surveys may have been distributed to students for various reasons, including to identify the prevalence of risk factors exhibited by students or to learn student's perceptions of the school (e.g., school safety, overall school environment). Local high schools may have developed and distributed surveys on their own. Alternatively, local high schools may have sought information from students, but brought in outside assistance to distribute the surveys. Finally, local high schools may have granted outside researchers permission to collect survey data from students for their own purposes.

The last source for existing county-level data that we include in Table 5 is county hospitals. The Illinois Violent Injury Registry is designed to include a great deal of information on injuries that are associated with risk factors. If county hospitals are complying with the mandate, then the registry should include a great deal of useful information for councils. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) estimated fairly high compliance rates, but also noted that it took some time after the March 10, 1998 startup date for hospitals to begin complying. IDPH was collecting 1999 data well into the year 2000. These delays may be partly associated with the comprehensiveness of the data that is being collected by IDPH. In particular, the coding scheme for violent injuries is quite detailed. The coding scheme for violent injuries requires some judgment on the part of individuals who gather data for the registry. In some instances, the exact same physical injury can be coded in several ways, depending on whether the individual recording the injury for the registry determines that the injury was a suicide attempt, an assault, or is unsure whether the injury is a suicide attempt or an assault.

Councils may want to contact administrators of local hospitals to inquire whether they are submitting data to IDPH and, if they are, then they may want ask questions regarding how the hospital is using the IDPH injury coding scheme (e.g., how they are determining in the emergency room that an injury is a suicide attempt as opposed to an assault). If it is the case that hospitals are not reporting violent injury data to IDPH, then the council may want to inquire whether the hospital has injury data available that they are willing to release to the council.

- ***Councils may also be interested in collecting their own risk and protective factor data. In particular, self-report data from minors (e.g., high school students) can be extremely useful to councils.***

Table 5 also includes some risk and protective factor data elements that we believe may be useful to juvenile justice councils, but which they will likely have to collect themselves. As with the court system data, we suggest that it may be useful to obtain survey, interview, or focus group data. For risk and protective factors, this type of data may be useful to obtain from individuals who work with at-risk minors (e.g., individuals who work at community agencies, teachers), inquiring about the difficulties they face when dealing with at-risk minors, the problems directly facing at-risk minors, etc.

In addition, it may be the case that local high schools have not distributed surveys to minors. Or, local high schools may have distributed surveys that lack some information that councils deem important. In such instances, authors of needs assessments may want to consider collecting their own data from minors. Self-report data from minors can prove to be a very informative, useful, and perhaps a vital, source of information for councils. Councils would likely benefit from efforts to collect their own data from minors, should adequate self-report data from minors not already exist. However, authors of needs assessments will have to pay special attention to the rights of minors who participate.

#### A Final Note on Data Collection

- ***Needs assessment reports should be updated periodically.***

As a final note on collecting data, it should be emphasized that data collection is an ongoing process. Councils should periodically update their needs assessment with the most recent data. For data that are readily available from federal or state agencies, it may be relatively easy to update data elements annually, as the agency makes new data available through their website, annual reports, etc. Similarly, some data elements available from county-level agencies may be relatively easy to update. Of course, other data elements will be more difficult to update on a regular basis.

- ***It may be necessary or desirable to collect additional data to follow up on ambiguous or unexpected conclusions drawn from needs assessments.***

Finally, related to the notion that data collection is a fluid process, there is one other type of data that councils may want to collect: data elements meant to resolve ambiguities or to elaborate on issues that emerge from other data elements. An unfortunate paradox of data collection is that more data does not always result in the ability to draw clear conclusions. Instead, data may result in more questions than answers. For example, two data elements may contradict each other. Additional data may be required to resolve the ambiguity. On the other hand, data may clearly indicate a pattern that the council had

previously not expected. If so, the council may want to follow up on the unexpected result with further data collection.

### *Writing About the Data*

#### Some Useful Strategies

The example needs assessment in Appendix D adopts several strategies that can enhance the informativeness of a needs assessment. Specifically, the strategies will better enable readers of the needs assessment to understand what constitutes a “high” or “low” level of some data element.

- ***To the extent possible, needs assessment reports should examine trends, or changes over time.***

First, it is recommended that authors of needs assessments attempt to examine trends. That is, to the extent possible, needs assessments should examine the same data element across several years. This will allow councils to examine increases or decreases across time, thereby allowing councils to better identify problem areas.

- ***Ideally, the needs assessment report should utilize a comparison group. In other words, the council’s county or jurisdiction should be directly compared to a similar county or jurisdiction.***

Second, it is recommended that authors of needs assessments select and utilize a comparison group for as many data elements as possible. For the purposes of the needs assessment, an appropriate comparison group would be a county or jurisdiction that is comparable to the council’s county or jurisdiction in as many respects as possible. In particular, the comparison group should be comparable to the council’s county or jurisdiction on factors that would contribute to differences in the data elements included in the needs assessment (e.g., demographic factors).

The purpose of using a comparison group is to determine whether a level of some data element is normative, or comparable to levels in similar counties or jurisdictions. In the example needs assessment, our hypothetical county was classified as a rural county by the U.S. Census Bureau. We compared the hypothetical county to the average of other Illinois counties classified as rural. This may not be the perfect approach, as there may be differences among rural counties. Another purpose of the demographic section in our example needs assessment is to determine whether the other rural counties constitute an appropriate comparison group. Authors of needs assessments can select other comparison groups that they deem appropriate, such as a neighboring county or jurisdiction, other rural counties with similar populations, etc. Comparison data may not be available for every data element. However, it is available for many of the readily available data elements that appear in Table 5.

Should authors elect to include a comparison group in the needs assessment, then another issue arises. It was mentioned above that demographic data can be used to provide greater insight into data elements by allowing readers to consider the data elements presented as absolute numbers in light of juvenile population size. It was also suggested that authors of needs assessments can circumvent difficulties associated with interpreting absolute numbers by also reporting percentages of the juvenile population and/or rates based on the juvenile population. This issue becomes quite important should authors of needs assessment choose to utilize a comparison group. The size of the juvenile population in the council's county or jurisdiction will likely differ from the size of the juvenile population in the comparison county or jurisdiction. To compare absolute numbers may be misleading. Thus, when making direct comparisons between the council's county or jurisdiction and the comparison group, percentages or rates should be used. In the example needs assessment, absolute numbers are generally reported (and are always reported for the council's county), but direct comparisons are made based on rates per 100,000 juveniles in the population.

Together, trends and comparison groups allow for more flexibility in what one can report in the text of a needs assessment. Authors of needs assessments can go beyond simply describing levels of data elements and make statements regarding percentage change over time, percent difference between the council's county or jurisdiction and the comparison county or jurisdiction, the extent to which trends differ in the council's county or jurisdiction and the comparison county or jurisdiction, etc.

### Content of the Report

- ***Liberal use of figures and tables can make the needs assessment report easier to read and interpret.***

One suggestion regarding the content of a needs assessment report is that the author consider using figures and tables liberally. In general, it is easier to interpret and understand figures and tables than it is to interpret and understand text describing data. Figures and tables can be beneficial in conveying the "big picture" without requiring the reader to get bogged down in numbers. This can be beneficial to council members who want to understand the juvenile justice system as completely as possible, but have a limited amount of time. The example needs assessment includes a figure or table for most types of data elements. The text in the example needs assessment is generally used to note the most interesting aspects of the figure or table or to describe additional calculations based on the data included in the figure or table (e.g., percent change over time, differences between the hypothetical county and the comparison county).

### *Drawing Conclusions From the Data*

It is recommended that needs assessment reports be concluded with a section that integrates all the data included in the report and, to the extent possible, interprets and draws conclusions from the data. This section provides some suggestions as to how to draw conclusions from data.

- ***Authors and readers of needs assessment reports should be aware that there are limitations to the utility of the data included in a needs assessment report.***

It should be clearly emphasized that there are limitations to the utility of the type of data we have encouraged councils to include in a needs assessment report. Here it is useful to understand the distinction between descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The purpose of descriptive statistics is to describe, summarize, or display data elements. Examples of descriptive statistics include frequencies, percentages, rates, and averages. The data elements that we have suggested authors include in a needs assessment are descriptive statistics.

Inferential statistics are more sophisticated. Researchers from various disciplines use inferential statistics to test hypotheses. One beneficial aspect of inferential statistics is that they allow researchers to take a sample (e.g., 20 juvenile offenders in County A) and make relatively firm statements about a population (every juvenile offender in County A). In so doing, the researcher can also, with a relatively strong degree of certainty, draw conclusions from data.

The point to be made is not that councils should learn how to use inferential statistics. Rather, the point is merely to suggest that, because needs assessments are comprised of descriptive statistics, councils should be cautious when drawing conclusions from the data. For each data element that seems to clearly suggest a particular conclusion, there may be viable alternative conclusions.

- ***Authors and readers of needs assessment reports should consider the reliability of the data elements included in the report.***

Nonetheless, descriptive statistics can be informative and useful. One factor that should be considered when determining how much emphasis to place on data elements that seem to suggest a particular conclusion is the reliability of the data. A data element is reliable when the researcher who collected the data is able to repeat the exact same data collection procedure and obtain the same result. Should the same data collection procedure yield discrepant results, the data element is less reliable and, hence, less useful.

Authors of needs assessments or councils can get an indication of how reliable a data element is by considering the procedures involved in collecting the data. For data elements obtained from federal, state, and county agencies, this may mean contacting researchers at the agencies and inquiring how they arrived at their numbers.

In addition, several of the data elements that are available from state agencies involve county-level agencies filling out a data collection instrument and sending it to the state agency. Authors of needs assessments or councils may want to consider finding out whether all the agencies in their county or jurisdiction have been filling out data collection instruments distributed by state agencies. If certain county agencies are not sending data to the state agency or are sending data on an irregular basis, it can have a large impact on the data reported by the state agency (and, hence, the reliability of the data).

It is possible that county level agencies are mistakenly completing parts of the data collection instrument in a manner not intended by the state agency. Authors of needs assessments or councils may want to ask state agencies for a blank copy of their data collection instrument. This will enable authors and/or councils to consider whether there may be aspects of the data collection instrument that county agencies are interpreting differently. It is likely that the state agency has already considered the issue. Nonetheless, it is useful to be aware of issues that may sacrifice the reliability of data elements.

As a final note on reliability, the examination of trends over time can serve as an indication of reliability. Should the authors of needs assessments and/or councils detect large, inexplicable increases or decreases over time in levels of a data element, it may be a product of how the data was collected. An attempt should be made to find out the cause of the fluctuation as opposed to assuming that the data accurately reflects reality.

- ***Firmer conclusions can be drawn from needs assessment reports by considering whether multiple data elements lead to the same conclusion.***

When examining individual data elements, authors of needs assessments and councils should consider reliability. However, stronger conclusions can be drawn from descriptive data by considering multiple data elements. If multiple data elements lead to the same conclusion, it increases the likelihood that the conclusion is accurate. For example, if juvenile arrest data indicates that a large percentage of juvenile arrests are for alcohol or drug related offenses and school survey data indicate that a large percentage of high school students admit to drinking and/or using drugs, then it strengthens the interpretation that alcohol and drug use is an issue that the council should address.

Related to the notion that multiple data elements should be considered, we encourage council members to consider whether data elements are consistent with their personal experiences working in the juvenile justice system. In effect, personal experience can serve as a “data element.” Strong conclusions can be drawn from a needs assessment by examining whether data elements corroborate personal experiences of council members.

It is possible that multiple data elements will lead to contradictory conclusions; or, two data elements may not directly contradict each other, but still fail to corroborate each other; or, a data element may run counter to or not be consistent with personal experience. Should any of these scenarios arise, councils have several options. First, they can assume that the conclusion is not strong enough to warrant considering a particular issue any further (or potentially addressing it in the juvenile justice plan). Second, they can collect more data to determine which conclusion is more accurate. Third, they can decide that a particular issue should be addressed, but because the evidence is equivocal, they will make the issue less of a priority than other, less ambiguous issues (and, presumably, allocate fewer resources toward the issue).

- ***Authors of needs assessment reports should draw both positive and negative conclusions.***

Needs assessment reports are useful in identifying needs and issues (i.e., negative aspects) in a council’s juvenile justice system. However, needs assessment reports should not be perceived as a tool to simply identify what is going wrong in the council’s juvenile justice system. The data included in a needs assessment report should also show the positive aspects of the council’s juvenile justice system.

In the next section, it is suggested that needs and issues identified in the needs assessment report be transformed into juvenile justice plan components. Part of the process of developing plan components based on needs and issues involves considering *why* the needs and issues exist (i.e., determining what is causing the needs and issues) and developing objectives and action steps that address causal factors. Similarly, councils can also consider why the strengths, or positive aspects of their juvenile justice system exist, and take measures in the plan to ensure that the strengths remain strong.

## **Developing a Juvenile Justice Plan**

Once councils have identified needs and issues facing their juvenile justice system, then they should be in a position to begin developing a juvenile justice plan. In this section, we attempt to provide some guidance for councils who are attempting to develop a juvenile justice plan. In particular, we propose one way that a juvenile justice plan may be structured. This proposed structure is partially based on our examination of two existing juvenile justice plans.

### *Plan Structure*

- ***Table 8 shows a possible juvenile justice plan outline with five sections: (1) introduction, (2) mission or philosophy statement, (3) description of needs, (4) goals and objectives, and (5) action steps.***

It can be a difficult task developing a comprehensive, polished, well-structured document that describes how to address the most pressing needs and issues of a juvenile justice system. There is certainly no single correct way to complete such a task, and the purpose of this section is not to propose the “right” way to develop a plan. Instead, this section describes one possible way in which a juvenile justice plan can be structured, as well as the content of each structural component. We base this possible plan structure not only on our own experience in criminal justice-related policy planning, but also on two existing juvenile justice plans that we were able to obtain: one from an Illinois county and one from a Florida county (Florida has a statute regarding juvenile justice councils that is very similar to the statute in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act). To the best of our knowledge, relatively few juvenile justice plans have been developed in Illinois. Given that many juvenile justice councils in Illinois may currently be attempting to develop a plan for the first time, a description of existing plans may be useful.

Table 8 provides a possible juvenile justice plan outline, based both on our suggestions and on the two existing plans. Table 8 shows that a juvenile justice plan may include five basic sections: an introduction, a mission or philosophy statement, a description of the needs facing the local juvenile justice system, goals and objectives, and action steps to carry out the goals and objectives. Below, a more detailed written description of what may be included in these basic sections is provided.

**Table 8: A Possible Juvenile Justice Plan Outline**

<p><b>1) Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Purpose and function of the council</li><li>b) Description of legislation providing authority for councils</li><li>c) Council committees (if applicable)</li></ul> <p><b>2) Mission or Philosophy Statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Mission or philosophy of local juvenile justice system and juvenile justice council</li><li>b) Priorities/emphases of local juvenile justice system and juvenile justice council</li></ul> <p><b>3) Needs of the Local Juvenile Justice System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) General description of completed needs assessment (if applicable)</li><li>b) List of needs and issues facing local juvenile justice system</li></ul> <p><b>4) Goals and Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Specific, difficult goals for each identified need or issue</li><li>b) Specific, difficult objectives for each identified goal</li></ul>
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In the section above on developing a needs assessment and in the evaluation manual (pages 7-8) the question of whether the task should be completed internally (i.e., by council members or employees in agencies represented on the council) or externally (i.e., by agencies not represented on the council) is addressed. This question could apply to juvenile justice plans as well.

Because council members work in the local juvenile justice system on a daily basis, they are likely in the best position to determine the needs and issues facing their system. Moreover, the development of objectives and action steps may involve knowledge of existing programs that are available to minors. Council members may be more likely to be aware of existing programs than an external plan author would be. Thus, council members may possess experience and knowledge that makes their contribution to a juvenile justice plan indispensable.

However, just as councils may not have time to develop their own needs assessment or complete their own evaluations, they may also not have time to write their own juvenile

justice plan. It is recommended that councils begin the process of developing a juvenile justice plan by determining how the plan will be structured (our proposed structure or otherwise). Then, the council should determine who will write each section of the plan. Should the council opt to have any non-council member contribute to the writing of the plan, then they should ensure that the agreed upon author is in attendance at all meetings in which relevant plan content is discussed. Depending on the rationale for selecting the author, he or she could either attend merely in the capacity of a notetaker (with the goal of preparing to write his or her plan sections) or to also make substantive contributions to relevant plan sections. After plan structure and authorship is determined, then subsequent council meetings can be, in effect, brainstorming sessions in which the council determines the content of each plan section.

### Plan Introduction

- ***Councils may want to write the plan introduction in a manner that makes the juvenile justice plan accessible to a wide variety of readers.***

Councils may be interested in distributing their completed juvenile justice plan to various audiences. Councils may want the public to be aware of their activities. If so, then the plan should be written in a manner that makes it accessible to the public at large. Moreover, in order to implement the plan, it may be necessary for councils to collaborate with agencies that are not represented on the council. Such agencies may not be entirely aware of the purpose and functions of the council.

Thus, it may be useful for councils to begin their plan with an introduction that does not assume any knowledge on the part of the reader regarding the purpose and functions of juvenile justice councils (e.g., to provide an interagency forum for the assessment of the juvenile justice system, to develop a juvenile justice plan, etc.). As such, the introduction could acquaint readers with juvenile justice councils. Consistent with this, the introduction could acquaint readers with the legislative statute in the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998 authorizing the formation of juvenile justice councils.<sup>10</sup> Both of the existing plans directly cite the legislative statute at various points in the introduction.

The Juvenile Justice Reform Act requires councils to be comprised of representatives from certain agencies: the sheriff's office, state's attorney's office, probation department, and county board. However, the Act also allows councils a great deal of flexibility in selecting council participants. For example, the statute states that "The chairperson shall appoint additional members of the council as is deemed necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Article . . .".<sup>11</sup> It may be useful to give the reader a sense of what agencies and types of individuals the council will attempt to include as members. Such information need not be specific or absolute, but should give the reader a sense of who is carrying out action steps that are described in the plan. An interested reader may want to make inquiries to council members about plan goals, objectives, or action steps. A

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<sup>10</sup> 705 ILCS 405/6-12

<sup>11</sup> 705 ILCS 405/6-12 (b))

general list of the agencies or individuals represented on the council will make this easier to accomplish.

One additional strategy that councils may want to consider is developing committees to carry on various functions of the council. This strategy was adopted by one of the councils whose plan we obtained. For example, this council created a public relations committee, an evaluation committee, and a grants review committee. Should councils choose to develop such committees, it may be worth noting their existence in the introduction to the juvenile justice plan.

### Mission or Philosophy Statement

After describing their functions and purposes, councils may want to describe the mission or philosophy that guides their local juvenile justice system. This mission or philosophy can guide the nature of the goals, objectives, and action steps that are included in the plan. Both existing plans make explicit statements regarding their mission or philosophy, then proceed to describe the emphases and priorities of the mission or philosophy. Including a mission or philosophy statement may help facilitate the formation of plan goals, objectives, and action steps by ensuring that the council is collectively operating under the same set of assumptions.

### Needs of the Local Juvenile Justice System

- ***Results from a needs assessment report and/or other relevant data on the council's juvenile justice system may be described prior to identifying needs, issues, and strengths.***

The purpose of this section of a juvenile justice plan is to describe the needs and issues facing the local juvenile justice system. If the council has conducted a needs assessment, then data and conclusions from the assessment can be included in this section. Councils that have completed a needs assessment may consider introducing the assessment to readers. Such an introduction could include the author(s) of the needs assessment, the types of data elements that were included in the needs assessment, and notable methodological strategies that were employed in the needs assessment (e.g., the use of a comparison group). After introducing the needs assessment, results and conclusions from the needs assessment can be briefly summarized. Both of the existing plans that we obtained make reference to relevant data pertaining to their juvenile justice system.

- ***After describing juvenile justice system data, needs and issues may be listed and prioritized.***

One possible strategy is to follow up a description of the needs assessment with a numbered list of the issues and needs facing the local juvenile justice system. Presumably, this list would, at least in part, follow directly from the results and conclusions drawn from the needs assessment. For issues and needs that do not follow directly from a needs assessment (because the council was unable to conduct a needs

assessment, was unable to obtain data on a particular topic, etc.), it may be useful to describe why the issue or need has been identified. The issues and needs that the council identifies at this point can be developed into goals, objectives, and action steps in subsequent sections of the plan.

It may also be useful for councils to prioritize issues and needs. Councils will likely want their plan to be comprehensive and, therefore, may want to identify as many issues and needs as they believe will contribute to the reduction of juvenile crime. However, councils may want to determine which issues and needs they will place more emphasis on addressing. Prioritizing issues may assist in determining how to allocate resources that will be used to implement the plan. This may be particularly useful if councils believe that they will have difficulty obtaining resources for implementing the plan. Factors that councils may want to consider as they prioritize issues and needs include the importance of the issue or need, the ease with which the issue or need can be addressed, the resources that will be necessary to address the issue or need, and how long it will take to address the issue or need.

- ***Consider the positives that were identified in the needs assessment report. Consider additional protective factors. Consider the list of needs and issues in light of available community resources.***

After developing a list of prioritized needs and issues, councils may want to consider the positives that were identified in the needs assessment report. It is conceivable that councils will want to improve on positive aspects of their juvenile justice system. Thus, in addition to shoring up weaknesses in the council's juvenile justice system, juvenile justice plans may also be used to bolster existing strengths.

Similarly, plan elements may be written to strengthen protective factors, irrespective of whether the protective factor was addressed in the needs assessment report. For example, councils may want to help create job opportunities for minors, even though their needs assessment report did not identify either high or low employment levels for minors.

In addition, the juvenile justice council statute in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act encourages councils to develop a resource guide that identifies available services for minors in the council's jurisdiction.<sup>12</sup> Councils that have undertaken this responsibility may consider examining needs, issues, and strengths in light of the resource guide. Such a comparison may reveal gaps in needed services. Alternatively, the comparison may reveal that services are available to address a need or issue, but are not being used as effectively as possible. Or, the comparison may help explain the strengths (i.e., the strengths exist because of the existence and effectiveness of necessary services).

- ***Consider relevant information from other local plans.***

The juvenile justice council statute in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act states that juvenile justice plans should include relevant portions of local plans that have already been

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<sup>12</sup> 705 ILCS 405/6-12 (3) (f)

developed (local crime prevention and public safety plans, school improvement and school safety plans, etc.). Councils may consider seeking existing plans, then examining them in light of the needs and issues that they have identified. The existing plans may suggest additional needs, issues, or strengths that councils can consider adding to their list. In addition, there may be some overlap between needs and issues identified in other plans and those identified by the council. In either case, councils may consider collaborating with other local planning entities to address needs, issues, or strengths relevant to both the council and the other entity.

### Goals and Objectives

- ***Goals and objectives compose the “heart” of the juvenile justice plan, as they describe what councils would like to achieve in order to reduce juvenile crime.***

After issues, needs, and strengths have been identified, then the next step is to develop goals and objectives for addressing each issue or need. These goals and objectives comprise the “heart” of the juvenile justice plan. They describe what the council would like to achieve in order to reduce juvenile crime. These goals and objectives are the main components of the plan.

- ***Goals transform issues, needs, and strengths into action statements.***

Goals should precede objectives. In effect, goals transform issues, needs, and strengths into action statements. For example, the Baird County needs assessment showed that the number of high school dropouts in Baird County increased throughout the 1990’s. Imagine that the Baird County juvenile justice council decides to identify this as an issue that should be addressed in their plan. A corresponding goal may be “To reduce the number of high school dropouts by 25% by January, 2003.”

- ***Goals should be written as specific as possible, and should be challenging, but not impossible to achieve.***

We suggest that councils attempt to make their goals as specific as possible. This can be achieved by including a specific level of increase or decrease to be achieved and a specific timeline. By including specificity in goals, it is easier for councils to measure success or failure. Related to this, by stating a desired outcome, specificity makes plan elements more evaluatable.

When writing specific levels of increase or decrease and specific timelines, we suggest that councils challenge themselves. Social scientific research has indicated that, for a variety of reasons, goal-related performance increases as goal difficulty increases. The limitation to this is that goal difficulty must not exceed ability. Thus, we suggest that councils should develop challenging goals, but not impossible goals.

- ***Objectives are more specific than goals; they address the factors that created the issue, need, or strength. By achieving each objective, one should also achieve the goal.***

Once councils have developed goals, then the next step is to develop one or more objectives for each goal. Objectives are developed in an attempt to address the potential causal factor(s) contributing to each need, issue, or strength. Each objective provides a more specific goal, intended to address one factor that contributes to the need, issue, or strength. For example, adolescent drug use, gang activity, perceptions of school safety, the nature of the school curriculum, opportunities for advanced education, and academic motivation may all be related to the number of students that drop out of high school. Councils will need to determine the factor(s) that they believe are causing the need, issue, or strength, then develop objectives that address the potential causal factor(s). Objectives may be written in a manner similar to that which we suggested for goals. That is, objectives should be written with as much specificity as possible and should provide a challenge for the council. As an example, if a council has developed a goal pertaining to high school dropouts and has determined that academic motivation may be a contributing factor, then one objective may be “To increase voluntary enrollment in the school system’s college preparatory program by 25% by the end of the year.”

The assumption is that, by achieving the objectives, one will also achieve the goal. This approach has the advantage of allowing councils to gain a better understanding of the factors that are the strongest contributors to needs, issues, and strengths that have been identified. Should a council achieve both the objective and the related goal, then it may be the case that there is an actual relationship between the factor being addressed in the objective and the issue, need, or strength being addressed in the goal. For example, if enrollment in a college preparatory program increases and the number of high school dropouts decreases, then there may be an actual relationship between the two variables. Councils will certainly want to keep these relationships in mind. However, councils will still want to be cautious in placing too much emphasis on the relationship.

By the term relationship, we mean that there may be a *correlational* relationship between the factor addressed in the objective and the issue, need, or strength addressed in the goal. A correlational relationship between two variables means that as levels of one variable change, levels of the other variable change as well. However, very few correlational relationships are perfect. A basic credo emphasized by social scientists is that “correlation is not causation.” In other words, even if a council achieves both a goal and an objective, it cannot be assumed that changes in the factor addressed in the objective *caused* changes in the issue, need, or strength addressed in the goal. Continued emphasis on the objective may not result in continued goal achievement. Instead, there may be other, previously unconsidered, factors that led to successful goal achievement.

## Action Steps

- ***Action steps describe what councils will do in order to achieve each goal and objective.***

After goals and objectives have been identified, then the final section of the juvenile justice plan can be devoted to describing the steps that councils will take to achieve each of the objectives (and, hence, to achieve each of the goals). As with goals and objectives, we suggest that action steps be as specific as possible. The purpose of such specificity should be to ensure that the council is clear on what they will be doing in order to carry out the objective.

To continue with the high school dropout example, one potential action step to increase voluntary enrollment in a college preparatory program may be to “Enlist guest speakers to discuss the importance of a college education.” Another may be to “Develop strategies for more effectively marketing the college preparatory program curriculum to students.” Other action steps may be more preliminary or preparatory, such as “Contact high school principals to discuss reasons for low enrollment in the college preparatory program.” This last action step may be followed up with further action that will directly affect completion of the objective.

- ***When considering action steps, councils may notice an absence of needed programs and services necessary to achieve goals and objectives. In such instances, action steps can still be written, but may be more preliminary (e.g., geared towards obtaining funding for new programs or resources, perhaps in conjunction with more immediate, short term courses of action).***

Upon considering action steps to address needs or issues, councils may find that there is a lack of necessary programs and services. In some respects, identifying the absence of needed programs and services in a community is another benefit of the juvenile justice council planning process. Focusing on a community’s needs frees council members to develop comprehensive solutions to their needs. Although this process may identify programs and services that are unavailable in a community, knowing what a community is missing is important to the building of a continuum of care for minors in need. For example, if bullying is a problem in a school, but no bullying prevention programs exist, working to develop a bullying prevention program or replicating an existing program fills the gap in a local continuum of care.

Should councils find that their jurisdiction lacks necessary services and programs, then goals, objectives, and action steps included in their juvenile justice plan will likely be more preliminary. Goals, objectives, and action steps may address attempts to obtain resources, supplemented with more immediate, short-term efforts to address the need or issue. In the section entitled “Putting it All Together: Two Examples,” we offer two examples of how a need or issue can be developed into juvenile justice plan goals, objectives, and action steps. In the first example, it is presumed that a program currently

exists to address the need or issue. In the second example, it is presumed that no program exists.

## **Interagency Agreements**

Once a juvenile justice plan has been developed, then developing a strategy for implementing the plan is the next step. This section of the guidebook describes how interagency agreements can lead to a unified and consistent strategy for addressing the components of a juvenile justice plan.

It is the explicit responsibility of juvenile justice councils to develop a written interagency agreement that specifies the contributions each member agency will make toward achieving the goals of the juvenile justice plan.<sup>13</sup> The role that each agency plays in achieving each goal becomes their “contribution” to achieving the goals of the juvenile justice plan.

- ***Consistent with the collaborative nature of juvenile justice councils, each council member can contribute to each juvenile justice plan element in some way. The extent and nature of each member’s contribution will depend on the nature of the plan element.***

The focus of the juvenile justice plan is on the needs, issues, and strengths identified by a comprehensive assessment of the local juvenile justice system and the communities served by the juvenile justice council. Consistent with the ideal of a holistic, comprehensive, and collaborative juvenile justice council, every member can contribute to each objective in the plan. The form that this contribution takes will vary depending on the impact that an agency can have on a stated objective.

For example, if reducing the school drop out rate is the objective (as it is in Baird County), schools are likely to play a more significant role than a county’s juvenile justice agencies. While the local educational system can help minors stay in school through specific initiatives (e.g., through alternative educational opportunities for troubled youth, attendance incentives, bullying prevention programs, tutoring programs, etc.), other agencies can support their mission. For example, social service agencies can work with educators to provide supplementary services to minors who are struggling with school, probation departments can monitor minors in a way that does not disrupt their educational experience, law enforcement agencies can share information with the schools regarding minors picked up for truancy, and the courts can develop responses to juvenile offenders that encourages them to attend school.

Less obvious is the contribution that the general public can make toward reducing the drop out rate. Parents and the public can take an active interest in the schools that serve their communities. This interest could be in the academic, athletic, intramural, and/or

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<sup>13</sup> 705 ILCS 405/6-12 (3) (b)

extramural pursuits of students. Local newspapers can publicize the efforts of the students in their communities.

