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JUVENILE ANTI-BURGLARY
(JAB) UNIT
MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

AN EVALUATION PLAN FOR THE JAB PROJECT

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

Bureau of Justice Assistance
CRIMINAL COURTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

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Adjudication Technical Assistance Project

TA NO. 022

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AUGUST 21, 1986

CONSULTANTS

Fred Springer, Ph.D
Joel L. Phillips

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This report was prepared in conjunction with the EMT Adjudication Technical Assistance Project, under a Cooperative Agreement with the Bureau of Justice Assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Organizations undertaking such projects under Federal Government sponsorship are encouraged to express their own judgment freely. Therefore, points of view or opinions stated in this report do not necessarily represent the official position of the Department of Justice. EMT is solely responsible for the factual accuracy of all material presented in this publication.
ASSIGNMENT DATA SHEET

Technical Assistance No.: 022
Requesting Jurisdiction: Multnomah County
Requesting Agency: Multnomah County District Attorney
Requesting Official: Janet Klapstein
Dates of On-Site Study: August 21, 1986
Consultant Assigned: Joel Phillips, Fred Springer, Ph.D.
EMT Group, Inc.
Central Focus of Study: Development of an evaluation plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the Juvenile Anti Burglary (JAB) Unit

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Janet Klapstein, Deputy District Attorney
FROM: Fred Springer, Ph.D., and Joel Phillips, EMT Group, Inc.
SUBJECT: Development of an Evaluation Plan for JAB (TA No. 022)
DATE: October 4, 1986

The Juvenile Anti-Burglary Program (JAB) was established through a Bureau of Justice Assistance grant to address the serious problem of juvenile property offenses. The program was initiated to evaluate and improve the methods for handling juvenile property offenders in the juvenile justice system. The eventual hope was to reduce the high recidivism rate for juvenile burglars.

The following memorandum presents the results of the on-site technical assistance visit to the Multnomah County Juvenile Anti-Burglary Unit conducted on August 21 by Joel Phillips from EMT Group, Inc. The purpose of the assignment was to provide assistance in the development of an evaluation plan to document and assess the success of the project in achieving its goals.

As presented in the Memorandum, the Evaluation Plan has been developed to provide useful information appropriate to the current stage of implementation of the JAB program. The plan also recognizes that the evaluation must be accomplished within program resources; the proposed research approach is accordingly designed to utilize realistic data sources and analysis techniques. The next section presents the overall assumptions and objectives underlying the evaluation. Subsequent sections outline tasks for implementing the study.

BACKGROUND

The JAB Program was initiated with a three month study to identify problems related to the handling of juvenile burglars in the criminal justice system. During this
period, JAB staff gathered information through meetings with judges, court counselors, police officers, and clerical staff. A sample of juvenile burglary cases was drawn and examined to identify causes of time delays in the program.

These initial activities identified problems in several aspects of juvenile burglary case handling. During the initiation phase of the JAB program the most significant of these problems were targeted, and program activities were designed to address these problem areas.

- **Prosecution Management.** Delays in the prosecution of cases (for a variety of reasons) meant that intervention did not follow rapidly upon the offense. These delays reduce the effectiveness of prosecution and break the link between offense and intervention.

  To reduce delays in case processing, procedures were established to consolidate all cases in the JAB unit for vertical prosecution. In addition, special procedures were proposed to ameliorate problems leading to inactive cases; and to expedite JAB cases. Prominent among these were procedures for developing plea negotiation offers prior to preliminary hearing. Closer liaison with court counselors would help expedite cases, and a special investigator was acquired to increase prosecutorial capability.

- **Detention.** Shrinking resources and legal changes have reduced detention beds (pre and post-trial) for juvenile offenders. There were no criteria that would select detention for juveniles that might benefit most from it. The lack of detention capability also meant that counseling efforts were inadequately backed with detention consequences.

  The program will fund a JAB detention center with counseling services at a local detention center. A juvenile risk assessment matrix will be used to target juveniles at a medium level of risk for the detention program. It is believed that these youth stand the greatest chance of profiting from quick detention sanctions and counseling opportunities.

