

## OJP Grant Sites

### FY2003 Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management Grants

#### Colorado

The State of Colorado has a combination of urban, rural, and mountain communities. The rural portions of the eastern plains represent approximately 10% of the population, while the Front Range which runs through the middle of the state (including the Denver metro area) comprises 70% of the population. The mountain communities, which contain approximately 20% of the population, face unique transportation challenges in the winter when mountain passes are closed. There are 22 judicial districts, 64 counties, 178 school districts, and more than 300 law enforcement agencies with too few residential treatment facilities and foster homes. Through the *Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management Grant Program*, the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice proposes to improve the management of juvenile sex offenders in the state. The Colorado Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB) was created over ten years ago to develop standards and guidelines for the management of sex offenders in the community. Most recently the SOMB has developed standards and guidelines for juveniles who have committed sexual offenses. Although there is support for the juvenile standards throughout the state, many communities are facing significant challenges to implementing them. Through this grant, jurisdictions are undergoing a structured cross-system analysis of their current sex offender management practices to identify gaps in implementing SOMB standards. Following the identification of jurisdictions' strengths and needs, grant funds will be used to assist local teams in starting collaborative meetings, developing jurisdiction-specific strategies, and developing performance measures to improve the management of juveniles who commit sexual offenses.

#### Minnesota, Bemidji District

The Minnesota Department of Corrections, Bemidji District Office seeks to assess and enhance its existing system of sex offender management in a nine county region of Northwestern Minnesota . These rural counties cover 13,465 square miles and holds 2.7% (129,228) of the state's total population. As of June 1, 2002, there were 357 adult sex offenders and adolescent sex offenders on probation and a total of 651 registered sex offenders in the region. Over the last three years, the region has developed and sustained a strong collaborative team of individuals representing a variety of agencies and disciplines concerned with the effective management of sex offenders. As a previous Office of Justice Programs' Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management Grantee (FY2000), the Bemidji team has met bimonthly since January 2001, and has made progress on identifying gaps in the system of sex offender management and in implementing effective strategies to fill these gaps. These gaps include improving sex offender evaluations, addressing the needs of chemically abusive sex offenders and developing specific programming in an effort to reduce the number of probation

revocations due to chemical use, and designing supportive services for adolescent offenders transitioning from the institution back to their home community. Analyzing the feasibility of providing transitional housing to sex offenders in the region is also a goal of the project. The Bemidji collaborative team is conducting a thorough system assessment and pursuing system change, and is committed to following through with and implementing the strategies identified through the process. Grant funds are being used to conduct this assessment and will be used to implement necessary changes to address system needs.

### **New Hampshire**

New Hampshire is a small, sparsely populated and primarily rural state of only approximately 1.2 million people. Almost 25% of the approximately 2,500 offenders incarcerated in the state are sex offenders. Of these, 451 (72%) will be eligible for parole between now and 2006. On average, there are 300 sex offenders on probation and 200 on parole at any given time. The New Hampshire Department of Corrections and the Statewide Steering Committee for Sex Offender Management began meeting regularly more than a year prior to applying for this grant and conducted an assessment of the state's sex offender management system. Several gaps within the state's law enforcement, judiciary, treatment and supervision system(s) that represent barriers to the effective sentencing, treatment and supervision of sex offenders in the state were identified during the assessment process. As a result of these gaps, many offenders do not receive the assessment, treatment or supervision services that will sufficiently assure safety. Through this grant the project seeks to increase awareness and understanding throughout the criminal justice system regarding the dynamics of sex offending and address gaps in policy in practice as they relate to the processing of sex offender cases, treatment, supervision, and polygraph testing. It is estimated that this project will affect an estimated 3,700 misdemeanor and felony sex offenders statewide. The New Hampshire team is utilizing grant funds to readdress and validate its assessment findings and project goals, refine its strategies for accomplishing these goals, and develop sound evaluation methods for measuring progress in meeting these goals.

### **New York, Dutchess County**

Dutchess County, New York, with over 280,000 residents, is one of the most populated counties in the state. A mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas, Dutchess is midway between New York City and Albany. The average number of adult and juvenile sex offenders supervised in the community by Probation or Parole is 145. Dutchess County has a significant history of collaboration in the management of sex offenders. However, adult and juvenile sex offenders who have received community sentences or who have re-entered the community after institutional custody, are currently being managed by independent systems. The project is working to enhance management of juvenile and adult sex offenders by creating a standardized and unified system with a victim-centered approach. Grant funds will support a comprehensive system analysis and identification of system gaps, followed by implementation of projects to address the most significant gaps in the sex offender management system. A "Stakeholders'

Manual," which will include sex offender management standards, descriptions of best practice models, and supporting research and available services will be created.