One of the promises of a holistic, comprehensive, and collaborative effort to address the components of the juvenile justice plan is that there are likely to also be auxiliary benefits. In the example of reducing drop out rates, not only is the drop out rate addressed in a well-coordinated manner, but the strategies that are developed are also likely to result in stronger communities.

Overall, there are few juvenile justice plan components that cannot be addressed by all juvenile justice council members. The challenge may be to think about juvenile delinquency not as a problem that only juvenile justice professionals must attend to, but a problem that the entire community can work together to solve.

- ***After councils have identified each member's role in addressing each juvenile justice plan element, these roles can be clearly described in an interagency agreement.***

If each council member contributes to each juvenile justice plan component in some way, then it may follow that an interagency agreement will be a written document clearly describing these contributions. This written document need not be a legal document or a binding contract (although, the level of formality included in the interagency agreement may vary, depending on the nature of relationships between council members). Instead, the interagency agreement can be treated as an “in good faith” public declaration of the contribution each council member and the agency they represent will make towards the completion of each juvenile justice plan component.

This public declaration can serve at least two purposes. First, it can help council members understand each other's role in the completion of the juvenile justice plan. Second, it can aid in making juvenile justice council members and their agencies accountable for their contributions to the completion of the plan.

A detailed written description of each council member's contribution to each juvenile justice plan element can also aid in evaluating the efficacy of the juvenile justice plan. Returning to the example of reducing drop out rates, if the drop out rate is not reduced, each agency's contribution can be evaluated separately in an attempt to understand where efforts need to be strengthened.

## Putting it All Together: Two Examples

- *This section includes two examples that incorporate many of the suggestions included in the guidebook regarding the development of juvenile justice plans and interagency agreements.*

The following examples use data from the example needs assessment completed by the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council (Appendix D) and focus on needs that the council has opted to address in their juvenile justice plan. The examples begin with the data from the Baird County needs assessment that led the decision by the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council to address the need in their juvenile justice plan. From there, both examples state the need that was identified based on the data, then the corresponding juvenile justice plan goals, objectives, and action steps. Finally, both examples propose how each agency represented in the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council can contribute to the achievement of the objectives addressed in the juvenile justice plan element.

### *Example 1: High School Dropout Levels in Baird County*

Throughout the text on juvenile justice plan components and interagency agreements, we have used high school dropout levels in Baird County as an example. Table 9 assembles the steps described in the text.

For the purposes of the example, it is assumed that the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council is composed of the following types of participants: several representatives from local law enforcement, at least one representative from the state's attorney's office, at least one juvenile court judge, at least one public defender, at least one county board member, several representatives from social services agencies that serve minors, at least one representative from the school system, and at least one citizen representing the community at large.

**Table 9: Example Goal, Objective, Action Steps,  
and Interagency Agreement to Address an Increase  
in the Number of High School Dropouts**

Needs Assessment Data Suggesting the Need (from Appendix E)

- There was a tendency for the number of high school dropouts in Baird County to increase throughout the 1990's. For example, there were 23 high school dropouts during the 1990-1991 school year (2.9% of the high school population) and 37 high school dropouts during the 1998-1999 school year (4.6% of the high school population).

Need Identified from Data

- School system representatives on the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council have also noticed that academic motivation has been a problem in Baird County high schools. The council decides that the increase in the number of high school dropouts, while not necessarily extreme in absolute terms (the number of high school dropouts is still fairly low and high school dropout rates in Baird County are lower than in the other 73 Illinois rural counties), corroborates the observations of the school system representatives. Thus, the council decides to address the high school dropout level in their juvenile justice plan. They hypothesize that increasing academic motivation will reduce the number of high school dropouts in Baird County.

Goal

- Reduce the number of high school dropouts by 25% by January, 2003.

Objective

- Increase voluntary enrollment in the school system's college preparatory program by 25% by the end of the year.

Action Steps

- Enlist guest speakers to discuss the importance of a college education.
- Develop strategies for more effectively marketing the college preparatory program curriculum to students.
- Contact high school principals to discuss reasons for low enrollment in the college preparatory program.

**Table 9 (cont.): Example Goal, Objective, Action Steps,  
and Interagency Agreement to Address an Increase  
in the Number of High School Dropouts**

Components of the interagency agreement specific to achieving the objective or more generally related to the goal of increasing academic motivation

Law Enforcement

- Share information with the schools and the council regarding minors picked up for truancy (i.e., at risk for dropping out of school and currently exhibiting low academic motivation).

Judges, State's Attorneys, Public Defenders

- Share information with the council regarding minors who have truancy petitions filed against them and minors adjudicated truant.
- Work together to place truant minors in county programs that will start to increase their level of academic motivation and reintegrate them into the school system (e.g., placements in alternative schools, after school tutoring programs, etc.).

County Board

- Assess financial resources available for guest speakers in schools.
- Support the college preparatory program and other programs aimed at keeping minors in school and/or increasing academic motivation.

Probation

- Assist in obtaining information on potential guest speakers addressing the importance of a college education.
- Assist in developing and carrying out strategies for marketing the college preparatory program in schools (e.g., making parents more aware of the program, having school guidance counselors describe the program curriculum to students).
- Assist in obtaining information on additional programs aimed at keeping minors in school and/or increasing academic motivation.
- Develop probation plans that support the educational needs of juvenile offenders.

Social Services

- Assist in obtaining information on potential guest speakers addressing the importance of a college education.

**Table 9 (cont.): Example Goal, Objective, Action Steps,  
and Interagency Agreement to Address an Increase  
in the Number of High School Dropouts**

Components of the interagency agreement specific to achieving the objective or more generally related to the goal of increasing academic motivation continued

Social Services continued

- Assist in developing and carrying out strategies for marketing the college preparatory program in schools (e.g., making parents more aware of the program, having school guidance counselors describe the program curriculum to students).
- Attend meetings with high school principals regarding the college preparatory program and developing/implementing a program marketing strategy.
- Provide input on additional programs aimed at keeping minors in school and/or increasing academic motivation.

Schools

- Assist in obtaining information on potential guest speakers addressing the importance of a college education.
- Contact guest speakers and coordinate the speaking engagements into school schedules.
- Attend meetings with high school principals regarding problems with the college preparatory program and developing/implementing a program marketing strategy.
- Share information from meetings with high school principals at a council meeting.
- Address other school based factors that impede a students ability to learn (e.g., bullying).

Citizens

- Assist in making parents aware of the college preparatory program (at civic organizations, during informal discussions, etc.)
- Support the local schools and their students, both traditional and non-traditional.
- Participate in the monitoring of minors who are not in school.

### *Example 2: Developing a Diversion Program in Baird County*

The Baird County Juvenile Justice Council's needs assessment (Appendix D) showed that Baird County has more juvenile court system activity than the other 73 Illinois rural counties. The Baird County Juvenile Justice Council determined that this increased court system activity is occurring because the county currently does not have an effective program in place that diverts minors who commit crimes from the Baird County court system. Thus, the council decides that one issue that should be addressed in their juvenile justice plan is the lack of an effective non-court system outlet for juveniles who commit less serious offenses. The council decides to target first time juvenile offenders who commit less serious offenses, and who seem to be at risk for future antisocial behavior.

Table 10 shows the steps for developing a juvenile justice plan element to address the need for a diversion program. Note that the goal in this example is slightly different from the goal in Example 1. Specifically, it was assumed in Example 1 that a program (the college preparatory program) already existed to address the need or issue. In this example, it is assumed that there is a need for a new program. This may impact the degree of specificity that may be included in the goal. However, we still attempted to make the goal as specific as possible by including a timeline.

The nature of the issue also impacts the nature of the objectives. It was suggested above that objectives should target the causal factors contributing to the need or issue that is addressed in the goal. This example is no exception. However, because no program currently exists, the content of the objectives differs somewhat. Instead of determining how to improve an existing program, councils must determine why no program currently exists. The Baird County Juvenile Justice Council determined that financial resources are a contributing factor. They also determine that they need to educate themselves on the types of diversion programs that work, as well as how to develop such programs. The council develops objectives, then action steps based on these causal factors.

Of course, should the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council succeed in developing and implementing a diversion program, this will lend itself to a new set of goals and objectives. A new goal may be developed that is more directly related to the issue that led to development of the diversion program: higher than expected levels of court system activity.

**Table 10: An Example Need With Corresponding Juvenile Justice Plan and Interagency Agreement Components**

Needs Assessment Data Suggesting the Need (from Appendix E)

- For each year in the 1990's, delinquency petition filing and adjudication rates in Baird County exceeded those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.
- Juvenile probation caseload rates in Baird County slightly exceeded those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

Need Identified from Data

- There is currently no diversion program for first time juvenile offenders who commit less serious offenses, and may be at risk for future antisocial behavior.

Goal

- Within the next year, develop a diversion program that targets first time offenders who commit less serious offenses.

Objective #1

- Learn about existing diversion programs that are effective, as well as how to implement the programs.

Action Steps – Objective #1

- Contact / check websites of Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Institute of Justice, and Blueprints Program for information on diversion programs.
- Find jurisdictions that are implementing programs that have been demonstrated to be effective and contact them to ask questions.

Objective #2

- Begin to seek potential financial resources for a diversion program.

Action Steps – Objective #2

- Contact / check websites of federal and state agencies that monitor or administer grant money, such as the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Examine current availability of financial resources.

**Table 10 (cont.): An Additional Example Need With Corresponding Juvenile Justice Plan and Interagency Agreement Components**

Components of the interagency agreement specific to achieving the objectives or more generally related to the development of a successful diversion program

Law Enforcement

- Begin to determine how minors who are arrested will be screened for diversion program eligibility
- Keep the council updated on the recent juvenile arrest data, particularly data pertaining to the population targeted for the diversion program.

Judges, State's Attorneys, Public Defenders

- Begin to make others in the court system aware that a diversion program is being developed
- Collaborate with law enforcement on diversion program eligibility criteria
- Keep the council updated on the recent juvenile court data, particularly data pertaining to the population targeted for the diversion program.

County Board

- Assess current financial resources
- Assist in seeking additional financial resources for a diversion program (by contacting / checking websites of federal and state agencies that monitor or administer grant money, such as the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).

Probation

- Assist in obtaining information on effective diversion programs by contacting / check websites of Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Institute of Justice, and Blueprints Program for information on diversion programs.
- Assist in obtaining information on effective diversion programs by finding jurisdictions that are implementing programs that have been demonstrated to be effective and contact them to ask questions.
- Assist in seeking additional financial resources for a diversion program (by contacting / checking websites of federal and state agencies that monitor or administer grant money, such as the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).

**Table 10 (cont.): An Additional Example Need With Corresponding Juvenile Justice Plan and Interagency Agreement Components**

Components of the interagency agreement specific to achieving the objectives or more generally related to the development of a successful diversion program continued

Social Services

- Provide input on effective diversion programs and/or assist probation in obtaining information on effective diversion programs.
- Assist in obtaining information on effective diversion programs by contacting / check websites of Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Institute of Justice, and Blueprints Program for information on diversion programs.
- Assist in obtaining information on effective diversion programs by finding jurisdictions that are implementing programs that have been demonstrated to be effective and contact them to ask questions.
- Assist in seeking additional financial resources for a diversion program (by contacting / checking websites of federal and state agencies that monitor or administer grant money, such as the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).
- Write grant applications if necessary

Schools

- Keep the council updated on the recent school data pertaining to at risk minors (e.g., dropouts, suspensions, expulsions).

Citizens

- Read and summarize information on effective diversion programs
- Present information on effective diversion programs at a council meeting

Entire Council

- Discuss what diversion program to develop and implement

## Programs to Address Juvenile Justice Plan Components

- ***Councils may be involved in making decisions regarding community programs for minors. University of Colorado’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Blueprints Program has identified effective delinquency prevention and intervention programs (see Table 11 and Appendix B). Councils may want to be aware of “what works”.***

After councils have developed a juvenile justice plan, then they must carry out the plan. Strategies for carrying out juvenile justice plans may involve developing new programs for youths, modifying existing programs for youths, or placing more emphasis on existing programs for youths. In other words, the juvenile justice plan should guide community programming.

Councils seeking to modify, emphasize, or develop programs may be interested in learning about effective programs. Some councils may directly assist in program development and/or modification. Other councils may take a less active role in program development and/or modification. Regardless of how active a role councils take in programming, they may want to be cognizant of the programs that work. Such awareness will, at minimum, enable councils to make clear suggestions to programmers (regarding program development, useful modifications to existing programs, etc).

Significant financial and intellectual resources have been invested in identifying programs that have proven to be effective, by rigorous scientific standards, at reducing levels of delinquent behavior. Many of the programs and strategies identified by these research initiatives are effective because of the attention paid to risk and protective factors.

One research initiative that has identified effective delinquency prevention and intervention programs is the University of Colorado’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Blueprints Program. All 10 programs identified by the Center as “Blueprints for Violence Prevention,” are those that address risk and/or protective factors (see Table 11, also, see Appendix B for summaries of the Blueprints programs). In addition to the programs identified as Blueprints, another 18 programs have been identified by the Center as “promising.” Many of these “promising” programs also target risk and protective factors.<sup>14</sup>

Other research initiatives, including a National Institute of Justice commissioned study of the relevant scientific literature on prevention and intervention programs headed by Lawrence Sherman of the University of Pennsylvania, and a meta-analysis of prevention

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<sup>14</sup> For more information about the Blueprints Program you can visit <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints> or contact the program through the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado.

and intervention programs headed by Mark Lipsey of Vanderbilt University, have identified programs and strategies that are effective at preventing delinquency.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 11: Blueprint Programs**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Targeted Risk Factor(s)</b>	<b>Targeted Protective Factor(s)</b>
Midwestern Prevention Project	Availability of drugs and alcohol; Norms favoring drug and alcohol use in the community, school, and the home;	
Multisystemic Therapy	Family management problems; Friends who engage in problem behaviors; Academic failure;	Positive bonds with pro-social others
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Absence of pro-social relationships	Positive bonds with pro-social others
Prenatal and Infancy Home Visitation	Economic and social deprivation; Family history of high-risk behavior; Parental involvement in problem behaviors and/or attitudes favorable of delinquency	
Bullying Prevention Program	Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior; Early initiation of problem behaviors; Friends who engage in problem behaviors	
Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care	Friends who engage in problem behaviors; Family management problems	

<sup>15</sup> A summary of the types of programs found to be effective at delinquency prevention and intervention can also be found in Appendix B. Sherman, Lawrence, Denise Gottfredson, Doris MacKenzie, John Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn Bushway. 1998. *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs. Lipsey, Mark and David B. Wilson. 1998. "Effective Intervention for Serious Juvenile Offenders: A Synthesis of Research." *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*. Rolf Loeber and David P. Farrington (eds.). Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage Publications.

**Table 11 (cont.): Blueprint Programs**

Quantum Opportunities	Lack of commitment to school	Positive bonds with pro-social others
Functional Family Therapy	Family management problems; Family conflict	
Life Skills Training	Community norms favoring drug use, firearms, and crime; Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior	Resilient temperament
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies	Absence of pro-social relationships; impulsivity	Resilient temperament; Positive bonds with pro-social others; Positive social orientation

- ***Councils may want to assist in the development of a new program or make suggestions regarding the development of a new program. If so, councils should be aware of the factors that make for an effective delinquency prevention or intervention program. Such factors also are listed in Appendix B.***

The Blueprints Programs provide a great deal of insight into effective programs. However, a Blueprints Program may not exist that addresses needs or issues identified in a council’s juvenile justice plan. In such instances, there may also be no other program in the council’s community that can address the need or issue. Thus, councils may want to assist in the development of a new program. Or, councils may want to suggest a new program and provide guidance on how the program should operate. If so, then councils should be aware of the factors that make for effective delinquency prevention or intervention programs. Appendix B also lists “best practices”, or core elements of effective programs for minors.

- ***Councils are responsible for applying for grants to support components of their juvenile justice plan. Appendix C offers some tips on how to write an effective grant application.***

While councils may vary in how active a role they take in community programming, the juvenile justice council statute in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act states that it is a duty of all councils to apply for funds to support components of their juvenile justice plan. Completing grant applications can be a confusing process. It can be difficult to determine what funders are looking for in a grant application. Grant funders vary in the criteria they examine to determine which programs to fund.

However, by following some general guidelines for the structure and content of grant applications, councils can increase the likelihood of receiving funding. Put another way, while grant funders vary in the criteria they examine to determine which programs to fund, they tend to prefer that grant applications are written and structured in a particular way. As funders of numerous criminal justice grants in Illinois, the ICJIA can be of assistance to councils in providing some tips on how grant applications should be written and structured. Appendix C offers these tips to councils.

# *APPENDIX A*

## **Juvenile Justice Council Statute in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act**

705 ILCS 405/6-12

Sec. 6-12. County juvenile justice councils.

(1) Each county, or group of counties pursuant to an intergovernmental agreement, in the State of Illinois may establish a county juvenile justice council ("council"). Each of the following county officers shall designate a representative to serve on the council: the sheriff, the State's Attorney, Chief Probation Officer, and the county board. In addition, the chief judge may designate a representative to serve on the council.

- (a) The council shall organize itself and elect from its members a chairperson and such officers as are deemed necessary. Until a chairperson is elected, the State's Attorney shall serve as interim chairperson.
- (b) The chairperson shall appoint additional members of the council as is deemed necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Article and whenever possible shall appoint a local Chief of Police and a representative of a community youth service provider. The additional members may include, but are not limited to, representatives of local law enforcement, juvenile justice agencies, schools, businesses, and community organizations.
- (c) The county juvenile justice council shall meet from time to time, but no less than semi-annually, for the purpose of encouraging the initiation of, or supporting ongoing, interagency cooperation and programs to address juvenile delinquency and juvenile crime.

(2) The purpose of a county juvenile justice council is to provide a forum for the development of a community-based interagency assessment of the local juvenile justice system, to develop a county juvenile justice plan for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, and to make recommendations to the county board, or county boards, for more effectively utilizing existing community resources in dealing with juveniles who are found to be involved in crime, or who are truant or have been suspended or expelled from school. The county juvenile justice plan shall include relevant portions of local crime prevention and public safety plans, school improvement and school safety plans, and the plans or initiatives of other public and private entities within the county that are concerned with dropout prevention, school safety, the prevention of juvenile crime and criminal activity by youth gangs.

(3) The duties and responsibilities of the county juvenile justice council include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Developing a county juvenile justice plan based upon utilization of the resources of law enforcement, school systems, park programs, sports entities, and others in a cooperative and collaborative manner to prevent or discourage juvenile crime.
- (b) Entering into a written county interagency agreement specifying the nature and extent of contributions each signatory agency will make in achieving the goals of the county juvenile justice plan and their commitment to the sharing of information useful in carrying out the goals of the interagency agreement to the extent authorized by law.
- (c) Applying for and receiving public or private grants, to be administered by one of the community partners, that support one or more components of the county juvenile justice plan.
- (d) Providing a forum for the presentation of interagency recommendations and the resolution of disagreements relating to the contents of the county interagency agreement or the performance by the parties of their respective obligations under the agreement.
- (e) Assisting and directing the efforts of local community support organizations and volunteer groups in providing enrichment programs and other support services for clients of local juvenile detention centers.
- (f) Developing and making available a county-wide or multi-county resource guide for minors in need of prevention, intervention, psycho-social, educational support, and other services needed to prevent juvenile delinquency.

(4) The council shall have no role in the charging or prosecution of juvenile offenders.

(Source: P.A. 90-590, eff. 1-1-99.)

# *APPENDIX B*

## Program Listing

Programs recommended by The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, at the University of Colorado.<sup>16</sup>

The programs listed below are those that have met rigorous selection criteria for inclusion by The University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence BLUEPRINTS project. The purpose of the BLUEPRINTS Project was to identify a core set of programs, based on a very high scientific standard of program effectiveness, which could serve as a nucleus for a national violence prevention initiative.

The four selection criteria for the BLUEPRINT programs are:

- 1) A strong research design used for evaluating the program, specifically experimental design with random assignment;
- 2) Evidence of significant prevention or deterrent effects;
- 3) Multiple site replication;
- 4) Sustained effects.

### *BLUEPRINT PROGRAMS*

*Functional Family Therapy (FFT)*-An empirically grounded intervention program that targets youth between the ages of 11-18, although younger siblings of referred adolescents are also treated. FFT is a family centered, short-term intervention with, on average, 8-12 one-hour sessions for mild cases and 26-30 hours of direct service for more difficult situations.

*Midwestern Prevention Project (MPP)*-A comprehensive community-based drug abuse intervention program that uses school, mass media, parent, community organization, and health policy programming to reduce or prevent gateway drug use (i.e., tobacco, alcohol, marijuana) and other drug use by adolescents and, secondarily, drug use by their parents and other community residents.

*Multisystemic Therapy (MST)*-A goal oriented treatment that specifically targets those factors in each youth's social network that are contributing to his or her antisocial behavior. MST interventions typically aim to improve caregiver discipline practices, enhance family affective relations, decrease youth association with delinquent peers, increase youth association with pro-social peers, improve youth school or vocational performance, engage youth in pro-social recreational outlets, and develop an indigenous support network of extended family, neighbors, and friends to help caregivers achieve and maintain such changes.

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<sup>16</sup> All program summaries are taken from The University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence website at <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv>.

*Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA)*-A community mentoring program which matches an adult volunteer, known as a Big Brother or Big Sister, to a child, known as a Little Brother or Little Sister, with the expectation that a caring and supportive long-term relationship will develop.

*Nurse Home Visitation Program*-A program of home visitation beginning during pregnancy and continues through the child's second birthday. Each family is assigned a nurse who visits families about once every other week during pregnancy and the first two years of the child's life. The nurses use program protocols that are designed to accomplish three overriding goals: 1) the improvement of pregnancy outcomes, 2) the improvement of the child's health and development, and 3) the improvement of the mothers' own personal development.

*Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC)*-In MTFC, adolescents are placed, usually singly or at most in twos, in a family setting for six to nine months. Community families are recruited, trained, and supported to provide well-supervised placements and treatments. MTFC parents implement a structured, individualized program for each youth that is designed to simultaneously build on the youngster's strengths and to set clear rules, expectations, and limits.

*Quantum Opportunities (QOP)*-QOP is a four-year, year round program that provides a balanced sequence of education opportunities, development opportunities, and service opportunities to small groups of youth from families receiving public assistance. QOP youth, from grade nine through high school graduation, are given an opportunity to receive annually, 250 hours of education activities (e.g., computer assisted instruction, peer tutoring, etc.), 250 hours of development activities (e.g., cultural and development activities, acquiring life/family planning skills, planning for college and advanced training, and job preparation), and 250 hours of service activities (e.g., community service projects, helping with public events, and working as a volunteer in various agencies).

*Bullying Prevention Program (BPP)*-Adult behavior is crucial to the success of the BPP, and in order to achieve the program's goals the following two conditions must be met. First, the adults at school and, to some degree, at home must become aware of the extent of bully/victim problems in their own school. Secondly, the adults must engage themselves, with some degree of seriousness, in changing the situation. These principles are then translated into specific measures that are used at the school, class, and individual levels, and taking action at all of these levels is vital to counteract bully/victim situations. In this way, students are consistently exposed to the message, from different persons/sources and in different contexts, that bullying is not accepted in the class/school, and the adults will see to it that it comes to an end.

*Life Skills Training (LST)*-The LST program is a three-year intervention designed to be conducted in school classrooms. The LST program was developed to impact drug-related knowledge, attitudes, and norms; teach skills for resisting social influences to use drugs; and promote the development of general personal self-management skills and social skills. The LST prevention program can best be conceptualized as consisting of three major components: 1) teach students a set of general self-management skills; 2) teach students general social skills; and 3) provide information and skills that are specifically related to the problem of drug abuse (e.g., drug resistance skills, anti-drug attitudes, anti-drug norms).

*Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)*-The goal of PATHS is focused on delinquency prevention through the development of essential developmental skills in emotional literacy, positive peer relations, and problem solving. The curriculum is designed to be taught by elementary school teachers from grade K through grade 5. PATHS is divided into three major units: 1) lessons that focus on readiness and self-control; 2) lessons that focus on teaching emotional and interpersonal understanding; and 3) lessons that cover eleven steps for formal interpersonal problem-solving.

## *PROMISING PROGRAMS*

These programs did not fit all of the criteria for a BLUEPRINT program designation. Yet, these programs have demonstrated significant prevention of deterrent effects. Programs that have failed to show a sustained effect are not eligible for classification as a PROMISING program, although those that have not yet demonstrated a sustained effect are eligible to remain in the PROMISING category. PROMISING programs can also be single site, unreplicated projects or have a small effect on delinquency/crime, violence, drug use, and pre-delinquent aggression. As more data becomes available, some or all of these PROMISING programs may move up to the BLUEPRINT category.

*FAST Track*-FAST Track is a comprehensive and long-term prevention program that aims to prevent chronic and severe conduct problems for high-risk children. It is based on the view that antisocial behavior stems from the interaction of multiple influences, and it includes the school, the home, and the individual in its intervention. FAST Track's main goals are to increase communication and bonds between these three domains, enhance children's social, cognitive, and problem-solving skills, improve peer relationships, and ultimately decrease disruptive behavior in the home and school.

*Preventive Treatment Program*-The Preventive Treatment Program is designed to prevent antisocial behavior of boys who display early, problem behavior. It provides training for both parents and youth to decrease delinquency, substance use, and gang involvement. This program combines parent training with individual social skills training. Parents receive an average of 17 sessions that focus on monitoring their children's behavior, giving positive reinforcement for pro-social behavior, using punishment effectively, and managing family crises. The boys receive 19 sessions aimed at improving pro-social skills and self-control. The training is implemented in small groups containing both disruptive and non-disruptive boys, and it utilizes coaching, peer modeling, self-instruction, reinforcement contingency, and role playing to build skills.

*Perry Preschool*-The Perry Preschool Program provides high-quality early childhood education to disadvantaged children in order to improve their later school and life performances. The intervention combats the relationship between childhood poverty and school failure by promoting young children's intellectual, social and physical development. By increasing academic success, the Perry Preschool Program is also able to improve employment opportunities and wages, as well as decrease crime, teenage pregnancy, and welfare use. The Perry Preschool Program is a two-year intervention that operates 2.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, for seven months per year, and includes weekly home visitations by teachers.

*Project PATHE*-Project PATHE is a comprehensive program implemented in secondary schools that reduces school disorder and improves the school environment to enhance students' experiences and attitudes about school. More specifically, it increases students' bonding to the school, self-concept, and educational and occupational attainment which, in turn, reduces juvenile delinquency. Project PATHE helps all students attending middle and high schools that serve high numbers of minority students in both inner-city and rural, impoverished areas. It provides additional treatment for low-achieving and disruptive students.

*Parent Child Development Center*-This intervention targets low-income families and provides multidimensional treatment to help mothers become more effective in child rearing. The programs have been successful in combating some of the educational and occupational problems associated with poverty and have demonstrated beneficial effects for both caregivers and their children. The Parent Child Development Programs target low-income families in which mothers are primary caregivers and children are aged 2 months to 3 years. Mothers are educated in socio-emotional, intellectual, and physical aspects of infant and child development through practical experiences and group discussions with staff and other mothers; care-givers' personal development is enhanced through training in home management and exposure to community resources and continuing education classes; and the needs of the entire family are addressed by providing transportation to services, some meals, health and social services, programs for siblings, and small stipends for participants.

*School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)*-STEP is based on the Transitional Life Events model, which theorizes that stressful life events such as making transitions between schools, places children at risk for maladaptive behavior. By reducing school disorganization and restructuring the role of the homeroom teacher, STEP aims to reduce the complexity of school environments, increase peer and teacher support, and decrease students' vulnerability to academic and emotional difficulties. Students are assigned to homerooms in which all classmates are STEP participants. Teachers in these classrooms act as administrators and guidance counselors, helping students choose classes, counseling them regarding school and personal problems, explaining the Project to parents, and notifying parents of student absences. This increased attention reduces student anonymity, increases student accountability, and enhances students' abilities to learn school rules and exceptions.

*The Syracuse Family Development Research Program (FDRP)*-FDRP bolsters child and family functioning and affective, interpersonal relationships through home visitations, parent training and individualized daycare. The intervention targets economically disadvantaged families in order to improve children's cognitive and emotional functioning, foster children's positive outlooks, and decrease juvenile delinquency. Mothers receive individualized training and support from paraprofessional child development trainers who make weekly home visitations. These trainers help mothers create developmentally appropriate and interactive games for their children, act as liaisons between participants and other support services, foster mothers' involvement in children's educational attainment, and model appropriate interactions with children.

The Childcare Center provides families with 5 years of daycare services run by highly trained staff. The Center offers cognitive and social interactive games, uses praise and positive reinforcement to encourage children to undertake challenges, and emphasizes both cooperation and concern for others by teaching participants how their behavior impacts others.

*Preventive Intervention*-This school-based intervention helps prevent juvenile delinquency, substance use, and school failure for high-risk adolescents. It targets juvenile cynicism about the world and the accompanying lack of self-efficacy to deal with problems. Preventive Intervention provides a school environment that allows students to realize that their actions can bring about desired consequences, and it reinforces this belief by eliciting participation from teachers, parents, and individuals. The two-year intervention begins when participants are in seventh grade and includes monitoring student actions, rewarding appropriate behavior, and increasing communication between teachers, students, and parents.

*Yale Child Welfare Project*-The Yale Child Welfare Project offers team-based, personalized family support to help disadvantaged parents support their children's development. The Project is based on the theory that improving bonds between parents and their offspring will result in better social and school adjustment for the children. It specifically targets impoverished families who lack adequate resources for their children and seeks to improve the quality of family life by providing medical, educational, social, and psychological services. The success of the Project lies in its ability to furnish constant, dependable, and personalized care in a variety of areas. The intervention begins when mothers are pregnant and continues until the infants are 30 months old.

*Baltimore Mastery Learning/Good Behavior Game*-The Mastery Learning (ML) and Good Behavior Game (GBG) interventions seek to improve children's psychological well-being and social task performance. The ML focuses on strengthening reading achievement to reduce the risk of depression later in life, while GBG aims to decrease early aggressive and shy behaviors to prevent later criminality. Both are implemented when children are in early elementary grades in order to provide students with the skills they need to respond to later, possibly negative, life experiences and societal influences.

*Intensive Protective Supervision (IPS)*-IPS removes juvenile offenders from criminal justice institutions and provides them with more proactive and extensive community supervision than they would otherwise receive. Its primary goals are to reduce undisciplined acts, decrease the likelihood of future, serious delinquency, and increase socially acceptable behaviors. IPS can be used for any youth under age 16 who is adjudicated as a status offender and who receives a protective supervision disposition. Offenders assigned to IPS are closely monitored by project counselors who have fewer cases and interact more extensively with the youth and his/her family than traditional parole officers. The counselors make frequent home visitations to assess family and youth needs, provide support for parents, and role model appropriate behavior.

