

ANNUAL REPORT

2018

NEBRASKA CENTER FOR
JUSTICE RESEARCH



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha



FROM THE DIRECTOR: RYAN E. SPOHN

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research (NCJR) was established in 2014 with a mission to develop and sustain criminal justice research capacity internal to the State of Nebraska.

Our goal is to assist the Legislature, justice agencies, practitioners, foundations, and stakeholders with research and evaluation to reduce recidivism, promote the use of evidence-based practices, and improve public safety. This annual report summarizes the activities and financial status of NCJR in its fourth year.

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, NCJR once again crafted our *Adult Justice in Nebraska* report to provide a foundation of data trends in areas such as law enforcement and corrections for the Legislature at the beginning of the legislative session. NCJR also completed policy and research briefs for the state, entitled *Restricted Housing among Juvenile Populations and Status Offenders and the Juvenile Justice System*. Finally, NCJR completed an evaluation for the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services of their *Moral Reconation Therapy* program and delivered the final report.

NCJR faculty and staff also produced numerous reports from our current contracts and grants. For example, Director Ryan Spohn completed a collaborative evaluation of the array of “alternatives to juvenile detention” available in Douglas County and produced a final report from the project. A situational analysis report and program theory report were produced from Director Spohn’s collaborative evaluation of Defy Venture’s reentry program. In addition, NCJR produced a qualitative report as part of the evaluation of the Vocational and Life Skills initiative. This report stemmed from participant interviews, giving voice to their efforts to reintegrate back into society.



In regards to NCJR’s academic mission, our faculty and graduate students produced multiple academic publications and presented at the annual conferences of the *American Society of Criminology*, the *Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences*, and the *National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judge’s National Conference on Juvenile Justice*.. Director Spohn and Associate Director Wright also participated in three webinars with Georgetown University’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. These webinars highlighted the process and findings of their evaluation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model in Douglas County.

From a budgetary standpoint, we continue to be encouraged by the well-balanced budgetary profile of NCJR that includes state funding, contracts with local agencies, federal grants, and funding by local foundations. The diversity of our funding profile not only broadens the impact of our research, training, technical assistance, and evaluation activities across the state, but also allows us to provide “matching” funding for products that benefit from both public and private dollars. Our state appropriation is only 26% of our budget, suggesting that for every state dollar invested, NCJR attracts three dollars in external funds.

In summary, 2017-2018 was another productive year with a substantial output of research, evaluation, and academic products. In addition, we continue to build research partnerships, collaborations, and relationships with agency and community stakeholders. We look forward to learning from these experiences and increasing our capacity to serve the Nebraska community in subsequent years.

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THE NEBRASKA CENTER FOR JUSTICE RESEARCH

MISSION STATEMENT

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research’s mission is “to develop and sustain research capacity internal to the State of Nebraska, assist the Legislature in research, evaluation, and policymaking to reduce recidivism, promote the use of evidence-based practices in corrections, and improve public safety.” Our research focus is to use data, research, and evaluation to reduce recidivism, promote the use of evidence-based practices, and improve public safety in Nebraska with an emphasis on reducing prison overcrowding.

NCJR FACILITIES

NCJR currently occupies approximately 1,000 square feet in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (SCCJ), located in the College of Public Affairs and Community Service (CPACS) building on the University of Nebraska Omaha campus.

STATEMENT OF GOALS

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research is comprised of a dedicated team of social science researchers who strive to serve the people of Nebraska as well as the University community. In pursuit of this overarching goal, we:

- 1) Conduct rigorous, objective examinations of justice-related issues facing the Nebraska community
- 2) Educate the public and provide assistance to the legislature regarding justice-related issues
- 3) Contribute to the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice’s graduate program by funding students to assist with applied research projects
- 4) Increase state funding to allow capacity to administer and evaluate future justice reinvestment activities
- 5) Increase research visibility through technical reports and academic publications
- 6) Increase our national reputation as a research and evaluation resource

For more information visit: justicereserach.unomaha.edu

MEET THE TEAM



RYAN SPOHN, PH.D. (DIRECTOR)

Ryan is the Director of the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. He received his B.S. in Sociology/Criminology from Kansas State University (1996), M.S. in Sociology from Texas A&M University (1998), and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Iowa (2003). His areas of research include juvenile delinquency, crime, families, child maltreatment, and the evaluation of criminal justice agencies and programs.



EMILY WRIGHT, PH.D. (ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR)

Emily is the Associate Director of the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. She received her B.S. in Psychology from Arkansas State University (2003), M.S. in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati (2004), and Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati (2008). Her areas of research include neighborhood crime and victimization, exposure to violence, gender differences in offending and victimization, and correctional intervention strategies.



LAURA SCHOENROCK, M.P.A. (PROGRAM COORDINATOR)

Laura has been a Program Coordinator since April 2012. Laura is a graduate of the UNO Masters in Public Administration Program and holds a B.A. degree in Organizational Communication studies from the University of Northern Iowa. She is currently coordinating the development of a transitional program for imprisoned individuals in the state of Nebraska.



JOHANNA PETERSON, M.A. (RESEARCH COORDINATOR)

Johanna has accepted a position at Omaha Police Department and was previously the Research Coordinator at the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. Johanna received her B.S. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska Lincoln (2012) and her M.A. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska Omaha (2014). She helps to coordinate data collection, develops research design strategies, and produces evaluation reports for the Vocational and Life Skills reentry programs across Nebraska.



JORDAN CLARK, B.S. (DATA COORDINATOR)

Jordan has accepted a position at Metropolitan Community College and was previously the Data Coordinator at the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. Jordan received her B.S. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska Lincoln (2012). She assists with data collection as well as database design and management, and provides technical support for the Vocational and Life Skills reentry programs across Nebraska.



JOSELYNE CHENANE, M.S. (RESEARCH ASSISTANT)

Joselyne has recently accepted an assistant professorship at University of Massachusetts-Lowell and was previously the graduate student assigned to the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. She received her B.A. in Education with a concentration in English and Literature from Egerton University (2007) and her M.S. in Criminal Justice from State University of New York College at Buffalo (2012). Her research interests include policing, race and justice, the intersection between race, and crime and neighborhood contexts.



SARA TOTO, M.A. (RESEARCH ASSISTANT)

Sara is a PhD student in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and a research assistant for the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. She received her B.A. in Criminal Justice (2013) and her M.A. in Criminal Justice (2015) from the University of Nevada, Reno. Her research interests include institutional and community corrections and exposure to violence and victimization.



