

THE Compiler

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



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Juvenile reform, specialized services help fuel fight against probationer recidivism

Probation at center of state juvenile justice reform

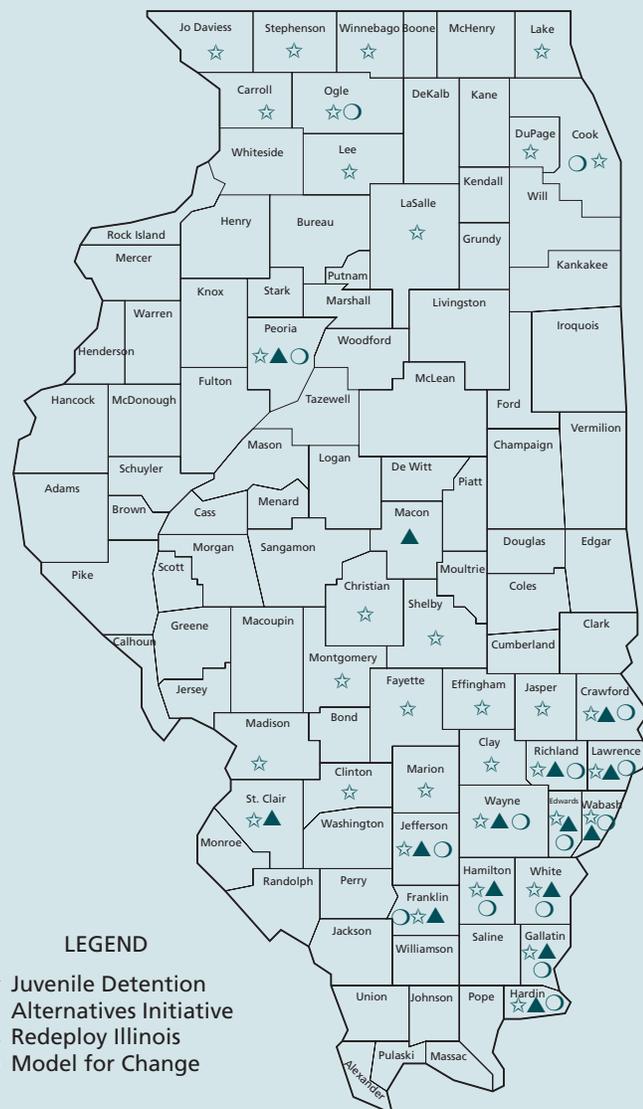
By Jessica Ashley

After years of support for harsher punishments for juvenile offenders that include incarceration and increased transfers of juveniles to adult criminal court, juvenile correctional systems have found themselves overburdened and overcrowded. In most Illinois counties, juveniles are often securely detained before trial and committed after trial, in part a result of fiscal incentives encouraging local communities to rely on incarceration for juveniles.

When county justice systems commit youth to corrections facilities, associated costs are paid by the state. While this produces a short-term savings to that county, studies have shown that community-based programs are more cost-effective over time. According to the Justice Policy Institute, costs of locked confinement in a state institution in the United States can run in excess of \$60,000 annually. The average annual cost to incarcerate a juvenile offender in an Illinois correctional institution was \$70,827 in state fiscal year 2005. In comparison, community supervision or services typically cost \$10,000 or less to provide.

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Figure 1
Juvenile justice reform initiatives in Illinois





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The Authority is governed by a 21-member board comprised of state and local leaders from the criminal justice system and members of the public.

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Printed by authority of the State of Illinois, September 2007. Printing order #08-030; 6,500 copies.

Several Illinois juvenile justice system reform initiatives are under way to divert youth from secure custody in juvenile correctional and detention facilities to supervision in the community.

Recent research reveals that a punitive approach to delinquency may be non-productive and have a worsening effect. Nearly half of juveniles discharged from the Department of Corrections (now known as the Department of Juvenile Justice) in 2002 were returned to a juvenile correctional facility within three years. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention-sponsored research suggests that non-violent youth are less likely to be involved in subsequent delinquent behavior if they remain in their communities and receive appropriate services that address their underlying needs.

