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On Good Authority is a periodic briefing on criminal justice program research and evaluation. This report was written by staff Research Analyst Sharyn Adams. It is a summary of an evaluation of the juvenile probation programs in Peoria, Winnebago, and Christian counties. The evaluation was conducted by the Center for Legal Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield. Copies of the evaluation are available from the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit.

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The impact of intensive juvenile probation programs

The Center for Legal Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield conducted an impact evaluation of the intensive juvenile probation projects in Peoria, Winnebago, and Christian counties to determine how and to what extent the three programs were affecting their respective target populations. The Authority supported development of these specialized, intensive juvenile probation programs with federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act funds.

Program operation and performance

Peoria County Anti-Gang and Drug Abuse Unit

The Peoria County Anti-Gang and Drug Abuse Unit (AGDAU) targeted juvenile offenders placed on probation for known gang-related behavior and/or substance abuse offenses. The juveniles had extensive criminal histories or were adjudicated for serious criminal offenses. Of the 119 juvenile participants evaluated from the program's inception in March 1998 through November 2000, 98 percent had a history of substance abuse, 63 percent had a history of mental health issues, and 56 percent endured unstable home environments.

AGDAU addresses juvenile probationer treatment needs while controlling behaviors through surveillance and intensive supervision. The program consists of many essential elements for

probation, including small caseloads, distinct graduated phases to structure movement through the program, substance abuse assessments, and behavioral controls, such as electronic monitoring, curfews, home confinement, and random drug testing. In the program's six-month duration, AGDAU officers make frequent contacts with program participants, their families, schools, and treatment providers. Participants are seen in their homes, schools, and communities. The officers have the authority to impose immediate consequences when observing or substantiating any negative behaviors.

AGDAU participants are required to submit to random substance use testing by program officers and by their treatment providers. On average, participants were tested about once every two months, with slightly more than 23 percent consistently testing negative and about 30 percent testing positive on the majority of the tests.

While about 65 percent of the participants did not receive any technical violations, 25 percent received two or more. Also, nearly 60 percent of the participants were not charged with a new criminal offense while in the program, but 22 percent had two or more in-program offenses. While most participants who were charged with a new offense had committed non-violent crimes, about 30 percent had committed at least one offense against a person. More than 25

percent had committed at least one new drug offense.

Of the 94 participants discharged, 50 left successfully, satisfying all sentence conditions and serving the entire probation sentence length. Participants were unsuccessfully discharged when their probation was revoked. Revocation occurred with re-arrest, for infractions such as failing to participate in treatment or missing appointments with a probation officer, or when participants became absconders or had a warrant issued against them.

Upon discharge, 36 percent of all participants were returned to regular probation, 28 percent were released from probation, 23 percent were sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), and 3 percent were committed to IDOC for evaluation. Specific data was unavailable for 10 percent of the participants, but it was reported that most of them were sent to other transitional and drug treatment programs.

Winnebago County Juvenile Day Reporting Center

The Winnebago Juvenile Day Reporting Center (DRC) was designed for juveniles who were adjudicated for a serious felony and were at risk of residential placement or commitment to the Illinois Department of Corrections Juvenile Division. DRC provided an alternative to incarceration, and included educational, vocational, and social skill building. In addition, substance abuse education was available to program participants. During the four-month program, participants were seen by their field officers and DRC staff. Contact occurred between the field officers and families of 76 percent of participants, and between the field officers and the schools of 50 percent of participants. The majority of field officers also maintained contact with the DRC participants themselves.

Participants were subjected to random substance use testing through urinalysis. Substance use testing information was available for 100 of the 117 DRC participants. An average of two tests per participant were performed each month, with about 50 percent of these DRC participants receiving no positive

Table 1

New offenses committed by probationers during program participation

Offense type	Peoria County	Winnebago County	Christian County
Person	7 (14%)	10 (16%)	2 (9%)
Property	12 (23%)	15 (25%)	3 (13%)
Drug	8 (15%)	6 (10%)	4 (17%)
Weapon	2 (4%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)
Driving	1 (2%)	2 (3%)	3 (13%)
Other	9 (17%)	14 (23%)	1 (4%)
Mixed	13 (25%)	11 (18%)	10 (44%)
Total	52 (100%)	61 (100%)	23 (100%)

results and 12 percent testing positive more frequently than negative.