CHERYL CHRISTIANSEN (STAFF ASSOCIATE)

Cheryl is a staff associate at the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. She tracks the Center’s budgets and supports the directors and coordinators with their various administrative needs. Cheryl has worked for the University of Nebraska Omaha in the Biology department, as well as the dean’s office in the College of Information Sciences & Technology, starting there in 2008.

SELECTED ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

2016-2018

Butler, H. Daniel, Starr Solomon, and Ryan Spohn. 2018. "Programming in Restrictive Housing: Considerations for Improving Outcome Evaluations." *Criminal Justice and Behavior*. doi: 0093854818780450.

Chenane, Joselyne, Emily M. Wright. 2018. "The Role of Police Officer Race/Ethnicity on Crime Rates in Immigrant Communities." *Race and Justice*. doi: 2153368718777278.

Ellison, Jared and Ryan Spohn. 2017. "Borders Up in Smoke: Marijuana Enforcement in Nebraska after Colorado's Legalization of Medicinal Marijuana." *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 28(9):847-865.

Spohn, Ryan, Abby L. Bjornsen, and Emily M. Wright. 2017. "Factors Associated with Perceptions of Rape Events and Reporting of Rape Events among College and Non-College Women." *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research* 9(4):279-289.

Radatz, Dana L. and Emily M. Wright. 2017. "Does Polyvictimization Impact Incarcerated and Non-incarcerated Adult Women Differently? An Exploration into Internalizing Problems." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 32(9):1379-1400.

Richards, Tara N., Marie S. Tillyer, and Emily M. Wright. 2017. "Intimate Partner Violence and the Overlap of Perpetration and Victimization: Considering the Influence of Physical, Sexual, and Emotional Abuse in Childhood." *Child Abuse & Neglect* 67:240-248.

Spohn, Ryan, Emily M. Wright, and Johanna C. Peterson. 2017. "Rape and Mental Health Outcomes Among Women: Examining the Moderating Effects of 'Healthy' Fear Levels." *Violence Against Women* 23(9):1055-1075.

Wright, Emily M. and Marie S. Tillyer. 2017. "Neighborhoods and Intimate Partner Violence against Women: The Direct and Interactive Effects of Social Ties and Collective Efficacy." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. doi: 0886260517712276.

Wright, Emily M., Ryan Spohn, Joselyne Chenane, and Nick Juliano. 2017. "The Importance of Interagency Collaboration for Crossover Youth: A Research Note." *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 15(4):481-491.

Cain, Calli, Benjamin Steiner, and Emily M. Wright. 2016. "Nonstranger Victimization and Inmate Maladjustment: Is the Relationship Gendered?" *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 43(8):992-1017.

Radatz, Dana L. and Emily M. Wright. 2016. "Integrating the Principles of Effective Intervention into Batterer Intervention Programming: The Case for Moving toward More Evidence-Based Programming." *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 17:72-87.

GRANTS AWARDED

2014-2018

2016-18	A Collaborative Evaluation of the Nebraska Connected Youth Initiative (with WestEd Justice and Prevention Resource Center). The Nebraska Children & Families Foundation.
2016-18	Project Safe Neighborhoods, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Research partner with City of Omaha.
2015-17	Project Safe Neighborhoods, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Research partner with City of Omaha.
2014-16	Evaluation of the Douglas County Crossover Youth Practice Model. The Sherwood Foundation.
2014-15	Project Safe Neighborhoods, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Research partner with City of Omaha.



Lieutenant Darci Tierney of the Omaha Police Department being congratulated by Bob Whitehouse, previous Chairman of the Board of Regents for University of Nebraska, for winning an award at the 2018 School of Criminology and Criminal Justice Annual Scholarship and Awards Luncheon.

CONTRACTS AND PROJECTS

2016-2018

ROLE: PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR

2018-20	Vocational & Life Skills Evaluation. Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. Ryan Spohn.
2017-18	Douglas County Juvenile Justice Prevention Needs Assessment. The Sherwood Foundation. Ryan Spohn with Emily Wright.
2017-19	Evaluation of Douglas County Assessment and Case Management Services. Douglas County Corrections. Ryan Spohn with Ben Steiner and Emily Wright.
2017	Defy Ventures Evaluation. The Sherwood Foundation. Ryan Spohn with Roni Reiter-Palmon and Joseph Allen.
2016	Completely KIDS Evaluation. Completely KIDS. Ryan Spohn
2016-18	Juvenile Justice Alternatives to Detention Evaluation. Douglas County/The Sherwood Foundation. Ryan Spohn

ROLE: PROJECT EVALUATOR

2018-19	A Collaborative Evaluation of the Nebraska Connected Youth Initiative. WestEd Justice & Prevention Resource Center.
2017-19	Douglas County Operation Youth Success Evaluation. The TerraLuna Collaborative.
2017-19	Minority Health Initiative Evaluation, Colfax and Platte Counties, NE. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.
2016-17	Blue Courage Police Training Assessment. The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training.
2016-17	Douglas County Operation Youth Success Evaluation. The TerraLuna Collaborative.
2016-18	Vocational & Life Skills Evaluation. Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.

SELECTED RESEARCH REPORTS

2016-2018

Kurtz, Don L., Ryan Spohn, and Johanna Peterson. 2018. *Nebraska Vocational and Life Skills Initiative. Client Perceptions of Program Services and Ability to Reintegrate: A Qualitative Analysis of Grant Cycle 1 Participant Interviews*. For the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.

Wright, Emily M., Ryan Spohn, Joselyne Chenane, and Sara N. Toto. 2018. *Evaluation of the Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) Program at Nebraska Department of Correctional Services*. For the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.

Scheller, E. M., Allen, J. A., Reiter-Palmon, R., Spohn, R., & Mroz, J. E. 2018. *Defy Ventures Evaluation Plan Report*. For the Sherwood Foundation.

Steiner, Benjamin, Emily M. Wright, Ryan Spohn, Ebonie Epinger, and Nicky Dalbir. 2018. *Evaluation of Douglas County Assessment and Case Management Services: Year 1 Report*. For the Douglas County and Sherwood Foundation.

Schoenbeck, Madison, Joseph Mroz, Joseph Allen, Roni Reiter-Palmon, and Ryan Spohn. 2018. *Alternatives to Detention Evaluation: Final Report*. For the Douglas County and Sherwood Foundation.

Spohn, Ryan, Emily M. Wright, Joselyn Chenane, and Sara Toto. 2017. *Adult Justice in Nebraska 2017*. For the Nebraska Legislature.