*Project STATUS*-Project STATUS is a school-based program that helps students become active, responsible members of their community. Based on the belief that isolating students in book-learning environments fails to inspire commitment to schools and belief in social rules, the Project provides a more challenging and relevant educational experience. It increases students' pro-social behaviors by providing contact with positive adult role models, enhancing stakes in conformity, and altering peer relationships. The school climate intervention allows students, school personnel, parents, and community members to work together for change and is comprised of four components: a youth committee/leadership training class in which students identify and help solve school problems; staff development training to improve student discipline procedures and increase positive and supportive interactions between staff and students; action committees in which citizens makes community resources available to students and serve as positive role models; and parent meetings that allow parents to contribute to school decision-making and improves awareness of their children's educational activities.

*Project Northland*-Project Northland is a community-wide intervention designed to reduce adolescent alcohol use. The program spans three years and is multi-level, involving individual students, parents, peers, and community members, businesses, and organizations. Project Northland is a universal intervention designed for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. In sixth grade, student and parent communication is targeted by requiring parents and children to complete homework assignments together that describe adolescent alcohol use. In seventh grade, a peer- and teacher-led classroom curriculum focuses on resistance skills and normative expectations regarding teen alcohol use and is implemented using discussions, games, problem solving, and role plays. In eighth grade, students are encouraged to become active citizens. They interview influential community members about their beliefs and activities concerning adolescent drinking and conduct town meetings to make recommendations for the community's help in preventing alcohol use.

*Iowa Strengthening Families (ISFP)*-ISFP is a universal, family-based intervention which enhances parents' general child management skills, parent-child affective relationships, and family communication. Based on a developmental model, ISFP assumes that increasing the family's protective processes while decreasing its potential risk factors can alter a child's future, so that problem behaviors can be reduced or avoided. In addition, the program seeks to delay the onset of adolescent alcohol and substance use by improving family practices. ISFP is designed for use with all sixth-grade students and their families. The seven-week intervention utilizes a biopsychosocial model in which parents and children learn individual skills, then are brought together to improve family communication and practices.

*Seattle Social Development Project*-This universal, multidimensional intervention decreases juveniles' problem behaviors by working with parents, teachers, and children. It incorporates both social control and social learning theories and intervenes early in children's development to increase pro-social bonds, strengthen attachment and commitment to schools, and decrease delinquency. Teachers receive instruction that emphasizes proactive classroom management, interactive teaching, and cooperative

learning. When implemented, these techniques minimize classroom disturbances by establishing clear rules and rewards for compliance; increase children's academic performance; and allow students to work in small, heterogeneous groups to increase their social skills and contact with pro-social peers.

*Preparing for the Drug Free Years (PDFY)*-PDFY is a family competency training program that promotes healthy, protective parent-child interactions and reduces children's risk for early substance use initiation. It is based on the social development model, which theorizes that enhancing protective factors such as effective parenting practices will decrease the likelihood that children will engage in problem behaviors. While most sessions are focused on improving parenting skills and parents' self-efficacy, the program also provides students with peer pressure refusal skills and has demonstrated reductions in children's alcohol initiation. PDFY is a weekly, five-session multimedia program that strengthens parents' child-rearing techniques, parent-child bonding, and children's peer resistance skills.

*I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)*-ICPS is a school-based intervention that trains children in generating a variety of solutions to interpersonal problems, considering the consequences of these solutions, and recognizing thoughts, feelings, and motives that generate problem situations. By teaching children *to* think, rather than *what* to think, the program changes thinking styles and, as a result, enhances children's social adjustment, promotes pro-social behavior, and decreases impulsivity and inhibition. Although the program is appropriate for all children, it is especially effective for young (age 4-5), poor, and urban students who may be at highest risk for behavioral dysfunctions and interpersonal maladjustment. Throughout the intervention, instructors utilize pictures, role-playing, puppets, and group interaction to help develop students' thinking skills, and children's own lives and problems are used as examples when teachers demonstrate problem-solving techniques.

*CASASTART*-The CASASTART program targets youth in high-risk environments, and seeks to reduce their exposure to drugs and criminal activity. The program seeks to decrease individual, peer group, family and neighborhood risk factors through case management services, after-school and summer activities, and increased police involvement. CASASTART also works to improve attachment to adults, attachment to pro-social norms, school performance, and participation in pro-social activities/peer groups.

Recommended programs based on an independent review of prevention programs funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.<sup>17</sup>

Based on the scientific strength and substantive findings of available evaluations, programs were classified into one of four categories: 1) What works; 2) what doesn't; 3) what's promising; 4) what's unknown. Programs included in the "what works" category are those that reviewers are reasonably certain prevent crime or reduce risk factors for crime. Programs included in the "what doesn't" category are those that reviewers are reasonably certain fail to prevent crime or reduce risk factors for crime. Programs included in the "what's promising" category are those for which there is some evidence of success, but lacks the evidence necessary to support generalizable conclusions. The "unknown" category is for those programs that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in any of the other categories.

*What Works*

*In Families*

- Frequent home visits to infants aged 0-2 by trained nurses and other helpers.
- Preschool and weekly home visits by teachers for children under 5.
- Family Therapy and parent training about delinquent and at-risk preadolescents.

*In Schools*

- Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school teams or other organizational development strategies.
- Clarifying and communicating norms about behavior through rules, reinforcement of positive behavior, and school-wide initiatives (such as anti-bullying campaigns).
- Social competency skills curriculum, such as Life Skills Training which teach skills such as stress management, problem solving, self-control, and emotional intelligence.
- Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth using behavior modification techniques and punishments.

*In Places*

- Nuisance abatement (e.g., threatening civil action against landlords for not addressing drug problems on the premises).

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<sup>17</sup> A group from the University of Maryland's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice were selected as the independent reviewers. Program summaries are taken from, "Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising," authored by Lawrence Sherman, Denise C. Gottfredson, Doris L. McKenzie, John Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn D. Bushway.

### *By Police*

- Extra police patrols in high-crime “hot spots.”
- Repeat offender units that reduce the time on the streets of known high-risk repeat offenders by monitoring them and returning them to prison more quickly than when they are not monitored.
- Arresting domestic abusers.

### *By Criminal Justice Agencies After Arrest*

- Incarceration of offenders who will continue to commit crime prevents crimes they would commit on the street, but the number of crimes prevented by locking up each additional offender declines with diminishing returns as less active or serious offenders are incarcerated.
- Rehabilitation programs for adult and juvenile offenders using treatments appropriate to their risk factors.
- Drug treatment in prison in therapeutic community programs.

### *What’s Promising*

#### *In Communities*

- Gang offender monitoring by community workers and probation and police officers.
- Community-based mentoring by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America.
- Community-based after school recreation programs. Similar programs based in schools, however, have failed to prevent crime.

#### *In Families*

- Battered women’s shelters.

#### *In Schools*

- “Schools within schools” programs such as Student Training Through Urban Strategies that group students into smaller units for more supportive interaction or flexibility in instruction.
- Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth using behavior modification techniques or rewards and punishments.
- Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school teams or other organizational development strategies.
- Improved classroom management and instructional techniques.

### *In Labor Markets*

- Job Corps, and intensive residential training program for at-risk youth.
- Dispersing inner-city public housing residents to scattered-site suburban public housing by rental of single units in middle-income neighborhoods.
- Enterprise zones with tax break incentives in areas of extremely high unemployment.

### *In Places*

- Adding a second clerk in stores that have been robbed at least once.
- Redesigning the layout of retail stores.
- Metal detectors in schools.
- Street closures, barricades, and rerouting.
- “Target Hardening” (i.e., making a potential target of crime more resistant)
- “Problem-solving” analysis addressed to the specific situation at each location.

### *By Police*

- Proactive arrests for carrying concealed weapons made by officers on directed patrols in gun crime “hot spots,” using traffic enforcement and field interrogations.
- Community policing with meetings to set priorities.
- Policing with greater respect to offenders.

### *By Criminal Justice Agencies After Arrest*

- Drug Courts that ordered and monitored a combination of rehabilitation and drug treatment.
- Drug testing in jails followed by urine testing in the community.
- Intensive supervision and aftercare of minor juvenile offenders.
- Intensive supervision and aftercare of serious juvenile offenders.

## Best Practices

Research suggests that there are certain overarching principles that are important to developing effective delinquency prevention and intervention programs. The principles that follow provide a framework to guide delinquency prevention and intervention strategies.

### General Principles for an Effective Juvenile Delinquency Prevention & Intervention Strategy<sup>18</sup>

**Strengthen and support key social institutions** – families, schools, and community organizations – it is these groups who have the responsibility for providing guidance and support to children. Programs to be considered should help families, schools, and communities build on juveniles' strengths while addressing those factors that place juveniles at risk for delinquency.

**Offer comprehensive interventions** across many systems, including health and education, and deal simultaneously with many aspects of juveniles' lives. Comprehensive prevention strategies that involve more than one entity (e.g., police and schools), take place in a variety of settings (e.g., home and community), and are maintained for several years have been shown to positively affect at risk youth. Comprehensive strategies work at preventing juvenile offending because they address multiple risk factors in multiple settings.

**Intervene immediately and effectively** when delinquent behavior occurs. When developing intervention strategies, a local juvenile justice collaborative should be confident that intervention programs respond appropriately to delinquent behavior. In order to know what is the most appropriate response to delinquency, it is important that the local juvenile justice system be equipped to comprehensively assess every juvenile when he or she first enters the system. The goal of a local juvenile justice system should be, to paraphrase John J. Wilson Acting Director of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, to provide the right program, at the right time, to the right youth.

**Incorporate a system of graduated sanctions and enhanced treatment services** when a juvenile fails to respond to initial interventions. Levels of sanctions and services should be based on the offense, identified risk factors, and the offender's treatment and rehabilitation needs. Given the multitude of risk factors, the differential impacts of the factors at different developmental stages, and the widely varying social contexts that children are exposed to, positive effects are more likely when addressing a variety of factors and conditions, rather than a single isolated factor.

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<sup>18</sup> Adapted from Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders 1998. James C. Howell (editor). U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

## **Programmatic Implications of Best Practices**

Of late, research has identified several effective juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs. This section looks at specific types of prevention and intervention programs and describes the elements that assist in making these programs effective. These programs include: family centered programs; school programs; community programs; leadership and service programs; aftercare programs; substance abuse programs; gang related programs; gun programs; corrections and probation programs; and media programs.<sup>19</sup>

### Family Programs

Effective family programs are ones that strengthen the family and foster healthy growth and development of children from prenatal care through adolescence. To have the greatest impact, these programs must reach families before significant problems develop. When developing family programs, it is important to identify and understand what risk factors children are exposed to and then implement programs that counter these risk factors. Family programs should also involve other major spheres of influence outside of the family such as schools, peer groups, and community-based organizations. Children should be provided with opportunities to contribute to their families, schools, peer groups, and communities. These children must also be taught the skills needed to take advantage of their opportunities and receive recognition for their efforts. In addition to providing assistance to children, family programs should ensure that parents are skilled at setting clear and consistent standards that endorse pro-social behavior.

### School Programs

Prevention and intervention programs in the school can assist the family and community by identifying at-risk youth, monitoring their progress, and intervening with effective programs at critical times during a youth's development. Programs that closely supervise student behavior and positively reinforce attendance and academic progress increase positive school behavior and academic achievement while also decreasing delinquency. Other effective practices for school-based programs include matching academic materials to students' skill levels, having curriculum and discipline policies that are continually reviewed and revised, and using cooperative learning techniques. Supervised recreation after-school can also be an effective delinquency prevention strategy. After-school programs address risk factors (e.g., youth alienation, association with delinquent peers) and protective factors (e.g., skill building, developing bonds with pro-social youth and adults).

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<sup>19</sup> Adapted from Wilson, J. J. & Howell, J. C., October 1993; Bilchik, S. (Ed.), September 1995; Catalano, R. F., Loeber, R., & McKinney, K. C., October 1999; Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, March 1996; *Community-Based Alternatives: Challenge Activity C*, from *Reducing Youth Violence: A Comprehensive Approach*, Version 2. September 1999. Multimedia CD-ROM; Burch, J. H. & Chemers, B. M., March 1997 & Spergel, I. et al., October 1994; Gist, N. E. (Ed.), November 1995; Bilchik, S. (Ed.), May 1996; Bilchik, S. (Ed.) September 1999, Multimedia CD-ROM.

## Community Programs

Community-based youth programs can be a powerful ally in the prevention of delinquency. Especially when the community-based program works in conjunction with family and school related programs. Comprehensive neighborhood-based programs help children develop positive life skills and minimize risk factors, give them support and direction, and create opportunities for community involvement and service. For a community program to be effective the following characteristics should be evident: (1) The program should foster bonding between youth and adults; (2) Program administrators should recognize that with at-risk youth, one must expect a reasonable degree of attrition; (3) The program must be prepared to continue providing services until youth can function autonomously; (4) The program must be well organized, have good working relationships with other sectors of the community, and be professional; (5) The program must have good leadership; (6) The program must show a willingness to deal with the entire spectrum of a youth's problems; (7) The program must be committed to working with the youth's family when appropriate; (8) The program must be founded upon the philosophy that community-based, non-coercive approaches yield the best results; and (9) There must be a process for re-accepting the unsuccessful youth back into the program.

## Leadership & Service Programs

Leadership and service programs can reinforce and help internalize positive individual traits and provide youth with more protective factors. These types of programs can also provide opportunities for personal growth, active involvement in education, vocational training, and the development of life skills.

## Substance Abuse Programs

Substance abuse programs should be designed to reduce youth involvement with drugs *and* strengthen and mobilize communities to fight substance abuse. Programs should be multi-faceted, helping families supervise and nurture the positive development of their children in nonviolent homes and communities.

## Gang Programs

As with other prevention and intervention programs, gang-related programs must include a number of elements that have been related to the sustained reduction of gang problems. One element that is especially relevant to the purpose of this guidebook is community leaders' willingness to obtain an objective understanding of the nature and extent of the local gang problem (if one exists) through a comprehensive and systematic assessment. Community leaders must also develop a consensus on definitions (e.g., gang, gang incident) in order to better discuss, assess, and respond to their gang problem.

## Media Campaigns

Another prevention strategy that has shown positive effects is the use of media campaigns that attempt to change public attitudes and standards, educate community

residents, or support other interventions in the community. For example, research has shown that media campaigns are especially effective in preventing gateway drug use (e.g., cigarettes, alcohol) when used in conjunction with school-based interventions. The local media can also help in a public information campaign that promotes pro-social lifestyles, informs community residents about their role in the prevention of juvenile delinquency, and motivates collaboration between community members.

**Web sites that contain information on promising and effective juvenile justice programs.**

**AfterSchool.Gov**

[www.afterschool.gov](http://www.afterschool.gov) - Connects you to federal resources that support children and youth during out-of-school hours.

**Blueprints for Violence Prevention**

[www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints) – At this site are ten programs identified as "blueprints" with descriptions of the theoretical rationale, the core components of the program as implemented, the evaluation designs and results, and the practical experiences programs encountered while implementing the program at multiple sites.

**Causes and Correlates of Delinquency**

[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ccd](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ccd) -- The Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency comprises three coordinated longitudinal projects: the Denver Youth Survey, the Pittsburgh Youth Study, and the Rochester Youth Development Study. Initiated in 1986 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the Causes and Correlates projects are designed to improve the understanding of serious delinquency, violence, and drug use by examining how youth develop within the context of family, school, peers, and community.

**Department of Education**

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) – This site provides information on the nation’s educational system, specifically noting funding opportunities, student financial assistance, research and statistics, news and events, programs and services, and publications and products.

**Executive Office for Weed and Seed**

[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows) -- Operation Weed and Seed is a strategy which aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in targeted high-crime neighborhoods across the country.

**Join Together Online**

[www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org)

Join Together, a project of Boston University School of Public Health, is a national resource for communities working to reduce substance abuse and gun violence.

**Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA)**

[www.jrsainfo.org](http://www.jrsainfo.org)

The Justice Research and Statistics Association is a national nonprofit organization of state Statistical Analysis Center directors, researchers, and practitioners throughout government, academia, and criminal justice organizations. JRSA provides a clearinghouse of current information on state criminal justice research, programs, and publications, training in the latest computer technologies for record management, data analysis, Internet, forecasting, and other cutting-edge topics, as well as reports on the latest research being conducted by Federal and State agencies

**Juvenile Mentoring Program**

[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jump](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jump) -- The Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) seeks to support one-to-one mentoring programs for youth at risk of educational failure, dropping out of school, or involvement in delinquent activities, including gangs and drug abuse.

**National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy**

[www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org) -- The mission of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is to improve the well being of children, youth, and families by reducing teen pregnancy. This site has information on facts and stats, fact sheets, publications, polling data, tips, resources for parents, teens, and faith organizations, and readings.

**National Center for Conflict Resolution Education**

[www.nccre.org](http://www.nccre.org) -- The National Center for Conflict Resolution Education provides information on conflict resolution education in the form of programs, services, guides, resources, and contacts.

**National Center for Juvenile Justice**

[www.ncjfcj.unr.edu/ncjj/homepage—revised/front.html](http://www.ncjfcj.unr.edu/ncjj/homepage—revised/front.html) – The National Center for Juvenile Justice is dedicated to improving the quality of justice for children and families. NCJJ's primary means of accomplishing this mission is by conducting research and providing objective, factual information that is utilized to increase the juvenile and family justice systems' effectiveness.

**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**

[www.missingkids.org](http://www.missingkids.org) -- NCMEC serves as a focal point in providing assistance to parents, children, law enforcement, schools, and the community in recovering missing children and raising public awareness about ways to help prevent child abduction, molestation, and sexual exploitation.

**National Criminal Justice Association**

[www.ncja.org](http://www.ncja.org) -- The National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) exists to foster the development of criminal justice systems in the states and units of local government that enhance public safety; that prevent and reduce the harmful effects of criminal behavior on individuals and communities; that adjudicate defendants and sanction offenders fairly and justly; and that use their resources effectively and efficiently.

**National Institute of Justice**

[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij) -- NIJ is the research and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice and is the only Federal agency solely dedicated to researching crime control and justice issues. NIJ provides objective, independent, non-partisan, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and justice, particularly at the State and local levels.

### **National Mentoring Center**

[www.nwrel.org/mentoring](http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring) -- The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's National Mentoring Center provides training and technical assistance to mentoring programs through a variety of services and conferences.

### **National Prevention Information Network**

[www.cdcnpin.org](http://www.cdcnpin.org) -- The CDC National Prevention Information Network (NPIN) provides information about HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and tuberculosis (TB) to people and organizations working in prevention, health care, research, and support services. All of NPIN's services are designed to facilitate the sharing of information about education, prevention, published materials, and research findings and news about HIV/AIDS-, STD-, and TB-related trends.

### **National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign**

[www.mediacampaign.org](http://www.mediacampaign.org) -- The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign targets youth ages 9-18 and their parents, and other adults who influence the choices young people make. The Campaign uses a mix of modern communications techniques and all possible venues—from television programs to after-school activities—to educate and empower young people to reject illicit drugs. The Campaign also teams up with civic and non-profit organizations, faith-based groups, and private corporations to enlist and engage people in prevention efforts at school, at work, and at play.

### **PreventionDSS.org**

[www.preventiondss.org](http://www.preventiondss.org)

CSAP's DSS website promotes scientific methods and programs for substance abuse prevention. The DSS is designed to actively guide practitioners and State systems toward making well-informed decisions concerning a broad range of prevention programming options. Its seven-step approach to on-line technical assistance, training and other resources identify "best and promising" approaches to needs assessment, capacity building, intervention program selection, evaluation, and reporting.

### **RAND Corporation**

[www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org) – RAND Corporation helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis. They sometimes develop new knowledge to inform decision-makers without suggesting any specific course of action. Often, they go further by spelling out the range of available options and by analyzing their relative advantages and disadvantages.

### **SafeFutures**

[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/safefutures](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/safefutures) -- SafeFutures seeks to prevent and control youth crime and victimization through the creation of a continuum of care in communities. This continuum of care enables communities to respond to the needs of youth, at critical stages of their development through the provision of the appropriate prevention, intervention, and treatment services as well as graduated sanctions.

### **Strengthening America's Families**

[www.strengtheningfamilies.org](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.org)

At this site, The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) reports the results of a search for "best practice" family strengthening programs. In the website you will find two page summaries of family-focused programs which have been proven to be effective.

### **Urban Institute**

[www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org) -- The Urban Institute is a nonpartisan, economic and social policy research organization established in Washington, D.C., in 1968 to sharpen thinking about society's problems and efforts to solve them, improve government decisions and their implementation, and increase citizens' awareness about important public choices.

### **Vera Institute of Justice**

[www.vera.org](http://www.vera.org) -- Working in collaboration with government, the Vera Institute of Justice designs and implements innovative programs that encourage just practices in public services and improve the quality of urban life. Vera operates the programs it designs only during their demonstration stage. When they succeed, these demonstrations lead to the creation of new government programs, the reform of old ones, or the establishment of nonprofit organizations to carry on Vera's innovations.

# *APPENDIX C*

## Grant Proposal Guidelines

The following guide outlines the main components of a grant proposal and provides some sample questions that may help you address the various components. A well-written proposal can improve your chances of obtaining a grant and can also help you think about what your project hopes to accomplish and how it plans to do so. Keep in mind that this is only a guide, and if the granting agency has its own outline or required form, it should be followed instead.

### SECTION I: SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

In this section you should provide a description of your proposed project. Although the summary is the first section read, it should be the last section written. In this section, you should include a description of what your agency does, the general population your agency serves, the purpose of your project, your specific target population for this project, what problem(s) you are trying to address, and how you think this project will impact the problem(s) you identified. You may want to address the following questions:

- a) What does your agency do?
- b) What general population is served by your agency?
- c) What does your agency propose to do for this project and for what purpose?
- d) What population will be targeted by this project?
- e) Why do you think this project is needed in addition to existing resources within your agency? In other words, what problem(s) has been identified warranting need for this project?
- f) How will this project address the problem(s) identified?

### SECTION II: STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem statement should be a specific description of the problem(s) identified among the population your agency will serve and how the proposed project will address this problem(s). It is recommended that you use data when possible to support your claims. In some cases, you may want to use quantitative data, such as statistics collected by your local police department. However, case histories and anecdotal information can

also be used to support your claims. This information should be used to describe the extent of the problem(s) and how you identified the problem(s) in your area. Also, you should describe why this is a problem that your organization cannot currently address. If you have tried to address this problem in the past, you should explain those efforts. You should also include the purpose of the project and the target population within this section. You may want to address the following questions:

- a) What problem(s) has been identified that this project will address?
- b) How do you know this problem(s) exists? You may want to use the following sources:
  - Quantitative data – Data that can be counted. Such data may include official statistics from government agencies or surveys of prospective clients. When presenting quantitative data, it is important to clearly define exactly what you are counting, the geographical area represented by the data and the time period covered by the data. However, it is also important not to overwhelm the reader with numbers. Only present data that demonstrate your problem(s) exists. Examples of quantitative data include violent offenses, the number of school truancies and the number of offenders released to your community on parole over the past five years.
  - Case histories – Recent incidents that serve as examples of what may be prevented if your proposed project were implemented. Examples of case histories include a child residing in a local housing complex who was severely injured during a gang fight, an elderly person who lost their entire life savings to a neighborhood scam artist, or a victim of domestic violence who returned to her abuser because she did not have anywhere else to live. If you use case histories, please do not report the names of the individuals you discuss. Instead, use general identifiers, such as a 10-year-old youth or an elderly resident.
  - Anecdotal information – Information you have heard from the population you serve or by others who also serve your population. Examples of anecdotal information may include comments from several community residents of the area your agency serves who have expressed fear of walking alone at night in their neighborhoods; teachers at the local grammar school who have complained that their students have been acting more violently in recent years.
- c) Why can't your agency effectively address this problem(s) with existing resources?
- d) Has your agency attempted to address this problem(s) before? If so, was the attempt successful? Why or why not?

- e) How do you think the proposed project will affect the problem(s) identified? —  
AND—How do you think your project will help your target population?

### SECTION III: PROJECT ACTIVITIES

This section should be a description of what you will do to address the problem(s) you have identified. It should explain the tasks and activities you will perform to implement the project in clear, logical detail. A good way to do this is to provide a chronological explanation of the step-by-step procedure of how you intend to carry out the project in the allotted timeframe. Be sure to indicate how the budgeted items are related to your activities. Your activities will be later used to develop your program's objectives. Therefore, it is important for you to keep in mind what you ultimately hope to accomplish when determining what activities should be undertaken. You may want to address the following questions:

- a) What additional resources are being sought with your proposed project?
- b) How will you reach your target population?
- c) What activities will be performed to affect the target population and the identified problem(s)?  
—AND—Will these activities be performed daily, weekly, or only as needed?

### SECTION IV: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Goals, objectives, and performance indicators are critical components of your narrative that define what you hope to accomplish, how you will get there, and how you will know you have gotten there. The proposed goals and objectives should offer some relief of the problems defined in the previous section and should reflect your project's activities. You should include both short-term and long-term goals and objectives. Short-term goals and objectives reflect what you expect to accomplish within a few months to a year. Long-term goals and objectives reflect what you expect to accomplish beyond one year. Performance indicators are the sources of information you will use to measure your progress toward your goals and objectives. All goals, objectives, and performance indicators must be specific and clear so that someone unfamiliar with the project will understand what you want to accomplish, how you intend to do it, and how you will measure your progress.

What is the difference between a goal and objective? Goals can be general or specific statements that reflect the ultimate purpose(s) of your project and what your project hopes to accomplish. When developing your goal(s), remember that it states what impact you hope your project will have on the problem(s). Objectives are more specific tasks completed or the changes in your population that must be accomplished to meet the goal. Both goals and objectives should be clear, measurable, and realistic.

Before you develop objectives for your project, it is important to understand the difference between process and outcome objectives. Process objectives refer to the implementation or delivery of your project, while outcome objectives refer to the changes (i.e., in behavior, attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, etc.) you hope to bring about in your target population. In other words, process objectives specify the activities or tasks that need to be completed to carry out the project, while outcome objectives reflect ways in which that problem will be alleviated or solved. When writing your proposal, it is important to remember that there should be objectives stated for each goal, and at least one of the stated objectives should be outcome-orientated.

The following are some examples of process and outcome objectives:

PROCESS:

- Recruit 10 high school students to serve as peer mentors for the project.
- Provide court accompaniment services to at least 40 victims of domestic violence.
- Hire a qualified instructor to provide G.E.D. classes to inmates.

OUTCOME:

- Reduce truancy among high school students served by Project X by 25 percent.
- Increase project participants' knowledge about the consequences of drug use by 50 percent.
- Improve prosecution rates of sexual assault offenders by 20 percent.

Finally, progress toward your goals and objectives cannot be assessed without some index of performance. Performance indicators are the sources of information (or the specific "gauge") you will use to determine whether or not you have accomplished your objectives. Performance indicators must follow from, and be directly related to the objectives (regardless of whether they are long-term or short-term). There should be at least one performance indicator for each objective regardless of the type of objective (i.e., process or outcome).

There are important things you should think about before writing your performance indicators. For each performance indicator, you need to determine whether the information is available, if it is accessible to you, how you will obtain the information, and if the information is clear and understandable.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- The total number of juvenile arrests made by local police departments in Sunny County.
- Treatment completed as indicated in the participant's activity log completed by project staff at the end of every treatment session.
- Number of domestic violence victims served by the project. Project staff will maintain records of all victims served.

Goals, objectives, and performance indicators should be presented in the following format:

*EXAMPLE: Goal 1*  
    *Objective 1*  
        Performance indicator(s)  
    *Objective 2*  
        Performance Indicator(s)  
*Goal 2*  
    *Objective 1*  
        Performance indicator(s)  
    *Objective 2*  
        Performance Indicator(s)

## SECTION V: IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

You should use the implementation schedule as a planning tool for the project and it should reflect a realistic projection of how the project will proceed. Special attention should be given to administrative procedures, which may affect project start-up. The implementation schedule also will be used to measure the project's progress. Also, the activities you list in the implementation schedule should reflect the activities you state in Section III and vice versa. Therefore, it is in your best interest to prepare an implementation schedule that is realistic, detailed and thorough.

## SECTION VI: BUDGET

While different granting agencies have different requirements for proposed budgets, most ask for both a line-item budget and a budget narrative. A line-item budget lists each expense (such as personnel, supplies, travel, printing, etc) and its corresponding cost. A narrative goes into more detail about each item, such as why it is needed for the project and how the expense amount was computed. Make sure that the expenses you list are reasonable, allowable and justified by the project. Also double-check your figures and ensure that everything is added correctly.

## OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

You can improve the quality of your proposal by keeping in mind the following points:

- You should always show how the information you include is related to your project. For example, if you are proposing to address substance abuse, include information that relates to substance abuse in your area and how this pertains to your project.
- Always assume the reader is not familiar with the topic you are writing about. If you are proposing a project, do not assume that the reader is familiar with that type of project.
- Use common language when describing your population or problem. Try not to use technical language that may not be commonly known. If you need to use technical language, describe for the reader the meaning of the language used. For instance, if you plan to target youth with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), include a definition of ADD.
- Do not use slang because it can confuse the reader. For instance, you may call methamphetamine by its street name “crank,” but others may not.
- If you use acronyms, always spell out what the acronym refers to when it is first introduced to the reader. From that point onward, you may use the acronym.
- If you have additional information about the type of project that you want to implement (e.g., such as a pamphlet containing a project description or bibliography), you may provide that information with the proposal. However, this should be considered an attachment. You will still need to describe the project in the proposal.

# *APPENDIX D*

**Example Needs Assessment Report**

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**A Profile of the Baird County Juvenile  
Justice System in the 1990's**

Prepared by the

**Baird County Juvenile Justice Council**

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## **I. Introduction**

The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998 (Public Act 90-590) made significant changes to Illinois' juvenile justice system. While many of these changes directly altered procedures for handling juvenile cases, the Act also made numerous overarching administrative changes to the juvenile justice system (Article VI, ILCS 405/6-1 through ILCS 405/6-12). One of these administrative changes was that Illinois counties were encouraged to develop a Juvenile Justice Council (ILCS 405/6-12), composed of representatives from the sheriff's office, state's attorney's office, probation department, and county board, as well as other individuals involved in the county's juvenile justice system (e.g., an appointee from the chief judge of the judicial circuit, social service providers, school board members). The purpose of the council is to provide an interagency forum to assess the county's juvenile justice system and to facilitate the reduction of juvenile crime in the community.

