Juvenile Drug Courts: Operational Characteristics and Implementation Issues

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FOREWORD

This report presents an overview of the operational characteristics and issues being addressed by jurisdictions that have recently begun implementation and/or planning for a juvenile drug court, and is designed to provide a snapshot of the current state of juvenile drug court activity among local jurisdictions and to address the operational components and policy issues that are common to the development of most current juvenile drug court programs. It has been prepared in conjunction with a special workshop conducted in August 1996 for these jurisdictions, sponsored jointly by the State Justice Institute and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Drug Courts Program Office. The session was attended by representatives from 27 jurisdictions in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

The sections that follow describe: the characteristics of current juvenile drug court programs; the populations they are serving; the case processing procedures they are using; the treatment and rehabilitation services they are providing for both the juveniles and their families, and the issues they are addressing as they plan, implement, and fine-tune their various programs. Nineteen programs were surveyed in the preparation of this report, with seventeen responding. In addition, two additional jurisdictions (Adams County, Colorado and Kalamazoo, Michigan) were included among those from which information was sought because of the activities underway in those jurisdictions that had bearing on juvenile drug court program operations. All of the jurisdictions from which information was requested were identified by America University during the course of either planning the 1995 SJI National Symposium on Drug Courts or in providing technical and information to jurisdictions interested in drug court programs under the auspices of the OJP Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project.

Not all respondents responded to all of the information requested because they may not have had a sufficient period of operation to permit response, the nature of their activities was not relevant to the information sought, or the information was not readily available. In each section, only those jurisdictions providing relevant information on the topic are included.
In developing the items of information requested from the responding jurisdictions, special appreciation is expressed to Robin Kimbrough of the Institute for Families In Society of the University of South Carolina and Judge John Parnham, Circuit Judge of the First Judicial Circuit, Pensacola, Florida, who reviewed the draft instrument and provided invaluable suggestions for its improvement.

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