Scheller, E. M., Allen, J. A., Reiter-Palmon, R., Spohn, R., & Mroz, J. E. 2017. *Defy Ventures Program Theory Report*. For the Sherwood Foundation.

Spohn, Ryan, Emily M. Wright, Joselyne Chenane, and Sara Toto. 2017. *Marijuana Enforcement in Nebraska (2013-2015)*. For the Nebraska Legislature.



Robyn Thiemann, Associate Deputy Attorney General for the U.S. Department of Justice, discusses the past, present and future of Project Safe Neighborhoods.

SELECTED RESEARCH REPORTS

2016-2018

Scheller, E. M., Allen, J. A., Reiter-Palmon, R., Spohn, R., & Mroz, J. E. 2017. *Defy Ventures Situation Analysis Report*. For the Sherwood Foundation.

Spohn, Ryan, Emily M. Wright, Joselyne Chenane, and Sara Toto. 2017. *Nebraska Center for Justice Research: Annual Report 2017*. Nebraska Center for Justice Research.

Spohn, Ryan, Emily M. Wright, and Joselyne Chenane. 2017. *Evaluation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (Youth Impact!): Results Summary*. For the Sherwood Foundation.

Spohn, Ryan, Joseph Mroz, Josphe Allen, and Roni Reiter-Palmon. 2017. *Alternatives to Detention Evaluation: Year One Report*. For Douglas County and the Sherwood Foundation.

Spohn, Ryan, Emily M. Wright, and Jared Ellison. 2016. *Adult Justice in Nebraska 2016*. For the Nebraska Legislature.

Hamilton, Zachary and Alex Kigerl. 2016. *Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Classification Tool Development*. Nebraska Center for Justice Research.

Miller, Jennifer and Ryan Spohn. 2016. *EPIC Alternative Education Program: Formative Evaluation Report*. For the Douglas County Youth Center and the Sherwood Foundation.

Nebraska Center for Justice Research. 2016. *Alternatives to Detention Theory of Change Report*. For Douglas County and the Sherwood Foundation.

Nebraska Center for Justice Research. 2016. *Completely KIDS Final Report (2014-2015)*. For Completely KIDS.

Miller, Jennifer and Ryan Spohn. 2016. *Operation Youth Success: Developmental Evaluation Final Report. 2016*. For the Sherwood Foundation.

Wright, Emily M. and Ryan Spohn. 2016. *Douglas County Youth Impact! Views of Challenges from the Professionals Involved*. Brief report submitted to the Douglas County Youth Impact! Working Group. Funding Agency: Sherwood Foundation.

Wright, Emily M. and Ryan Spohn. 2016. *Douglas County Youth Impact! Views of Successes from the Professionals Involved*. Brief report submitted to the Douglas County Youth Impact! Working Group. Funding Agency: Sherwood Foundation.

Wright, Emily M. and Ryan Spohn. 2016. *Douglas County Youth Impact! Recommendations from the Professionals Involved*. Brief report submitted to the Douglas County Youth Impact! Working Group. Funding Agency: Sherwood Foundation.

Spohn, Ryan. 2016. *Project Safe Neighborhoods 2014 Grant Final Evaluation Report*. For the City of Omaha.

Spohn, Ryan and Jared Ellison. 2016. *Marijuana Enforcement in Nebraska (2009-2014)*. For the Nebraska Legislature.

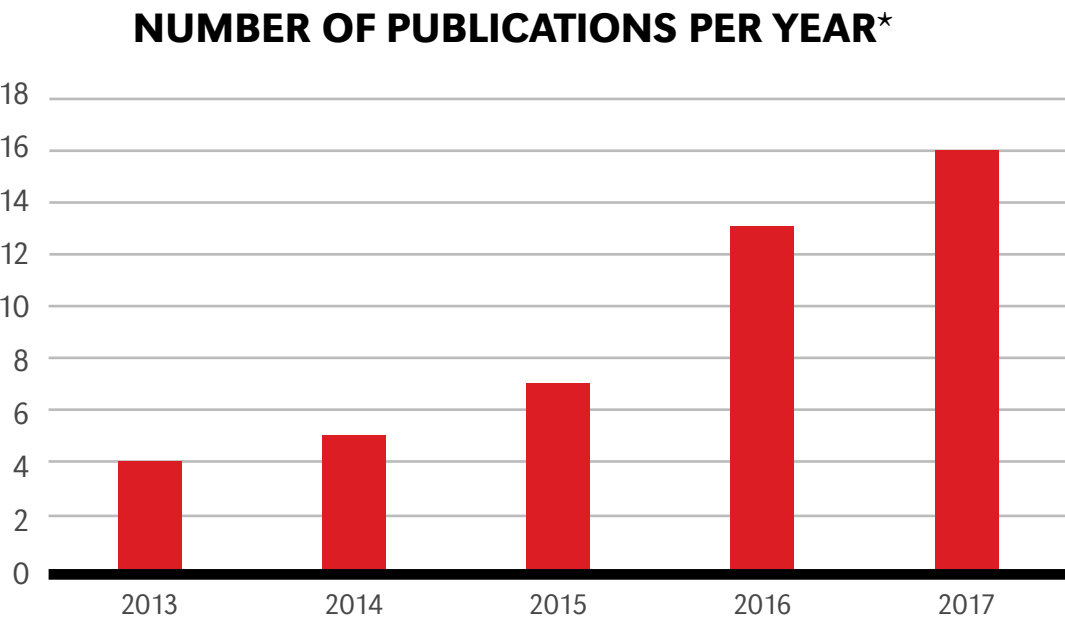
POLICY AND RESEARCH BRIEFS

Braun, Clara L., Emily M. Wright, and Ryan Spohn. 2017. *Restricted Housing among Juvenile Populations*. Nebraska Center for Justice Research.

Moore, Sara, Emily M. Wright, and Ryan Spohn. 2017. *Status Offenders and the Juvenile Justice System*. Nebraska Center for Justice Research.

WHITE PAPERS

Weiner, Richard L., Anne M. Hobbs, and Ryan Spohn. 2014. *Evidence Based Practice in Juvenile Justice: Nebraska White Paper*.



*Includes academic peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, and policy and research briefs

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

2016-2018

Johnson, Doug, Shawn Coonfare, Ryan Spohn, and Margaret Vacek. 2018. “Achieving Positive Outcomes for Crossover Youth through Youth Family Engagement.” Presented at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Arnio, Ashley and Ryan Spohn. 2017. “An Exploratory Analysis of ShotSpotter as a Tool for Community Policing.” Presented at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Chenane, Joselyne, Ryan Spohn, and Emily Wright. 2017. “Evaluation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (Youth Impact!).” Poster presented at the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association conference, Kearney, NE.