To these ends, one goal of the Juvenile Justice Council is to develop a juvenile justice plan "based upon utilization of the resources of law enforcement, school systems, park programs, sports entities, and others in a cooperative and collaborative manner to prevent or discourage juvenile crime" (ILCS 405/6-12 (3) (a)). An initial step in developing a juvenile justice plan is to determine the needs of the local juvenile justice system. This report was prepared by the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council (a fictional county council). The purpose of this report is to provide us with data which will enable us to more effectively assess the needs of our juvenile justice system.

This report assembles data related to the Baird County juvenile justice system that is made available by various federal and state agencies. Demographic data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. The remaining data elements included in this report came from the following Illinois agencies: the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts.

The data in this report are separated into four sections: (1) a demographic section describing the overall Baird County population and the Baird County juvenile population, (2) a juvenile court system section describing amounts and rates of system activity in Baird County, (3) a risk and protective factor section describing numerous variables which have an impact on juvenile development and which may be linked to future criminal behavior, and (4) a summary that attempts to identify some of the more notable findings in this report and draws conclusions from the data.

In order to make this report as informative as possible, we adopted two strategies throughout the report. First, for each variable included in the report, we attempted to include data for the years 1990 to 1999. By including these years, the reader will be able to identify the most recent levels of the variable, and will be able to identify trends in the data. However, there are numerous instances throughout this report when data for one or more of the years in the 1990's were not available.

Second, for several of the variables described in the report, we compared Baird County to other Illinois counties that are geographically and demographically comparable. Baird County has been designated a rural county by the U.S. Census Bureau. Thus, we compared Baird County to the other 73 Illinois rural counties on several of the most informative variables for which we had relatively complete data. These comparisons may allow the reader to better interpret what constitutes a "high" or "low" level of a variable. The introductory paragraphs of the demographic, juvenile court system, and risk factor sections each state which variables are compared.

The US Census Bureau designates counties as urban or rural based on whether or not they lie within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). A MSA has been defined by the Census Bureau as an area that meets one of following criteria: (1) it includes a city with a population of at least 50,000, (2) it includes an urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000 and a metropolitan population of at least 100,000. Additional areas may also be defined as a MSA if they have strong economic or social ties to an area that meets one of the two criteria. Based on this definition, there are 28 counties in Illinois which are part of a MSA, and 74 counties which are not part of a MSA (and, therefore, are classified as rural).

When comparing Baird County to the other 73 Illinois rural counties in Sections II and III, we sometimes used rates instead of absolute numbers or averages. This allowed us to control for population size. In other words, it allowed us to determine that differences between Baird County and the other 73 Illinois rural counties on the variables we examined were not the result of differences in the number of juveniles that live in Baird County compared to the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

We compared Baird County to the other 73 Illinois rural counties using rates per 100,000 juveniles ages 5 to 16 in the population. So, for example, the reported child sexual abuse rate per 100,000 juveniles ages 5 to 16 in Baird County for 1999 would be calculated by using the simple formula (# of reported child sexual abuse cases in Baird County in 1999 / juvenile population in Baird County in 1999) x 100,000. If reporting the collective rates for the other 73 Illinois rural counties in 1999, the formula would be ( $\Sigma$  # of reported child sexual abuse cases in 1999 /  $\Sigma$  juvenile population in 1999) x 100,000, where  $\Sigma$  is the sum of the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

Our decision to use rates per *100,000* juveniles as opposed to some other number of juveniles was arbitrary. The rates simply allow one to make useful comparisons between counties with different populations. Thus, when examining figures throughout the report that are based on rates, the reader should attend to differences between Baird County and the other 73 Illinois rural counties, as opposed to the rates themselves.

The data included in this report alone does not provide a complete picture of the Baird County juvenile justice system. There are limitations to the report's utility. Thus, this report should be perceived as a tool that can be used to provide an initial indication of some potential issues facing our juvenile justice system. We intend to use this report to contribute to the development of an effective juvenile justice plan.

## II. Demographic Information

This section provides a general demographic description of the Baird County juvenile population and the overall Baird County population. General demographic information and demographic trends, when considered in conjunction with juvenile justice system and/or risk factor information, may provide further insights into our juvenile justice needs.

As was mentioned above, throughout the report we make numerous comparisons between Baird County and the other 73 Illinois rural counties using rates to control for population differences. In this section, we attempted to determine whether the Baird County juvenile population is comparable to the juvenile population in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. We compared Baird County's juvenile gender and racial composition to that of the other 73 Illinois rural counties and found that there were slight differences. However, we believed that the differences were not large enough to warrant choosing another comparison group.

In addition, it is instructive to know the size of the Baird County juvenile population relative to the other 73 Illinois rural counties. Such knowledge may help us to determine the amount of resources needed to address juvenile justice system needs in Baird County. Thus, in this section, we compared Baird County's juvenile population from 1990-1999 to juvenile populations in the other 73 Illinois rural counties for each year from 1990-1999.

Demographic data for this section was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau's website provides overall population estimates for each U.S. county, as well as population estimates by age, gender, race, and Hispanic origin<sup>20</sup>. We included these demographic estimates in the report. Each estimate represents the population as of July 1 of that year. Estimates are made using the population estimate for the most recent census year (for this report, 1990), then factoring in annual birth rates, death rates, and migration rates.

In addition to population estimates separated by race, ethnicity, and gender, we also report Census Bureau data on poverty and income. The Census Bureau determines county income and poverty levels by developing statistical models based on tax returns, counts of food stamp participants, data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the population estimate for the most recent census year, population estimates for mid-census years, and Census Bureau surveys.

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<sup>20</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau classifies the population according to four racial categories (White, Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Asian or Pacific Islander) and two ethnicity categories (Hispanic and non-Hispanic). Race and ethnicity are independent categories. Thus, for example, a person can be classified as both White and Hispanic.

Baird County - Overall and Juvenile Population Estimates, 1990-1999

Table 1 shows Baird County overall and juvenile population estimates for July 1 of each year in the 1990's<sup>21</sup>. Table 1 shows that the overall and juvenile population in Baird County has remained stable from 1990 to 1999. The largest overall population in Baird County in the 1990's was 14,221 (1990) and the smallest overall population in the 1990's was 13,929 (1994). This is a difference of only 292 individuals. Similarly, there were small differences between the largest juvenile population in the 1990's and the smallest juvenile population in the 1990's.

Whereas there were more females than males in the overall Baird County population for every year during the 1990's, the opposite was true for the Baird County juvenile population. There were more males than females in the juvenile population for every year in the 1990's. In addition, for both the overall and juvenile population, there was a great deal of stability throughout the 1990's in the percentage of the population that was female.

**Table 1**

**Baird County Population Estimates From 1990 to 1999**

Year	Overall Population			Juvenile Population, 5 to 16		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1990	14,221	6,787	7,434	2,538	1,306	1,232
1991	14,043	6,705	7,338	2,517	1,295	1,222
1992	14,004	6,693	7,311	2,498	1,285	1,213
1993	13,931	6,661	7,270	2,488	1,281	1,207
1994	13,929	6,667	7,262	2,491	1,282	1,209
1995	14,131	6,780	7,351	2,557	1,315	1,242
1996	14,124	6,782	7,342	2,590	1,331	1,259
1997	14,139	6,789	7,350	2,597	1,334	1,263
1998	14,068	6,770	7,298	2,572	1,321	1,251
1999	14,045	6,767	7,278	2,553	1,312	1,241

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>21</sup> For the most part, we define a juvenile as someone between the ages of 5 and 16. However, there are a number of instances throughout the report when we examine different age groups (e.g., 0 to 17). In these instances, we examined different age groups either because it seemed appropriate given the variable we were examining or because we only had data available for a particular age range (typically the latter reason as, to the extent possible, we would have preferred to adopt a uniform age range throughout the report).

## Comparing Juvenile Populations, 1990-1999

Table 2 compares the Baird County juvenile population ages 5 to 16 from 1990 to 1999 to juvenile populations in the 73 Illinois rural counties from 1990 to 1999. To be specific, Table 2 compares the Baird County juvenile population for each year during the 1990's to the largest and smallest juvenile population in other rural Illinois counties. Table 2 also shows the percentage of other Illinois rural counties with juvenile populations larger than that in Baird County.

Table 2 suggests that the Baird County juvenile population tends to be smaller than the juvenile population in the other 73 rural Illinois counties. For each year in the 1990's a majority of rural counties had larger juvenile populations.

In addition to having a slightly smaller juvenile population than many other rural counties in Illinois, the gender distribution for the juvenile population ages 5 to 16 was slightly different. Whereas Table 1 showed that a slight majority of Baird County juveniles for each year from 1990 to 1999 are male, a slight majority of juveniles ages 5 to 16 in the other 73 Illinois rural counties are female (50.8%).

**Table 2**

### **Indicators Comparing Baird County's Juvenile Population Ages 5 to 16 in the 1990's to Juvenile Populations in the Other 73 Illinois Rural Counties**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Baird County Juvenile Population</b>	<b>Largest Juvenile Population<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Smallest Juvenile Population<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Percent With Larger Population<sup>c</sup></b>
<b>1990</b>	2,538	18,299	675	68.5%
<b>1991</b>	2,517	18,552	689	71.2%
<b>1992</b>	2,498	18,631	680	71.2%
<b>1993</b>	2,488	18,793	702	72.6%
<b>1994</b>	2,491	18,950	719	72.6%
<b>1995</b>	2,557	19,215	742	72.6%
<b>1996</b>	2,590	19,419	754	72.6%
<b>1997</b>	2,597	19,523	759	72.6%
<b>1998</b>	2,572	19,478	765	72.6%
<b>1999</b>	2,553	19,371	768	71.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Baird County Council calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau data

a: This column shows the juvenile population ages 5 to 16 of the Illinois rural county that had the largest juvenile population for that year

b: This column shows the juvenile population ages 5 to 16 of the Illinois Rural county that had the smallest juvenile population for that year

c: This column shows the percentage of Illinois rural counties with juvenile populations ages 5 to 16 larger than that in Baird County

### Baird County – Racial and Ethnic Composition, 1990-1999

Baird County's racial and ethnic composition has remained stable from 1990 to 1999. A large majority of the Baird County population is White (over 99% for each year in the 1990's, including both Hispanic and non-Hispanic ethnicities). The Hispanic population constituted less than 1% of the Baird County for each year in the 1990's.

Baird County's racial and ethnic composition in the 1990's differed slightly from the overall racial and ethnic composition in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. Overall, for each year in the 1990's, approximately 96% of the population in the other rural counties was White, 3% was African-American, and 1% was Hispanic. Thus, there were slightly larger percentages of minorities (in particular, African-Americans) in the other 73 Illinois rural counties than there were in Baird County.

### Baird County – Poverty Levels and Median Household Income, 1993, 1995, and 1997

The U.S. Census Bureau has made several county level poverty measures for the years 1993, 1995, and 1997 available on their website. There were an estimated 1,268 individuals living in poverty in Baird County in 1993, 1,184 in 1995, and 1,193 in 1997. These absolute numbers constituted between an estimated 8.5% and an estimated 9.2% of the overall Baird County population.

Unfortunately, we were unable to compare Baird County poverty levels to those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. However, we were able to compare the estimated percentage of individuals living in poverty in Baird County to estimated percentages in Illinois as a whole. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that between 11.3% and 13.4% of the Illinois population was living in poverty during 1993, 1995, and 1997. These estimated percentages are higher than the estimated percentages in Baird County.

Of the estimated number of individuals in Baird County who were living in poverty during 1993, 1995, and 1997, a significant percentage were between the ages of 0 and 17 (between 36.6% and 41.1%). There were 464 individuals between the ages of 0 and 17 living in poverty in Baird County in 1993, 487 in 1995, and 477 in 1997. These estimates constitute between 12.6% and 13.0% of the juvenile population for 1993, 1995, and 1997. Again, these estimated percentages were slightly lower than the estimated percentages for individuals ages 0 to 17 in Illinois as a whole (between 17.5% and 20.4%). Baird County had a median family income of \$30,523 in 1993, \$32,819 in 1995, and \$36,681 in 1997.

### **III. Juvenile Court System Information**

This section provides information on the number of juveniles in Baird County who entered into the juvenile court system during the 1990's, as well as information on the number of juveniles in Baird County who received various types of dispositions during these years. Much of the data reported in this section was obtained from Annual Reports published by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts.

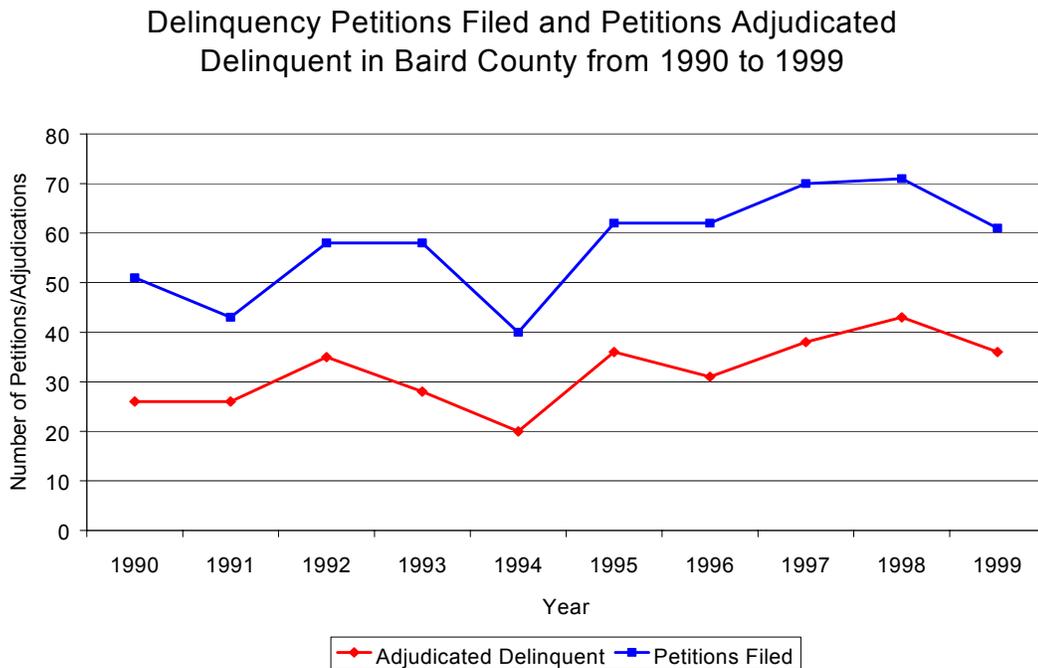
We report data on the number of delinquency petitions filed, the number of petitions adjudicated delinquent, probation caseloads, the number of hours of community service completed, the amount of restitution paid, the number of juveniles who were detained in juvenile detention centers (both pre and post adjudication), and the number of juveniles sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections. We also report the number of technical violations and new offenses committed by juvenile probationers during the 1990's. Finally, we compare Baird County to the other 73 Illinois rural counties on the following variables: the rate of delinquency petition filings per 100,000 juveniles, the rate of delinquency adjudications per 100,000 juveniles, juvenile probation caseload rates per 100,000 juveniles, and the rate of juveniles sent to a detention facility (pre and post-adjudication) per 100,000 juveniles.

## Baird County – Delinquency Petitions Filed and Adjudicated Delinquent, 1990-1999

Figure 1 shows the absolute number of delinquency petitions filed and petitions adjudicated delinquent in Baird County from 1990 to 1999. Figure 1 shows that there was some fluctuation throughout the 1990's in the number of delinquency petitions filed and delinquency adjudications in Baird County. However, relative to the early 1990's, there tended to be more filings and adjudications in Baird County later in the 1990's. For example, there were 37.3% more delinquency petition filings in Baird County during 1998 than there were during 1990. Similarly, there were 46.2% more delinquency adjudications in Baird County during 1998 than there were during 1990.

We also examined, for each year in the 1990's, delinquency petitions filed relative to delinquency petitions adjudicated ( $\#$  of delinquency petitions filed /  $\#$  of petitions adjudicated delinquent). This gave us a percentage which allowed us get an indication of how often juveniles who have a delinquency petition filed against them, are subsequently adjudicated delinquent. However, because a juvenile may have a petition filed in one calendar year, then be adjudicated in the next calendar year, this percentage cannot be interpreted as the percent of delinquency petitions filed each year that were subsequently adjudicated delinquent. Nonetheless, we found that, throughout the 1990's, these percentages ranged from 48.3% (in 1993) to 60.6% (in 1998). Thus, a fairly large percentage of minors in Baird County who have a delinquency petition filed against them are subsequently adjudicated delinquent.

**Figure 1**



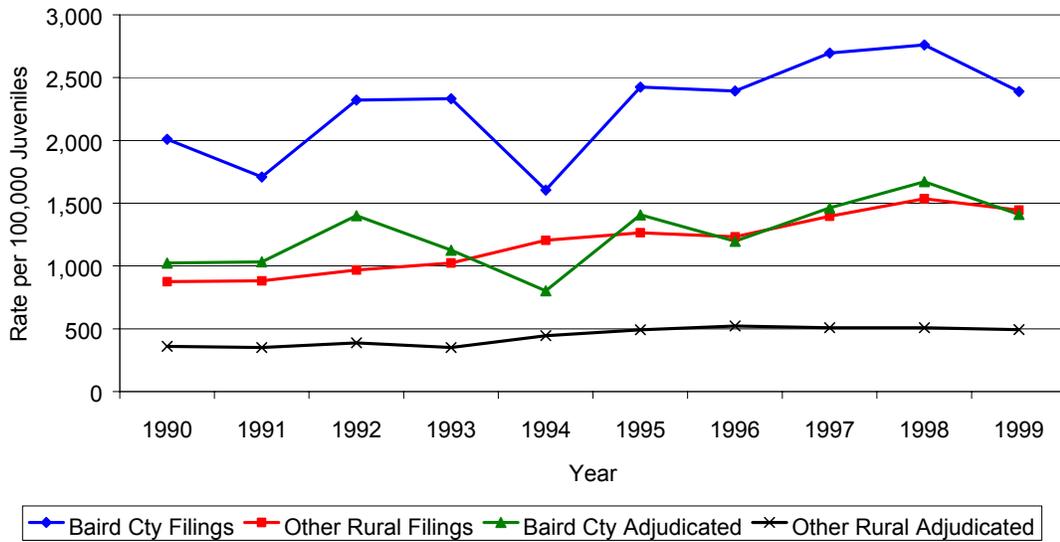
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Comparing Rates of Delinquency Petitions Filed and Adjudicated Delinquent, 1990-1999

Figure 2 compares Baird County's delinquency petition filing rate and delinquency adjudication rate per 100,000 juveniles ages 5 to 16 to that of the other 73 Illinois rural counties. Figure 2 shows that both delinquency petition filing and adjudication rates were considerably higher in Baird County than in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

**Figure 2**

**Baird County vs. Other 73 Illinois Rural Counties -  
Delinquency Petition Filing and Adjudication Rates from  
1990 to 1999**



Source: Baird County Council calculations based on data from the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Baird County – Continuance Under Supervision, 1990-1999

Table 3 shows the total number of petitions for continuance under supervision in Baird County for each year from 1990 to 1999. Table 3 also shows an indirect indicator of the extent to which juveniles who have a delinquency petition filed against them subsequently have their cases continued under supervision. For each year, we divided the number of petitions for continuance under supervision by the number of delinquency petitions filed. This percentage does not accurately reflect the percentage of juveniles each year who had their cases continued under supervision for at least two reasons: (1) some juveniles may have more than one delinquency petition filed against them in the same calendar year, and (2) a delinquency petition for a particular case may be filed in one calendar year, while a petition for continuance under supervision for that case is filed the next year. Nonetheless, the percentages in Table 3 provide an indirect indication of the extent to which adjudication in Baird County is averted through continuance under supervision.

Table 3 indicates that from approximately 17.1% (1997) to approximately 32.3% (1995 and 1996) of the cases in Baird County for which a delinquency petition was filed were not adjudicated, but instead were continued under supervision. Thus, a fairly significant number of juveniles in Baird County avert adjudication.

**Table 3**

**The Number of Petitions for Continuance Under Supervision  
in Baird County from 1990 to 1999**

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Petitions For Continuance Under Supervision</b>	<b>% of Delinquency Petition Filings</b>
1990	10	19.6%
1991	12	27.9%
1992	15	25.9%
1993	10	17.2%
1994	8	20.0%
1995	20	32.3%
1996	20	32.3%
1997	12	17.1%
1998	22	31.0%
1999	18	29.5%

Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Baird County – Juvenile Probation Caseloads, 1990-1999

Table 4 shows the active, end of calendar year juvenile probation caseloads in Baird County from 1990 to 1999. There was some fluctuation in probation caseloads throughout the 1990's. For example, there were over twice as many active juvenile probationers in Baird County at the end of 1998 than there were at the end of 1990 or 1994. However, there were no pronounced trends in Baird County juvenile probation caseloads during the 1990's.

To get an indirect indication of the extent to which probation is being used as a sentencing option for juveniles in Baird County, we also included the number of juveniles adjudicated delinquent in Baird County for each year during the 1990's. The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts requests the number of juveniles adjudicated delinquent *each year*. On the other hand, end of year probation caseloads may include cases that were sentenced in *past years* (if a juvenile gets a multiple year probation sentence). Thus, the data in Table 4 is not an accurate indication of the extent to which probation is being used as a sentencing option in Baird County. Nonetheless, Table 4 provides an indirect indication that probation is a frequently used sentencing option for juveniles in Baird County.

**Table 4**

**Juvenile Probation Caseloads in Baird County  
From 1990 to 1999**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile Probation Caseload</b>	<b>Juveniles Adjudicated Delinquent</b>
<b>1990</b>	15	26
<b>1991</b>	19	26
<b>1992</b>	23	35
<b>1993</b>	22	28
<b>1994</b>	14	20
<b>1995</b>	21	36
<b>1996</b>	25	31
<b>1997</b>	26	38
<b>1998</b>	32	43
<b>1999</b>	22	36

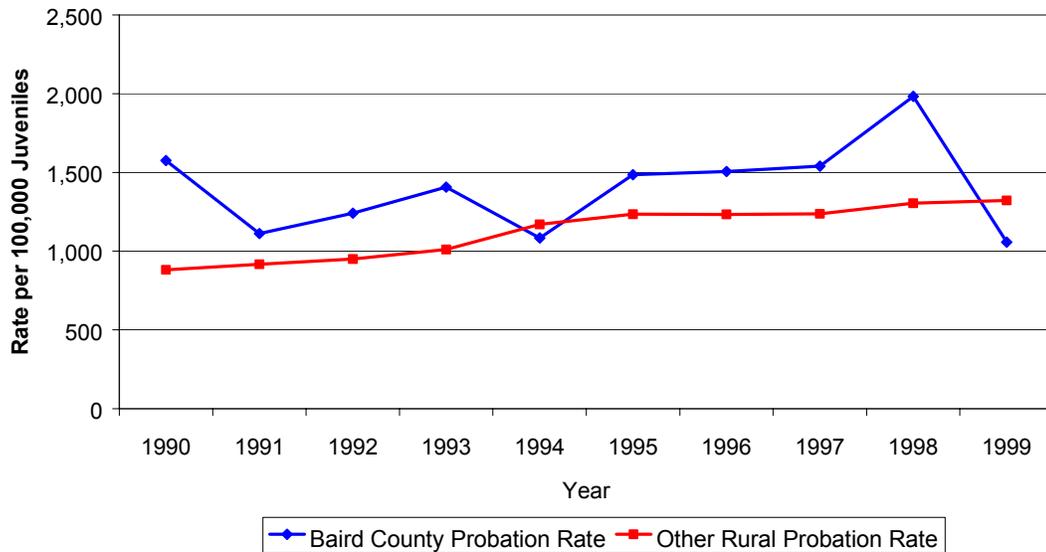
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Comparing Juvenile Probation Caseload Rates, 1990-1999

Figure 3 compares the end of calendar year active juvenile probation caseload rate per 100,000 juveniles ages 5 to 16 in Baird County to the probation rate for the other 73 Illinois rural counties. Figure 3 shows that the Baird County juvenile probation caseload rate exceeded that of the other 73 Illinois rural counties for every year except 1994 and 1999.

**Figure 3**

**Baird County vs. Other 73 Illinois Rural Counties - Juvenile Probation Rates from 1990 to 1999**



Source: Baird County calculations using data from the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Baird County – Juvenile Community Service and Restitution, 1990-1999

Community service and/or restitution tended to be included in many juvenile dispositions in Baird County from 1990 to 1999. Table 5 shows the number of community service hours completed and the amount of restitution paid by juveniles in Baird County from 1990 to 1999. There appears to be some indication that there was fluctuation in the extent to which community service and restitution were included as part of juvenile dispositions in Baird County. Although, because the data reflects community service hours *completed* and restitution *paid*, compliance likely contributed to the fluctuation as well.

Table 5 also includes the number of juveniles in Baird County for each year in the 1990's who were either adjudicated delinquent or who had a petition for continuance under supervision filed for them by the court. Of course, it is likely that not every juvenile who is adjudicated delinquent or whose case is continued under supervision will be required to complete community service and/or pay restitution. Moreover, some community service may not be completed and/or restitution may not be paid during the year in which the juvenile is adjudicated delinquent or the year in which the juvenile's case is continued under supervision. Nonetheless, Table 5 allows one to get a general indication of how many community service hours were completed and restitution paid, relative to the amount that *could have* been completed or paid, given the number of potential recipients of community service or restitution.

**Table 5**

**Community Service Hours Completed and  
Restitution Paid by Juveniles in Baird County from 1990 to 1999**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Community Service Hours Completed</b>	<b>Amount of Restitution Paid</b>	<b># of Delinquency Adjudications and Petitions for Continuance Under Supervisions</b>
<b>1990</b>	220	\$3,879	36
<b>1991</b>	338	\$3,375	38
<b>1992</b>	990	\$8,765	50
<b>1993</b>	784	\$6,732	38
<b>1994</b>	563	\$3,612	28
<b>1995</b>	535	\$1,253	56
<b>1996</b>	455	\$738	51
<b>1997</b>	728	\$3,641	50
<b>1998</b>	620	\$3,893	65
<b>1999</b>	112	\$7,585	44

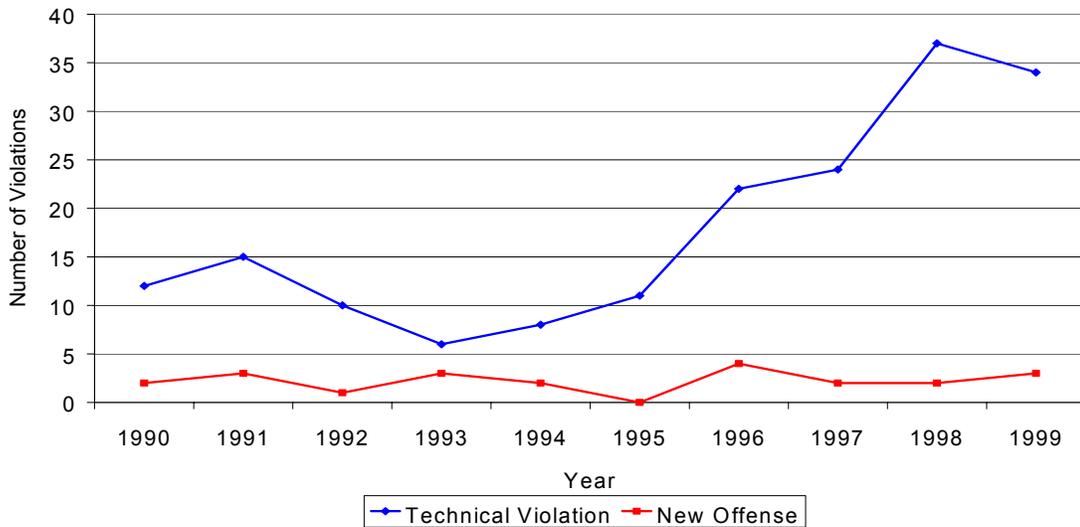
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Baird County – Juvenile Probation Violations, 1990-1999

Figure 4 shows the number of technical violations and new offenses committed by juvenile probationers in Baird County from 1990 to 1999. The number of technical violations fluctuated slightly throughout the early 1990's, but increased dramatically from 1995 to 1999 (there were 11 reported technical violations in 1995, 37 in 1998, and 34 in 1999). There were relatively few violations for new offenses (no more than 4 during any year in the 1990's).

**Figure 4**

**Juvenile Probation Violations in Baird County  
from 1990 to 1999**



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Table 6 shows the end of calendar year active probation caseload in Baird County for each year in the 1990's, alongside the number of technical violations and new offenses. There was a slight tendency for there to be more technical violations during years when the active probation caseload was larger. However, violations for new offenses remained low regardless of the active probation caseload.

**Table 6**

**Active Juvenile Probation Caseload and Juvenile Probation Violations in Baird County from 1990 to 1999**

Year	Juvenile Probation Caseload	Probation Violations	
		Technical Violation	New Offense
1990	15	12	2
1991	19	15	3
1992	23	10	1
1993	22	6	3
1994	14	8	2
1995	21	11	0
1996	25	22	4
1997	26	24	2
1998	32	37	2
1999	22	34	3

Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Baird County - Juvenile Detention, 1990-1999

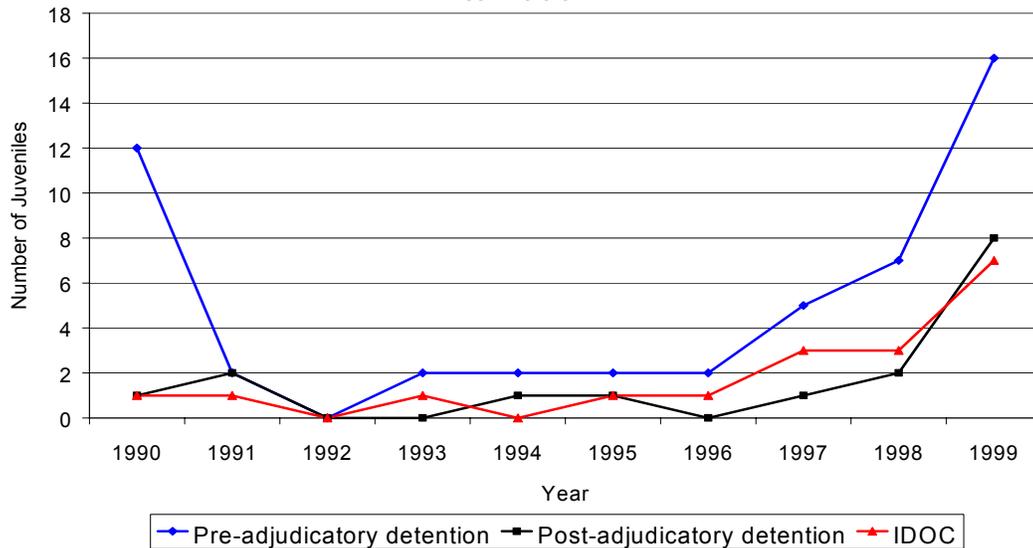
Figure 5 shows the number of Baird County juveniles reported to have been detained in juvenile detention centers both prior to and after adjudication during the 1990's. Figure 5 also shows the number of Baird County juveniles reported to have been sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) during the 1990's.