- **Substance Abuse.** Alcohol and drug abuse are acknowledged to be ubiquitous among serious juvenile property offenders. Although substance abuse is a criteria for probation revocation and detention, counselors do not have the means to detect and process cases of substance abuse. In effect, there has been no realistic sanction for continuing substance abuse.

  After exploring several options, JAB has established a contract with Treatment Alternative to Street Crime (TASC) for random urinalysis tests of juvenile probationers. This program is expected to provide a means of enforcing sanctions for continued substance abuse on probation.

- **Restitution.** Restitution has received a lot of attention as a means of rehabilitation/sanction in cases of juvenile property offense. However, the difficulty of attaining employment opportunities for juvenile offenders has made the approach impractical. Juvenile offenders often have no legitimate source of restitution funds.
To address this problem, JAB has developed a cooperative program with local businesses to provide juvenile offenders with employment and restitution opportunities.

The above points emphasize that the JAB program has benefitted from an unusually thorough research and planning effort prior to proposing and implementing specific changes in current juvenile justice system procedures. The program represents a careful attempt to address specific, identifiable problems in current practice. Improvement in these specific areas are expected to improve the overall performance of the system, and eventually reduce the high recidivism rate for juvenile property offenders.

**Evaluation Approach**

The fact that the JAB program is planned to address specific problems through a series of targeted changes in practice provides a strong foundation for successful, and practical, evaluation. EMT recommends that the JAB evaluation effort be designed to provide information on how well each targeted component of the program (e.g., prosecution management, detention, substance abuse, restitution) is performing. The recommended approach does not depend on directly measuring decreased recidivism among JAB juveniles, but focuses on more specific indicators of implementation and performance. This approach is recommended for several reasons:

- **JAB is a new and innovative program.** The major evaluation need is to learn whether specific program activities are:
  
  a) being implemented as planned (are activities actually being carried out?); and
  
  b) producing the immediate improvements in system performance that were anticipated.

  Information on immediate program performance will identify which program activities are meeting expectations and which are not; providing a basis for program improvements.

- **Focusing on program impacts (e.g., recidivism) poses serious problems in evaluating new programs.** In terms of study method, the numbers JAB juveniles and their time at risk are insufficient to provide a valid and
discriminating measure of success. In addition, it is difficult and costly to collect "controlled" information on recidivism for comparable non-JAB juveniles for purposes of "proving" impact. In other words, studies that focus on impacts require extensive resources and often produce methodologically questionable results.

Furthermore, information on program impact alone does not provide direct information on why the program is or is not working. Focusing on performance of specific program activities provides this information.

In sum, a well-planned program addressing specific problems in the juvenile justice system offers opportunities for useful evaluation. Ultimate program effects (e.g., reduced recidivism) will not occur unless the actions aimed at specific problems are successfully implemented. The proposed evaluation will assess the degree to which these specific steps to program goals are being successfully taken.

EVALUATION PLAN

The identification of prosecution management, detention, substance abuse, and restitution as major program components was based on a one-day preliminary visit to JAB and the Office of the Multnomah County District Attorney. These categories are accordingly suggestive, and the following outline of evaluation tasks may require revision. However, the basic approach and related tasks should be readily adaptable to a realignment of major program components. The following outline sets forth five major steps and associated subtasks for the JAB evaluation.

Step 1: Refining Program Objectives

The first step in the proposed evaluation is to review the major program components suggested here and make appropriate revisions. In accomplishing this step, JAB staff should identify the major problem areas the program is currently attempting to address. The four program components suggested here should be modified accordingly. Once the major program components have been identified, JAB staff should specify:
- Objectives to be accomplished in each problem area. These objectives can be stated in relative terms (e.g., reducing time to disposition), or absolute terms (e.g., disposition in "x" days, sanctions for probation violations). The selection of relative or absolute objectives should consider whether "baseline" or other comparative information is available for assessing relative improvement.

- Program activities that have been implemented to achieve the specified objectives (e.g., early filing, early plea negotiation offers, contracted urinalysis).