Leifker, Denise, Samantha O’Hara, Brianne Potts, William Wells, Delores Craig-Moreland, Gordon A. Crews, and Ryan Spohn. 2017. “The Blue Courage Guardianship Police Training Program: Observations from a Multi-State Implementation and Evaluation.” Roundtable at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Schoenbeck, Madison, Kevin Mitchell, Ryan Spohn, Joseph Mroz, Joseph Allen, and Roni Reiter-Palmon. 2017. “Evaluating the System of Alternatives to Youth Detention in Douglas County.” Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO.

Solomon, Starr, H. Daniel Butler, and Ryan Spohn. 2017. “Examining the Relationship between Misconduct and Restrictive Housing.” Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO.

Spohn, Ryan, Madison Schoenbeck, Joseph Mroz, Joseph Allen, and Roni Retier-Palmon. 2017. “Addressing Risk but not Needs in Juvenile Intake: An Evaluation of Alternatives to Juvenile Detention.” Presented at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Toto, Sara N., Benjamin Steiner, and Emily M. Wright. “Assessing Risk Factors for Sexual Perpetration and Victimization in a Prison for Women.” Poster presented at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Wright, Emily M., Ryan Spohn, and Joselyne Chenane. 2017. “Crossover Youth in the Justice System: An Outcome and Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Crossover Youth Practice Model.” Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO.

Chenane, Joselyne, Emily M. Wright, and Ryan Spohn. 2016. “When Helping Crossover Youth Helps the Juvenile Justice System: Reports from Agency Professionals.” Presented at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Toto, Sara N., Benjamin Steiner, and Emily M. Wright. 2016. “Assessing Gender Specific Risk Factors for Sexual Perpetration and Victimization in Prison.” Presented at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Wright, Emily M., Ryan Spohn, and Joselyne Chenane. 2016. “Enhancing Services for Crossover Youth: Challenges and Recommendations.” Presented at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Miller, Jennifer and Ryan Spohn. 2016. “Collaborative Efficacy? Assessing Collective Impact in the Context of Juvenile Justice Reform.” Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting, Denver, CO.

Ellison, Jared and Ryan Spohn. 2016. “Assessing the Consequences of Colorado’s Legalization of Recreational Marijuana on Nebraska.” Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting, Denver, CO.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

2015-2017

Spohn, Ryan. 2017. “Nebraska Center for Justice Research: Research and Community Engagement Activities.” Omaha Community Partnership meeting, June 22, Omaha, NE.

Wright, Emily M., Ryan Spohn, and Joselyne Chenane. 2017. “Evaluation of Douglas County Youth Impact!” Presented at the quarterly meeting of the Nebraska Juvenile Services, April 11, Lincoln, NE.

Wright, Emily M., Ryan Spohn and Anne Hobbs. 2016. “Justice Initiatives in Nebraska.” Presented at Mass Incarceration Criminal Justice Reform, Best Practices Conference, September 23, Omaha, NE.

Spohn, Ryan and Jennifer Miller. 2015. “Developmental Evaluation.” Presented at the August meeting of the Omaha Evaluators Group, Omaha, NE.

Spohn, Ryan and Anne Hobbs. 2015. “Using Data to Inform Good Agency Practice.” Presented at the Nebraska Justice Alliance Meeting.

Spohn, Ryan and Emily M. Wright. 2015. “Evaluation of Douglas County Youth Impact!” Presented at the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association Meeting, Kearney, NE.

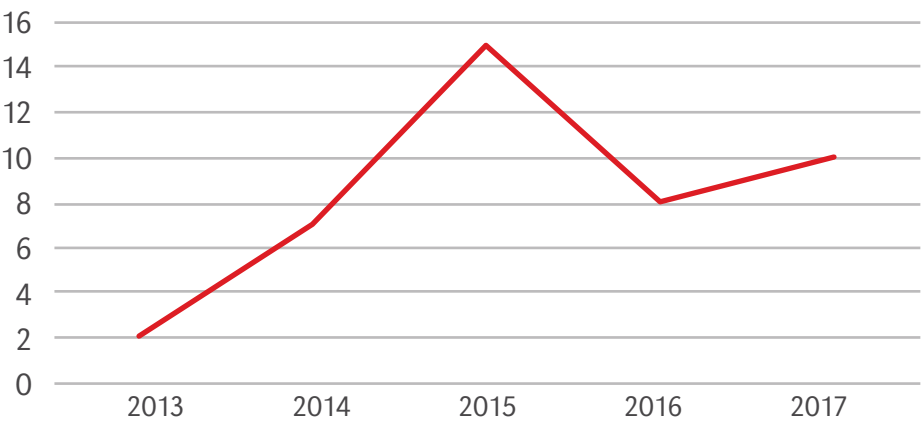
Chambers, Jeff and Ryan Spohn. 2015. “Traumatic Brain Injury Screening Differences between Youth with and without Juvenile Justice System Involvement in Nebraska.” Presented to Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council, June 26, Lincoln, NE.

Ellison, Jared and Ryan Spohn. 2015. “Borders up in Smoke: Marijuana Enforcement in Nebraska after Colorado’s Legalization.” Presented at the March meeting of the Omaha Evaluators Group, Omaha, NE.

Spohn, Ryan. 2015. “Rape and Mental Health Outcomes among Women: Examining the Moderating Effects of “Healthy” Fear Levels.” Presented at the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Nebraska-Omaha, March 10, Omaha, NE.

Spohn, Ryan. 2015. “Nebraska Center for Justice Research: Legislative Activities.” Presented at the Omaha Friends and Families of Inmates meeting, February 28, Omaha, NE.

NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS PER YEAR*



*Includes invited and academic presentation, as well as panels and discussions

PANELS AND DISCUSSIONS

2014-2018

Spohn, Ryan. 2018. “Beyond Police, Courts, and Corrections.” For UNO’s School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, February 7, Omaha, NE.

Spohn, Ryan. 2016. “Sustainability Panel.” For the statewide Crossover Youth Practice Model Meeting, September 6.

Spohn, Ryan. 2016. “Evidence-Based Practice Panel.” For the Nebraska Children’s Commission Meeting, January 20.

Spohn, Ryan. 2015. “Evaluation Panel.” For Nebraska Minority Health Initiative Technical Assistance Meeting, July 29.

Spohn, Ryan. 2015. “Discussion about Film on Capital Punishment: *Into the Abyss*.” For Filmstreams’ Community Development Program and UNO’s Grace Abbott School of Social Work, April 22.