With the exception of a large decrease in the number of pre-adjudicatory detentions in Baird County from 1990 to 1991, the number of pre and post adjudicatory detentions and sentences to IDOC fluctuated only slightly from 1990 to 1996. However, all three types of sanctions tended to increase from 1996 to 1999. In particular, there were appreciable increases in all three types of sanctions from 1998 to 1999. There were over twice as many pre-adjudicatory detentions, post-adjudicatory detentions, and sentences to IDOC in 1999 than there were in 1998. During this year, the juvenile probation caseload decreased by 31.3%.

Despite these increases, the absolute number of detentions in Baird County remained low. For most of the years during the 1990's, there were fewer than ten pre-adjudicatory, post-adjudicatory, and IDOC detentions.

**Figure 5**

Juvenile Detained or Sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections in Baird County from 1990 to 1999



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and the Illinois Department of Corrections

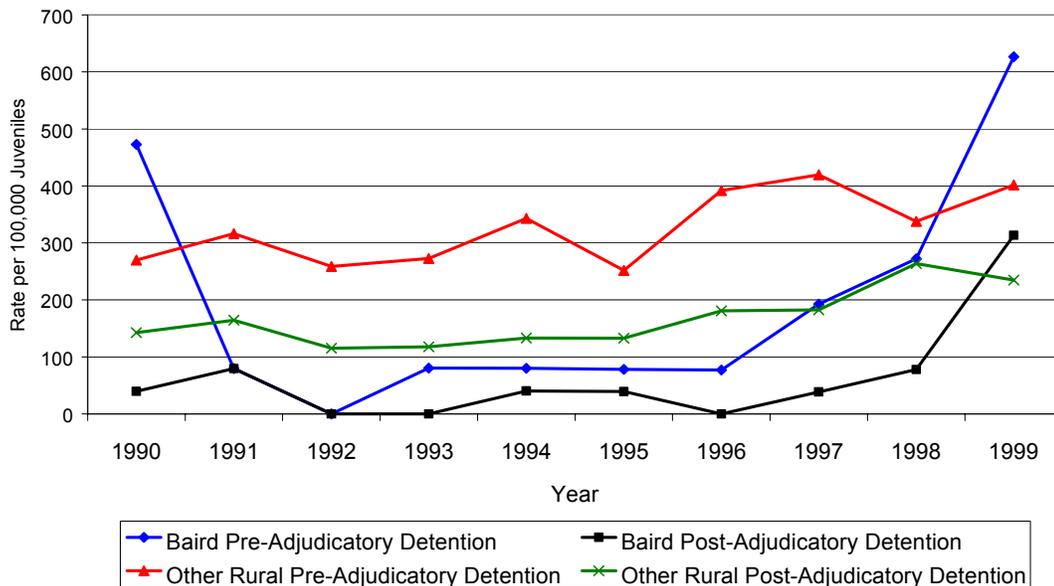
Comparing Juvenile Detention Rates, 1990-1999

Figure 6 compares the pre and post adjudicatory detention rates per 100,000 juveniles age 5 to 16 in Baird County to rates in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. Figure 6 shows that, for most of the 1990's, there were considerably lower pre and post adjudicatory detention rates in Baird County compared to the other 73 Illinois rural counties. However, pre and post adjudicatory detention rates in Baird County rose every year from 1996 to 1999, whereas rates in the other 73 Illinois rural counties remained relatively stable. As a result, the 1999 pre and post adjudicatory detention rates in Baird County were higher than the rates in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

Overall, Figure 5 and Figure 6 suggest that the use of juvenile detention has increased in Baird County in the later years of the 1990's and that, on the whole, there have not been similar increases in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

**Figure 6**

**Baird County vs. Other 73 Illinois Rural Counties - Juvenile Detention Rates From 1990 to 1999**



Source: Baird County Council calculations based on data from the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

#### **IV. Risk Factor Information**

This section reports data on variables that may be related to the likelihood of a minor committing a crime. The variables that we examined were: the number of reported and verified child abuse and neglect cases, the number of reported and verified child sexual abuse cases, the number of substance affected infants, the number of neglect or abuse petitions filed in Baird County courts, the number of Minors Requiring Authoritative Intervention (MRAI) petitions filed in Baird County courts, the number of dependency petitions filed in Baird County courts, the number of minors under 19 receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the total number of births by mothers age 19 or under, the number of high school dropouts, the number of truancy petitions filed in Baird County courts, the number of emergency room admissions to minors under 18 for violent injuries, the number of minors age 0 to 16 admitted to Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA) funded drug treatment facilities (as well as information pertaining to the minors), and the number of addiction petitions filed in Baird County courts. In addition to providing information on the number of youths who are at greater risk of entering into the juvenile justice system both presently and in the future, this information also may provide an indication of the demands that are being placed on local agencies who provide services to at risk youths and their families.

We compared Baird County to the other 73 Illinois rural counties on reported and verified abuse and neglect rates per 100,000 juveniles, reported and verified child sexual abuse rates per 100,000 juveniles, the percentage of total births in the county that were by mothers age 19 or under, and on the percentage of the county high school population that dropped out of school.

Data for this section came from various sources. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) reports information on the number of child abuse and neglect cases (sexual and non-sexual) reported and verified in each Illinois county for each state fiscal year. DCFS also reports information on the number of substance-affected infants for each state fiscal year.

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) reports the number of neglect or abuse, MRAI, dependency, truancy and addiction petitions filed in each Illinois county. Neglected minors are under 18 and do not receive necessary support or are abandoned by their parents or guardians. Abused minors are under 18 and have been physically or sexually abused. An MRAI petition may be filed for minors who have run away or are beyond control of their parents and guardians so that their physical safety is in immediate danger. A dependency petition may be filed for minors under 18 whose parents are deceased or disabled, who are without proper care (through or not through the fault of the parent or guardian), or whose parents or guardians wish to relinquish all parental control. Truant minors are reported by a regional school superintendent as being chronically absent from school. Finally, an addiction petition may be filed for a minor under 18 who is addicted to drugs or alcohol.

AOIC also reports where minors who have been adjudicated neglected, abused, MRAI, etc., are subsequently placed by the court. AOIC reports the number of minors placed in foster homes, group homes, residential treatment, and with relatives.

Information on the number of minors under 19 in families receiving AFDC and TANF funds was obtained from the Illinois Department of Human Services. Information on births by mothers age 19 or under and on emergency room admissions for violent injuries was obtained from the Illinois Department of Public Health. Information on high school dropouts was obtained from the Illinois State Board of Education. Information on admissions to Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA) funded facilities was obtained from OASA, which is a division of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Baird County - Child Abuse and Neglect, 1990-1999

Figure 7 shows the number of reported and verified (i.e., examined and found to have merit) cases of child abuse and neglect in Baird County during the 1990's. Throughout the 1990's, the number of reported cases fluctuated somewhat, with the greatest number of reported cases occurring in state fiscal year 1996 (203) and the fewest number of reported cases occurring in state fiscal year 1991 (139).

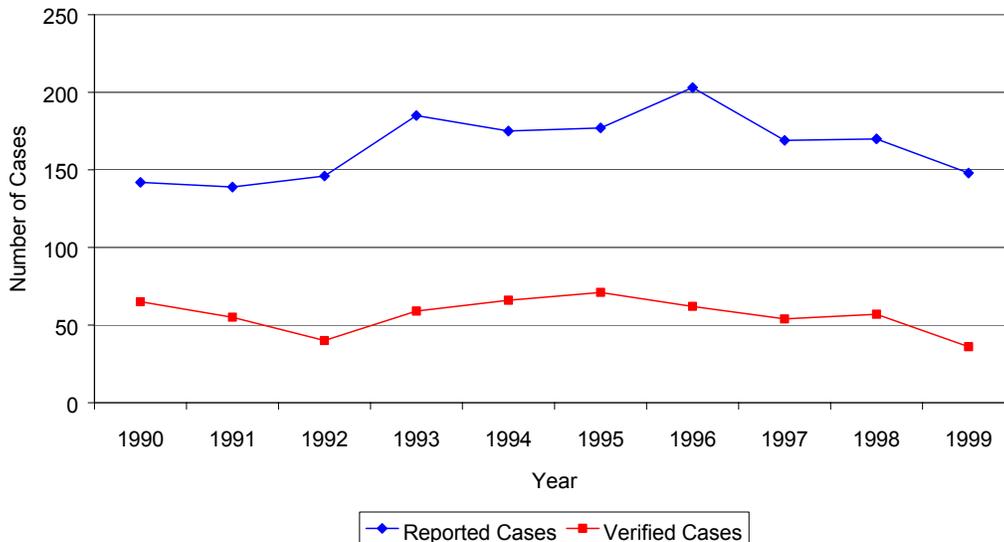
The number of verified child abuse and neglect cases in Baird County also fluctuated somewhat throughout the 1990's. The greatest number of verified cases occurred in state fiscal year 1995 (71) and the fewest number of verified cases occurred in state fiscal year 1999 (36). The percentage of reported abuse and neglect cases that were subsequently verified in the 1990's ranged from 27.4% (1992) to 45.7% (1990).

There were 16 petitions filed in Baird County juvenile court in 1990 for abuse and neglect. In addition, nine abuse and neglect petitions were filed in 1999. However, no abuse and neglect petitions were reported as having been filed from 1991 through 1998.

There were no dependency or MRAI (Minors Requiring Authoritative Intervention) petitions filed in Baird County during the 1990's. Thus, overall, there may have been few abuse and neglect, MRAI, or dependency cases heard in Baird County juvenile court. Alternatively, AOIC may not have had the data available.

**Figure 7**

**Reported and Verified Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect in Baird County from 1990 to 1999**

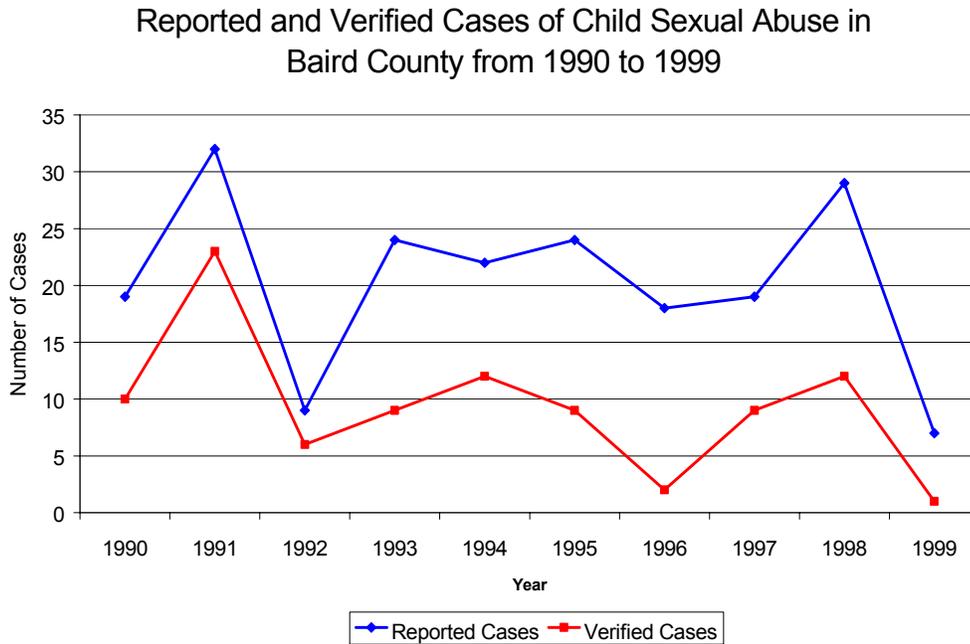


Source: Department of Children and Family Services

Baird County – Child Sexual Abuse, 1990-1999

Figure 8 shows the number of reported and verified child sexual abuse cases in Baird County during the 1990's. Reported and verified child sexual abuse cases fluctuated greatly throughout the 1990's. Perhaps most notably, the number of reported and verified child sexual abuse cases in 1999 was the lowest during the 1990's (7 reported and 1 verified).

**Figure 8**



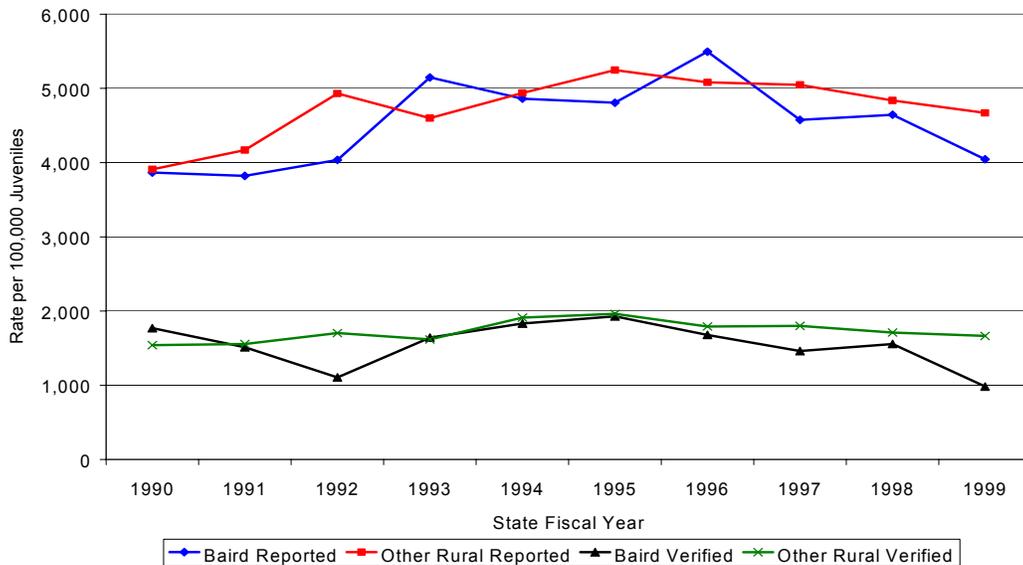
Source: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Comparing Child Abuse and Neglect Rates, 1990-1999

Figure 9 compares the rates of reported and verified child abuse and neglect cases per 100,000 juveniles age 0 to 17 in Baird County from 1990 to 1999 to those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. In general, Figure 9 shows that from 1990 to 1999, Baird County rates were comparable to the other 73 Illinois rural counties. Moreover, differences between Baird County rates and rates in the other 73 Illinois rural counties tended to be quite small.

**Figure 9**

**Baird County vs. Other 73 Illinois Rural Counties -  
Reported and Verified Child Abuse and Neglect from  
1990 to 1999**



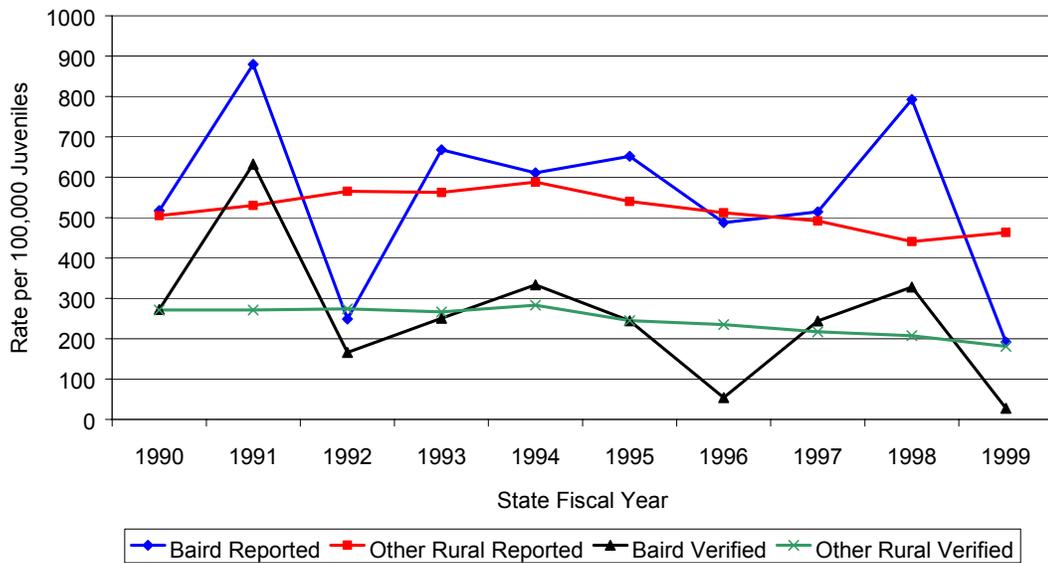
Source: Baird County calculations based on data from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Comparing Child Sexual Abuse Rates, 1990-1999

Figure 10 compares the rates of reported and verified child sexual abuse cases per 100,000 juveniles ages 0 to 17 in Baird County from 1990 to 1999 to those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. In general, Figure 10 shows no clear pattern. In several years, the rates of reported and verified child sexual abuse for Baird County and the other 73 Illinois rural counties were quite comparable. In other years, the rates were either appreciably higher or lower in Baird County.

**Figure 10**

**Baird County vs. Other 73 Illinois Rural Counties -  
Reported and Verified Child Sexual Abuse Rates from  
1990 to 1999**



Source: Baird County calculations based on data from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

### Baird County - Substance Affected Infants, 1990-1999

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services also reports information on the number of substance-affected births reported and verified in each Illinois County for each state fiscal year. This information may be useful in identifying at-risk minors further into the future.

There were a low number of reported substance-affected births in Baird County throughout the 1990's. In 1990, 1992, and 1993 there was one report of a substance-affected birth filed each year, while during the remaining years there were no reports. Of the three substance-affected births in Baird County that were reported to DCFS from 1990 to 1999, all were subsequently verified.

### Baird County – Juvenile Court Placements, 1990-1999

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) reports the number of neglect or abuse, MRAI, dependency, and addiction petitions filed in each Illinois county. Of the minors who have these petitions filed against them, some are adjudicated neglected, abused, MRAI, or addicted and placed in an alternative setting by the court. AOIC reports the number of minors placed in foster homes, group homes, residential treatment, and with relatives. However, AOIC does not distinguish placements by type of petition (i.e., only the total number of placements to each type of alternative setting are reported).

AOIC reported that, in Baird County, there were no court placements to any alternative setting from 1991 to 1998. In 1990, there were eight group home placements (and no placements to other alternative settings). In 1999, there were seven group home placements (and no placements to other alternative settings).

Baird County – Unemployment Assistance for Needy Families, 1990-1999

Effective July 1, 1997, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) as the program providing funds and services to unemployed Illinois citizens with children. With the change came an increased emphasis on transitional services. Many TANF clients are required to work or participate in work-related activities (e.g., job search and job readiness programs). Clients are limited in the amount of time that they can receive TANF benefits.

Because of this significant change, it is not appropriate to compare the number of minors in Baird County living in families who received AFDC funds and services to the number of minors in Baird County living in families who received TANF funds and services. Table 7 shows the number of minors living in families receiving unemployment assistance throughout the 1990's (AFDC or TANF). Perhaps not surprisingly, there were appreciable drops from 1996 (the last full year of the AFDC program) to 1998 (the first full year of the TANF program) in the number of minors in Baird County living in families receiving unemployment funds and services. Similarly, after 1996, there were decreases in the percentage of minors in the Baird County population living in families receiving assistance.

**Table 7**

**The Number of Minors Ages 0 to 18 in Baird County  
in Families Receiving Unemployment Assistance  
from 1990 to 1999**

<b>Unemployment Program</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Minors Receiving Aid</b>	<b>% of Population Age 0 to 18</b>
AFDC	1990	193	5.0%
AFDC	1991	229	6.1%
AFDC	1992	222	5.9%
AFDC	1993	207	5.6%
AFDC	1994	206	5.5%
AFDC	1995	203	5.3%
AFDC	1996	225	5.9%
AFDC-TANF	1997	153	4.0%
TANF	1998	122	3.2%
TANF	1999	83	2.2%

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services and Baird County Council calculations based on Illinois Department of Human Services data

Baird County - Births by Mothers Age 19 or Under, 1993-1999

Table 8 shows the overall number of births in Baird County from 1993 to 1999 by mothers ages 19 or under. Table 8 also shows this information broken down into age ranges: under 15, ages 15 to 17, and ages 18 or 19. From 1993 to 1999, there were small annual fluctuations in the number of births to mothers age 19 or under. However, on the whole, births by mothers age 19 or under remained relatively stable throughout the 1990's. Table 8 also shows that a majority of the mothers age 19 or under in Baird County from 1993 to 1999 were either 18 or 19 years old (ranging from 55% to 78.9%). Few of the mothers were under the age of 15.

The percentage of the total number of children born in Baird County from 1993 to 1999 that were born to mothers age 19 or under remained somewhat stable. Percentages ranged from 11.4% to 12.2% for four of the seven years from 1993 to 1999. However, only 8.8% of the total births in Baird County in 1998 were by mothers age 19 or under, whereas 16.1% of the total births in Baird County in 1997 were by mothers age 19 or under.

**Table 8**

**Births in Baird County by Mothers Age 19 or Under  
From 1993 to 1999**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Births by Mothers Age 19 or Under</b>	<b>Births by Mothers Under 15</b>	<b>Births by Mothers Ages 15 to 17</b>	<b>Births by Mothers Ages 18 or 19</b>	<b>% of Total Births by Mothers Age 19 or Under</b>
1993	19	0	4	15	11.8%
1994	20	1	8	11	11.8%
1995	23	1	5	17	12.2%
1996	17	0	6	11	9.7%
1997	29	1	6	22	16.1%
1998	15	0	4	11	8.8%
1999	20	0	6	14	11.4%

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health and Baird County Council data based on Illinois Department of Public Health data

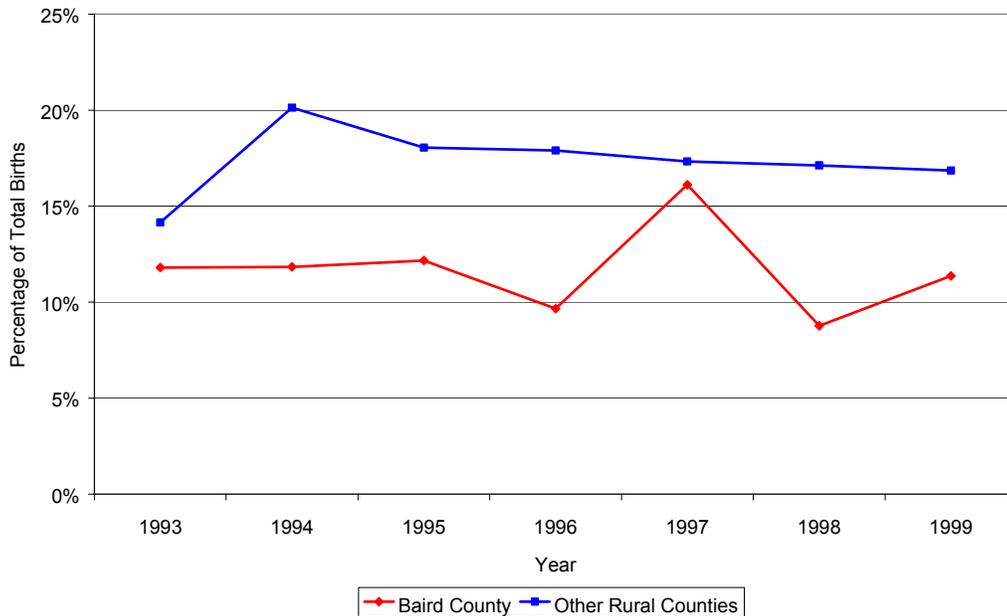
## Comparing Births by Mothers Age 19 or Under, 1993-1999

We compared Baird County to the other 73 Illinois rural counties on the percentage of total births that were by mothers age 19 or under. Figure 11 shows that the percentage of total births by mothers age 19 or under was lower in Baird County than in the other 73 Illinois rural counties for every year from 1993 to 1999.

Table 8 showed that a majority of the births to mothers age 19 or under in Baird County were by mothers ages 18 or 19. On average, from 1993 to 1999, 70.3% of the births to mothers age 19 or under in Baird County were by 18 or 19 year olds. We were unable to easily examine whether there were similar percentages in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. However, we were able to examine whether there were similar percentages statewide. The statewide percentage of total births to mothers age 19 or under that were by mothers 18 or 19 was somewhat lower than in Baird County (60.2%).

**Figure 11**

**Baird County vs. Other 73 Illinois Rural Counties -  
Percentage of Total Births by Mothers Age 19 and Under  
from 1993 to 1999**



Source: Baird County calculations based on data from the Illinois Department of Public Health

## Baird County - High School Dropouts, 1990-1999

Table 9 shows the number of high school dropouts in Baird County from the 1990-1991 school year to the 1998-1999 school year. There was a tendency for high school dropouts in Baird County to increase throughout the 1990's. For example, there were 14 more dropouts during the 1998-1999 school year compared to the 1990-1991 school year. Table 9 also includes the percentage of high school students who dropped out each school year in the 1990's. These percentages were low throughout the 1990's, but tended to increase as the number of dropouts in Baird County increased.

There was only one truancy petition reported as having been filed in Baird County juvenile court from 1990 to 1998. The truancy petition was reported to have been filed in 1991.

**Table 9**  
**High School Dropouts in Baird County**  
**from 1990 to 1999**

<b>School Year</b>	<b># of Dropouts</b>	<b>% of High School Population</b>
90-91	23	2.9%
91-92	29	3.7%
92-93	27	3.4%
93-94	31	3.8%
94-95	36	4.4%
95-96	35	4.1%
96-97	35	4.4%
97-98	33	4.2%
98-99	37	4.6%

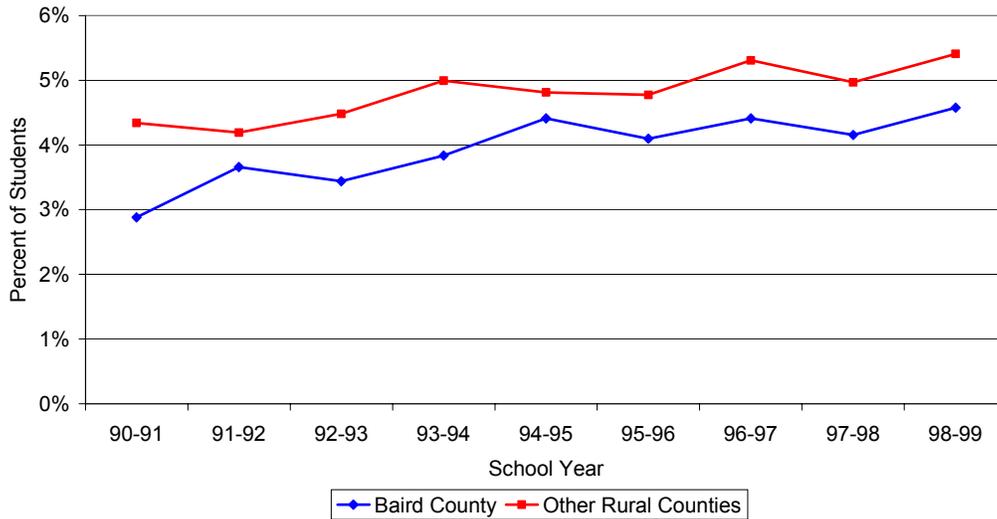
Source: Illinois State Board of Education and Baird County Council calculations based on Illinois State Board of Education data

Comparing Percent of High School Students Who Dropped Out, 1990-1999

Figure 12 compares the percentage of high school dropouts in Baird County for each school year during the 1990's compared to the percentage of dropouts in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. Figure 12 shows that the other 73 Illinois rural counties had slightly higher percentages of dropouts. On average, the other 73 Illinois rural counties had almost exactly 1% (0.87%) more of their high school population drop out of school throughout the 1990's. Figure 12 also shows that the percent of high school students who dropped out tended to increase throughout the 1990's in both Baird County and the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

**Figure 12**

**Baird County vs. Other 73 Illinois Rural Counties -  
Percent of High School Students who Dropped Out From  
1990-1991 School Year to 1998-1999 School Year**



Source: Baird County calculations based on Illinois State Board of Education data

## Baird County – Emergency Room Admissions for Violent Injuries, 1998 and 1999

Effective March 10, 1998, the Illinois General Assembly mandated all hospitals with emergency departments to report victims of violent injury to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). More specifically, emergency departments were required to report every violent injury resulting in a hospital admission and every instance of child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence (irrespective of whether or not the patient is admitted to the hospital). Reporting is optional for all violent injuries besides child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence, when the individual is not admitted to the hospital, but is instead discharged home from the emergency department.

IDPH was mandated to compile all the information they obtained in the Illinois Violent Injury Registry. IDPH estimated that 90% of Illinois hospitals complied with the mandate in 1998. IDPH also expected compliance to increase in 1999.

Injuries are reported by Emergency Departments using a system of injury codes. Each injury has its own code. In addition to child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence, the registry also includes violent injuries by assaults of various types (e.g., by firearms, poisoning, cutting instruments, etc.), suicide of various types (the same types as the assault categories), legal intervention of various types (the same types as the assault categories), fights or brawls, and accidents by firearms or explosives. The Registry also includes data on the following injuries, when it's uncertain whether the injury occurred by accident or was purposely inflicted: poisoning, hanging or strangulation or suffocation, drowning, injuries due to firearms or explosives, injuries by cutting or piercing instruments, falling from a high place, injuries by other and unspecified means.

Several types of injuries have both a general code, and more specific sub-codes. The sub-codes provide more detail about the injury. For example, IDPH uses a general code for "assault by firearms and explosives" and a more specific sub-code for "assault by shotgun."