Probation efforts across the state such as Redeploy Illinois, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, Models for Change, and balanced and restorative justice implementation have had success in monitoring juvenile offenders, providing services, and reducing recidivism.

Redeploy Illinois

The Redeploy Illinois Act took effect in December 2003 and provides counties with funding for probation departments to assess delinquent youth and refer those deemed low-risk to community-based programs that include education, recreation, community service, and crisis and health intervention. Redeploy program participants are non-violent youth who would otherwise be incarcerated.

Redeploy Illinois programs are obligated to reduce the number of youth commitments to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) by 25 percent from the average number of commitments

for the previous three years. Redeploy Illinois sites are operating in Macon County, the 2nd Judicial Circuit (serving Crawford, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, and White counties), St. Clair County, and Peoria County.

Services provided by Redeploy Illinois programs include:

- Aggression replacement training.
- Functional family therapy.
- GPS monitoring.
- Substance abuse and mental health treatment.
- Life skills education.
- Parent/family support.
- Victim support.

Macon County's Redeploy program is Community ACCESS. The Community ACCESS juvenile court judge identifies youth to be assessed for possible inclusion in the program. A team of social service providers and probation professionals present an assessment to the court within 30 days. Once referred, the youth is assigned to a probation officer whose caseload is made up of only Redeploy participants.

"This is how every probation case should be handled—the unified case plan, the team effort for accountability, and open communication," said Lori Long, deputy director of the Macon County Probation Department. "It's so different from garden variety probation."

In the first two years of implementation, Redeploy Illinois pilot sites, on average, reduced DJJ commitments by 44 percent (226 youth) within their communities. The Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board estimated that the reduction of 226 youth equals a gross DJJ savings of more than \$11 million in the four sites.

The Compiler, Summer 2007

Vol. 25, No. 1

Produced by the Office of Public Information

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Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

The Annie E. Casey Foundation established the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in 1992 to demonstrate that jurisdictions can establish more effective and efficient alternatives to placing youth in detention centers. The national foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children. JDAI focuses on the juvenile detention component of the juvenile justice system with an underlying belief that youth are often unnecessarily or inappropriately detained at great expense, with long-lasting negative consequences for both public safety and youth development.

JDAI promotes changes to policies, practices, and programs in efforts to:

- Reduce reliance on secure confinement.
- Improve public safety.
- Reduce racial disparities and bias.
- Save tax dollars.
- Stimulate overall juvenile justice reforms.
- Implement new or enhanced non-secure alternatives to detention, such as innovative probation-based services.

Prior to wider implementation, the foundation tested JDAI in Cook County and in four other sites across the country. Cook County reduced its detention admissions by 51 percent between 1996 and 2005 via a JDAI objective detention screening instrument administered by probation officers that assigns scores based on severity of the youth's offense, prior criminal record, number of missed court appearances, and legal status. Cook County's JDAI also included evening reporting centers, home confinement, electronic monitoring, staff secure shelter, and community outreach supervision.

"JDAI promotes concepts of community-based diversion," said Michael Rohan, director of the Cook County Juvenile Probation and Court Services Department. In addition, the initiative encourages "a more thoughtful use of policies and programs, and a more systemic approach to problem solving," he said.

JDAI is coordinated by several state and local agencies and entities, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, Illinois Department of Human Services, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, Cook County Juvenile Probation and Court Services Department, and the Authority. Detention alternative initiatives have been implemented in DuPage, Franklin, Jefferson, Kankakee, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Peoria, Stephenson, and Winnebago counties.

Models for Change

Models for Change, an initiative of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, is based on its investment in research regarding adolescent development and delinquent behavior. The initiative also is laying the groundwork for significant changes in law, policy and practice. Models for Change partners with the states of Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Washington to advance juvenile reforms that effectively hold young people accountable for their actions, provide for their rehabilitation, protect them from harm, increase their life chances, and manage the risk they pose to themselves and the public.