More than 80 percent of DRC participants received at least one disciplinary action from staff while in the program. About 65 percent of the participants received at least one technical violation, with 45 percent receiving more than one.

More than 50 percent of the participants were arrested for a new offense while in the program. About 30 percent of the participants were arrested once, while 22 percent were arrested twice or more. Offenses committed by participants most often were not violent in nature.

About one-half of the 115 juveniles discharged from the DRC program exited successfully. Once discharged from DRC, 52 percent were returned to regular probation, 18 percent were sentenced to IDOC, 20 percent were committed to IDOC for an evaluation, and 9 percent were sent to other discharge locations, such as detention followed by in-house confinement, jail time, and intensive probation. One percent of participants discharged were released from probation.

Christian County Juvenile Probation Intensive Extended Day Program

The Christian County Juvenile Probation Intensive Extended Day Program (EDP) provided an alternative to detention for juvenile offenders. Eligibility criteria was modified after the program's inception to include offenders as young as 10 years old, juveniles who have not yet been adjudicated delinquent but have been under court supervision and are facing revocation or have a petition pending, and juveniles with a criminal history involving drugs or violence. EDP aimed to expand supervision, provide coordinated community-based services, reduce new offenses that may lead to residential or institutional placement, make participants accountable to the community for their behavior, and reduce the use of controlled substances by adjudicated delinquents. The program lasted the duration of the participant's probation period.

On average, the EDP officer made one contact per month with the parents of the participants, while an average of fewer than one school contact per month was reported.

EDP participants were subjected to substance use testing. About 70 percent of the 31 EDP participants for whom data was available received at least one positive test result during their time in the program.

Drug treatment discharge data were available from the treatment provider for 22 of the Christian County EDP participants. Nearly 70 percent of the participants were unsuccessfully discharged from the drug treatment component of the program, and 5 percent were successfully discharged. About 15 percent were still in treatment at the end of the evaluation period. The discharge information for all other participants were classified as unknown.

About 65 percent of EDP participants received at least one technical violation while in the program. About 60 percent of participants received more than one technical violation — 25 percent received five or more during their time in the program. Almost 60 percent of participants were arrested for at least one new offense, with 25 percent being arrested for four or more. Most arrests were for non-violent offenses. The arrests were drug-related in 40 percent of the cases.

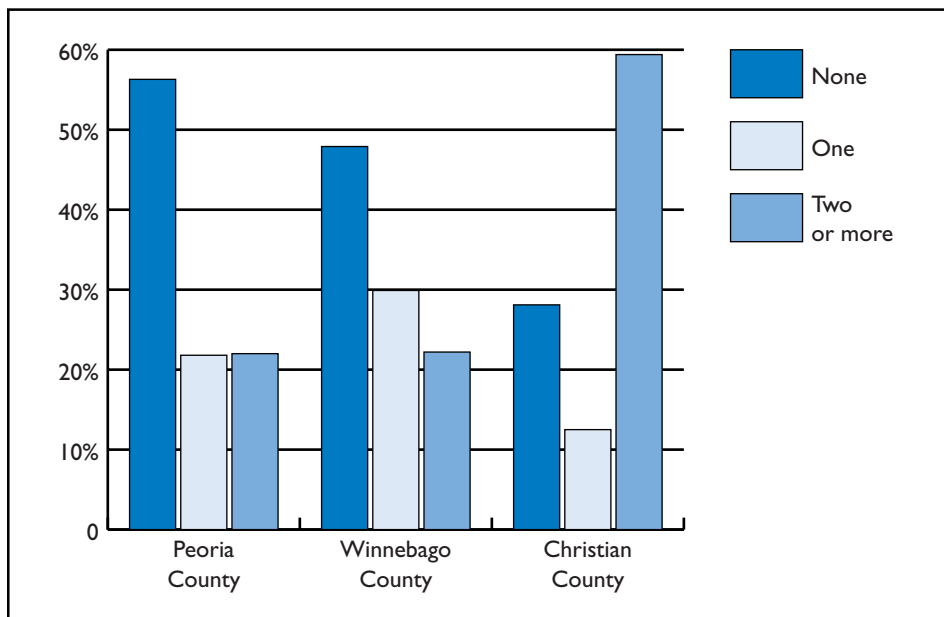
Of the 22 participants who were discharged from EDP, 17 were unsuccessfully discharged. Five were discharged successfully and released from probation. Of those unsuccessfully discharged, three were released from probation, five received full commitments to the IDOC, four were placed on adult probation and probation was revoked from four others. One juvenile had adult charges pending.