This section reports emergency room admissions for minors who resided and/or had their injuries occur in Baird County during 1998 and 1999. Table 10 (on the next page) shows the types of violent injuries sustained by minors in Baird County. Table 10 shows that relatively few violent injuries to minors were reported to IDPH. Given these relatively low numbers, it is conceivable that Baird County hospital(s) are under-reporting instances of violent injury. However, there were only 650 violent injuries reported in the other 73 Illinois rural counties in both 1998 and 1999. Moreover, in 1998 there were two rural counties that reported over 50 violent injuries and in 1999 there were four rural counties that reported over 50 violent injuries. If one excludes these counties, then rural counties reported an average of 5.9 violent injuries in 1998 and 3.7 violent injuries in 1999. These averages are relatively similar to the number of injuries reported by Baird County.

**Table 10**

**Information on Minors in Baird County Age 0 to 17 Who Sustained Violent Injuries in 1998 and 1999**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
	n = 10	n = 11
<b>Type of Injury</b>		
<b>Unarmed Fight/Brawl</b>	2	3
<b>Rape</b>	2	1
<b>Assault by:</b>		
<b>Cutting and Piercing Instruments</b>	1	2
<b>Striking by Blunt or Thrown Object</b>	0	1
<b>Other Specified Means</b>	2	1
<b>Child Battering/Maltreatment by:</b>		
<b>Father, Stepfather, Partner</b>	3	2
<b>Mother, Stepmother, Girlfriend</b>	0	1
<b>Place That Injury Occurred</b>		
<b>Home</b>	8	8
<b>Street/Highway</b>	2	1
<b>Public Building</b>	0	1
<b>Other Specified Place</b>	0	1

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

## Baird County – Admissions to Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facilities, 1994-1999

We obtained data from the Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA) on the demographics of minors ages 0 to 16 who were admitted to OASA funded facilities in Baird County from 1994 to 1999. OASA funds are designated for various indigent populations (e.g., populations that would not receive drug or alcohol treatment through private insurance). The data that OASA collects pertains to individuals who were treated through OASA funds. Thus, the data reported in this section may not reflect trends and levels for all minors in Baird County.

Table 11 summarizes data on the following variables pertaining to minors admitted to OASA funded facilities in Baird County: the minors' gender, the minors' race, the size of the minors' families, the primary drug that precipitated the admission to an OASA funded facility, the number of prior arrests that the minors had, the number of prior treatment admissions the minors had, and the source of the current referral.

Overall, OASA has data on 81 minors ages 0 to 16 who were admitted to an OASA funded facility in Baird County from 1994 to 1999. Table 11 shows that the number of annual admittances ranged from 8 to 19. A small majority of the total reported admittances from 1994 to 1999 were male (54.3%). Most were white (92.6%). These percentages approximately match the gender and racial distribution in the overall Baird County population.

Many of the total admittances in Baird County from 1994 to 1999 were for marijuana/hashish use (49.4%), followed by alcohol use (21.0%). There were only two admittances for all other types of drugs.

A majority of the minors ages 0 to 16 who were reported as having been admitted to OASA funded facilities came from moderate sized families; only one minor came from a family with more than five members. Interestingly, 22 minors (27.2%) were reported as having come from families of one, presumably meaning that they have no family or reported no family information to the OASA funded facility.

A majority of the admitted minors had previously been arrested (65.4%), suggesting that there may be a relationship between alcohol and/or drug use and involvement in the juvenile court system. Consistent with this, a relatively large percentage of admittances were referred to the OASA funded facility through the court system (the probation department or the court; 37.0%). The remaining 63.0% were not referred through the court system, with many of these being referred by the Department of Children and Family Services or by the minor's family. Finally, 20 of the minors (24.7%) who were admitted to OASA funded agencies had previously been admitted for treatment.

Data from the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts showed that there were not addiction petitions filed against minors in Baird County throughout the 1990's.

**Table 11**

**Information on Minors Age 0 to 16 Who Were Admitted to  
OASA Funded Treatment Facilities in Baird County  
From 1994 to 1999**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>Total</b>
	N = 9	N = 17	N = 8	N = 13	N = 15	N = 19	N = 81
<b>Gender</b>							
<b>Male</b>	4	12	5	7	5	11	44
<b>Female</b>	5	5	3	6	10	8	37
<b>Race</b>							
<b>White</b>	9	17	7	9	15	18	75
<b>Black</b>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Hispanic</b>	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
<b>Other</b>	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
<b>Primary Drug Precipitating Admission</b>							
<b>Alcohol</b>	3	4	2	1	3	4	17
<b>Marijuana/Hashish</b>	2	8	2	6	10	12	40
<b>Cocaine</b>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Heroin</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Hallucinogens</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Inhalants</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Amphetamines</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>None</b>	4	5	4	5	1	3	22
<b>Number of Prior Arrests</b>							
<b>0</b>	4	8	4	6	5	1	28
<b>1</b>	5	5	3	3	4	9	29
<b>2</b>	0	2	0	3	1	5	11
<b>3</b>	0	0	0	1	4	3	8
<b>4</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
<b>&gt;5</b>	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
<b>Number of Prior Treatment Admissions</b>							
<b>0</b>	6	11	6	9	11	14	57
<b>1-3</b>	3	5	2	4	3	2	19
<b>4-10</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0	0	0	1	3	4

Table 11 continued

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
<b>Family Size</b>							
1	0	6	5	0	5	6	22
2	5	2	0	1	1	5	14
3	2	5	2	4	3	2	18
4	2	4	1	4	1	2	14
5	0	0	0	3	5	4	12
>5	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Referral Source</b>							
Hospital/MD	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
AA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corrections	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family	4	6	0	2	0	2	14
Self	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
School	1	0	0	1	3	1	6
DMHDD (Dept. of Mental Health and Developmentally Disabled)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Law Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other DASA or OASA Funded	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Court	0	0	0	1	2	1	4
DCFS	0	4	4	5	5	2	20
TASC (Treatment Alternative for Safe Communities)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attorneys	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Probation	3	6	4	3	4	6	26
Outreach	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse

#### **IV. Summary and Conclusions**

There are two purposes to this section. The first purpose is to summarize some of the more prominent findings in this report. The second purpose is to draw some conclusions based on the data. The conclusions should not be interpreted as recommendations as to issues that should be included in the Baird County Council Juvenile Justice Plan. Instead, the conclusions identify issues that the Baird County Juvenile Justice Council should consider further as they work towards a plan.

##### Baird County Juvenile Demographics

To a large extent, there were two purposes to the section describing Baird County's juvenile demographics. The first purpose was to identify whether there had been any changes in the Baird County juvenile population throughout the 1990's. The second purpose was to examine whether the Baird County juvenile population paralleled that of the other 73 Illinois rural counties. To these ends, the following summary statements can be made about the Baird County juvenile population:

- The Baird County juvenile population has remained very stable throughout the 1990's, with the population of juveniles ages 5 to 16 constituting approximately 18% of the Baird County population each year.
- The demographics of the Baird County juvenile population have remained stable throughout the 1990's, with a slight majority of males and a large majority of Whites.
- Baird County has a smaller juvenile population than a majority of the rural counties in Illinois and is slightly more racially homogenous.

##### Baird County Juvenile Court System

The following summary statements can be made about the Baird County juvenile court system:

- For each year in the 1990's, delinquency petition filing and adjudication rates in Baird County exceeded those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.
- Juvenile probation caseload rates in Baird County slightly exceeded those in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. Reported technical probation violations increased dramatically from 1995 to 1999, however few minors were reported as having committed new offenses while on probation.
- Reported pre and post adjudicatory juvenile detention increased in Baird County from 1997 to 1999; these increases were not matched by commensurate increases in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.

## Juvenile Risk Factors in Baird County

The following summary statements can be made about various juvenile delinquency risk factors in Baird County:

- Instances of child abuse and neglect in Baird County remained fairly stable throughout the 1990's; rates of child abuse and neglect in Baird County approximately matched rates in the other 73 Illinois rural counties.
- Instances of child sexual abuse in Baird County fluctuated greatly throughout the 1990's, but were at decade-low levels in 1999.
- There was a 63.1% decrease from 1996 to 1999 in the number of minors ages 0 to 18 in Baird County in families receiving unemployment assistance. This drop is likely related to changes in Illinois' unemployment assistance program (the change from Aid to Families with Dependent Children to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families).
- For each year from 1993 to 1999, smaller percentages of the total number of births in Baird County compared to the other 73 Illinois rural counties were by mothers age 19 and under.
- The number of high school dropouts in Baird County and the percentage of high school students that dropped out tended to rise slightly throughout the 1990's. However, no more than 4.6% of the Baird County high school population dropped out during any year in the 1990's, and there were smaller percentages of dropouts in Baird County than in the other 73 Illinois rural counties during every year in the 1990's.
- The Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA) received data on 81 minors in Baird County who were admitted to OASA funded facilities. Marijuana and hashish were the drugs that most frequently precipitated the admittance. A majority of the minors who were admitted to OASA funded facilities had been arrested at least once (65.4%), however, many of the minors were referred to the OASA funded facility through the court system (37.0%).

## Conclusions

Court system data seem to suggest that juvenile court system activity in Baird County has increased throughout the 1990's. Moreover, court system data seem to suggest that these increases have not been paralleled by similar increases in the other 73 Illinois rural counties. The Baird County Juvenile Justice Council will examine the causes of these increases.

Decreases in the number of minors in families receiving unemployment aid does not appear to be paralleled by decreases in poverty in Baird County. The Council will examine the extent to which needy families in Baird County are receiving the support that they need.

Although the percentage of births in Baird County by mothers age 19 or under does not exceed percentages in the other 73 Illinois rural counties, the Council will consider whether to address teen pregnancy, as the percentages seemed relatively high (over 10% for most of the 1990's).

However, on the other hand, the Council will also examine the reasons why the percentage of births in Baird County by mothers age 19 or under tended to be lower than percentages in the other 73 Illinois rural counties and will attempt to ensure that the trend continues.

Although the percentage of high school students in Baird County who dropped out did not exceed percentages in the other 73 Illinois rural counties, the Council will examine why the percentages in Baird County have increased throughout the 1990's.

However, on the other hand, the Council will examine the reasons why dropout rates in Baird County are lower than the other 73 Illinois rural counties and work to ensure that this trend continues.

The Council will consider whether alcohol and drug use is a problem in Baird County, as OASA data indicates a relationship between alcohol and drug use by minors and involvement in the juvenile court system.

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**Enhancing Local Juvenile Justice Systems in Illinois:**

**Evaluation Manual**

**Prepared by**

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## *Thinking About Evaluation*

While evaluation may mean different things to different people, nearly everyone agrees that the main purpose is to determine whether programs are succeeding in what they set out to do. Evaluation looks at all aspects of a program, including how it was designed, how it was implemented and what it achieved. This evaluation manual is to serve as a companion piece to the guidebook. The manual is designed for those who are seeking basic introductory knowledge about what evaluations can do, as well as for those who may be familiar with evaluation, but would like to think more carefully about how to go about it. Most importantly, however, is recognizing that evaluation should be carefully thought out, planned and conducted. Attempting to conduct a complicated evaluation, with little or no expertise in the area, will often times do more harm than good.

Evaluations address many questions. One focal point of an evaluation is to determine how well a program was implemented and how well the programs' activities are being carried out. Process evaluation determines whether a program reached its intended target population and whether the activities of the program are working toward its objectives and ultimately its goals. Evaluations also focus on the impact and outcome of a project. That is, whether the project is indeed accomplishing its objectives, whether those objectives are working toward the ultimate goal of the program, and the final result or effect the program had. Therefore, an evaluation not only looks at how well a program operates, but whether it's really working to address the problem or issue for which it was designed.

Evaluation is also becoming more and more popular with funders of juvenile justice. To manage and make the best use of scarce resources, projects and grantees are being required to implement evaluation to some degree in order to achieve funding for projects. This manual will discuss four types of evaluation commonly used in the assessment of criminal justice and social service projects. These include formative evaluation, which looks at the project design; process or implementation evaluation, which determines how the project was initiated; impact evaluation, which determines how the project affected its target population; and outcome evaluation, which determines whether the project ultimately attained its goal.

## *Benefits of Evaluation*

While evaluations usually cost money, they can also save money as well as time and other resources. The main benefit of a project evaluation is to help policy makers and funders (and project staff) decide where resources are best used. There are limited dollars and resources for juvenile justice projects, and it makes sense to document whether those projects receiving funds are a wise investment. Evaluations aid in making sound decisions about programs, assist in the development of the best possible programs and give program staff and planners opportunities to learn from their mistakes.

For projects that are doing well and are succeeding in the accomplishment of their goals, evaluation can document that success. This documentation can serve a number of purposes, including justification for continued or increased funding and replication of the project in another area. A positive evaluation can also make project staff feel good about the work they have done - that they are really making a difference. For evaluations that show a project is not achieving its intended goals, it can offer suggestions for improvement or point to areas of the project that may be contributing to unintended effects.

Evaluations can also reacquaint staff with their project. Many times a project will undergo a number of transformations or be operating for so long that it takes on a life of its own and digresses from its original plan. Projects can also undergo a number of staff changes and changes in the target population it serves. Evaluations can take a look at goals and objectives and determine if they are still appropriate or accurate as to what the project is now working toward. It can serve as a "face-lift" to projects that have grown somewhat removed from their original design. It can give project staff an opportunity to listen and reacquaint themselves with their target population. Participants in a project are often happy to hear an evaluation is being conducted because it can give them an opportunity to provide their feedback. Evaluations, however, should not substitute for day-to-day project monitoring. Project coordinators and granting agencies need to continue their monitoring efforts through site visits and collection of regular project data.

### *Myths of Evaluation*

Undoubtedly you will encounter people who feel that evaluation takes away scarce resources from the project itself. Perhaps you feel that way too. Some may feel that evaluations are intrusive and disrupt the project operations or that they place a burden on project staff. Many people also feel that evaluations are "audits" with the sole purpose of pointing out what a horrible job project staff are doing and thus giving funders an excuse to cut or reduce resources for the project.

When used correctly, evaluations offer many benefits. Evaluations can document areas of project strength. They can also point out areas of weakness and determine what is contributing to this weakness and how the project can be improved. While there are some projects that cease to exist because of unfavorable evaluations, most agree that it is better to focus resources on methods that are proven to work, as opposed to those that keep resources from other initiatives. That is why it is important to become familiar with evaluation and to make sure that the team evaluating your project (whether that team is internal or external to the project) is in tune with what the project is and knows the best way to go about evaluating it.

### *Evaluatibility - What to Consider*

There are a number of things that you will need to consider before deciding if an evaluation is appropriate, including:

- What is the purpose of the evaluation? (Evaluations designed to determine if the project should be replicated in other areas may have to be more stringent in its design than an evaluation designed to simply give feedback to staff on its operations)
- What specific questions do you want an evaluation to answer?
- What data sources would you need to tap to conduct an evaluation? (what performance indicators should be collected and who will collect this information, availability of other data, information on the target population); Will you (or the evaluator) be able to collect the data needed to answer these questions?
- Are the project design, goals and objectives realistic and logical? (formative evaluation can help assess this to some extent)
- What stage is your project in? (is your project stable and not in danger of significantly changing its focus or ceasing all together)
- What phase of evaluation is your project ready for (formative, process, impact or outcome)?
- What resources are available for the evaluation? (funding, evaluation personnel)
- What time frame is desired? Can a worthwhile evaluation be done in this time frame?
- Can the effect of the project be isolated from other external effects? (A project that is short in duration with a large target population and seeking to achieve a fairly lofty goal may have results that are difficult to isolate from many other external factors that could influence the project's goal)
- Are sufficient resources invested in the project or is it a project that figures prominently in your juvenile justice plan?
- Was this project, or one similar to it, evaluated before?
- Is the project staff on-board and educated about evaluation?
- Are all members of the Juvenile Justice County Council in basic agreement that the project should be evaluated?

Perhaps one of the biggest questions regarding evaluation is cost. What you spend on an evaluation will depend on the individuals you enlist to do the evaluation (internal vs. external, experience, education, etc.). Cost will also depend on how extensive a design you desire and the duration of the evaluation. Evaluations that deal with large populations or continue for long periods of time may be more expensive to evaluate. Therefore, more and more agencies are building evaluations into their original project budgets. This allows a project to prepare in advance for evaluation and secure the funds up front. Some agencies partner with their local college or university for evaluations. Many professors are willing to conduct evaluations with assistance from their students in areas of data collection and entry.

### *Evaluation Components*

A plan for evaluation should contain basic information on what is needed from the evaluation and what aspects of the project should be assessed. Evaluation plans can help you start thinking about evaluation and help you design Requests for Proposals (RFP) if you plan to contract outside of your agency for an evaluation. While you can begin to design this plan as you think about evaluation, some of the plan components may have to be supplied by the evaluation team, such as detail on the type of evaluation design that is best suited for the project. Some basic components of this plan might include:

- A clear description of what the evaluation seeks to accomplish and by when.

This should include information on what aspects are to be evaluated (such as the project goals and objectives or the project design or model). This description will depend on what phase of evaluation a project is in. For example, a process evaluation would seek to assess the implementation of the project. The outcome evaluation would seek to determine if the project ultimately accomplished its intended goals. This part of the evaluation plan should include all questions that you want the evaluation to address. A timeline or date of completion should also be considered. If you are designing a Request for Proposals (RFP) this information should be included in the RFP to help guide the evaluation team in designing their proposal.

- A clear description of the project information that is to be collected and how it will be collected.

These data elements will be used to measure the effectiveness of the project design, its implementation, impact or outcome. These elements should be tied to the project objectives and goals and include the performance indicators that the project reports on a regular basis. The methods for data collection include a number of tools that vary by the type of data desired. Qualitative (or narrative) data can be gathered through interviews or observations, while quantitative

(numerical) data can be gathered through official sources and records. The collection of baseline data (a measurement of something before a project begins) should be considered. Information for this part of the plan should pay attention to the questions that you want the evaluation to address and what aspects of the project are to be evaluated. If you are designing an RFP, list the data elements that the project plans to collect on their performance indicators and any other available data that would be relevant to the goals and objectives of the project. Information on how this data will be maintained (whether project data will be entered in a database and made available to the evaluators) is also important. An RFP should also list any additional information that the evaluators should collect, such as recidivism data. The collection of data and information also hinges upon the next component, the evaluation design.

- The most appropriate evaluation design.

There are distinct phases of evaluation and various methods or study designs that are tied to these phases. The appropriate selection of a method depends on the stage of the project - whether it is being conceptualized or has been in operation for a number of years. The evaluation designs available also vary. An experimental design may be suitable if you desire a rigorous impact or outcome evaluation with the most reliable results possible. A non-experimental design may be suited for an evaluation with a small budget or in the process evaluation stage. The level of data analysis desired, as well as the complexity of the study design, will govern the selection of the evaluator as it relates to the expertise, training and experience required. If you find you are having trouble deciding what evaluation design would be best, a consultant or someone familiar with evaluation may be able to advise you based on the specifics of your project. If you are developing an RFP, you can leave the details of the study design up to the evaluation teams that are submitting proposals, and then select the one that RFP reviewers feel is most suitable.

- The target population that is the subject of the project's efforts.

This should detail the population that is the focus of the project. If the project includes an experimental or quasi-experimental design, a description of the control (the target population or group receiving the project services) or comparison group (a group not receiving project services) can be supplied. An RFP for an evaluation should always provide detail on the project's target population.

- How the evaluation results should be reported

This part of the plan can vary depending on the format you would like your evaluation results presented in. The findings of the evaluation can simply be reported in memo format or through a presentation by the evaluation team. Presentations give the project staff an opportunity to discuss the findings and ask the evaluation team questions. Full reports can provide all the details of the evaluation, but are sometimes technically written and difficult for someone without an evaluation background to easily understand. Executive summaries should always be included in full reports and should provide information on the basic tasks of the evaluation and the findings in a clear and concise manner. No matter what format is chosen to present the findings, it should be done in a manner that is clear and easily understood by project staff and stakeholders. An RFP should specify how the results are to be presented. More information on how to report results is provided later in this manual.

If you are reviewing evaluation proposals, all of the above information should be included in the proposal (and requested in the RFP), as well as information on:

- A timeline and milestone chart that details the proposed progress of the evaluation;
- The number of deliverables, such as progress reports and survey instruments, as well as the final report;
- Qualifications of the evaluation team, including their education, experience, training and how staff will be utilized;
- The budget for the evaluation in as much detail as desired; and
- A literature review on the project topic that includes studies or evaluations of projects similar to the current project and demonstrates that the evaluation team has a basic knowledge of the issue the project is attempting to address.

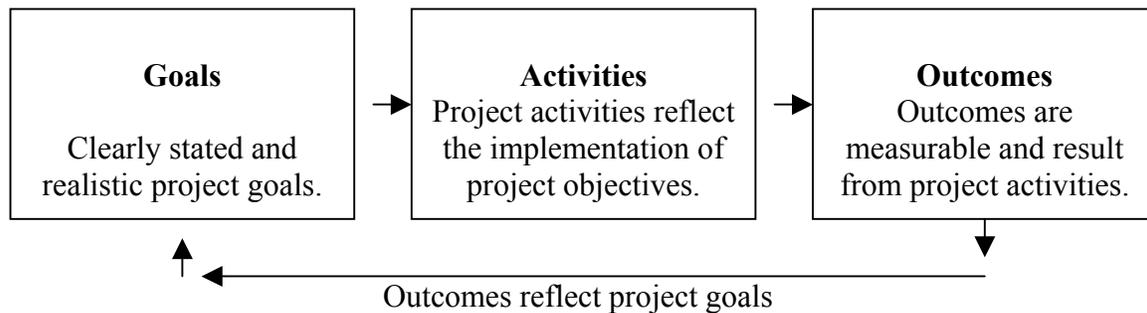
### *Advisory Groups*

During the course of an evaluation, it is important for both the evaluators and project staff to gain feedback from each other. One mechanism of gaining this feedback is the formation of an advisory group that meets on a regular basis. Advisory groups generally include the evaluation team and project staff, but can also include other stakeholders, such as police chiefs, probation officers, teachers and community members. They can also include other researchers who have knowledge in the area of evaluation or the project topic, as well as advocates for the target population, such as victim service providers. Anyone who has a financial stake in the project, such as the granting agency, may also participate in the advisory group.

Advisory groups serve a number of functions. They guide the development of the evaluation and discuss developments or changes in the projects. They can help overcome evaluation problems, such as access to data or observation of program operations. Sometimes they serve as a mediating body for the evaluation when there are disagreements between the evaluators and project staff. They can also guide any recommendations that the evaluators may have for improving the project as the evaluation continues. Often times, advisory groups make sure that the evaluation is proceeding as it was set forth and is making scheduled progress. Group members can make sure that confidentiality and human subjects concerns are addressed and stipulations adhered to. Finally, advisory groups provide a forum for discussions regarding pertinent research findings from other evaluations or studies and facilitate the sharing of knowledge about the topic of the project.

*Logic Model*

One tool for identifying the relationship between project activity and results is a logic model. Logic models can take different forms and vary in complexity, but basically they follow a continuum beginning with project goals, then project activities and finally project outcomes. Ideally, the model shows how project outcomes reflect the project’s goals. By using a logic model, you are assuming that there is a relationship between the activities or services provided and the outcome or impact on the targeted population. By asking why the activities were chosen to accomplish the project’s goals, you should begin to identify the expected results, including initial, intermediate and long-term outcomes. The model provides a continuum that facilitates questions of why project staff are providing the services or doing the activities, and how they influence the ultimate goal.



*External vs. Internal Evaluations*

Once you have decided to evaluate a project, deciding who will actually conduct the evaluation is the next step. This often depends on financial resources and the nature of the project. Most of the time, external evaluators are the best choice. They are generally more likely to be familiar with evaluation and have experience conducting them. They are also more likely to be objective and unbiased about the project and offer a new perspective when looking at the project. The approach that external evaluators may take varies. Some

partner with the project staff and become fairly engrained in the project while others stay on the sidelines and simply observe. The level of training and expertise of an external evaluator also varies. Many agencies issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) that includes all the specifications of the evaluation and the qualifications desired. A panel can then review the proposals submitted in response to the RFP and determine the most qualified candidate. You should feel comfortable that an evaluator is working with your needs in mind. References from other agencies can also be helpful in selecting an external evaluator.

An evaluator internal to your agency or organization, however, is sometimes more cost-effective. They can be more familiar with the project and more in-tune with the project's needs from an evaluation (i.e., the types of questions the project needs addressed). It is best that an internal evaluation team have no personal stake in the project, and that the team is able to do an objective assessment. Close ties to a project or implementing agency can taint the findings of an evaluation if the evaluator desires the project to appear more successful than it really is. Whenever possible, the evaluator should not be directly involved in the management or operation of the project.

Another type of internal evaluation is a self-evaluation. While the concept of self-evaluation automatically violates the principle of not having the evaluator directly involved in the project, it can still serve a useful purpose. The project manager or coordinator generally does self-evaluation of their project on an on-going basis. Self-evaluations and other internal evaluations can also be supplemented with formal external evaluations if desired or a consultant can be hired to advise on the process. Self-evaluation can involve the use of the same tools that many evaluations use, such as assessment of project data, interviews, surveys, focus groups, observations and so on. If funds are limited and project staff are objective and truly desire an accurate assessment of their project, self-evaluation can be the answer. However, the person or persons involved in the self-evaluation should make sure that they have the time available to devote to both the evaluation and their responsibilities to the project.

### *Evaluating Multi-Site Projects*

There are a few things to keep in mind when evaluating similar projects that are active in multiple sites. Evaluations should avoid comparing projects or judging them against each other. General comparisons regarding the operation or description of the projects are useful, but if an evaluation starts comparing the effectiveness of one against the other - without taking into account the different environments they operate or different resources, target population or other constraints - the result may be some very unfair comparisons and negative reactions. Evaluations of multiple site projects should always note how the projects differ from one another, so the reader realizes these differences, as they may attempt to compare the projects themselves.

Evaluation is a good opportunity to encourage the projects to learn from each other. As noted earlier, advisory meetings are great forums to discuss how one county is handling a problem that may be common to them all. Evaluations should also spend equal time with

the different projects - even if one has a more interesting caseload or more accommodating staff. The same standards, as much as possible, should be employed to measure project success while still taking into account the differences of the project designs. Holding similar projects to different standards without good reason will result in unfair and unreliable evaluation findings.

Finally, evaluation teams should be prepared to alter their workplans for each site. A workplan that details the number of site visits, access to staff and collection of data may work well for one site but not another. The availability, collection or automation of data in one site may vary dramatically from another. While one site may have automated case file data and be able to provide that information on disk, another may require the manual collection of information from the files themselves.

### *Choosing an Evaluation Team*

No matter what type of evaluation method you choose, it is important to keep the following points in mind:

- The evaluator and evaluation team should be familiar with evaluation and have some training or experience in the methods of evaluation;
- The evaluator should be objective and impartial regarding the assessment of the project;
- The evaluator should be familiar with the type of the project he or she is evaluating (for example, someone who is unfamiliar with domestic violence or the literature on domestic violence may not be the best choice for an evaluation of a project that trains officers about domestic violence);
- The evaluator should have good communication skills and be willing to produce an evaluation that fits your needs and relate the findings in a clear manner;
- The evaluator should be willing to design an evaluation that minimizes disruptions to the project and does not place an undue burden on staff; and
- The evaluator should report results and progress in a timely manner and keep staff up to date on the status of the evaluation.

## *The Phases of Program Evaluation*

Evaluation should be an on-going process that spans the life of a program. Ideally, evaluation should begin with the first conception of a program and continue for as long as the program is in operation and even after its conclusion. You can save significant resources and effort by factoring in evaluation at the time the program is developed. Not only will this help you think carefully about whether or not the program is appropriate or feasible, it will help establish baseline information that will assist assessment of whether or not the program achieved what it set out to do. Factoring in evaluation early can also help identify problems or limitations that can be caught early in the program's development (before time and money are wasted), which may also increase the program's chance of success.

Traditionally, most evaluation guides reference two main types of evaluation: process (sometimes referred to as implementation) and impact. However, there are additional stages in the evaluation process that can assist in planning and replication of programs. This manual identifies the four complete stages or phases of evaluation: formative, process, impact and outcome. It also provides a fictional, sample project and outlines some of the questions that would be posed in each evaluation phase. The following describes the sample project, AIM.

Example Project:	Baird Junior High School After-School Initiative and Mentoring (AIM) Project
Project Development:	A survey of students and parents has shown that many of the youth enrolled in the school are unsupervised during the hours after school while their parents are at work. The survey also showed that students would be interested in various after-school activities if they were provided. Statistics from law enforcement also show that many juvenile offenses occur during the hours of 3pm and 5pm. Based on a needs assessment, the AIM Project was developed to provide youth with alternatives to time spent alone or in the community unsupervised.
Project Description:	An after-school project designed to provide students with activities, tutoring, supervision and mentoring during the hours of 3 - 5pm, during the school week. A project coordinator, staff and volunteers will organize and supervise activities. Sporting activities will include basketball, baseball, volleyball and soccer. Other activities will include art instruction, help with school assignments and tutoring, age-appropriate movie screenings, snacks and general mentoring of the youth by the adult volunteers as positive role models. The project is grant funded and will be based in the junior high school gym, the outside soccer field and ball diamond and an available classroom. A van or bus will be available to take youth home after the program at 5:00pm.
Target Population	All youth enrolled in Baird Junior High School. Student must attend school during the day to participate in the project after school.
Goal:	To reduce the incidence of juvenile crime and delinquent behavior by a third in the City of Baird during the peak hours between 3-5pm by providing youth attending Baird Junior High School with an alternative to unsupervised after school time. This decrease of one-third should be evident after one school year.

Process Objectives:

- 1) Organize at least one team-building sporting or entertainment activity per day that will appeal to the target population and encourage their participation in these activities after school, thus providing an alternative to unsupervised after-school time.
- 2) Provide assistance with homework assignments and tutoring at any time for those students who request assistance and hold at least one general tutoring session per week.
- 3) Provide mentoring for youth with staff members acting as positive role models by encouraging constructive behavior and building self-esteem and educating youth on the negatives of delinquent activity throughout the project and through one organized discussion group per week.
- 4) Encourage youth to talk to AIM staff about problems or issues they may be facing by developing a positive relationship with youth and offering forums for discussion by organizing at least one guest speaker or focus group per month.

Process Performance Indicators:

The number of basketball, volleyball, soccer and baseball games organized and the number of youths who participated in these games.

The number of movies screened or other entertainment activities (such as art instruction) organized and the number of youths who participated in these activities.

The number of discussion groups, guest speakers and focus groups organized and the number of youths who participated in these activities.

The number of youths requesting and receiving assistance with homework or tutoring.

The number of general tutoring sessions held and the number of youths who attended.