Models for Change supports the reform efforts under way in Illinois to bring about change in three areas needing improvement: juvenile court jurisdiction, community-based alternatives to secure confinement, and disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system. The MacArthur Foundation, in partnership with its grantees in the juvenile justice field, developed a model juvenile justice system that responds to delinquency locally and informally whenever possible. Under this vision, all but a limited number of juvenile offenders are to be supervised, sanctioned, and treated in community settings.

Chief probation officers are integral in the development of the models in Illinois as statutory members of juvenile justice councils that advise county boards on the status of juvenile delinquency prevention programs.

"In all our site work, probation is at the table and at the forefront of all our initiatives," said retired Chief Judge George Timberlake, a member of the Coordinating Council for Models for Change.

(See REFORM on page 7)

Publications

The following summaries and reports are available from the Authority. Most can be found online at www.icjia.state.il.us.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority 2006 Annual Report

Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council 2006 Annual Report

Illinois Integrated Justice Information System 2006 Annual Report

State survey results quantify crime victimization patterns

Findings of the first statewide survey, completed in 2005, of adult residents who reported incidents of criminal victimization are the subject of this **Research Bulletin**. A random sample of 7,498 non-institutionalized adults, whose names were drawn from the Secretary of State driver's license and state identification card databases, produced a response rate of 28 percent, with 1,602 completed surveys returned to the Authority. During 2002, an estimated 39 percent of residents were crime victims, while less than four in 10 crime incidents were reported to police.

Redeploy Illinois program decreases incarceration rates among juveniles

Implementation of a pilot program that provided community-based services to non-violent juvenile felony offenders in the Second Judicial Circuit of Illinois is described in this **Program Evaluation Summary**. Individualized evidence-based practices were applied to address the needs of each of the 54 youth between 13 and 17 years old who met specific program requirements for participation. A 56 percent reduction in youth commitments to the Illinois Department of Corrections was projected during the program's 10 months of operation. A system of services provided and sanctions imposed aimed to modify participant behavior and achieve a successful outcome for juveniles.

Research

Investigator-initiated research proposals under review

A variety of proposals for investigator-initiated research are under review. Researchers competed for \$300,000 in available Anti-Drug Abuse Act funding to focus on topics consistent with the current needs and trends in criminal justice. A number of high quality proposals to produce research valuable to the state's criminal justice system were submitted to the Authority. Funded research will begin in September.

Previously funded projects have yielded research in the areas of juvenile offender re-entry into the community, risk factors for sex offender recidivism, mental health assessment for jail detainees, InfoNet victim data collection analysis, crime victimization survey analysis, methamphetamine and domestic violence connections, and probationer drug treatment.

Jail Data Link study to evaluate program effectiveness

The University of Illinois at Springfield was hired by the Authority to conduct an evaluation of the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health (DMH) program, Jail Data Link.

Legislation enabled DMH to disclose the contents of a jail detainees' mental health treatment record for the purpose of providing mental health services at any Illinois county jail. Supported with Authority-administered Anti-Drug Abuse Act grant funding, Jail Data Link allows electronic cross matching of the daily roster of jail detainees and the most recent roster of clients reported in the Division of Mental Health Record of Community Services Reporting. A list is then produced of detainees in the jail who have received documented mental health services by a DMH grant funded community mental health services provider.

The list is accessible to both jail clinical staff and the agency from which the services originated, enabling the jail and the community mental health center to provide discharge/linkage to aftercare services, continuity of care and re-linking of services prior to the detainee's release.

The evaluation seeks to identify all DMH clients with open cases at local community agencies upon any admission to a jail detention facility, and provide

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Gender-specific issues at heart of specialized women's probation program

By Adrienne Frederick

A Lake County pilot program offering probationers gender-specific services is helping women recognize and overcome the effects of trauma on their lives, keeping them from committing new crimes, and motivating them to comply with the conditions of their probation.

