



# IDOC Statewide Recidivism Reduction Grant Newsletter

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### **What is the Second Chance Act SRR Program?**

The Second Chance Act Statewide Recidivism Reduction (SRR) Program was designed by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice, to help executive-branch policymakers and state corrections departments plan and implement state-wide reforms to reduce recidivism.

In 2013, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) was awarded the SRR Planning Grant and in 2014, was one of five or six states across the nation to receive a BJA SRR Implementation award. The IDOC has continued to receive supplement funding awards funds each year to implement initiatives that will have a successful impact on reducing recidivism in Illinois.

### **Risk Assessment and Case Planning**

Implementing a risk assessment process that starts during the Reception and Classification process to identify offenders most likely to recidivate and developing case plans to target criminogenic needs is one of the key goals for the IDOC SRR initiative. The assessment process includes periodic assessment and case plan updates to measure each offender's progress.

SRR grant funding enabled the IDOC to hire seven RANA Specialist (social workers) to conduct offender risk assessments and develop case plans for offenders scoring moderate to high risk to recidivate. To date, seventeen (17) social workers in twelve (12) correctional centers have been hired with additional positions posted at twenty-four (24) facilities.

Stay tuned! In our next SRR Newsletter; highlights on IDOC's new Offender 360 CARE module; the new reception and classification intake process!

### **Model Program**

Offenders from seven City of Chicago communities (accounting for approximately 40% of the commitments to IDOC custody) were identified to participate in the IDOC SRR Model Program. The SRR Model Program was implemented at the Pinckneyville and Sheridan Correctional Centers with RANA specialists conducting over 500 pre-screen risk assessments to identify offenders with a moderate to high risk to recidivate to participate in the model program. The RANA Specialists developed case plans and referred offenders to programs and services based on the needs of the offender. The RANA Specialists provide support to the offender in order to accomplish the goals and action steps identified in the case plan.

A control group from the seven (7) targeted communities scoring moderate to high risk to reoffend from Illinois River Correctional Center were identified. These offenders did not receive any specialized case planning.

Data is routinely compiled on various offender outcome measures while the offender remains in the custody of the IDOC and in the community on mandatory supervised release. The data includes referrals to cognitive based programming, program completions, offenders who obtained employment and maintained employment over a period of time and offenders who had returned to the IDOC due to technical violations or new offenses.

Preliminary data suggests the SRR model program group has a reduced recidivism rate (12.2% vs 18%).

In addition, the offenders in the SRR model program group had a significant rate of obtaining employment for at least three months compared to the control group (35% vs 10%). The rate of offenders sustaining employment for six months is also notable (14.70% vs 13.20%).

In January 2018, approximately half of the released offender SRR model program group was transferred to Epics Trained Parole Agent caseloads. With this continuity of offender management, we anticipate increased positive behavioral measures with the assistance of Parole Agents who have received specialized training.

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### Staff Development Initiatives

The IDOC is realigning departmental program offerings to address the criminogenic needs of the Illinois offender population. In order to establish the appropriate framework for implementing evidenced-based practices in IDOC's facilities and parole environments, training has been implemented and includes foundational training in risks, needs, and responsivity and core correctional practices. This training involves skill building and problem-solving strategies, effective use of community resources and enhancing relationships. The IDOC recognizes one of the biggest impacts on the process of changing offender behaviors is the professionalism and skills of staff.

#### **Core Correctional Practices (CCP)**

The SRR grant has provided avenues to support the IDOC's vision that staff are trained to the highest professional level. In January of 2016, the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute conducted a three-day training in Core Correctional Practices (CCP). CCP provides instruction to front line staff in cognitive-based interactions with offenders. Relevant topics include; effective use of reinforcement; effective use of disapproval; effective use of authority; prosocial modeling; cognitive restructuring, social skill training and problem-solving skills. The IDOC has implemented an agency wide training plan for Core Correctional Practices. CCP has been added to the new cadet training curriculum. To date, 1,419 staff have been trained in Correctional Core Practices (CCP).

#### **Effective Practices in Correctional Supervision (EPICS)**

Seventeen (17) Parole Agents and Commanders completed the University of Cincinnati Effective Practices in Correctional Supervision (EPICS) Training in November 2017. The EPICS model is designed to use a combination of monitoring, referrals, and face-to face interactions to provide offenders with targeted treatment interventions, and maximize the use of time to develop a collaborative relationship. EPICS training will continue and staff will be identified to participate in a Train-the-Trainer course and provide the IDOC with the capacity to train all parole agents in the near future.

#### **Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)**

Seventy-two (72) clinical staff have participated in Cognitive Behavior Interventions for Offenders Training. The training is designed to provide a thorough intervention that broadly targets criminogenic needs in group settings. The skills acquired during the training will provide staff with techniques to effectuate offender thinking and behaviors. Statewide implementation of these training programs clearly demonstrates the IDOC's commitment to provide quality training to valued staff.

### Quality Assurance and Evidence-Based Programs

The IDOC has made significant progress towards implementation of a Quality Assurance component for offender programming. It is essential to not only include evidence-based programming to our offender population but provide an on-going analysis of program fidelity and effectiveness.

To that end, IDOC entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Southern Illinois University (SIU) to catalog and evaluate IDOC's current offender services and programs and develop a quality assurance tool for future evaluation. The SIU project provided a baseline for program evaluation. The refinement and development of new programs is an ongoing effort within the Department in order to best equip our offenders for a successful community re-entry.

In order to implement the IDOC Programs Division's Quality Assurance Program, three regional Professional Development Specialists will soon begin quality assurance activities, ensuring the fidelity of existing programs and provide analysis of the effectiveness of offender programs.

The IDOC selected *Thinking for Change* (an evidence-based offender program) for statewide implementation. Nikole Justice (Pinckneyville Correctional Center) and Angie Issacs (Vienna Correctional Center) received training from the National Institute of Corrections and will train program staff throughout the state to facilitate the program.

**Stay tuned!** In our next SRR Newsletter; we will report on the new evidenced based programs being introduced and our progress on quality assurance measures!