- Performance indicators that will indicate whether the intended activities are actually taking place (e.g., numbers of cases with early plea offers, numbers of urinalysis tests performed).

- Outcome indicators that will measure the degree to which the objectives for each program component have been attained (e.g., average disposition time for JAB cases, numbers of probation actions taken as a result of urinalysis results).

This initial step will provide the focus for data collection and analysis activities in subsequent steps of the evaluation. The following discussion is organized according to the major program components suggested above. Examples of appropriate objectives and indicators are used in the discussion. It is expected that JAB staff may modify or augment these examples in implementing the evaluation plan.

Step 2: Prosecution Management

This section suggests procedures for assessing program activities in the area of prosecution management. It is assumed that major objectives in the area include:

- reduce time from receipt of case to disposition;
- increase convictions;
- increase control of plea negotiations; and
- improve summons service and court appearances for juvenile burglars.

Program activities designed to further these objectives are assumed to include:

- centralization of juvenile burglary cases under a system of vertical prosecution;
- developing a system for providing computerized juvenile records at the time the case is received by the prosecutor;
• developing a procedure for filing cases early and providing an early plea negotiation offer to the defendant;
• acquiring the services of an experienced investigator to aid in serving summonses, transporting defendants, etc; and
• improving tracking of cases so that prosecutors can be notified if there is no petition on a case within thirty days.

The following research tasks are designed to address these objectives and activities. JAB staff may find it necessary to modify them according to the result of Step One above.

Data Collection

If planned activities are not carried out, they cannot produce their intended effects. Several data collection tasks can provide information on the degree to which prosecution management tasks are being implemented. Potential data sources are:

• attorneys prosecuting JAB cases (interviews based on their direct experience);
• other JAB personnel (e.g., interviews with clerical staff and investigator concerning their experience with their responsibilities [See Appendix A]);
• JAB case files and records (using the coding forms and MIS software provided by EMT Group in this report);
• Juvenile court records on non-JAB cases.

The most direct approach to identifying the degree to which planned activities are being implemented is to interview the staff who are responsible. Interviews should include questions concerning the reasons that reported problems are being experienced (as a guide to changes in program management).

Data on case processing time and case outcomes can be coded using the coding forms and analytic software provided by EMT in this report. Indicators will include:

• time from arrest to case receipt;
• time from case receipt to preliminary hearing;
• time from case receipt to disposition;
• percentage of convictions;
- percentage of pleas accepted before preliminary hearing;
- percentage of pleas accepted as offered;
- sentencing outcome.

If resources permit, these data could be coded for all cases that have been processed by JAB since the program began. If a sample is necessary, EMT will provide assistance on designing a simple random sampling procedure.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data base manager (See Appendix A) designed by EMT will allow calculation of summary statistics for the outcome. These statistics should be aggregated:

- at the program level (all cases processed in the unit), and
- at appropriate time intervals (e.g., monthly) to track changes in program performance since implementation.

Comparisons of program performance with outcomes for a controlled comparison group of similar but non-JAB cases are not practical for this evaluation. Therefore, judgments about the "success" of JAB performance indicators must be made through comparison with available information concerning past (pre-JAB) system performance, or comparison to targeted levels of "successful" performance for each indicator. If desired, EMT will provide assistance in determining which approach to performance criteria is most appropriate.

An important objective for analysis of the data on prosecution management will be to link problems in carrying out planned activities with performance outcomes (e.g., if JAB case processing time does not meet expectations, the explanation may be found in "process" difficulties reported by program staff). The task of finding reasons for failures to reach performance objectives is crucial to developing strategies for program improvement.
Step 3: Detention Resources

JAB is funding a 30 week detention center for JAB juveniles. Major objectives of this detention center program are:

- to provide additional beds for short-term detention of juvenile burglars;
- to provide a system for quick detention as a sanction for probation violations;
- to utilize limited detention resources for those offenders who are most likely to benefit from intensive counseling and intensive probation backed by short-term detention sanctions.