The Lake County Women's Specialized Services probation program works to stabilize the effects of trauma on women whose backgrounds are riddled with violence. The program addresses the needs of female offenders who have endured child molestation, physical and sexual assault, and domestic violence in an effort to reduce recidivism.

Addressing trauma

Many program participants have lived life in a brutal world of poverty, abuse, and drugs, said Mary Figeas, assistant director of Lake County Adult Probation Services.

"When I think of what some of these women have gone through, I wonder if I were in their shoes would I have the strength they have to just get up every morning again and go on," she said.

Lake County is authorized through the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and the National Institute of Corrections to launch and test innovative pilot programs. Successful pilots are then replicated at other sites nationwide. Lake County has received more than \$85,000 in federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act funding, administered by the Authority, for the Women's Specialized Services Program since its inception.

The need to help non-psychotic, traumatized women offenders during their probation period became evident as the population of female offenders exploded in recent years, Figeas said. A significant recidivism rate of high-risk women probationers also was seen. Probationers at high-risk include indi-

viduals whose criminal behavior stems from problems relating to their history of trauma. The program was developed to address a rising number of women probationers who were not meeting their probation conditions.

Program participants are referred by probation officers after mental health assessment and testing. Initiated in 2004, the program recently received positive appraisal by Loyola University of Chicago evaluators. Of 168 total women referred during the period studied, 93 successfully completed the program. The remaining 75 committed a technical probation violation or were re-arrested.

Prior to starting the Women's Specialized Services program, Figeas said Lake County Probation and Psychological Services offered *Thinking for Change*, a cognitive behavioral group program developed by the National Institute of Corrections targeting men and women at high risk for recidivism. The program focused on the participant's behavior, feelings and interpersonal skills, and provided problem-solving social skills and interventions aimed at restructuring decision-making processes. By working with and observing the women in *Thinking for Change*, it was determined that most of them were still impacted by unresolved trauma experiences.

"The ladies in the group kept bringing up problems they were having in their lives, violent situations they experienced, poor relationships they were involved in, their lack of housing, problems with their kids, and so forth," Figeas said. "We found in dealing with them we couldn't even get to the course curriculum. So we started talking about forming a short-term trauma support group that would provide these women with community services to help stabilize their lives, give them a safe environment, and teach them coping skills."

An initial survey of 850 Lake County women probationers had determined

Figure 1
Comparison of mental health characteristics
between control and combined probationer groups,
and the two probationer groups*

Mental health characteristic	Comparison of control and combined probationer groups		Comparison of two probationer groups	
	Control group	Combined probationer groups	First provider	Second provider
Victim of domestic violence within last six months	27%	37%	39%	34%
Witnessed physical or sexual abuse between parents	28%	44%	44%	45%
Diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder	19%	31%	31%	31%
Received counseling/mental health treatment	54%	50%	48%	53%
Currently depressed	54%	67%	69%	66%
Currently taking medication for depression	39%	56%	69%	41%

*The program changed service providers during the evaluation period. The probationer groups served by the two providers were compared.

that up to 80 percent had traumatic histories. Most showed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental condition defined as overwhelming a person's ability to cope, with symptoms that can include anxiety, dissociation, impulsive behavior, physical disorders, compulsions, self-destructive behavior, and personality changes.

Many women in the program are multiply traumatized, added Kathryn Grzanich, mental health evaluator of the Lake County Psychological Services Division. Some are mentally ill, some are developmentally disabled, and many are just afraid, she said. Because the effects of long-term trauma are becoming more commonly recognized in the criminal justice system, mental health practitioners are opening up a new area of related research called developmental trauma disorder, which focuses on chronic complex trauma experienced by individuals victimized since childhood, she said.

According to Lake County's Psychological Services Division therapists, women trauma victims often harbor feelings of guilt, self-blame, and depression. Some need anger management counseling, and all program participants are intro-

duced to positive coping and relaxation skills to reduce symptoms of trauma while increasing their ability to meet the demands of daily life.