Spohn, Ryan. 2015. “Contemporary Issues in Criminal Offending and Victimization.” Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting, March 28, Kansas City, MO.

Spohn, Ryan. 2014. “Rational Choice Theories: New Directions and Applications.” American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, November 21, San Francisco, CA.

Spohn, Ryan. 2014. “Evaluation Panel.” for Nebraska Minority Health Initiative Technical Assistance Meeting, July 30.

WEBINARS

Bilchik, Shay, Michael Umpierre, Amy Latshaw, Monica DeMent, Cara Stirts, Dawn Rockey, Larry Gendler, Emily Wright, and Ryan Spohn. 2018. *Crossover Youth Practice Model 101*. Webinar with the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University and the Nebraska Court Improvement Project, June 22.

Spohn, Ryan, Nick Juliano, Emily M. Wright, and Darci Poland. 2018. *Douglas County, Nebraska CYPM Cost-Benefit Analysis*. For Georgetown’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, April, 26.

Coonfare, Shawn, Dan Jackson, Nick Juliano, Ryan Spohn, and Emily M. Wright. 2018. *A Research and Practice Partnership to Improve Outcomes for Crossover Youth: Douglas County, Nebraska’s CYPM Evaluation*. For Georgetown’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, February 20.

TRAININGS PROVIDED

Outcomes and Performance Measures: Training for NDCS Reentry Grantees. Training provided for the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. (June 26, 2015)

Performance Measure Training: 2014 FY JAG Funds. Funded by the Nebraska Crime Commission. (November 3, 2014)

Developing Outcomes for VOCA & STOP (VAWA) Grant Programs. Funded by the Nebraska Crime Commission. (October 8, 2014)

Measuring Relevant Processes and Outcomes in Violence Prevention Programs. With Anne Hobbs and Monica Miles-Steffens. Funded by the Nebraska Crime Commission. (June 17, 2014)

Outcomes and Performance Measures: Training for JAG, STOP VAWA, and VOCA Subgrantees. Funded by the Nebraska Crime Commission. (May 15, 2014)

Cross-Over Youth. Training provided for Lutheran Family Services. (February 12, 2014)

Evidence-Based Practices. Training provided for JAG Byrne sub grantees, as requested by the Crime Commission. (June 13, 2013)



School of Criminology and Criminal Justice Annual Scholarship and Awards Luncheon, April 13, 2018.



SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT: DR. JUSTIN NIX

A recent addition to the faculty of the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Assistant Professor Justin Nix, studies various aspects of policing including procedural justice, police legitimacy, and organizational justice.

His research has been featured in top peer-reviewed journals such as *Justice Quarterly*, *Crime & Delinquency*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, and *Criminal Justice and Behavior*. Furthermore, by working on grants funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, he has had the chance to work closely with both local and federal law enforcement agencies to improve policing practices and increase community safety. Most recently, and discussed in more detail below, Dr. Nix has focused on the effects of citizen demeanor on police officer behavior, understanding the factors that shape people's perceptions of procedural justice, and improving our understanding of police use of deadly force.

Recent Selected Publications on Citizen Demeanor and Police Procedural Justice

A recent article authored by Dr. Justin Nix and colleagues, Drs. Justin Pickett, Scott Wolfe, and Bradley Campbell published in *Justice Quarterly* highlights the importance of citizen demeanor in influencing whether police officers will respond to suspects in a way that is fair and respectful (i.e., exercising procedural justice). Dr. Nix and his colleagues conducted two randomized experiments with separate samples of police officers to test whether suspect race and/or demeanor affected

officers' perceptions of the threat of violence and importance of exercising procedural justice while interacting with suspicious persons. Their findings point to demeanor, rather than suspect race, affecting such outcomes – officers in the study perceived a greater threat of violence from those suspects who acted disrespectfully, and furthermore, officers felt less inclined to exercise procedural justice with such disrespectful suspects. The researchers note that these findings are encouraging as police do not appear to be less willing to exercise procedural justice based simply on race. They also suggest that police agencies may want to focus on procedural justice training that can improve patience with suspects who appear disrespectful.

An article that recently appeared in the *Social Psychology Quarterly*, presents further treatment of procedural justice. The researchers, Drs. Justin Pickett, Justin Nix, and Sean Roche, note that while there is a sizeable literature that suggests procedural justice is important to people, the sources of perceived police procedural justice remain unclear. In an attempt to clarify what influences these perceptions, the authors posit and test the theory that citizens generalize from their past interactions and relationships with non-legal actors (e.g., parents and teachers)

to come up with a general conception of how fair, respectful, and unbiased most people are towards others, including the police. Furthermore, Dr. Nix and his colleagues posit that perceptions of neighborhood disorder and informal social control factors may also affect perceptions of procedural justice. Findings from two national samples of U.S. adults lend support for their model of perceptions of police procedural justice. Citizens' past interactions with parents and teachers, and the condition of their neighborhood, influence their evaluations of police treatment.

Police Use of Deadly Force: Improving our Understanding of Officer-Involved Shootings

With the increased media interest in police use of deadly force and especially the issues it has generated with police-community relations, it was only natural that researchers would seek to study these events. However, reliable data on officer involved shootings (OIS) was unavailable until recently. Thanks

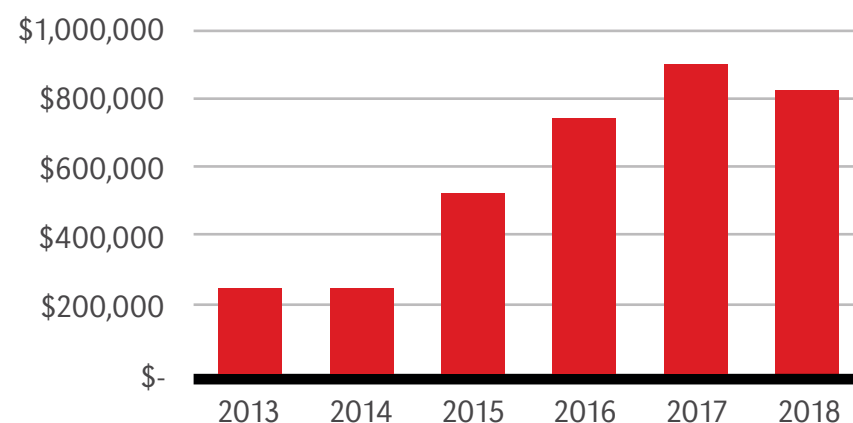
to data collection efforts by the *Washington Post* and other media outlets (e.g., *The Guardian*, *VICE News*, *killedbypolice.net*, and *fatalencounters.org*), we now know that approximately 1,000 people a year are fatally shot by police in the U.S., however, there remains the problem of contextualizing these events. In order to compare how common police use of deadly force is across jurisdictions and across time, a rate needs to be calculated, but that requires knowing what number to use in the denominator. In other words, the next step in understanding this phenomenon is to calculate the number of fatal shootings (the numerator) compared to the population at risk for being fatally shot by police (the denominator). The challenges associated with identifying a proper denominator are discussed by Drs. Nix and Geoff Alpert in a recent research brief in *The Police Chief*.

