

Minutes of the Risks, Assets, and Needs (RANA) Task Force Meeting
Tuesday, May 4, 2010
1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
JRTC, IDHS Office of Rehabilitation, Suite 5-300, Chicago
IDOC Springfield ISU, IDOC Springfield Conkle Hall, Springfield

Meeting Minutes: Approved at June 1, 2010 Meeting

Members in attendance (Chicago): Gino DiVito, Patricia Hayden, Jorge Montes, Mark Myrent, Rick Schwind, Brian Sexton

Members in attendance (Springfield): Grace Hong Duffin, Michael Randle, Mike Torchia

Members absent: Stephen Baker, Al Lolie, Michael Tardy

Non-members in attendance: Mike Bacula (for Jesse Reyes), Lindsay Bostwick, Jordan Boulger, Joe Danzl, Mary Ann Dyar, Cory Foster, Esther Franco-Payne, Steve Karr, Maggie Peck, Janelle Prueter, Mark Prosperi, Alison Shames, Sara Sullivan, Chris Devitt Westley, Paula Wolff

Purpose: (1) to hear from practitioners in other jurisdictions about selecting and implementing an assessment tool, (2) to learn about local practices in offender assessment, (3) to discuss the creation of an advisory group to the Task Force, and (4) to identify next steps in developing an assessment system in Illinois.

Welcome and Introductions

Chairperson Grace Hong Duffin, Chief of Staff, Illinois Department of Human Services, welcomed the group via videoconference in Springfield. Introductions were made around the table in Chicago and in Springfield.

Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2010 Meeting

Upon a motion by Mike Torchia and seconded by Michael Randle, the minutes for the March 19th meeting were approved.

Schedule of Meetings for the Rest of the Year

Upon a motion by Richard Schwind and seconded by Jorge Montes, the schedule of meetings for the rest of 2010 was approved. These dates will be posted at the IDOC web site according to the Open Meetings Act. Tuesday, June 1st; Wednesday, July 7th; Wednesday, August 4th; Wednesday, September 1st; Wednesday, October 6th; *November TBD*; and Thursday, December 2nd.

Report on the Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council and Its Relationship to the RANA Task Force

Justice Gino DiVito, Chair of the Sentencing Policy Advisory Council, gave a brief update on the work of the Sentencing Policy Advisory Council (SPAC), which was created by legislation at the same time that the Crime Reduction Act was passed. SPAC is designed to provide policy makers with objective analysis and evaluation of sentencing trends and policies to aid in their decision-making. To produce these analyses, SPAC will access publicly-available criminal justice data generated by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Illinois Department of Corrections, and Illinois State Police, which are represented on SPAC. The work of SPAC will be dependent on the data collected through the assessment instrument/system adopted by RANA. SPAC has met twice (on March 8th and yesterday, May 3rd) and will continue to meeting every other month.

The Michigan Experience with the COMPAS Offender Assessment

Alison Shames of the Vera Institute noted that at the March 19th RANA meeting, Ed Latessa from the University of Cincinnati spoke about the Ohio experience in choosing an assessment system. To provide technical assistance to the Task Force, Vera prepares memos on pertinent topics and brings in national associates to offer their experiences. She introduced Dennis Schrantz, Senior Policy Analyst for Northpointe Institute for Public Management and Former Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development Administration, Michigan Department of Corrections. Schrantz has extensive corrections experience in and currently works for the company that developed the COMPAS (Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions) assessment instrument, which incorporates strengths and protective factors.

Schrantz talked about how Michigan became concerned about prison population growth and wanted to determine how they could better control prison growth on the front-end (choosing programs that address needs), within the institutions (preparing inmates for release), as well as at reentry (reducing recidivism). Michigan determined that what was needed was a risk, need and strength assessment (RNSA) that would allow for the flow of offender information from the beginning to the end of the process, and which would make information available to communities where the reentry work is done. A work group was created and criteria to select a RNSA were defined (such as validity/reliability of instrument/process; dynamic measurement; adaptability; utility in planning and case management; data system requirements, staff training needs). Using the RNSA, case plans were developed, which were linked to the availability of services in prison and in the community. He described some positive results after adoptions of the RNSA: 32% improvement in recidivism, and 40% reduction in parole violations. In addition, the prison population was reduced from 52,000 to 44,000.