Stabilizing a participant's trauma symptoms is the main objective of the Women's Specialized Services program, in which weekly two-hour group counseling sessions are conducted for 10 weeks.

Providing resources

Facilitated by two licensed therapists and often featuring guest speakers, the program's psycho-educational sessions cover topics such as trauma, sexual assault, child abuse and child abuse accommodation syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder, healthy relationships, coping strategies, and self-esteem. A community support system is set up for each woman and assistance is provided in making safety plans for her and for her family. Women are familiarized with available community resources.

One of the Lake County program's greatest strengths is its proactive strategy to identify and quickly act to meet probationers' needs, Figeas said. The program

(See WOMEN on page 8)

Research continued

them with referrals to needed services. The evaluation began in June and will continue for one year.

Safe Havens evaluation nears completion

Authority staff partnered with the Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence to evaluate Chicago's Safe Havens Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program. The Safe Havens program was created to reduce the possibility of domestic violence during the transfer of children for visitation purposes and help ensure safe exchange of children in cases involving domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. Evaluators set out to identify promising practices in the field of supervised visitation and safe exchange.

Chicago was one of four cities selected to participate in the Safe Havens initiative. Other participating cities included Kent, Wash., Santa Monica, Calif., and Lansing, Mich. The four programs were evaluated individually.

Results of the Chicago Safe Havens program evaluation will be published this fall.

Balanced and restorative justice initiatives continue through fall

The Authority has coordinated conferences in Bloomington for summer and fall on specific balanced and restorative justice issues.

Juvenile Substance Abuse & Balanced & Restorative Justice: Exploring New Interventions was held in August. The seminar gave juvenile justice practitioners, policymakers, counselors, and treatment providers strategies to incorporate balanced and restorative justice philosophy and practices into juvenile substance abuse treatment and maximize the potential for rehabilitation.

Balanced and Restorative Justice: Repairing the Harm will be held Oct. 15 and 16. The event will help victim service providers incorporate the principles of balanced and restorative justice in their work. BARJ strategies provide opportunities for offenders to be accountable to those they have harmed and enable them to repair the harm they caused, to the extent possible. At the conference, experts will share techniques to include victims in the process of repairing the harm and rebuilding relationships destroyed through crime.

Grants

Federal fiscal year 2007 grant designations

The Authority received just more than \$15 million in federal fiscal year 2007 funding from the U.S. Department of Justice to administer the **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)**. The grant represents about a \$1.2 million decrease in funding from federal fiscal year 2006. Funded with fines paid by those convicted of violating federal laws, VOCA supports direct services to violent crime victims.

More than \$3.8 million was received to administer the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**. VAWA funds are used to improve the response of the criminal justice system to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The Authority also received about \$12.5 million to administer the **Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)** program, almost a \$4 million increase over federal fiscal year 2006's award. JAG funds can be used for state and local initiatives, technical assistance, training, personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual support, and information systems in the areas of law enforcement, prosecution and courts, prevention and education, corrections, drug treatment and planning evaluation, and technology improvement.

Nearly \$1.5 million was received by the Authority to administer the **Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) Program**. JABG supports local efforts to reduce juvenile delinquency and crime and hold young people, their families, and the juvenile justice system accountable for improving the quality of life in every community.

Finally, **Residential Substance Abuse Treatment** program funding in the amount of \$278,825 was received to support prison drug treatment initiatives.

Center on Halsted opens with Authority's programming support

Authority staff proudly participated in Center on Halsted's grand opening in Chicago June 5. The cultural center offers performance arts events, seminars on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender legal issues and financial management, and family and recreational activities. The Authority allocated \$56,000 in federal VOCA grant

(Continued on page 7)

Needs assessed, evidence-based practices measured in probation research initiatives

By **Cristin Monti Evans**

Two Authority research initiatives will help shape probation policy and services throughout Illinois.

A needs assessment survey conducted in 2005 helped the Authority identify the latest criminal justice trends and issues facing probation officers, as well as court clerks, detention center administrators, judges, police chiefs, public defenders, state's attorneys, and victim service providers, across the state.