The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and NCJR are excited to have Dr. Nix as faculty and we look forward to seeing more groundbreaking work from him in the future.

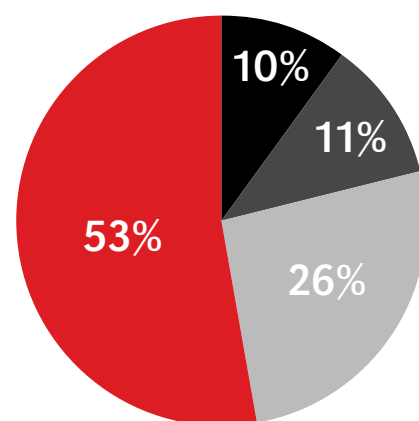


NCJR BUDGET

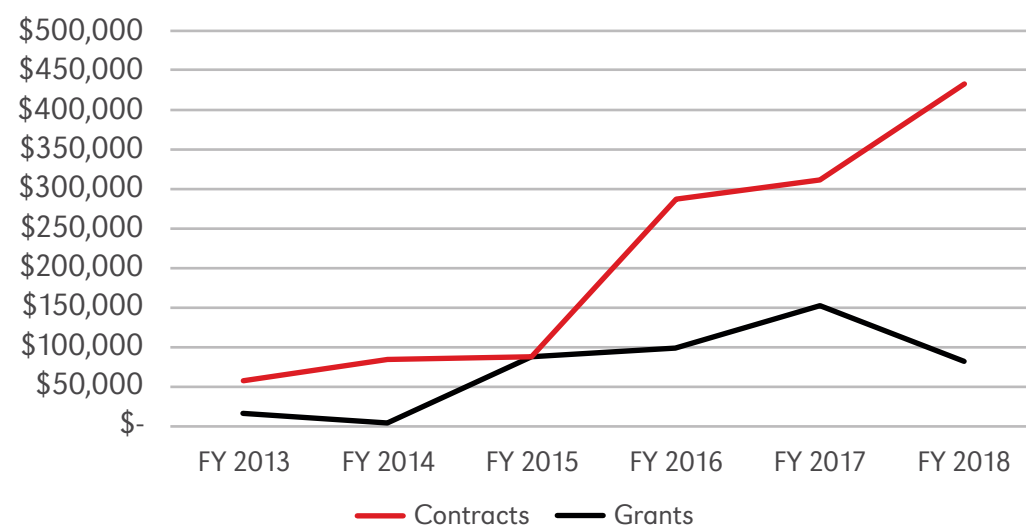
TOTAL BUDGET BY FISCAL YEAR



FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET BREAKDOWN



CONTRACTS AND GRANTS FROM FY 2013-2018



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

EVALUATION OF DOUGLAS COUNTY ASSESSMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES PROJECT

Benjamin Steiner, Ph.D., Emily M. Wright, Ph.D., Ryan Spohn, Ph.D., Ebonie Epinger, M.A., Nicky Dalbir, M.A., and Krista Brewer, M.A.



This project was designed to determine what the Douglas County Detention Center (DCDC) inmate population looks like in terms of its risks and needs, its flow into and out the institution, and its odds of recidivism (Phase I). The information learned from this process is to be used to develop a data-driven assessment and case management strategy for DCDC, which would then be evaluated and modified if needed (Phase II). The specific research questions to be addressed during the project are:

1. What are the risks and needs of the inmate population housed in the DCDC?

2. Do the assessment instruments used by the DCDC adequately identify the risks and needs of the inmate population housed in the DCDC?

3. Are the assessment and case management services provided to inmates incarcerated in the DCDC effective in achieving their intended outcomes (e.g., making appropriate use of resources, reducing recidivism)?

During Phase I of the project, DCDC hired a supervisor for Reentry Specialists. DCDC also hired seven Reentry Specialists, who hold a Bachelors Degree with experience in corrections or human service fields. UNO researchers assisted DCDC administration in constructing a Screening Interview to assess risk and need factors, and software was developed to house the data. Finally, DCDC staff conducted over 6,000 interviews at

booking over a period of approximately six months, while UNO researchers helped track and enter the data.

Phase I primarily revolved around the above activities in order to answer Research Question 1, above. UNO obtained most of the data necessary to answer Research Question 1 from DCDC during October and November 2017. Risk and need factors related to criminal history, victimization, educational attainment, unemployment, homelessness, mobility, safety, dependent children, mental health, physical health, substance use, and traumatic brain injury were collected. A preliminary analysis of the data indicates that the majority of DCDC inmates are high/medium risk with a myriad of needs that are potentially criminogenic. UNO will continue to work with DCDC staff to further define "risk" for their population, and identify those needs that are most salient to address in order to reduce their inmate populations' overall level of recidivism.

Finally, DCDC, with collaborative input from UNO, developed a prospective risk-based case management model implemented in early 2018, where DCDC provides case management services to approximately 300 inmates per month. DCDC staff assesses inmates within two days of arraignment, but prior to housing assignment—the information provided by the screening tool informs housing decision-making. DCDC staff developed a preliminary case flow diagram to identify and sort inmates into three levels of case management intensity based on the inmates' level of need. These levels for case management are preliminary, but Level 1 would include inmates who have the highest level of need—approximately 25-33% of the 300 inmates. Level 2 includes inmates who would receive less intensive treatment. Level 3 inmates are expected to be excluded from services based on their risk level. UNO recommended that DCDC identify inmates with any of the following needs as high risk (or Level 1): unstable/acute mental or physical health issues, cognitive deficits, or high/severe rating on two or more needs.