The number of youths who approached AIM staff regarding a problem or issue in their personal lives or in school.

The number of youths who were provided with a referral to other specialized services.

The number of youths, overall, participating in the AIM Project.

The number of youths that were transported to their homes or other approved residence after the program.

Impact Objectives:

To have 75% of youths participating in the project for one year show an improvement in positive attitudes, including self-esteem, conflict resolution and attitudes toward substance abuse.

To have 75% of youths participating in the project for one year show an improvement in attitudes and behaviors regarding at-risk behavior, such as substance use and gang activity.

To have a 30% of the youths participating in the project for one year show improvement in school performance as measured through grade point averages.

Impact Indicators:

Changes in attitudes regarding self-esteem and positive behaviors as measured through pre and post-test surveys.

Changes in attitudes and behaviors regarding at-risk behavior, such as alcohol and drug use and associating with gang members as measured through pre and post-test surveys.

Changes in the completion of homework and class assignments and test scores, and changes in letter grades as provided by teachers.

Outcome Objective

Reduction in the incidence of juvenile crime and delinquent behavior by one-third in the City of Baird during the peak hours between 3-5pm. within one school year.

Outcome Performance Indicator:

The number of offenses (property, violent, drug and status offenses) committed by juveniles during the hours of 3:00-5:00pm.

Other Indicators:  
(where a change *may*  
be a product of the project)

The change in the level of juvenile crime overall near the school and in the city.

The number of in-school disciplinary actions against students currently participating in the project.

Improvement in grades and class participation.

## ***Formative Evaluation***

Formative evaluation begins with the conception of the project idea. It provides an assessment of the project's procedures, activities and resources to make sure that the project is implemented in a manner that will allow it to work toward its purpose. Formative evaluations, to some extent, assess the project design itself by identifying strengths and weaknesses in design prior to implementation.

Formative evaluation can also help a project determine whether or not its goals and objectives are clear, measurable, and reasonable. Goals or objectives that are too lofty or vague can hinder not only the implementation of the project, but pose difficulties during evaluation. Goals and objectives should be well-defined and the mechanism for measuring them clear. Project goals can specify exactly what the project is designed to change and by how much (for example, a decrease in arrests by 33% within the first year). Goals can also, in some instances, be more general. However, the objectives for implementing or operating a project should always be specific and measurable. The clearer and more the measurable goals and objectives are, the easier it is to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

Formative evaluation should also address the performance indicators that the project plans to report to demonstrate its progress toward objectives. These indicators should be tied to the objectives and also be clear and measurable. The project should decide early on what data to collect, and how it will be reported. It is important for projects to regularly maintain this data, in an automated fashion if possible, for evaluation.

A formative evaluation can save quite a bit of time in the launching of a project by serving as a "quality control" test. A project that is not well thought out in the beginning, or misses essential elements, will not be implemented effectively and will not yield the desired impact or outcomes. Formative evaluations, like the other phases of evaluation, can be conducted by an outside party or in-house.

Formative evaluations should center on standard questions regarding the project. Examples as to how these questions can be posed for the sample juvenile justice project, AIM, are provided. As described earlier, our sample project is an after-school activity project designed to keep youth occupied and supervised during the after school hours.

Some of the formative evaluation questions that evaluators may want to pose for the AIM Project include:

- *When should the project begin and how should it be introduced?*

Example questions: Should the project begin at the start of the school year?

How should parents and school staff be notified or made aware of the project?

Is training necessary for staff?

How should performance data on the project be collected? How often? How will it be maintained?

- *Is the project strategy well designed?*

Example questions: Is the project description well developed and likely to succeed in accomplishing its goals and objectives?

Have the targeted youth expressed an interest in after-school activities and a project of this type?

Is there a need for a project of this type?

What other projects are currently available to address this need?

Have projects similar to this one been implemented elsewhere and are evaluations available? Does the project strategy take this information into account?

Will the project be able to keep track of statistics related to performance measures in a meaningful and consistent manner?

- *Are the implementation strategies likely to be effective or do they exhibit flaws?*

Example questions: Is the use of the school grounds feasible and not likely to conflict with other school activities?

Is transportation home well-organized and needed?

Are sufficient resources and staff available?

Are the staff screened and qualified to work in the project's capacity and with the target population?

Are the project hours sufficient and appropriate?

- *Are the activities of the project geared toward its goals and objectives?*

Example questions: Will an activity schedule be planned out well in advance and suited to the needs and desires of the youth participating?

How will the rules of the project be introduced and enforced (such as no drug or alcohol use, no gang clothing or symbols)?

Are the activities age-appropriate and will the sporting activities include teams of comparable age and skill levels?

Are there a sufficient number of activities available for a wide range of interests? (Are there art or reading activities for those not interested in sports?)

- *Are the project personnel on-board with the project and its goals and objectives?*

Example questions: Are staff willing to work the designated hours and be consistently available for the project activities?

Are staff willing to plan and organize activities ahead of time?

Are staff willing to work with school personnel to secure and schedule space?

Are staff comfortable with the project and do they believe in the project's goals and objectives?

Are the staff likely to be respected and looked up to by youth?

- *What are the obstacles or limitations to the success of the project?*

Example questions: Does the project have the support of school personnel and parents?

Will students be willing to spend their after-school time on school grounds?

Will the students most at risk for after-school delinquent behavior participate in the project?

### *When to use Formative Evaluations*

Some of the questions asked in formative evaluations are also addressed to some extent in process evaluations, but they are best utilized before a program is actually implemented and in operation. The main goal is to determine whether a program will work as intended or what changes or modifications need to be considered.

Formative evaluations are also conducted when an existing program is replicated elsewhere. The success of a program in one area does not ensure that it will be successful in another location, with another target population or if it is redesigned to address a different problem. Formative evaluations can also be used for existing programs that are undergoing modifications to their original design or when an operating program is struggling with problems and the solution is not apparent. By taking another look at the design, plans, target population and modifications that a program has gone through, you can sometimes identify or uncover reasons as to why a program is not performing up to its expected level.

### *Tools that can be used in Formative Evaluations*

The tools or target of a formative evaluation can vary depending on the program. Field testing is one common way to gauge the possible implementation and effect of a program. Field testing can involve the distribution of program materials (brochures, for example) to a random group that would represent your target population and you can gain their feedback on the material.

Whether a formative evaluation is conducted by an outside party or in-house, it is important that the evaluator be completely honest with the assessment of the project and its limitations. Surveys, interviews and focus groups can provide you with information as to whether a project would be welcome, utilized or attended. Various statistics can help you gauge the need for the projects. Formal needs assessments (see sample needs assessment provided in Appendix E of the guidebook) often combine official statistics and data from law enforcement, social services, health organizations, schools and other agencies. They may include survey data from youth or criminal justice professionals. Primarily, needs assessments serve to support what criminal justice and youth service professionals see in the field and identify as needs (though at other times, the data may dispute what the criminal justice community perceives as a need).

Data collected at the formative evaluation stage, and related to the need for the project can also serve as a baseline measure that will help measure the impact a project has made after its implementation and operation. This is important if an impact or outcome evaluation is desired at a later date. For example, AIM may want to collect data on youth attitudes and behaviors in a pre-survey or focus group. Later, during an outcome evaluation, a post-test asking the same questions can be done to measure any change that the project may have contributed to. The tricky part, however, is that to be accurate a pre- and post-test must be done on the same group of individuals. If students drop in and out of the project, these measurement tools may not be as reliable. Data that was collected as part of the needs assessment, such as official law enforcement statistics, can also be used as a baseline to measure change after the project has been in operation.

It is also important to consider the manner in which project data will be collected as it relates to its performance measures. Implementing a good data collection protocol is important if you want to continue the evaluation process and gauge whether or not your

project is working as intended. If you are implementing a number of similar projects in different jurisdictions, try to keep the performance measures common and comparable, while allowing for variations in the individual projects. This will allow you to compare the projects across sites while taking into consideration any unique attributes of the projects. Data collection forms on project activity and performance indicators should be developed prior to the project's implementation and completed on a regular basis, usually every month or quarter.

### ***Process (Implementation)Evaluation***

Process evaluations, sometimes referred to as implementation evaluations, are used to assess whether the project was implemented the way it was intended. Process evaluations follow formative evaluations and begin as soon as the project is implemented. In process evaluations, the evaluator looks at what the project activities are in reality regardless of how the project was originally intended to operate. One distinction that a process evaluation makes is the difference between the actual project activities and population receiving the services and the intended project activities and target population. Process evaluations also look at the implementation efforts of the project and its "growing pains." Communication, collaboration, personnel issues, and services rendered are all things that make up the life of a project and play into how the project will ultimately achieve its goals and objectives.

Process evaluations lay the groundwork and are generally necessary before an impact and outcome evaluation can begin. They serve as an excellent way to document a project's growth and changes. For example, when replicating a project in a different location, it is helpful to know what limitations the original project design encountered and how they were addressed, how the project modified its goals and objectives over time, and what were the essential elements that benefited the project the most. Process evaluations also identify project barriers and limitations that were not anticipated or evident early on. Adjustments can then be made before time and resources are wasted. Projects are often more flexible early in their life and modifications are more easily incorporated at that time.

Some of the process evaluation questions we would pose for our sample project, AIM, might include:

- *What type of environment is the project operating in?*

Example questions: What is the relationship between project staff and school personnel, parents and the youth?

How do youth perceive the project (positively - "interesting" or "cool", indifferent - "better than being home alone", or negatively - "boring" or "babyish")?

Is there good communication among project staff?

Do project staff collaborate on ideas and problem-solving?

Is the scheduling of facilities, fields and rooms going smoothly?

Is there a problem with staff turnover?

- *How are the project activities being carried out?*

Example questions: How many sporting events were organized and took place?

How many entertainment events were organized and took place?

How many group speakers were scheduled and appeared?

How many focus or discussion groups were scheduled and took place?

- *How many contacts with the target populations are being made?*

Example questions: How many youth received assistance with homework or tutoring?

How many youth participated in sporting events?

How many youth participated in entertainment events?

How many youth attended the speaking engagements?

How many youth participated in the focus or discussion groups?

How many youth took advantage of transportation home?

Are you reaching the target population?

- *Are there any project development issues?*

Example questions: Are there any barriers or limitations that the project is facing now that it is operating? Any unexpected costs?

Is the project operating on schedule?

Are youth and their parents aware of the project?

Has any training been provided to staff?

Is staffing and supervision adequate?

Is the project perceived positively in the school and community?

What other types of collaborations or interactions exist among project staff and other entities (businesses, police department, non-profit or volunteer organizations)?

Are there incidences of youth fighting or solidifying gang membership ties during the project? How can the project address this?

### *When to use Process Evaluations*

Although a process evaluation ideally begins when a project begins it shouldn't end before the project ends. Projects often undergo various adaptations and changes both early in their life and also as the target population, needs and resources change over time. Therefore, it is important that a process evaluation continue to some extent for the duration of the project. Although changes to address project barriers are best done early in the project, a process evaluation should continue because barriers and problems can occur at any time.

Again, process evaluations are often necessary to do before an impact or outcome evaluation takes place. While an impact or outcome evaluation can tell you whether or not you are working successfully toward your goals or having the desired effect, the process evaluation is necessary to determine how you got there. For example, an impact evaluation may show that attitudes toward community beautification and reporting of vandalism have changed for the better due to the door-to-door distribution and discussion of a brochure that outlined what residents can do to help keep improve their neighborhood. An outcome evaluation shows, as a result, that acts of vandalism in a particular area have been reduced. But without a process evaluation, you may think that the brochure-distribution project was responsible for the reduction. However, a process evaluation could show that the number of contacts actually made with residents in the area affected were non-existent. Perhaps the project was not able to reach residents in that particular area due to the time of day that the contacts were attempted or a lack of workers in that area. Based on this information, it would likely be concluded that some other factor(s) were responsible for the reduction. Regardless, it is important to do a process evaluation to determine what actions and activities your project is really accomplishing. That information will lead you toward determining if any impact or outcomes stem from those activities.

### *Tools that can be used in Process Evaluations*

Process evaluations rely on the two main types of data: quantitative, or numerical data and qualitative, or more descriptive data.

Project activity data includes documentation about the project, including:

- Project budgets and fiscal report to determine if estimated costs are meeting the project's needs;
- The project description to determine if the project is being implemented according to plan;
- Correspondence and meeting minutes to determine the level of collaboration and communication;
- Documentation on the number of activities organized and conducted;
- The number of participants or project contacts;
- The types of participants contacted (in other words, was the project making contacts with its target population);
- Data about the project participants (age, race, gender, etc.);

Other data related to project activity can include:

- Interviews with project staff. For the AIM example, school personnel, law enforcement and parents could be interviewed to gauge their perceptions about the project, collaborations and communications;
- Observations of project activity;
- Surveys, discussions or focus groups with project participants;
- Surveys or interviews with non-participants or drop-outs to determine why they are not, or no longer, participating in the project;
- Literature reviews or prior evaluations of similar projects; and
- Case studies of a particular participant(s), documenting how the project affected them directly.

## ***Impact Evaluation***

Impact evaluations measure how a project is working toward its goals and whether the project is having its intended impact. Impact evaluations are often desired, sometimes required, and along with outcome evaluations, they provide the findings that people are most interested in. The main idea behind an impact evaluation is to determine if the project's activities affect the target population and lead to the desired change in their behaviors and/or attitudes.

Impact evaluations go hand-in-hand with outcome evaluations and are often combined. One distinction is that while an impact evaluation determines if the desired change in behaviors, attitudes or beliefs took place because of the project, an outcome evaluation addresses whether these changes actually resulted in achieving the ultimate goal. For instance, the goal of the AIM project is to reduce the incidence of juvenile crime and delinquency during the peak hours between 3-5pm by providing youth attending Baird Junior High School an alternative to unsupervised after school time. It proposes to accomplish this goal by providing activities, encouraging youth to build relationships with staff through mentoring, building self-esteem and constructive behavior, etc. An impact evaluation will determine whether project activities have resulted in a change in how the students perceive themselves, the relationships they have built with staff, and how they use their after-school time. These changes may contribute to the ultimate goal (i.e. the outcome) of a reduction in after-school crime in the Baird area.

Some impact evaluation questions that evaluators may want to pose for the AIM Project might include:

- *What is the change that the target population exhibits as a result of exposure to the project?*

Example questions: What were the attitudes and beliefs toward crime and delinquency and at-risk behavior prior to the project and after (such as drug use, gang activity, vandalism)?

Are students exposed to the project exhibiting more positive behaviors and more self-esteem that would contribute to a decline in juvenile offending? (Perhaps the target population is now less likely to hang out with gang members or in areas known for drug dealing. This change would perhaps reduce their chance of being involved in crime or arrested).

Have the grades of participants improved?

What aspects of the project seem to contribute most to these changes (sporting activities, discussion groups, tutoring, relationship building with staff?)

What other external factors might have contributed to the changes in attitudes, behaviors or beliefs?

Has the project encouraged youth to make positive use of their after-school time as a result of the project?

### *When to use Impact Evaluations*

Steps toward an impact evaluation should begin when the project begins. Baseline measures are important because the key to a successful impact evaluation is that the project produced a desired change in the target population. Impact evaluations document whether these changes became evident over the course of participating in the project. Changes can then be measured immediately after the first encounter or over a period after participation in the project.

### *Tools that can be used in Impact Evaluations*

Impact evaluations rely on data gathered at the beginning (baseline) of the project, even before it starts, and after exposure to the project. Comparing these two measurements will give you an idea of what occurred as a result of your project.

Surveys are a primary means to measure changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. Both closed-ended and open-ended items can provide this information. Focus groups, if conducted by someone trained in facilitating focus groups, may also provide evidence of change. Observations are another manner in which to gauge impact, although they are conducted a little differently at this stage. An evaluator would have to observe the behavior of the target population and listen or watch for signs that would point to their attitudes or beliefs (perhaps turning down a cigarette or shying away from groups that are involved in delinquent behavior or situations that are likely to lead to delinquent behavior).

Again, it is important to consider external factors that may have also contributed to changes in the target population. Other initiatives that were implemented, such as increased patrols by the police department or the beginning of baseball season where a number of students participate in after-school practice, can all have an influence on the change the impact evaluation documents in the target population.

Often, positive impact evaluation results are proof that a project is worthwhile. This can justify additional resources or funds to build the project, or at least maintain it in the wake of budget constraints. Impact evaluations also offer proof that a project is indeed making progress toward its ultimate goal. If an impact evaluation shows that the attitudes, behaviors and beliefs that would contribute to a reduction in crime are not at all evident or that youth are not participating in the manner intended, it is impossible to connect a reduction in crime to the activities of the project. One hypothetical example for

the AIM project would be if the sporting activities are becoming so competitive that it contributes to fights and rivalries outside of school, or is solidifying gang ties.

### ***Outcome Evaluation***

If a project seeks to only change attitudes and beliefs about something, an impact evaluation may be the stopping point. However, almost always, projects seek to have those changes translated into a change in actions or results. For example, it is not enough for the AIM Project to document a favorable change in student attitudes and use of after school time if that does not translate into a decrease in crime - the ultimate goal. Outcome evaluations are a natural extension of impact evaluations and are oftentimes done together or the terms used interchangeably. The main purpose of an outcome evaluation is to document whether or not the goal of a project was achieved. In other words, what difference the project made. Obviously, this is of primary interest to those operating and funding the project.

Some outcome evaluation questions that evaluators may want to pose for the AIM Project might include:

- *What were the results or net effects of the project as it pertains to the project goal(s)?*

Example questions: What level of improvement was seen in the number of juveniles arrested in Baird for offenses committed during the after-school hours as the project was underway?

What about the number of informal police contacts?

What about the number of reported offenses that can be associated with juveniles?

Did these measures contribute to a reduction of at least one-third (33%) in the incidence of juvenile crime in the city of Baird between 3-5pm after a year?

At what level does the need or problem still exist?

How do residents feel about any reduction in the incidence of juvenile crime during the after school hours?

After an outcome evaluation, there may be other questions that a project may be interested in, such as:

- *Has the project produced other outcomes not directly related to the project goal?*

Example questions: Has the level or incidence of juvenile crime decreased during hours outside of the after-school hours perhaps as a result of the project?

Has the level or seriousness of juvenile arrests or reported offenses changed during the project's operation?

Has the level or seriousness of in-school offenses changed?

Have the grades or attendance of participating students improved?

- *What types of program adjustments might be needed to better affect the needs or problems identified in the project goal(s) or minimize adverse impacts/outcomes?*

Example questions: Were there any displacement effects (did crime increase during the evenings and weekends)?

If the project did not achieve its desired outcome, what is the disconnect between the assumed success of the project's impact, but unsuccessful achievement of its desired outcome? (For example, although attitudes, beliefs and even the behaviors of youth participating in the project may have changed for the better, police are arresting more youth than even and juvenile crime continues to increase during the after-school hours.) An evaluator may go back to a formative evaluation to determine the answer.

### *When to use Outcome Evaluations*

Outcome evaluations should be conducted after participants have been exposed to the project for a period of time. They can be conducted on a regular basis to see if the desired outcomes are being maintained or as new participants are involved. If the project is of limited duration, after conclusion of the project is generally when outcome evaluations begin. Outcome evaluations may continue to be done a number of years after exposure to the project to see if the project had a lasting effect. Of course, it is much more difficult to document that these long-term changes were the result of the project. Rigorous long-term experimental designs are best equipped for that purpose.

The AIM Project might want to conduct an outcome evaluation at the end of each semester, but at least after every school year since the goal notes that the desired change be evident after one school year. A project of this type might see their goals achieved early in the life of the project and then drop off if students lose interest. This issue of participation would likely be identified in the process evaluation phase. Each phase of the

evaluation ultimately feeds into the impact and outcome phase. A solid and well thought-out project design has the best chance of producing a useful outcome evaluation.

### *Tools that can be used in Outcome Evaluations*

Like an impact evaluation, preparation for an outcome evaluation is done well ahead of time with baseline measures that capture data on the target population prior to the project's implementation. The data captured must be specific enough to measure the elements that the project proposes to affect or change.

Many of the same measures used in an impact evaluation can be used in an outcome evaluation, such as surveys and focus groups that document a change in behavior (such as self-reports of delinquent activity). Official sources of data are usually used to document project outcomes. Crime statistics from the police department would be a primary data source for the AIM Project. As discussed later in the section on evaluation instruments and designs, working closely with the agency providing the data can help you get the level of detail you desire at the periods of time that are necessary.

When evaluating for outcome, it is also important to know what defines a "successful project." While the main goal of the AIM Project is pretty clear - reducing arrests - that may not be the only factor considered when looking at outcome. An evaluator may want to look not only at arrests, but also other contact with law enforcement (warnings, station adjustments), referrals to court, and maybe even school disciplinary actions or law enforcement contacts outside of the after-school hours. It is important to choose factors that are most closely related to the participant's behavior, as opposed to the factors that may be more a function of organizational policy, like a police department's tendency to use informal adjustments. Also keep in mind other factors that can influence these outcome measures. One example may be a community policing or citizen awareness program in the city that results in citizens being more aware of their neighborhood and thus more likely to report crimes and seek help from the police

Additional ways of measuring outcome can be used if it is difficult to measure the direct effect that the project had on a large population. When a long-term and in-depth outcome evaluation is not possible, evaluators may look at data that is available on the changes in behavior or attitudes that were seen in the impact evaluations and tie them to prior research that documents a relationship between the changes and the project's goal. To do this, evaluators need to show that prior research from other studies have shown that certain characteristics or changes in behavior or attitude leads to or has an effect on certain other behaviors. For instance, an evaluation may provide prior research findings that show youth who complete their school assignments on a regular basis and have a favorable attitude toward school are less likely to vandalize school property. If the evaluation can document that the project contributed to more students completing their homework assignments and improving their attitude toward school through the tutoring it provides, compared to before the project began, it may be able to draw a connection between this change and the reduction in vandalism on school grounds. Using this

method is best left to evaluators that are familiar with the detail and limitations of the research they are drawing from.

Once again, evaluators should be careful not to use strictly "black-box" evaluations that examine the impact or outcome of the project without examining the internal operations of the project. In other words, looking only at the outcome goals limits the evaluation usefulness. If it was found that the goals were not achieved, it is necessary to know why and how the project could be improved. If, on the other hand, an evaluation shows that goals have been met, but there are other unintended consequences, those factors need to be addressed. In projects where there are many outside factors that could contribute to or influence the change or improvement the project was seeking to accomplish, conducting only an outcome evaluation would place severe limitations on the interpretation of the findings.

### *Examples of Evaluation Instruments and Designs*

Formative, process, impact and outcome evaluations all use various tools as outlined above. The following contains descriptions of these tools as well as sample data collection forms that staff might use, sample interview and focus group questions, sample observation points, and sample survey questions. As the collection of data begins, it is also important to keep matters of confidentiality and the consideration of human subjects in mind. Ideally, people who are objective and trained in the particular measurement instrument should implement the methods below. The descriptions below are very summative and designed to give you an idea of the types of tools and designs common to the evaluation of juvenile justice projects. Much more detail and information is available on these types of instruments and designs from the resource references noted as the end of this manual.

Evaluations normally rely on two main types of information: quantitative data that looks at numerical data to help assess the project, including project data, survey data, statistics and rates and qualitative data that involves mostly descriptive information such as written descriptions, correspondence, interviews, focus groups and observations. Some evaluation instruments can yield both types of data.

#### *Project Data*

As was stated in the section regarding formative evaluations, it is important to consider the manner in which project data will be collected as it relates to its objectives. The method and manner of data collection should ideally be determined prior to project implementation and remain consistent through the project's operations. Sometimes it is beneficial to have the team that will be conducting the evaluation have input into the design of the data collection forms. This way, information that is relevant to the operation of the project (information that funders and managers may require) and information that would be relevant to the evaluation can be captured consistently. It is burdensome when

evaluators have to go back and recapture data that could have been recorded as the project began.

Your data collection protocol will help determine whether or not your project is working as intended and will set the stage for the continuing process of evaluation. Similar projects in different jurisdictions should try to keep performance measures common and comparable, while allowing for variations in the individual projects. Caution should be exercised, however, when comparing like projects - taking into consideration their target populations, location, staffing, etc.

Data collection forms on project activity and performance indicators should be completed on a regular basis, usually every month or quarter. This data should be automated whenever possible. Automation, or the entry of data in a computerized database format, will allow the evaluators and project staff the ability to run queries, do analysis and capture summative information about the project.

Other areas of project data collection can include timesheets for personnel, training logs and participant daily attendance. Qualitative project data can include correspondence, marketing materials, and staff job descriptions. A sample data collection form to capture information on project activity for the AIM Project is provided in Appendix E of this manual. In addition to the data form that captures project activities, AIM staff may want to collect information that will help them keep track of school disciplinary actions and school performance.

### *Surveys*

The key to gaining useful information from a survey is taking the time to design a survey that truly elicits responses that pertain to the project you are implementing. A survey can be a quantitative source of data when the collection of information can be expressed numerically. A survey is more qualitative if it takes the form of an open-ended questionnaire. Surveys are self-reported instruments that commonly collect information about knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of the target population and contain a standard set of questions administered most often to a group of people at the same period of time. Surveys can also collect self-reported information about past behaviors, such as the number of times a respondent committed a crime. It is often helpful to conduct surveys of the target population (and control group if applicable) before and after the implementation of a project (a pre-test / post-test method). Surveys may be conducted in a variety of ways, either by telephone, mail, or administered in a group setting on paper.

It is important to select the correct group for surveying. If you are interested in collecting baseline information, survey individuals that will be participating in your project. If you are attempting to assess general need or awareness, survey a sample of the general population (a sample is a sub-set of the population). If you are attempting to assess change, survey those participating in the project after they have been exposed to the project for a period of time and survey those that have not been exposed to it (this would

be the control group). Surveys should also be age-appropriate with language that can be easily comprehended by the group being surveyed.

The survey should be clear and easy to understand. Avoid questions that would encourage or sway the respondent to answer one way or the other. Each survey question should address only one item and not combine topics, such as "Do you approve of after-school projects that involve sporting events and community service?" Separating items will allow you to get a better and more specific idea of what your respondent's opinion is of the project. Be as specific as possible in your survey questions. Sometimes you will need several questions on the same topic, dealing with different aspects of the topic, to gain the most meaningful results.

There are a few drawbacks to surveys. One is that sometimes they have a low response rate (particularly mail surveys that may never be returned). Another drawback is that there is a lack of control over the quality of data, that is, a respondent may fill out the form incorrectly or incompletely. The reading and comprehension level of a survey is also a concern, especially if respondents read at a certain grade level or require the survey in another language. An advantage of surveys is that they are relatively low in cost to administer. You may also be more likely to get true and accurate responses due to anonymity (if it is an anonymous survey).

Forced-choice types of questions will also yield an easier analysis of the survey data. While "yes/no" and "agree/disagree" survey responses are often used, more meaningful response options, such as those that offer more options and gauge the intensity of the response, can be more useful. Open-ended questions, while sometimes difficult to analyze across many respondents, can provide information that a forced choice question would not allow. An example of an open-ended survey question might be "What would improve the AIM Project?" Many surveys contain a mix of forced-choice, or close-ended, with a few open-ended questions. Keep in mind the purpose of the survey when determining the questions. Finally, a pre-test of the survey can help you determine if you are measuring what you intended to measure, whether the questions are easily understood, and feedback as to the length and design.

Surveys continue to be popular research tool due to their relatively low cost and fairly simple administration. A sample survey is provided in Appendix E of this manual and is designed to measure the attitudes and behaviors of participants prior to the AIM project. It could then be administered again after participation in the project to see if there are any improvements. A survey could also be developed for AIM participants to measure their reaction to the project after they have been exposed to it for a period of time. A similar type of instrument could be used to gauge parent and school personnel attitudes regarding the project.

### *Standardized Assessments*

Somewhat similar to surveys, but much more structured, are standardized assessments or tests. These tools are rigorously designed and tested with large samples to establish their validity. They are used to assess needs, attitudes and behaviors among other things. When administered in a consistent manner, the results can be used to compare differences between the participants and other populations. They are popular with clinical types of programs where a standardized and generally accepted test allows clinicians or therapists to determine results that are not as open to dispute or interpretation as other types of instruments. For example, a commonly accepted individual personality assessment is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). An example of a standardized survey is one that the Blueprints for Violence Prevention Program, Bullying Prevention, uses to assess need. The Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire is an anonymous survey to assess information regarding level and seriousness of bullying. The Blueprint Program, Functional Family Therapy (FFT), uses tests for supervising and gauging the continuing development of FFT therapists. Standardized instruments can be used in the evaluation of the project by measuring changes in participants or need, as well as the development of staff implementing the project.

### *Interviews*

One measurement tool that can take many forms is interviewing. Interviews can be done with those implementing the project, managing the project, working in conjunction with the project, or participating in the project. Interviews can even be done with individuals that are not directly involved in the project, but may have an opinion on it. For example, evaluators assessing the AIM Project would be interested in interviewing staff that organize and coordinate the sporting activities, the project coordinator that schedules facilities and manages staff, school personnel and parent of participants, and the participants themselves. They may also be interested in interviewing community members and law enforcement officers to see what their perception of the project is and whether they feel it is making a difference in the community.

Interviews can either be closed-ended and structured or semi-structured and open-ended. For example, an interviewer may have a list of specific questions to ask the respondent or just ask how they feel in general about the project and then capture their thoughts. Interviews are usually done face-to-face, but can also be done over the phone. One difference between a survey and an interview is that in an interview there is an opportunity to clarify responses or ask a respondent to expand on their thoughts. Interviews are often tailored to the subject being interviewed. For example, you may have a different set of questions for the project staff than you would for the coordinator because their roles and the role of the project as it pertains to them differs somewhat.

Interviews, however, while fairly easy to prepare and conduct, can be time-consuming as they generally take more time than a survey would. Scheduling interviews with busy people is also an obstacle. Anonymity and confidentiality are also an issue, since the

respondent is identified to the evaluator, even if they are not identified by name in the evaluation report. Interviewees may also be reluctant to give an honest answer if they feel it reflects unfavorably on the project. It is also important to use the information obtained in an interview accurately and not draw inferences. Nevertheless, interviews are often a useful measurement tool for evaluations. Sample interview questions for the AIM Project are provided in Appendix E.

### *Focus Groups*

Another qualitative measurement tool is the focus group. Focus groups range in size, but should be small enough (usually under 10) to elicit responses from everyone participating. Facilitators generally head the groups and pose questions for discussion. The forum is usually unstructured and free-flowing. Facilitators should draw out those participants who seem reluctant to give their thoughts while maintaining order and the flow of discussion.