### **New York, St. Lawrence County**

St. Lawrence County is located in northern New York along the Canadian border. The largest county in New York State, it covers 2,685 square miles. Rural St. Lawrence County's size and location preclude the pursuit of regional strategies to share services with other jurisdictions. Lack of public transportation, as well as the relative poverty of the county, also hinders solutions that might rely on traveling to other jurisdictions for services. St. Lawrence County is a previous OJP sex offender management grantee (FY2000) that engaged in a planning process, which helped identify gaps in their sex offender management services. Prior to this endeavor, law enforcement, county judges, local magistrates and prosecutors had never received specialized training in the effective investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of sex offenders. Furthermore, there were no sex offender-specific assessment methodologies and limited treatment options for sex offenders. Realizing the benefit of collaboration, the multi-disciplinary team is fully engaged in the assessment process to identify what is most needed in the jurisdiction. The team meets monthly to discuss progress, and the sub-committees also meet separately on a monthly basis to examine the information collected. The team has received training on best practices in sex offender management to enable the team to make informed decisions regarding the best possible strategy to address identified gaps. Furthermore, the team is assisted by a researcher who is developing an analysis of the offender population and providing assistance in gathering data to inform the policy making process. The multi-disciplinary team will utilize grant funds to implement services to fill gaps identified through the assessment process.

### **Oregon**

The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA), a statewide agency representing a wide range of collaborative partners, seeks to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide plan for the management of juvenile sex offenders. OYA provides supervision for youth ages 12 to 25 adjudicated for law violations and who require out-of-home placement. According to the state Juvenile Justice Information System June 2003 data, 1,108 youth offenders were under supervision in the juvenile system. Juvenile sex offender management in Oregon is fragmented in its application of legal response, evaluation, treatment and supervision and has not consistently addressed victim issues. It presents different challenges in urban and rural areas. Juvenile sex offenders represent a public safety concern in Oregon, and they have the highest priority for placement and treatment services. Through this grant OYA will design, recommend, and implement a comprehensive statewide system of sex offender management that will include a consistent legal response to juvenile sex offenders, a common assessment/evaluation process, effective and efficient treatment approaches, support services for youth in the community, dissemination of information to constituent groups, and a system to evaluate and monitor outcomes. Grant funds are being used to conduct a complete inventory of current juvenile sex offender management practices throughout the state, identify emerging best

practices and standards to address concerns in the areas identified, develop an implementation strategy to make recommendations and enact change throughout the system, and create valid and reliable methods for evaluation of outcomes.

### **Oregon, Deschutes County**

The Central Oregon region, including Deschutes, Jefferson, and Crook Counties, is isolated from the state's more densely inhabited urban centers both by distance and geographic barriers. The population within the counties has multiplied at a rate of between 53.9% and 62% during the past decade. Most of the combined 166,500 residents live in a rural environment and an average of 10% live at or below the poverty level, although this figure increases to 60% within some remote areas. The region is experiencing growing numbers of sex offenses committed by youth. The Deschutes County juvenile sex offender supervision caseload alone has doubled within the past eight years. These counties have or are establishing frameworks for policy-level teams in each county to examine current practices, identify gaps, explore areas for improvement, and facilitate the development of a comprehensive, coordinated, community response to the adolescent and pre-pubescent sex offender population. Grant funds are supporting this group in conducting a thorough assessment of current policy and informal practices and refining its goals and objectives to reflect an outcome-based focus. Additionally, funds will be used to follow through on recommendations that arise from the assessment and to develop and implement the necessary programs that could make a measurable difference in reducing the numbers of juvenile sex offenders, preventing reoffense, protecting victims, and promoting public safety. Efforts in the Central Region will result in a model to be replicated throughout the Central and Eastern Oregon Juvenile Justice Consortium, a coalition of 17 county juvenile departments in Oregon working together to provide effective treatment and supervision services to delinquent youth to prevent their further involvement in criminal behavior, and to advocate for resources for the region's at-risk youth and families.

### **Oregon, Lane County**

Lane County, Oregon has a population of 322,959 in a geographic area of 4,610 square miles stretching from the summit of the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean . More than half the population (60%) lives in the county's two largest cities, Eugene and Springfield, the second largest metropolitan area in Oregon . The Lane County, Oregon Sex Offender Management Project focuses on juvenile and adult sex offenders under supervision in the community. At the time of this grant, 981 sex offenders in Lane County were registered. As of February 2003, 282 adult sex offenders were under community supervision in the county. Changes in laws, policies, and resources coupled with a growing number of sex offenders have resulted in the rapid growth of sex offender supervision caseloads. In addition, the State Department of Corrections does not provide sex offender treatment during incarceration; many sex offenders return to the community ill-prepared to reintegrate. Additionally, most juvenile sex offender treatment does not fit the state definition for mental health treatment, which greatly reduces the pool of resources for treatment of these youth. In 2001, the Lane Council of Governments was awarded a Sex Offender Management Planning Grant through OJP. Under this grant, the Lane County

teams (one focused on adult offenders and one focused on juveniles) analyzed their strengths and weaknesses and the gaps in their sex offender management system. An implementation plan was developed to address wraparound service needs for juvenile sex offenders and treatment needs for adult sex offenders. Current grant funds are being used to revisit this plan and develop a comprehensive strategic plan for juvenile and adult sex offender management which is data-driven and based on best practices. Funds will then be used to develop and implement local policies that reflect best practices.