Program results

Of AGDAU participants for whom data are known, nearly 60 percent did not commit another offense during the first year following program completion. Of participants who successfully completed the program, 63 percent were not arrested for a new offense, while 44 percent of those who were unsuccessful in the program were not arrested for a new offense. The factors that appeared to have the strongest correlation to successful program completion are regular school attendance, gender (female), lack of mental health problems, an initial assess-

Figure 1

Percent of participants committing new offenses while in program*



*Peoria County program completion occurred in six months. Winnebago County program completion occurred in four months. The Christian County program lasted the entire term of probation.

Table 2

Discharge status of participants

Status	Peoria County*	Winnebago County	Christian County
Still in program	24 (20%)	2 (2%)	10 (31%)
Successful discharge	50 (43%)	62 (53%)	5 (16%)
Unsuccessful discharge	44 (27%)	53 (45%)	17 (53%)
Total	118 (100%)	117 (100%)	32 (100%)

*One participant is deceased.

ment of low risk, and the extent of prior involvement in the juvenile justice system, such as age at program entry, number of prior offenses, and length of prior probation terms. The older a participant is at the time of first involvement in the criminal justice system, and the fewer prior offenses he or she has, the more likely the participant is to successfully complete the AGDAU program.

Forty-two of the participants who successfully completed the DRC program

had been out of the program for at least one year during the evaluation period. Of these, 31 were arrested for a new offense their first year following program completion. Four of the 11 who were not arrested for a new offense during the first year committed technical violations, leaving seven participants who were not involved with the court system during the first year following their completion of the program.

DRC participants without a history of substance use fare considerably better in

the program than those with a history. Other variables related to successful program completion include the number of prior offenses, number of technical violations prior to program referral, parental involvement in the DRC Parent Empowerment Group, and whether the youth continues to abuse drugs and/or alcohol while in the program.

The number of discharged participants from the Christian County Juvenile Probation Intensive Extended Day Program was not sufficient to perform an analysis of the factors relating to successful completion.

Recommendations

Evaluators made several recommendations for improving the three juvenile probation programs.

Peoria County AGDAU

Evaluators recommended the following:

- Develop an assessment tool to identify mental health issues upon intake.
- Conduct a six-month court review of all AGDAU cases to make participants accountable if they do not progress through the program phases as required.

Winnebago County DRC

Evaluators recommended the following:

- Include therapeutic interventions to meet the substance abuse and mental health treatment needs of participants.
- Develop aftercare services.
- Add weekend and late evening participant supervision.

Christian County EDP

Evaluators recommended the following:

- Develop a more consistent response to violations, and the inclusion of positive sanctions to recognize and encourage good behavior.
- Create distinct and graduated phases which would be visible to participants as an incentive for their cooperation and compliance.
- Develop a screening instrument for any mental health issues presented by probationers.
- Establish screening criteria to target the juvenile offenders most appropriate for the program. ♦

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