Schrantz remarked on Illinois' focus on strengths in the RANA process, noting that, especially in these tough fiscal times, the human services delivery system is not always going to provide for all of an offender's needs; therefore, it is important to know how to build on his/her strengths. He described COMPAS as a full system solution with a focus on case management and comprehensive planning. From Michigan's perspective, he discussed the successes and challenges with COMPAS.

In the Q&A session, the following issues were raised:

- COMPAS' ability to be implemented along with LSI-R (which AOIC uses).
- How COMPAS could be integrated in the prison classification system.
- Implementation of RNSA/COMPAS did not lead to prison closures in Michigan as much as the increase in programming as part of comprehensive planning.
- The possible impact of sentencing changes and/or changes in arrest procedures on prison population reductions.
- Whether the RNSA can be used pre-trial for diversion.
- COMPAS' gender responsiveness – it works well for both men and women, but there is also a COMPAS specifically for women.
- The impact of RNSA on culture change in the DOC.
- The role of the media, particularly if problems developed in the community – talking points were produced, and editorial board meetings and roundtables were scheduled to manage messages.
- Role of prosecutors.
- Upfront investment in the RNSA – Schrantz reported that the first budget was \$0 – by the time targeted prisons were closed two years later, the state saved \$19M and invested \$12M in RNSA; as more prisons were closed, received more money, ended up with \$57M. Overall, it was predicted that \$950M was saved from an investment of \$200M. The first contract with Northpointe, which came in two years into the process, was \$600K over three years.

Inventory of Offender Assessments at Two Points in the Illinois Criminal Justice System

Steve Karr, Manager, Planning and Research Unit, Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), reported on the different assessment tools used by IDOC, referencing the instruments used in classification and reclassification, substance abuse and mental health assessment, educational testing (see completed inventory by IDOC). There were questions about the mental health assessment of sex offenders and the possible need for a separate screening instrument. Director Randle noted that IDOC is working with Jim Austin, a leading expert on classification, on revalidating the department's instruments.

Maggie Peck from the Vera Institute gave a brief recap of the assessment instrument inventory chart produced by AOIC (see completed inventory), noting the tools used in the juvenile system, as well as the adult system – the Illinois Pre-screen Instrument (IPI); LSI-R used pre- and post-sentence; and the Adult Substance Abuse Driving Survey (ASUDS/ASUDS-RI). In addition, there are 60+ specialized tools that are used as needed, county by county, which are not individually listed on the inventory.

Creation and Operation of an Advisory Group

Alison Shames facilitated a discussion based on the proposal from the March 19th meeting to establish a RANA Advisory Group that would include researchers and representatives of community-based organizations with a vested interest in the process because of the impact it will have on their clients. Members raised questions about the formal role of an Advisory Group in relation to Task Force's goals and duties, and at what point in the vetting process to most effectively engage them. Limiting the number of people at the table was discussed, as well as the importance of including service providers and victim advocacy groups in the process. It was suggested that a subgroup draft a charge for the Advisory Group, come up with a list of possible people/entities to include, and offer it to the full Task Force for consideration. This subgroup will consist of Cory Foster, Mark Myrent, Sara Sullivan and Paula Wolff.

Identifying Next Steps in Developing an Assessment System in Illinois

Shames led a brief discussion at the end of the meeting about what the Task Force members' priorities will be moving forward. A possible focus would be on developing selection criteria. Suggestions included:

- Cost
- Which tool has the most research behind it? After all, we're striving for evidence-based
- Need for tool integrate with other existing tools in Probation/compatibility (see #6); automation
- User-friendliness
- Doesn't take a long time to administer
- Ability to override (should not be more than 15%)
- Assessment of return on investment – eliminating redundant processes
- Confidentiality/privacy (HIPPA considerations).

DiVito suggested that the experts at Vera take this information and prepare a list of suggested selection criteria for the Task Force to discuss at the next RANA meeting (on June 1st). Also, at the next RANA meeting, Vera will be providing additional information about the assessment tools used in other states, to complement what the Task Force has learned about the Illinois tools.

The meeting was adjourned around 5:00 p.m.