### **Rhode Island**

The State of Rhode Island encompasses 1,045 square miles; any point in the state is accessible within a one-hour drive. At the time of this grant there were approximately 400 sex offenders incarcerated at the Adult Correctional Institution and an additional 24 juvenile sex offenders held at the Rhode Island Training School . Additionally, there were approximately 800 adult sex offenders on probation and 67 juvenile sex offenders living in the community under the supervision of the Department of Children, Youth and Families. Rhode Island received grant funds to formalize and expand its Sex Offender Management Task Force to promote community safety and prevent harm to victims. A statewide, policy level, multi-disciplinary task force has been meeting monthly for the past year. Grant funds are assisting the task force in using a deliberate process to systematically assess all of their juvenile and adult sex offender management practices. Specifically, four subcommittees have been established to assess services available to sex offenders throughout the state, including: investigation, prosecution, adjudication; assessment and treatment; supervision and reentry; and registration and notification. In addition, the task force has established a public education awareness committee that is developing a statewide education strategy for public officials and private citizens around sexual assault and sex offender management issues. Ultimately, this assessment of services will result in a set of policy recommendations as well as potential legislative recommendations by January 2005. Grant funds will be used to address the most significant shortcomings identified through this process. The task force envisions a long-term role in overseeing the implementation and evaluation of these changes well beyond the life of the grant.

### **Texas, Dallas County**

Dallas County, Texas is an urban jurisdiction with a 2003 estimated population of 2,284,096. In 2002, 155 assessments were conducted on sexually abusive youth referred to the county's juvenile court for a felony sex offense. Approximately 100 juveniles who have committed sex offenses participate in weekly outpatient group treatment and about 35-50 are in residential treatment facilities. The Dallas County Juvenile Department and other agencies and disciplines in the county recognize the need to protect victims while improving their responses and services to youth who commit sex offenses. To address this need, Dallas County received a grant to develop a program that promotes a coordinated effort between the juvenile justice system, and treatment and other service providers to manage these youth more effectively in the community. The Dallas County Juvenile Sex Offender Advisory Board—a multi-disciplinary collaborative policy team—began working together in late 2003 to become more expert on this

issue, examine closely and evaluate their county's existing policies and practices, identify their strengths and gaps in services, prioritize their most significant need areas, and develop strategies to address these. The board has organized itself into four subcommittees to examine and evaluate the county's existing juvenile sex offender management policies and practices in the following areas: investigation, prosecution, and disposition; assessment and treatment; reentry and supervision; and registration and community notification. The results of this evaluation will be used by the board to prioritize their gaps and needs, and develop a plan to address them.

## **Wisconsin**

The State of Wisconsin is primarily rural with metropolitan areas concentrated in its southeastern region. According to the 2000 census, there were approximately 5.4 million people living in 72 counties, with over 800,000 youth between the ages of 10 and 19. From 1999-2002, an average of 1,672 youth were referred to county intake workers each year for alleged sexual offenses, and during that time 583 youth were arrested for forcible rape. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Corrections, seeks to implement a comprehensive program of sex offender management for young offenders. While Wisconsin has developed community supervision programs for adult offenders, it has not addressed the unique needs of youthful sex offenders who are supervised in the community by either the state Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Corrections or the counties. As a previous Office of Justice Programs' Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management Grantee (FY2001), a multidisciplinary collaborative policy team was convened to help build a model transition and community supervision system for youthful sex offenders who are returning to communities from juvenile correctional institutions. Grant funds are supporting the assessment of juvenile sex offender management practices and the implementation of a collaborative statewide plan to address the investigation, prosecution, adjudication, assessment, confinement, treatment, reentry, and community supervision of youthful sex offenders. Specific objectives of the grant are to engage the multidisciplinary collaborative policy team in the continuous implementation of a comprehensive youthful sex offender management strategy, provide staff training in methods of treatment and management, provide all youthful sex offenders a 90 day transition program and treatment in the community until discharged from supervision, increase the capacity for treatment statewide, and contribute to the larger body of knowledge about sex offender management approaches through the collection and analysis of outcome data and evaluation standards for programming and community supervision.