

Wisconsin Legislative Council
Special Study Committee on Justice Reinvestment Initiative Oversight

Summary of Initiatives Referenced at Committee Meeting on 03/11/2009

Setting a Framework for a Community Justice Act

In late 2007 a nonpartisan, multi-agency ad-hoc committee was brought together to study current best practices in community corrections acts and lessons learned from other states. The intent was to affect strategic and fiscally-sound policy changes designed to address the burgeoning costs of corrections (jails and prisons) in their respective states. The committee, chaired by the Honorable Judge Michael Malmstadt (retired) and co-chaired by the Honorable Judge Elliott Levine, was comprised of representatives from the judiciary, prosecution, public defender, county sheriffs, police, counties association, departments of corrections and health and family services, office of justice assistance, legislature, community providers and criminal justice advocates. A major focus of the committee was studying over 30 years of experience of other states who have enacted Community Corrections Acts (CCA) as part of their strategies to address the increasing costs of corrections, drawing upon 'lessons learned' and 'what works' in other states, while creating a CCA framework model that would work for Wisconsin.

The work of the committee involved adopting a number of fundamental principles related to designing an effective CCA model, as well as providing recommendations to construct a Wisconsin-specific Community Justice Act (WI-CJA). The framework of the WI-CJA is intended to blend evidence-based practices with existing initiatives taking place across the Wisconsin criminal justice system – including the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion Program (TAD), Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils, and the Assess, Inform, and Measure (AIM) project.

For the complete report by the committee, see "*Setting a Framework for a Community Justice Act – June 2008*"

Assess, Inform, and Measure (AIM)

The Wisconsin Court System's Effective Justice Strategies Subcommittee (EJSS) has been working to explore and assess the effectiveness of policies and programs designed to improve public safety and reduce incarceration. With the leadership of subcommittee Chair Judge Carl Ashley, the EJSS developed a process model titled AIM (Assess, Inform, and Measure) which is intended to enhance the quality and scope of information provided to the court, including: risk assessment (an individual's risk to commit further crime in the community); needs assessment (assessing criminogenic needs - needs that are directly related to the individual's criminal behavior); responsivity assessment (taking into account the individual's motivation to change, learning style, gender and cultural needs); and an assessment of available community-based treatment programs that address the assessed needs and reduce the offender's risk to the community.

Additionally, the AIM model includes the development of a "feedback loop" that is designed to provide evaluation data that continually validates the accuracy of the risk and needs

assessment process and measures the effectiveness of community-based intervention strategies. This process serves as a means to measure outcomes and to increase the reliability and validity of the information (risk, needs, client responsivity and community assessment) provided to the court, as well as provide outcome data on the success/failure rates (recidivism) of offenders targeted for this project. Current project counties include: Eau Claire, Iowa, La Crosse, Marathon, Milwaukee and Portage.

For more Information on **AIM**:

Wisconsin Court System

<http://www.wicourts.gov/about/organization/programs/altaim.htm>

For statutory language on funding of the Milwaukee AIM project, see: Assess, Inform, and Measure Grant, page 632

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2007/data/acts/07Act20.pdf>

Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils

Each year more Wisconsin counties are developing collaborative teams to problem- solve around justice system and public safety issues in their communities. An effective collaborative team can bring about improvements and new initiatives that cannot be achieved by a single agency or organization (i.e. problem solving courts, utilization of risk assessment tools, community service programs, restorative justice, etc.). Collaborating councils provide the necessary foundation for communities to fully assess the needs of the local criminal justice system and develop programming and practices in response to these needs. Judges play a critical role in these collaborative teams by convening the appropriate justice system leaders and offering a unique perspective of the system and its impacts from an objective and neutral vantage point.

For more Information on **Wisconsin Collaborating Councils**:

Wisconsin Court System

<http://www.wicourts.gov/about/organization/programs/alternatives.htm>

Problem-Solving Courts

The problem-solving court approach is one that had been rapidly growing nationwide throughout the justice system over the last few decades. The most commonly known problem-solving court is the drug-treatment court but a wide range of specialized courts including mental health, juvenile, domestic violence, reentry, etc., are being developed to specifically address the underlying issues related to criminal behavior. These courts work across disciplines and with other institutions to deploy interventions that treat the offender while also holding them accountable for criminal actions.

For more Information on **Wisconsin Problem-Solving Courts**

Wisconsin Court System

<http://www.wicourts.gov/about/organization/programs/altproblemsolving.htm>

Treatment Alternatives and Diversion Program (TAD)

The Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) program is a grant program for counties was created and funded through the 2005 Wisconsin Act 25 – 2005-2007 Biennial Budget. The program provides grants to counties to develop treatment and diversion alternatives to jail and prison sentences for non-violent offenders with drug and alcohol problems. Administratively, the program is a joint effort involving the Office of Justice Assistance (OJA) as the granting agency, in program collaboration with the State Departments of Health and Family Services and Corrections. Current TAD Counties: Dane, Rock, Milwaukee, Wood, Washburn/Burnett and St. Croix Tribe, and Washington.

For more Information on **TAD**:

Office of Justice Assistance

http://oja.wi.gov/subcategory_archive.asp?linksubcatid=1613&linkcatid=1318&linkid=708&locid=97

Wisconsin Court System

<http://www.wicourts.gov/about/organization/programs/alttreatment.htm>

Evaluation Reports

Kit R. Van Stelle and Janae Goodrich. "Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Program: Report on Participant Outcomes". University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute Report, December 2008. [Executive Summary](#). [One-page Summary](#). Full report available on [request](#).

Kit R. Van Stelle. "Annual 2007 Evaluation Report for the Wisconsin Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Program". University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute Report, February 2008. [Executive Summary](#). [One-page Summary](#). Full report available on [request](#)

Note: Information and direct text used to produce a good portion of this document summary is based on the work of the Wisconsin Court System's Effective Justice Strategies Subcommittee (EJSS).

In the spring of 2004, the Wisconsin Court System's Planning, Policy and Advisory Committee (PPAC) created a subcommittee to research and provide recommendations in the area of alternatives to incarceration. The mission of the subcommittee is to "explore and assess the effectiveness of policies and programs designed to improve public safety and reduce incarceration." For the remainder of 2004 and throughout 2005, the subcommittee researched the various policies and programs related to alternatives and began to define areas to focus its efforts. Four major working groups within the subcommittee have been created to address specific topics: problem solving courts, criminal justice coordinating councils (CJCC's), other justice system practices, and the Assess, Inform and Measure (AIM) pilot project. Further information about the subcommittee can be found on the Wisconsin State Court System's Web site, at <http://www.wicourts.gov/about/organization/programs/alternatives.htm> .