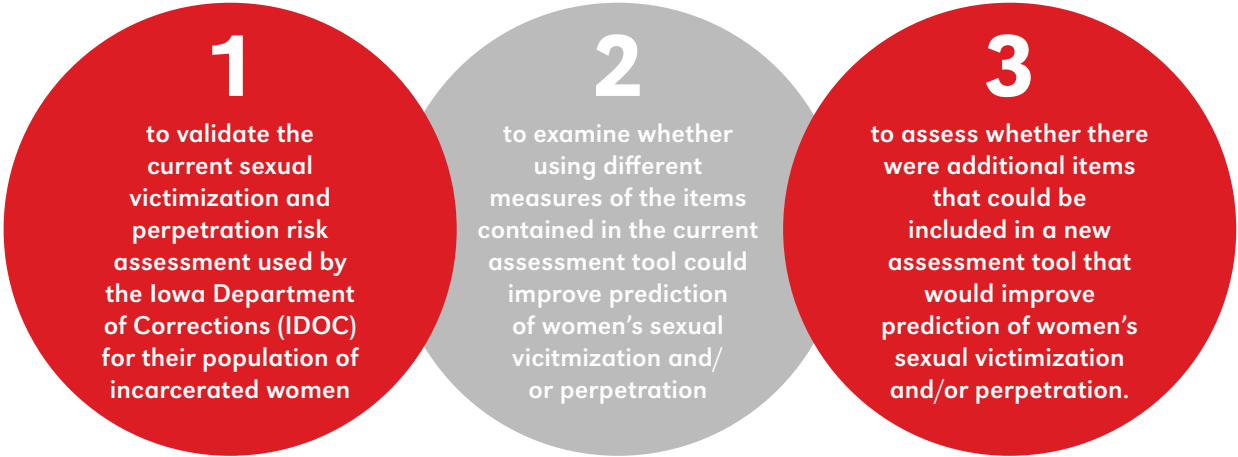
PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

EXAMINING THE PREDICTORS OF SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION AMONG FEMALE INMATES: PREA CONSIDERATIONS

Emily M. Wright, Ph.D., Benjamin Steiner, Ph.D., and Sara N. Toto, M.A.

Overview. This project falls under the PREA mandate that all inmates (male and female) be assessed for sexual victimization and perpetration potential upon intake. However, research regarding the predictors of sexual violence and perpetration in prisons is scarce, and has primarily been conducted on mixed sex samples (that are primarily men) or samples of only male prisoners. This means that risk assessment tools created to predict these outcomes among inmates have necessarily been based on research on male inmates and then applied to female inmates with little consideration as to whether there are additional, different, or unique predictors for women.

Goals. The purposes of this study were:



Procedures. Researchers from the University of Nebraska, Omaha (UNO) conducted focus groups with IDOC women in order to get their perspectives about the characteristics of perpetrators and victims of sexual violence in prison. The UNO research team also conducted an extensive literature review from various sources in order to identify potential risk factors for sexual victimization and perpetration. Finally, the UNO research team, in collaboration with the Moss Group and IDOC staff, developed a survey instrument with questions related to the additional potential risk factors which had been identified.

The survey was administered to all IDOC women in the fall of 2016, and official data from IDOC databases were collected for the women who participated in the survey. Official data primarily included “alternative” measures that fell under the PREA standards (Mental, physical, developmental disabilities; Age; Physical build; Previous incarceration(s); Exclusive nonviolent criminal history; Prior sex offense(s); Perceptions of being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or gender nonconforming; Prior sexual victimization; Perception of vulnerability; Prior act(s) of sex abuse; Prior conviction(s) for violent offense(s); and Whether the inmate has a history of prior institutional violence or sex abuse) which could be used instead of the current assessment tool items. Three outcome measures were examined via the survey: 1) whether the inmate self-reported that she was a victim of coerced sex by another inmate(s); 2) whether she was a victim of sexual harassment by another inmate(s); 3) whether she was a perpetrator of sexual abuse against another inmate(s) during her time at the facility. Since the survey was also developed to examine whether the risk factors identified via the methods described above were predictive of sexual violence, it included questions that measured items which were not available via IDOC databases. These items included: prior victimization, gender identity, family support, help seeking, institutional resources,

naiveté, manipulative, relationship co-dependency, assertive, aggressive, self-control, antisocial attitude, and trust and confidence in staff. A total of 687 women inmates participated in the survey (a 97 percent participation rate).

Results. 4.2 percent of the women indicated they were victims of coerced sex, 33 percent of the women reported they were victims of sexual harassment, and 11.8 percent of the women indicated they were perpetrators of sexual abuse.

1

Is the current sexual victimization and perpetration risk assessment used by the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) predicting accurately for their population of incarcerated women?

No, findings indicated that the current assessment tool is not predictive of sexual victimization or perpetration, which may result in the over classification of a high percentage of women (falsely identifying women as potential victims or perpetrators)

2

Are there different measures of the items contained in the current assessment tool that could improve prediction of women's sexual victimization and/or perpetration?

Yes, we found alternative measures of the following PREA standards that improved prediction of sexual violence:

- Mental/physical/developmental disability
- Age
- Previous incarceration
- Exclusive nonviolent criminal history
- Perceived sexual orientation
- Prior sexual victimization
- Prior convictions for violent offenses
- Prior institutional violence or sexual abuse

3

Are there additional items that could be included in a new assessment tool that would improve prediction of women's sexual victimization and/or perpetration?

Yes, we found adding the following additional predictors to an assessment tool might improve prediction of sexual violence:

- Naiveté
- Aggressive
- Antisocial attitudes
- Trust and confidence in staff
- Manipulative
- Relationship co-dependency
- Self-control
- Institutional resources

Implications. The results of this study have some implications for the study and response to sexual violence and victimization among women in prisons. First, some of the PREA standards appear to be irrelevant for female inmates, both in terms of prevalence and predictive power. Very few women in this study scored highly on measures related to the PREA standards of “physical build,” “prior sex offenses,” or “prior acts of sexual abuse”; further, various measures tapping these standards failed to maintain significant relationships with any of the sexual victimization and perpetration outcomes.

Second, many measures that correctional staff are asked to assess which are perceptual in nature were not strongly related to sexual victimization or perpetration (e.g., perception of sexual orientation, perception that inmate is unassertive/lacks confidence, or the perception that the inmate is “prison wise”). Self-reported measures from the women were found to be better indicators instead (e.g., self-reports of being lesbian, gay, or bisexual, experiencing prior victimization, and having aggressive tendencies or antisocial attitudes) and should be considered in PREA assessments in the future.