The composition of the group should be so that the members consider themselves peers or equals. Combining project staff with project participants may not yield the most accurate and candid responses. Often, a comment from one participant in a focus group stimulates the comments of others and so on. However, individual responses can also influence the opinions of others or discourage someone from giving their opinion. Information obtained from focus groups can also be limited because focus groups may be comprised of only those who volunteered to participate. A number of focus group meetings should be conducted to gauge the development of a project. As with interviews, it is important that the information gained in focus groups is conveyed accurately. Sample focus group questions for the AIM Project is provided in Appendix E.

### *Observations*

Observation is another tool that can be used in evaluation and is often paired with interviews. Typically, you can gain quite a bit of information about a project by observing project meetings, staff interactions and project activities. Observations should be done as unintrusively as possible to minimize disruptions to project operations and to also allow for observation of the most candid and realistic manner in which the project operates. However, when project staff or participants are aware of an observer, they may behave in a manner that is especially favorable and not how they would act under a normal situation. Although project staff and participants may begin to assume their more natural actions if observations occur frequently and over a long period of time, observations should always be backed up by other methods of data collection.

Observations are a good way to learn in detail how a project is operating, but it lacks the focus that other evaluation tools have and can be more subjective - that is the information gained from the observation may depend on who was doing the observing. Specific forms or protocols can be used to gain more reliability, especially if there are multiple

observers. Observations are generally most useful during the process evaluation phase when a project is developing and you are interested in documenting project activities. Some sample points of observation for AIM are provided in Appendix E.

### *Case Studies*

Case studies are a qualitative measure of data collection that looks intensively at one or a small number of participants to determine in detail how the project may have affected them. Case studies use other tools of measurement, such as interviews and observations to gain information. It provides a real-life context as to how the project is working and affecting certain members of its target population. Individuals chosen for case studies should represent the different variations in the target population so evaluation can better assess the impact the project might have on various participants.

Interviews are the primary mechanism for case studies, including in-depth interviews with the participant as well as with project staff and others who can comment on the project as it affects the participant (teachers, law enforcement, parents, etc.). Interviews are generally semi-structured and allow the interviewee to elaborate as much as they desire. Case studies also use observations to assess how the participant is reacting to the real-life operations of the project. Quantitative data, such as official records concerning the youth and individual-level project data on the youth are also used. Since case studies are limited in that they only focus on a few individual members of the target population, they should be combined with more encompassing measures of data collection.

### *Official Sources of Data*

Official sources of data are often easily available, but sometimes have to be collected with the help of the school and local police department or other agencies. Official sources of data for the AIM Project, for example, may include the number of offenses committed by juveniles during the hours of 3:00-5:00 pm or the number of in-school disciplinary actions against students currently participating in the project. By talking early on to entities that can supply you with data to help gauge the effectiveness of your project you can get a sense of what data is available and how it is maintained. They may even be able to begin tracking certain data that would be helpful. For instance, in developing the AIM project, organizers may have talked to police and obtained information as to the time of day that offenses committed by juveniles (those that would be likely to attend Baird Junior High) occurred. From this information, they could begin to see a need for a program and continue with a formal needs assessment. This type of data can then continue to be tracked throughout the project to see if the numbers change or fluctuate perhaps as a result of the project. If the local police department does not routinely enter the time of day that an offense occurred, in some automated fashion, they may be able to begin entering this information or keeping track of it for the evaluation. Evaluators may also be able to track individual arrest or disciplinary records of students participating in the project. However, caution should be exercised to ensure that all legal and

confidentiality measures are adhered to. Thorough needs assessments (like the sample needs assessment provided in the guidebook) capture much of the information that official sources, such as police departments, social services and the court system provide.

### *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*

Impact and outcome evaluations make the most use of experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Experimental designs generally produce the strongest evidence as to whether a project succeeded in its mission. Many formal evaluations use an experimental design that compares a group that participated in a project with a control group, or group that did not participate. A control group is sometimes referred to as a comparison group. While this type of evaluation is generally more involved and expensive, it does yield the most beneficial results. After conclusion of the project, or after a specified period of time, comparisons are made between the two groups. Theoretically, any differences could be the result of participation in the project. Many experimental designs feature randomization - that is subjects are either assigned or not assigned to the project at random.

While pure experimental designs are the ideal way to determine a project's impact and outcome, they are the most difficult to implement. It would be difficult to randomly assign students to the AIM project because parents might complain if their child was not (or was) chosen. It may be more difficult to isolate the effects of the project. It is also difficult to justify giving one group of students the perceived benefit of this activity and not others.

Since the AIM Project is a voluntary project, evaluators may elect to conduct a quasi-experimental design method. This design does not require that randomization occur, but the group that is exposed to the project is compared with a control (or comparison) group that is not. Control groups should always be matched as closely as possible to the target population - in demographics, exposure to other treatments or stimuli, locations - taking into account anything that would set them apart or differentiate them from the target population other than exposure to the project. Both groups should be observed during the project's operations to ensure that these differences are not evident.

In our AIM Project, evaluators could select a sample of students from the area that are very similar to Baird Junior High students (but attending a school other than Baird, with a similar rate of after-school crime by juveniles) and compare the rates or change in rates of juvenile offending during after-school hours between the groups. They could also be compared on their attitudes toward negative behavior through a survey instrument. There are a few obstacles here, however. Since AIM is voluntary, there may be differences, or selection bias, in those Baird students that choose to attend the project activities and those that do not. Therefore, there may also be differences between those Baird students that attend and those from another school that would not have attended, even if given the chance. These differences need to be taken into consideration and controlled for, if possible.

Remember that an evaluation with a control group should be carefully designed so the group is similar, in as many ways as possible, to the target population. While in field research there are always outside conditions that may influence the groups, there should be as few outside factors as possible or influences on either group that may contaminate the results. If a control group cannot be found, a non-experimental design consisting of a simple pre-test and post-test of the participating group's behaviors and attitudes or the change in their offending rates can be used.

Another option is a time series, or longitudinal design, that collects data over a long period of time- before, during and after the project. This type of design allows analysis as to whether the trend of the time series after the intervention differs from what it was before. A time series for AIM might chart the number of juvenile offenses committed during the after- school hours a number of months or years prior to the project implementation and then a number of months or years after.

### *Limitations*

For many of these evaluation designs and tools, a number of things must be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. Internal validity is basically how well an evaluation truly assesses the effect of the project. External validity, on the other hand, refers to how the findings of an evaluation can be applied to other projects in other settings, or to the same project operating at different times with different people. It is often referred to as the generalizability of the project to populations or contexts other than those used in the original design. Most evaluations are primarily concerned with threats to internal validity, such as history, selection, maturation, testing and mortality (attrition), which are discussed below.

Extraneous threats that could affect the interpretation of evaluation results include history, where the changes exhibited by the observed populations may be caused by other events that take place during the same time period. For example, if the AIM Project found that fewer participating students were involved in locker thefts during after school hours than before the project, you would have to determine whether that result was a function of the project or some other factor (e.g., a new security system was installed during the project's operation).

Another threat is selection. Selection threatens the internal validity of evaluation findings when there are differences in populations being compared, usually as a result of a non-randomized sample. Selection may be a threat to the AIM Project because it is voluntary project and there may be differences in those that choose to participate and those who do not.

Maturation refers to changes that occur in the population studied that are really the result of the passage of time. The age of participants is an example of how maturation factors into the interpretation of results. As subjects age, they may be more inclined to cease certain behaviors or develop others, not as a result of being exposed to the project.

Evaluators implementing pre- and post-test designs must sometimes be aware of the effect that testing has on the scores. A bias or foreknowledge can be instilled in participants as a result of a pre-test. The experience of the first test may impact reactions to the project or to the post-test. Mortality, or attrition, is also a threat to the internal validity of an evaluation when participants withdraw or drop out of a project.

### *Confidentiality of Data and Human Subjects Protection*

As you or the evaluators collect information on your project, it is important to be aware of any confidentiality issues that may apply to information sensitive in nature. For example, in project AIM, evaluators may be interested in collecting information on criminal histories or disciplinary actions taken against participating students to see if these decrease while they are participating in the project. There are a number of hurdles the evaluators may have to go through in order to obtain this information in the first place, and one requirement may be to keep the data confidential and not use easily identifiable elements in the dataset they maintain. Formal agreements as to the manner in which confidentiality is ensured should be established, as well as agreements that ensure the information will be used only for evaluation purposes.

Project staff also have a responsibility to keep project information confidential if it contains identifying information or could cause potential harm to the participants. If an AIM participant disclosed a problem to a staff person that they trusted, it would be important that this information not be reported or maintained in an identifiable manner in a database that is easily accessible.

Additionally, research that may put a subject at risk or deny benefits to another can be a human subject concern. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections, has established guidelines on the treatment of human subjects (available through their website at: [ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/](http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/)). Many research organizations and universities have established Institutional Review Boards (IRB) that review applications for studies and evaluations for the protection of human subjects. Be aware of any elements of your evaluation that may cause potential harm to your participants or others and ask to see the approved application from the evaluators' IRB.

### *Data Analysis*

A significant part of evaluating for project impact and outcome is data analysis. Statistical analysis is used to determine whether a change that occurred is statistically significant, or if the probability of it happening by chance. These analyses help determine the relationship between variables. The ability to conduct meaningful statistical analyses is contingent upon the collection of adequate and reliable data, and data that is quantitative in nature. This section will only provide a very basic and general description of some of the more common types of statistical analyses conducted in evaluations and to get you familiar with some of the terminology as you read evaluation reports or review

proposals. Space does not permit a thorough discussion of how to conduct statistical analyses, its appropriateness and its limitations.

### *Types of Data*

Data are also categorized in terms of measurement, which include nominal, ordinal, ratio and interval. Nominal data are not mathematical in nature and the number assigned to a respondent category does not have meaning. An example would be religion, where one type of religion, Protestant, would be labeled as "1" and another, Catholic, labeled as "2". Nominal data cannot be rank ordered and are often used to put people or events in categories. For example, assigning race a number (such as black = 1, white = 2, etc.) allows you to compute statistical analyses on variables that do not have mathematical properties. The numbers assigned to the data are completely arbitrary.

Ordinal data are just that – there is an order, or the ability to rank, the data. However, these data are also not considered mathematical in nature. For example, when students rank their favorite activity, the best liked-activity is 1 and the second is 2, and so on. There is reason and an order behind the assignment of the numbers. What this does not tell us, however, is how different the activities are from one another, such as whether the activity ranked first is liked twice as much or just a little better than the one ranked second.

Interval data are mathematical in nature and can also be rank-ordered. Interval data require that the numbers provide an indication of position as well as information on relative position; however, zero is arbitrary. Intelligence scores are a common type of interval data, but a score of 0 does not necessarily indicate an absence of intelligence.

Ratio data is similar to the other types of data, but has a definite zero. For example if one respondent noted they were 200 pounds and another indicated that she was 100, we know not only that the first respondent is heavier than the second, but that the first respondent is twice as heavy as the second.

### *Descriptive and Inferential Statistics*

Statistics are often classified in two categories – descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics give you summary information or a general feel of the data. They often tell how many times a question was answered a certain way (frequencies), or provide information on trends. Inferential statistics go beyond what the data alone show and attempt to infer things about a population from a sample of that population. For example, a study may select a random sample of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to take a test. Inferential statistics could help you determine if the results of this test could be used to infer information about all 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in that school. The following section discuss some of the measures used in descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

### *Measures of Central Tendency*

Descriptive statistics often include measures of position (or central tendency) such as the mean, median and mode. The mean is basically the average of a set of numbers. It is commonly used and a good way to get summary information. However, numbers that lie far outside the average (i.e., outliers) can influence the mean. For example, the number 150 in a set of numbers all under 10 can really influence the average. The mean should be used for interval/ratio data only.

The median is the middle point of a data set after it has been rank ordered. For example, in the set of 2,5,7,9,10, the number 7 is the median. Half of the numbers are below it and half fall above it. If you have an even number of numerals, the median is the average of the two that fall in the middle. The median can be calculated with ordinal and interval/ratio data.

The mode is the observation with the highest frequency or the one most often reported. The mode can be calculated with nominal data, but is sometimes not the most appropriate measurement choice for other types of data and is infrequently used.

### *Measures of Variability*

Descriptive statistics also use measures of variability to determine the dispersion or spread of data. The range is the difference between the largest point in a data set and the smallest. Because it depends on only two numbers, it can be somewhat deceiving, but it does provide information on the distribution of the data. Variance takes into consideration all data points in a set. The variance will be larger as the distribution is more spread out. A common measure of variability is the standard deviation. The standard deviation is the square root of the variance and indicates how close the observations are to the average, or mean. Again, the standard deviation will be larger the more the observations spread out. These measures can only be used with interval and ratio data.

### *Measuring Relationships*

Evaluators studying how one variable affects another may use correlational techniques that determine the degree to which the two are associated. For example, high grades on homework assignments may be highly correlated with high test scores. Caution should be used, however, when determining correlation. For example, when analyzing the test results of a group of children, there is a strong correlation between height and high test scores. This does not mean that the taller someone is, the smarter they are. It simply means that age may be a more accurate predictor of intelligence in young children, and as children age, they usually become taller. Correlation is typically referred to as "Pearson's  $r$ " or Pearson product-moment correlation and is measured within a range of -1.00 to +1.00, with 1 equaling a perfect positive correction, 0 indicates no relationship

and -1 indicates a perfect inverse relationship. Correlations are used with interval and ratio data.

Chi-square is a common statistical analyses for nominal data. It examines the observed frequencies in a category and compares it to what would be expected if there were no relationship between the variables. Like correlation, it tells us if a relationship exists, but not that one causes the other.

The t-test is used to compare the averages, or means, of two groups and whether those two averages are different enough from each other to be statistically significant. For example, let's assume an evaluator is interested in whether or not there are differences in youth who receive classroom instruction in large groups as opposed to small groups. The evaluation would collect performance data on both groups and conduct a t-test where its value is compared to a table indicating whether the observed averages are statistically different. T-tests are often used with interval and ratio data.

If an evaluation is interested in more than two groups, an analysis of variance (or ANOVA) is used to tell us if those groups are different on some variable. If the evaluators wanted to look at the performance of students in class sizes categorized as individual, small, medium and large, they would use ANOVA.

### *Variables*

Since many statistical analyses are used to determine the relationship between variables, it is important to know what the different types of variables are. Dependent variables are used to refer to what is expected to change or be affected as a result of your project's activities. For the sample project, AIM, the dependent variable is the change in the number of crimes committed by juveniles after school. Independent variables are the things that are believed to influence or cause the change. In project AIM, the independent variable is inclusion in the project activities. Other things can also be referred to as independent variables, such as the age or gender of the students if there is reason to believe they may be connected to behavior.

The choice of what statistical analyses to use depends on what you want your evaluation to measure and answer. The type and distribution of data will lend itself to certain analyses, while excluding others. While some of the more basic analyses, such as percentages, frequencies and averages, can be conducted rather easily, more complex types of analyses should be conducted by evaluators who are knowledgeable in the area of statistical procedures and familiar with its limitations. You should also be able to find a number of books and other resources that will provide you with additional information on data analysis in your local library or on the Internet.

### *Special Evaluation Considerations for Juvenile Justice Projects*

Juvenile justice projects pose special evaluation concerns. Listed below are a few of the special considerations evaluators should take into account when assessing juvenile projects:

- *Attrition/Mortality* - It is often difficult to persuade juveniles to participate in activities or projects offered by schools or youth based service agencies. An after-school project may seem immature to students who would rather spend unstructured time with their friends. Juveniles are at an age when they begin to explore their independence and structured activities may be met with little enthusiasm. While many juvenile projects are mandatory, such as programs through the juvenile justice system, many others are voluntary in nature. Voluntary projects have a number of limitations - they may have high drop-out rates, there may be differences in the types of juveniles who are targeted for the project and those who actually participate, or very few youth participate to begin with. Voluntary projects also limit the ability to use experimental designs since there is not an opportunity to randomize subjects. Even mandatory programs may experience problems with juveniles who lack interest and essentially stop participating. Projects targeting youth should make efforts to determine what activities would be of interest to the target population, how staff can engage youth and gain feedback on what they feel could improve the project.
- *Outcome Measures* - Some juvenile projects use recidivism or number of probation violations as an outcome measure. Evaluations should be careful to consider other measures, such as improved family functioning, positive behaviors or a reduction in negative behaviors, positive changes in peer groups, changes in self-esteem and attitudes, substance abuse, school work, etc. These more qualitative changes can be measured through standardized assessments, surveys and interviews. It is important to not limit outcome measures on items that can be easily influenced by other external factors or to define success narrowly.
- *Confidentiality and Consent* - Evaluators may experience resistance as they attempt to gather information on juveniles. Juvenile records are generally kept confidential and may require a court order to gain access. School records may also be confidential. It is of primary importance that the evaluators keep identifying and sensitive information on juveniles confidential. Consent is also important, from both the juvenile and parent/guardian. Any participation of the juvenile in the evaluation, whether it is taking a survey or participating in an interview, must be voluntary in nature. This can present a problem, as often has, when evaluators are attempting to gather youth for a focus group or survey. Sometimes evaluators offer incentives, such as snacks or a pizza party, to get youth and others to participate.
- *Isolation of Project Effects* - Because there are so many external factors influencing juveniles, it is often difficult to isolate these effects from the effects of the project. Evaluations should take careful note of any other interventions, efforts, programs, policies or initiatives that may have also contributed to the changes seen in the

targeted population. Control groups in experimental designs attempt to address these external factors, but experimental designs are not always feasible. Evaluations can attempt to gain qualitative information from participants on how other external factors have affected their behavior, such as school, family and peers.

- *Consistent Definitions* - While this may seem like an issue this is easily addressed, project staff and advisors on juvenile projects may not be on the same page even when they are using the same words. Before an evaluation begins, staff and advisors should make sure that they interpret goals, objectives, and performance measurements in the same manner. Definitions of "gang" "recidivism" and "delinquency" can vary. These definitions must also be communicated to the evaluation team. For example, if a project seeks to reduce the level of gang crime and defines gang crime as crime resulting directly from gang activity, the evaluation team may incorrectly include crimes involving gang members, but not necessarily stemming from gang activity. Gang members may be involved in domestic offenses that may have little to do with their direct involvement with the gang.
- *Appropriate Staff* - Especially in projects geared to provide services for youth, it is important to secure qualified staff. Background checks, reference checks and verifying previous employment or certifications is important. However, the element of having appropriate staff on board may also play into the evaluation. For example, staff that don't relate well to young people or have little patience for youth that may have short attention spans may adversely affect the outcomes of the project activities. In our sample project, AIM, it would be important to enlist staff that relate well to teens, that are respected and maybe even similar in the areas of race, gender, where they live or soci-economic background. Youth that can relate to project staff will be more likely to confide in them and participate.
- *Reading and Comprehension Level* – When conducting surveys, questionnaires and interviews, it is important to use language and terms that are easily understood by the target population. Take into account your target population's reading and comprehension level when designing these types of measurement tools. Youth may not admit that they don't understand a question or a term and responses may not be as accurate as they should be. Taking into account reading and comprehension levels is also important when designing the project activities. While challenging youth is important, juveniles will soon lose interest in an activity that they have a hard time understanding. On the other hand, they will also lose interest in an activity that is overly simplified or boring.

## *Using and Reporting Your Results*

The final report on an evaluation serves a number of purposes, including

- Aid in the continued planning, development and funding of a project or overall plan;
- Documentation of the history of the project and its evolution;
- Promotion of the project (if the evaluation showed positive results) to other jurisdictions;
- Add to the research literature by providing information on the benefits and limitations of the effort.

All information gathered from an evaluation should be included, even that which is deemed non-significant statistically. Even if your project was found to be unsuccessful in achieving its original goals, the evaluation report can provide information on any aspects that did show promise as well as what efforts failed and why. Learning what does not work is as important as learning what does.

### *Content of the Final Report*

Earlier in this manual, we discussed the different formats available to convey findings. No matter which method you choose - full reports, presentations, memos – it is important to maintain a full accounting of the evaluation and its findings. This is usually done in a full report format. Impact and outcome evaluations, for example, should contain the following information:

- *Executive summary* – A summary should always accompany a full report. They are usually 5-10 pages and highlight the main findings of the evaluation.
- *Thorough description of the project* - Remember that not everyone who reads the report will be familiar with the project.
- *Evaluation of the implementation* - Even if the implementation evaluation was done in the past and evaluators are now preparing a report on the impact or outcome, it is important to provide a context in which the project operates, its progress toward objectives, and project developments. The findings from an implementation evaluation provide important detail for interpretation of the impact and outcome. Evaluation reports should always contain information from any previous evaluations.
- *Evaluation design* – This includes the questions the evaluation seeks to answer, how they relate to the project's goals and objectives and how each question will be answered.

- *Methodology, data collection and measurement instruments used* – This should be included for implementation, impact and outcome evaluations. Depending on the target audience, more or less detail on the methodology can be provided. If the audience are mainly project staff and practitioners, language describing the methodology should be as easily understood as possible. For publication in a journal, more detail is necessary. Copies of the instruments used (blank surveys, interview questions) are often useful to provide.
- *Data analyses and findings* – Again, the detail on the data analyses should be tailored to the audience, and conveyed so it is clearly understood. Findings should provide as much information as possible as they pertain to each evaluation question. Graphs and other visuals can be used to better explain the findings.
- *Discussion of results and limitations* – This section should pull all of the findings together and synthesize them to convey an overall assessment of the project. Detail as to what factors may have influenced the findings, data limitations, project accessibility, changes in the project structure and other issues that may have influenced the course of the evaluation should be discussed here.
- *Conclusion / Recommendations* – Based on the discussion of results, evaluators should provide recommendations to improve the project, modify it or replicate it. This section should include what elements of the project are essential and working the best, which (if any) can be eliminated or scaled back and any new initiatives that should be considered. If the project is recommended for replication, any issues that should be considered before implementation in another jurisdiction should be addressed.

Evaluation reports on implementation would contain the same basic information, with a description of what the formative evaluation assessed.

### *Dissemination of the Report*

Take advantage of the opportunity to share the findings of your evaluation with others who are interested or active in your field. Advertising the results in community meetings can acquaint the community with your project and help build support (and possible volunteers). Press releases, newspaper articles or newsletters can help get the word out. The report can be made available on a web site or through the public library. You can also make presentations at county board meetings or with the funding agency to build support and make a case for additional resources. In particular, sharing your results with other juvenile justice councils or agencies serving youth will help you network and allow you to gain information from their projects.

## ***Resources***

Now that you know about evaluation and how important it is, what else is out there to assist you? There may already be someone on staff or on the juvenile justice council that is qualified to conduct or assist in a needs assessment or evaluation. A resource that nearly every county has access to is the local community college or other nearby college or university. Check with professors in the criminal justice, sociology, social work, psychology or public administration departments to see if there is interest in conducting a needs assessment or evaluation. Many students are interested in assisting in evaluation projects and volunteer their services to gain the experience. In addition, a number of web sites and other resources are available to provide assistance in preparing for and conducting evaluations:

*Agency:* Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)  
120 S. Riverside Plaza  
Suite 1016  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Phone - (312) 793-8550  
Fax - (312) 793-8422  
[www.icjia.state.il.us](http://www.icjia.state.il.us)

*Resources:* Copies and summaries of criminal justice based evaluations and research studies are available and can be accessed through the web site. Basic information on evaluation and program planning is also available.

Information on ICJIA-administered grant programs is also available through the web site, including Local Law Enforcement Block Grants, Juvenile Accountability and Incentive Block Grants (JAIBG), and the Byrne Memorial (Anti-Drug Abuse Act) Grant Programs. Grants are generally administered to units of government through a needs based assessment, request for proposal process or formula allocation. Information on administrative requirements and eligibility for these grants is available through the web site.

*Agency:* Justice Research and Statistics Association  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.  
Suite 801  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 842-9330  
Fax: (202) 842-9329  
[www.jrsa.org](http://www.jrsa.org)

*Resources:* Information on criminal justice programs, data, research and evaluations; contact information for state statistical analysis centers (SACs); JAIBG technical support center; and the Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center - a web-based resource designed to build juvenile justice evaluation capacity. Information on federal grant programs and funding through foundations is also available.

*Agency:* Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
810 Seventh Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
Phone: (202) 307-5911  
Fax: (202) 307-2093  
[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org)

*Resources:* Provides data and numerous publications and informational materials through the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse. Also offers an opportunity to subscribe to their electronic newsletter. The site provides information on OJJDP funding opportunities, requirements and grant announcements.

*Agency:* Bureau of Justice Assistance  
Office of Justice Programs  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/)

*Resources:* Information is available on federal grant programs, training and technical assistance, publications and conferences. A wealth of information on evaluation is available through the BJS Evaluation Web Site.

*Agency:* National Center for Juvenile Justice  
710 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3000  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-3000  
Phone: (412) 227-6950  
Fax: (412) 227-6955  
[www.ncjj.org/](http://www.ncjj.org/)

*Resources:* Information is available on juvenile justice administration, data, publications and evaluation.

*Agency:* Illinois Violence Prevention Authority  
100 W. Randolph Street  
Room 6-600  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Phone: (312) 814-2796  
Fax: (312) 814-8323  
[www.ivpa.org](http://www.ivpa.org)

*Resources:* Information available on IVPA grant programs, including community violence prevention, community policing violence prevention, violence prevention research, Safe to Learn standard awards, Safe to Learn mini grants and youth-led violence prevention mini grants. Information is also available on currently funded programs and collaborative projects.

# *APPENDIX E*

SAMPLE DATA COLLECTION FORM  
AIM Project

Report for the period of \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the number of sporting events scheduled, the number that took place, and the number of youth attending each event for this report period:

<b>Sporting Event</b>	<b># Scheduled</b>	<b># That Took Place</b>	<b># of Youth Participating</b>
Basketball			
Volleyball			
Soccer			
Baseball			
Other (indicate)			

<b>Entertainment</b>	<b># Scheduled</b>	<b># That Took Place</b>	<b># of Youth Participating</b>
Movie Screenings			
Art Instruction			
Other (indicate)			

<b>Discussions</b>	<b># Scheduled</b>	<b># That Took Place</b>	<b># of Youth Participating</b>
Focus/discussion Groups			
Guest Speakers			
Other (indicate)			

Number of youth receiving assistance with class assignments: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of youth receiving tutoring assistance: \_\_\_\_\_

The number of youth who approach AIM staff regarding a problem or issue in their personal lives or in school. \_\_\_\_\_

The number of youth provided with referral to other services. \_\_\_\_\_

The number of youth, overall, participating in the AIM Project. \_\_\_\_\_

Demographics of youth participating in the project this reporting period:

<b>AGE</b>	Number of youth
< 11	
12	
13	
14	
15 or older	

<b>Race</b>	Number of youth
American Indian or Alaska Native	
Asian	
Black or African American	
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	
White	

<b>Ethnicity</b>	Number of youth
Hispanic or Latino	
Non-Hispanic or Latino	

<b>Gender</b>	Number of youth
Female	
Male	

The number of youth that were transported to their homes or other approved residence after the program. \_\_\_\_\_

Any limitations or problems that the project experienced this reporting period:

Any other relevant comments:

## SAMPLE SURVEY FORM

### AIM Project

*(The following are only sample questions, in reality this survey would contain additional questions about attitude and behavior)*

This survey is designed to gather information about attitudes and behaviors. The results will help us design and improve ways to meet the needs of our students. Please respond to each question carefully and circle the answer that best describes your response. This is an anonymous survey, so please do not put your name on it.

1. How old are you?
  - A. 11 years old or younger
  - B. 12 years old
  - C. 13 years old
  - D. 14 years old
  - E. 15 years old or older
  
2. What is your sex?
  - A. Female
  - B. Male
  
2. What types of activities do you typically do after school on a regular basis? (Circle as many as apply)
  - A. School-related sports
  - B. Other school-related activities (band, theater, computer club, etc.)
  - C. Non-school related activities or clubs (church groups, park district sports, etc.)
  - D. Job or volunteer work
  - E. Getting together with friends / hanging out
  - F. No activities
  
3. How often are you unsupervised after school (parents are working or no adults are around)?
  - A. Never
  - B. Hardly ever
  - C. Once in a while
  - D. Most of the time
  - E. Almost always
  
4. How often do you feel bored after school?
  - A. Never
  - B. Hardly ever
  - C. Once in a while
  - D. Most of the time
  - E. Almost always

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS  
AIM Project

Interview Questions for the Project Coordinator:

1. Tell me about the early development of the project.
2. What have been the most beneficial or positive aspects of the project?
3. What have been some of the limitations or obstacles you've had to overcome?
4. Have you encountered any issues in staffing the program and recruiting qualified personnel?
5. How would you describe the relationship between the project and the school?
6. How have parents been involved?

Interview Questions for Project Staff:

1. What have been the most beneficial or positive aspects of the project?
2. What have been some of the limitations or obstacles you've had to overcome?
3. How do you feel the students perceive the project?
4. How do the day-to-day activities change?
5. What activities do youth seem to enjoy the most?
6. What activities do they seem to enjoy the least?
7. What do you think could be done to improve the project?

Interview Questions for School Personnel

1. Do you perceive the project as beneficial?
2. What do you think could be done to improve the project?
3. Do you feel the project has contributed to the way youth are behaving during school hours?

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS  
AIM Project

The following focus group questions could be posed to youth participating in the project:

How did you find out about the AIM Project?

What got you to participate? (Prompt: friends, teachers, parents, etc.)

How often do you participate?

When you don't participate, why?

Before the project, what did you do during the after-school hours (3-5pm)?

How do you feel about the types of activities the project offers?

What are your most favorite activities and why?

What are your least favorite activities and why?

How do you think other students feel about the project? What have you heard?

What would make this project better or increase participation?

Do you think that you are better spending your after-school time now that you are in the project as opposed to before?

Do you think your schoolwork has improved?

Do you think are getting into trouble less?

## SAMPLE OBSERVATIONS AIM Project

Some possible events to observe related to the AIM Project could include:

- Observe staff meetings and meeting with cooperating or partnering agencies.
- The carrying out of project activities - How are they organized and coordinated?; Do they keep the attention of participants?; Do some activities seem silly or boring?; Do some activities seem to excite participants or gain their interest?
- Observe how potential participants are identified or approached.
- Observe how the project is marketed.
- Observe the involvement of participants in the project - are they participating in the manner that was originally conceptualized?
- Observe the characteristics of those positively and negatively participating in the project.
- Observe how conflicts are resolved.
- Are appropriate safety precautions being observed?