To meet these objectives, JAB has initiated the following activities:

- arranged for detention facilities set aside for JAB offenders. These facilities include a mid-week "penalty box" for one-night sanctions for probation violators.
- initiated development of a "risk matrix" for classifying juvenile offenders into "low", "medium" and "high" risk groups. The assumption is that "medium" risk juveniles will benefit most from short-term detention, and intensive counseling and supervision.

Evaluation of the detention portion of the JAB program will involve examining the adequacy of the detention program and an initial assessment of the operation of the matrix.

Detention Facilities

The first questions to be addressed concern the degree to which detention facilities are being used, and for what purposes. Data sources will include:

- program and detention center records;
- detention facility staff;
- probation counselors working with JAB juveniles.

Data collected from program and detention records will include information on indicators such as:

- numbers of juveniles in detention;
- length of stay;
numbers of juveniles in "penalty box" detention;
reasons for "penalty box" detention.

Interviews with staff and counselors should solicit perceptions of the adequacy of the program and any problems in the operation of the detention program.

The "Risk Matrix"

The risk matrix is a new and complex undertaking for the JAB program. The matrix is under development and there is insufficient experience to assess the degree to which the matrix achieves its long range objectives of identifying those juveniles who will benefit most from close supervision. Some preliminary evaluative activity would, however, be appropriate:

- The results of application of the matrix should be monitored to determine the numbers and percentages of JAB cases that fall into each of the defined "risk categories;"
- To the extent feasible, probation behavior for each category of risk should be monitored to test the assumption that low risk offenders will experience few violations and that high risk offenders will experience violations serious enough to warrant longer term detention.

These quantitative results will allow an initial assessment of whether the matrix identifies a subgroup of targeted juveniles that is appropriate to the capacity of the detention and close supervision program. Analysis of differential probation behavior for the different risk categories is the minimal test of whether it effectively identifies differential "risk."

Step 4: Substance Abuse

The JAB program proposes to utilize random urinalysis testing to improve the ability to impose sanctions for probation violations. The objectives of this program component are straightforward:
• to identify probation violations involving substance abuse;
• to provide a basis (evidence) for imposing sanctions through PV hearings.

To accomplish these objectives, JAB has contracted for random urinalysis testing. To assess the urinalysis program, program records should be monitored to provide information on the following indicators of program performance:

- numbers of tests conducted;
- number/percentage of positive tests;
- substances involved in positive tests;
- cost per test;
- cost per positive test.

For positive tests, probation counselor records should be used (possibly through telephone contact with counselors) to identify:

- PV hearings resulting from test results;
- sanctions resulting from hearings.

Counselors may be interviewed to determine the reasons for instances when parole violations did not lead to sanctions, and the types of actions taken in those cases. Cost information can be analyzed to determine cost per probation revocation.

Step 5: Restitution

The final major program component addressed in this evaluation plan is the restitution effort aimed at involving the business community in hiring JAB juveniles. This program is in initial stages precluding a full evaluation of results. However, initial evaluation might document:

- the potential numbers of jobs available;
- types of jobs potentially available;
- types of skills potential employers are considering;
• potential hours of employment/income potential;
• realistic levels of restitution that may be achieved through the program.

In the early stages of implementing this cooperative program, evaluation resources might be profitably used to interview program employers concerning their objectives in the program and their concerns about potential problems. This information would provide guidance for counselors placing and supervising juveniles in the program.

The steps suggested in the above evaluation plan focus study efforts on specific activities initiated in the program. The study will identify those areas in which the program is operating according to expectation, and those areas of performance problems. This type of focused information on program activities is appropriate for a program in the early stages of implementation, and will build a foundation for effective program development.
APPENDIX A

DATA BASE MANAGER
The following two forms were prepared by EMT Group, Inc., as part of technical assistance on developing an evaluation for JAB. One form is a Case Management Form and is based on the existing form developed by Judy Lawrence. It documents basic case processing and management information. Data from this form can be tabulated monthly and will determine delay points in the processing of JAB cases. The second form is a Case Disposition Form. It tracks dispositional information. Information from this form will be used to prepare the monthly statistical reports currently prepared by the office.

These are draft forms for review purposes. We are prepared, after review, to revamp the forms and send an IBM program based data disk to facilitate date manipulation.