A study also is under way to measure the affect of evidence-based practices on recidivism among offenders. Evidence-based practices include probationer assessments for drug or mental health treatment, additional contacts as needed with the probationer, probationer's employer, and/or treatment providers by the probation officer, and implementation of specialized caseloads for specific types of offenders, such as those convicted of domestic and sex offenses.

By communicating with those who have direct probationer contact and measuring best practices, both initiatives serve to enhance probation practices across Illinois.

Probation needs assessment

Criminal justice practitioners across Illinois were surveyed in an Authority effort to shape policy development and service planning, and develop research priorities. Conducted in fall 2005, the surveys focused on issues of workload, training, information systems, and needed improvements.

In a needs assessment survey of probation officers, increased drug treatment availability, youth prevention programs, and job opportunities were most often listed.

Probation officers noted a worsening of the problems of identity theft, drug/al-

cohol use, and drug dealing. More than 80 percent of those surveyed stated that more drug treatment and youth prevention programs would reduce drug use and violence. Almost 80 percent said better job opportunities also would help reduce crime.

The 2007 Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Needs Assessment Survey final report is available online at www.icjia.state.il.us.

Evidence-based probation study

Research also is under way to determine what works to reduce recidivism among probationers in six Illinois jurisdictions participating in an evidence-based probation initiative.

Data will be collected on probationers in Adams, Cook, DuPage, Lake and Sangamon counties, and in the Second Judicial Circuit, which includes the counties of Crawford, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, and White. The data and analyses will gauge probation performance prior to and after implementation of evidence-based practices, and help establish protocol for ongoing assessment of probation performance through state and local partnerships.

Probationer characteristics, sentence conditions, levels of compliance, program completion rates among probationers, and probation sentence outcomes will be among the data collected. Illinois State Police records also will be examined to determine the extent and nature of arrests for new crimes during or after the probation sentence.

Completion of the study is expected in summer 2008.

Cristin Monti Evans is a public information officer with the Authority

Balanced and restorative justice

Balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) is a philosophy that guides the work of individuals who work with juvenile offenders, their victims, their families, and the communities in which they live. The goals of BARJ are:

Accountability. BARJ-based strategies provide opportunities for offenders to be accountable to those they have harmed and enable them to repair the harm they caused, to the extent possible.

Community safety. Community safety can be accomplished through BARJ strategies by building relationships and empowering the community to take responsibility for the well being of its members.

Competency development. BARJ seeks to increase the pro-social skills of offenders. Addressing the factors that lead youth to engage in delinquent behavior and building on the strengths evident in each youth increases their competencies.

BARJ recognizes three parties that have an equally important role and stake in the justice process: victims, offenders, and communities.

The U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention endorses BARJ, and Illinois adopted BARJ as its purpose and policy for responding to juvenile delinquency in its Juvenile Court Act.

In 2002, the collaborative Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Initiative was formed to provide leadership, education and support to the courts, governmental agencies, organizations, communities and individuals as they strive to promote the values and principles of BARJ in their communities. Research has shown that BARJ programming is associated with low recidivism and high satisfaction with the juvenile justice system by both victims and the community.

Probation can apply BARJ principles to operate diversion programs for non-adjudicated youth, such as teen courts or victim offender mediation, and use BARJ strategies with juveniles serving probation post-adjudication.

Specific benefits of BARJ for probation professionals include:

- Increased collection of restitution for victims.
- Improvement of offender's life skills, while meeting the needs of the victim(s) and the community through productive community service.
- Reduction of recidivism among probationers.
- Increased victim satisfaction by being more responsive to victim needs.
- Decreased community fear of crime and increased satisfaction with probation and the juvenile justice system in general.
- Increased involvement among community members in probationer management.
- Encouragement of effective probationer management by providing opportunities to repair the harm caused and increase competencies.