Third, nearly all of the significant predictors of sexual victimization were also predictive of sexual abuse perpetration. This means that, for PREA assessment purposes, many of the same predictors can be included to identify victimization and perpetration risk. It also suggests that some victims may resemble offenders on many standards, and vice versa. Although the current PREA standards expect that potential victims of sexual abuse and harassment are very different from the perpetrators of such behaviors, the results of this study suggest that within prisons housing women, the predictors of sexual victimization and perpetration are more similar than different, and this should be reflected on gender-informed PREA assessments. Finally, it appears that PREA assessments could improve prediction of sexual victimization and perpetration by adding new risk domains that have been previously unexamined. Based on the findings from this study, we recommend that PREA assessments consider including domains related to: institutional resources, naiveté, manipulation, relationship co-dependence, aggressive tendencies, self-control, antisocial attitudes, and trust and confidence in staff.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

VOCATIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS

Vocational and Life Skills Programs Work to Reduce Recidivism and Increase Employment across Nebraska

Omaha — Since 2015, a grant administered by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) has funded prisoner reentry programs across the state of Nebraska to provide vocational and life skills training. To qualify for programming, participants must currently be inmates; under probation or parole supervision; or within 18 months of release. In the first grant cycle, 2,449 participants were served by Vocational and Life Skills (VLS) programs. In the second grant cycle, which began in July 2016 and ends June 2018 over 4,500 participants were served.

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research (NCJR), under the advisement of Director Ryan Spohn, Ph.D., signed on as a research partner in May 2015. Johanna Peterson, research coordinator, works directly with NDCS and the VLS programs

to track data on program participation. Participant surveys and interviews also provide additional insight into barriers and successes unique to participants. Through this work, NCJR provides feedback on what aspects of programming appear most beneficial to program participants. Over time, this evaluation will indicate whether or not participants return to prison at a lower rate than those who did not participate and if those participants are able to gain and maintain employment in the community. In spring of 2018, NCJR began analyzing qualitative data from interviews of participants of the VLS programs. The primary goal of this work was to learn from the personal stories of incarcerated individuals reentering society and to use the information to improve the delivery of programming. The resulting report was delivered to NDCS and VLS grantees in May, 2018.



Eight programs received funding in the second grant cycle. VLS programming is offered at all ten correctional facilities in the state and many more participants are served in area communities. Program services vary widely including specific job training, community college courses, and residential facilities, and offer peer-support and case management throughout programming. Many of the staff of the programs can uniquely relate to participants, as they were also involved in the correctional system at some point. This personal connection to the participants' reentry challenges can increase hope within participants and show that they can succeed and become a productive member of society.

Through this work, NCJR provides feedback on what aspects of programming appear most beneficial to program participants.

The word is getting out. Local news stories have highlighted the work of many of the grantees. Short videos explaining the services offered by each program play on televisions inside correctional facilities. There is a demand for programming. Just nine months into the two-year grant cycle, many programs have reached their participant service goal for the entire grant cycle. Some programs have waitlists of people eager to participate. Grantees work closely with one another to close gaps in services and work with community members to find employers and landlords willing to hire and rent to participants. The future of VLS programming is bright and NCJR staff are excited to work with programs and staff dedicated to offering people second chances and a path forward.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Transformation Project is a prisoner transition program that helps participants identify the things they value most and behaviors that do not support those values. Transformation Project was first implemented in 2009 for general population inmates and has recently evolved into a program aimed at improving the behavior and outcomes of inmates in restrictive housing.

The **vision** of Transformation Project is to create a prison system where inmates are committed to the values, attitudes, and behaviors they believe will help them successfully transition through incarceration and reentry.

The **mission** of Transformation Project is to facilitate prisoners in developing a foundation for learning and motivation to change through a process of self-reflection and goal setting.

The **goals** of Transformation Project are to create a foundation for change by adhering to the fidelity of Motivational Interviewing principles and the program model, increase participants' prosocial behavior, and ultimately, reduce recidivism.

We are working to ensure that Transformation Project is an evidence based program that can improve the lives of all inmates. To that end, we have begun developing specialized curriculum for woman and youth in order to meet the unique needs of these populations.

HIGHLIGHTED RESEARCH REPORTS

ADULT JUSTICE IN NEBRASKA (2017)



This report compares criminal justice data across Nebraska from 2012 to 2017. Completed in January, 2018, the document presented the most recent and comprehensive system-wide data available. NCJR will continue to provide updates to this report each year and submit the findings to the Nebraska state legislature. Our hope is that the report serves as a reference guide for providing a clearer understanding of recent trends in crime and criminal justice activities in the state of Nebraska. The report was made possible by the financial support provided to NCJR by LB 907.

[You Can Find this Report on Our Website](#)

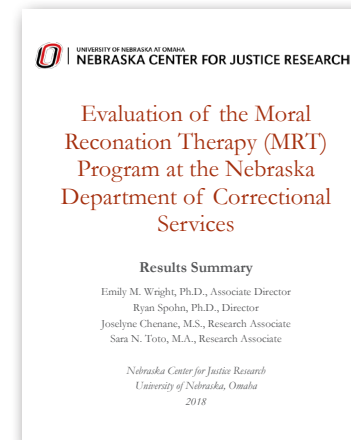
VLS CLIENT PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM SERVICES AND ABILITY TO REINTEGRATE: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRANT CYCLE 1 PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS



NCJR recently completed a qualitative report based on interviews of participants of VLS reentry programs. The report gives a voice to incarcerated persons and their reentry experiences, and points to the need of communities to take an active role in the process of integrating people back into society.

[You Can Find this Report on Our Website](#)

EVALUATION OF THE MORAL RECONATION THERAPY (MRT) PROGRAM AT NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES



This project evaluated the Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) program that is used in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS). The goals of the project were to provide feedback to NDCS regarding:

1. The NDCS facilities that successfully provide MRT services to inmates;
2. Whether MRT participation reduces institutional misconducts and recidivism among inmates;
3. Whether MRT program participation is related to inmates' participation in other types of programming; and
4. The characteristics of inmates who participate in and complete MRT programming.

[You Can Find this Report on Our Website](#)

MARIJUANA ENFORCEMENT IN NEBRASKA (2013-2015)



NCJR has produced an updated report entitled "Marijuana Enforcement in Nebraska (2013-2015)." This report presents updated marijuana arrest statistics on the Nebraska counties bordering Colorado.

[You Can Find this Report on Our Website](#)

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Starr Solomon		Starr Solomon	Ebonie Epinger
Sara Toto		Sara Toto	Starr Solomon
			Sara Toto
			Brandon Tregle
HOURS/WEEK: 140	HOURS/WEEK: 100	HOURS/WEEK: 120	HOURS/WEEK: 160



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