

March 2011 CJPAC workgroup subcommittee  
Agency Update – Division of Public Defender Services

Good morning. I am Jennie Albert and I am providing the agency update for the Division of Public Defender Services.

Our Chief Public Defender Suzy Storey is very committed to data collection and research. Six months ago our agency developed my research position and since our last subcommittee meeting we have been working on several research initiatives for improving data collection, best practices, collaborating with other agencies and laying the groundwork for more advanced research within our agency:

1. Two JAG/Byrne grant projects:
  - a. Domestic Violence Social Workers: We developed and began implementation of a collaborative Domestic Violence social worker position in our New Haven and Bridgeport GA offices. We have hired two professional social workers to provide wrap-around services to our indigent defendants on the domestic violence dockets under the theory that this intensive provision of collateral case management services such as homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse and mental health needs will enhance the defendant's ability to successfully complete the domestic violence counseling program. The collaboration piece that refers to other criminal justice agencies who are involved in the DV dockets is based on our shared goal of program completion, reduced recidivism, reduced violence and safety. In addition to the grant's evaluation requirements, we are going to use this data for a comparison with offices that are not providing these services to this population.
  - b. Juvenile Case Management System: Although all of our adult offices are now collecting case data through a case tracking system, our juvenile offices do not have that capability. Through grant money our agency will partner with a developer to implement a case management system that is capable of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.
2. Grant Funding: To enhance our technology and practice we are also regularly looking for grants. We have hundreds of employees who often have very good practice-based ideas for innovative programming so we are developing a grant template for agency personnel to use when they have a fundable idea. This not only inspires employees to take part in practice initiatives, it allows them to partner with my Information and Research Department in their own area of expertise.
3. Research Studies: Laying the groundwork for more advanced research studies on the long term outcomes of our cases, client satisfaction and the impact of each of our programs (legal, social work and investigative) on client outcomes so we can better implement evidence-based practices.
4. Collaboration: We would like to collaborate with other criminal justice agencies on the research level to better understand what works best as the cases move through the criminal justice system. For example, we currently do not know what the long-term

outcomes of our clients. The Division shares the same goals as the other agencies at this table who want to know if our programs reduce recidivism, improve safety and encourage positive changes in our clients.