Probation efforts ongoing

In many ways, probation is vital to ongoing efforts of Illinois juvenile justice system reform. New initiatives are having increasing success at reducing costly juvenile detention and correction stays, decreasing recidivism rates among young offenders, and empowering the community. At the same time, specialized services can provide troubled youth with much needed substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and other tools necessary to move forward in a productive manner.

Jessica Ashley is a research analyst with the Authority.

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Grants continued

funding to support the center's Anti-Violence Project for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

Drug task force, prosecution funding allocations announced

The Authority allocated more than \$5.3 million in federal funds to help fight drug crimes in 64 counties throughout Illinois in federal fiscal year 2007.

Federal Justice Assistance Grant funding will be distributed to 28 multi-jurisdictional narcotics enforcement and narcotics prosecution units, and will be used to conduct undercover drug operations, crack down on methamphetamine labs, and prosecute drug offenders, among other programs.

The Authority allocated \$2.8 million in funds to 20 multijurisdictional narcotics units, also known as metropolitan enforcement groups and drug task forces, throughout the state. In addition, eight prosecution units across the state will receive almost \$2.5 million for narcotics-related prosecutions.

Narcotics enforcement units create local, individualized strategies to address drug problems facing the county or counties they serve. Methamphetamine remains a major focus of the units in central and southern Illinois. Seizure of marijuana, heroin, cocaine and designer drugs remains a priority for northern counties, including DuPage, Kane, and Lake.

In 2006, these metropolitan enforcement groups and drug task forces:

- Made 3,229 drug arrests, including 1,039 for marijuana and 2,190 for other controlled substances.
- Seized a total 302,951,879 grams of controlled substances, up tenfold from the previous year's seizure of 30,502,508 grams of controlled substances.
- Seized 1,306 grams of heroin, an increase from 1,215 in 2005.
- Seized 302,023,153 grams of marijuana, more than 10 times the 28,843,527 grams seized in 2005.
- Seized 17,015 grams of crack cocaine, more than three times the 2005 seizures.

Technology

Vehicle theft data collection technology nears completion

Authority staff are developing a data collection system that will allow on-line motor vehicle theft reporting by state-funded anti-theft task forces throughout Illinois.

The Motor Vehicle Automated Reporting System will allow simpler and more accurate monthly reporting of vehicle recoveries, arrests, and investigations of stolen vehicles.

The system will be used throughout the state by motor vehicle theft task forces supported with Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council funding. Statistics on auto theft are used to help determine annual task force funding needs.

Testing of the system will begin in the fall. Future plans for the system include possible expansion for use by multijurisdictional narcotics enforcement groups and drug task forces across Illinois.

WOMEN, from page 5

links probationers with appropriate gender-specific providers through the Women's Treatment Network, a group of collaborating community agencies.

But despite the services and assistance available, the real challenge for administrators is convincing probationers to take advantage of the program.

"The notion of being part of a probation group is a hard sell for these women," Figeas said, "But once you get them in the door they'll come back. They have so many issues—housing, abusive relationships, childcare and parenting, transportation, education, employment, money, physical health problems, you name it, besides mental health and substance abuse problems."

While actual recidivism rates are still being measured among the first group of program graduates, evaluators noted that participants who completed the group sessions and continued in referred community treatment experienced positive outcomes. Most probationers took advantage of mental health trauma counseling services, improved

their job situations, and bettered their parenting skills. Some participated in *Moving On*, a behavior-based cognitive program targeting problematic survival issues that also are touched upon in the Lake County program. Other probationers volunteered as mentors for women first going through the program.

Ongoing program development

Helping women understand, manage, and heal their symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, and assisting them through group therapy and follow-up services to get on with their lives remains the program's ultimate goal. The program will continue to evolve based on feedback and evaluation, Figeas said.

"These women are so strong," she said. "I have seen them grow so much. They haven't given up. They have hopes and dreams just like everyone else, even with what they've gone through. And they have so much strength, they inspire me."

Adrienne Frederick is a public information officer with the Authority.

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