

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES (EBP) IMPLEMENTATION FOR CAPACITY

Colorado Department of Public Safety Justice Assistance Grant

Project Overview

August, 2010

This summary describes the components of a \$2.1M multi-agency training Justice Assistance Grant awarded to the Colorado Department of Public Safety in October of 2009. The primary goals of this two-year initiative are to reduce recidivism among adult offenders and enhance public safety through the use of evidence-based practices. The grant brings together five system components (generically referred to as “agencies”) in this criminal justice collaboration:

PROJECT GOALS

- ✚ Bring an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration to the Colorado criminal justice system and community
- ✚ Bring a new level of skill in evidence-based practices to criminal justice practitioners resulting in reduced recidivism
- ✚ Produce immediate and long-term benefits to the criminal justice system and the citizens of Colorado as public safety is maintained and enhanced
- ✚ Create a viable plan for sustainability of evidence-based practices as well as Mental Health First Aid instruction
- ✚ Promote the mission of the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice and other conceptually aligned organizations
- ✚ Collect and analyze field data to measure outcomes

- Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS)→ as grant administrator and Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Community Corrections
- Colorado Department of Corrections→ Division of Adult Parole, Community Corrections and the Youthful Offender System (Parole)
- Colorado Department of Corrections→ Institutions
- Judicial Department→ Division of Probation Services (Probation)
- Department of Human Services→ Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)

The grant goals and objectives are designed and intended to create a uniquely collaborative, comprehensive effort to systemically enhance the knowledge and skill base of criminal justice professionals in evidence-based practices, in particular Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Cognitive Behavior Education (CBE). It also includes a substantial component to address the skill level of professionals in the use of a validated risk and needs assessment instrument widely used in the state of Colorado, the Level of Supervision Inventory-Revised (LSI-R).

The long-term objective of this multi-agency training initiative, under the auspices of the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, is to provide evidence-based offender supervision, case management and service practices. Specifically, building the capacity for successful implementation of agencies in the use of MI, CBE and the LSI-R in order to bring these modalities to scale throughout Colorado’s justice system and constructing a solid sustainability plan beyond the life of the grant are key to project success.

This track of the grant targets three selected communities and two correctional facilities as demonstration “sites” for initial implementation:

- Larimer County(north)
- Adams County (central)
- El Paso County (south)
- Buena Vista Correctional Facility
- La Vista Correctional Facility (Pueblo)

Staff from participating agencies in the three counties and two facilities will participate fully in the resources for the full term of the grant. The multiagency framework of the project is designed with the specific intent of addressing the diverse needs of offenders regardless of the point in the system they are involved, whether it be probation, community corrections, institutional confinement, or parole. Individuals involved in the justice system being treated in mental health facilities also would also receive treatment from professionals trained in these modalities as they pertain to this particular population.

On a parallel track, the grant joins Colorado Behavioral Health Care in facilitating delivery of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) curriculum statewide. This 12-hour course is designed to provide trainees the skills to help people who are developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. A 40-hour instructor course was completed by Colorado justice and behavioral health professionals in May 2010 and the MHFA Training Series targeting their peers began in early June 2010. Through the 25 instructors trained through the grant, and by partnering with other MHFA instructors previously trained in Colorado, grant goals include bringing this course to approximately 1000 justice professionals by grant's end.

In addition to the aforementioned partnering state agencies, other members of the system (i.e. judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement) will be afforded tailored training in the modalities included in the grant to the degree they deem appropriate.

FOUNDATIONAL TO THE PROJECT

The organizational structure of the project provides for five Training Coordinators assigned to each participating agency to facilitate capacity building in the identified EBPs across agency boundaries. This is designed to enhance collaboration and cooperation among the agencies and encourage a holistic perspective and approach by all criminal justice professionals regardless of departmental affiliation.

In addition, agencies in each of the sites have committed three to five individuals to the project designated as “Change Agents” (CA) resulting in over 70 “on the ground” professionals who, along with others intimately involved with the grant, will form the backbone of the project as they serve as transformative ambassadors for evidence-based service delivery. While moving through five progressive phases of implementation highlighted in the literature, CAs and grant staff will participate in an intensive training, coaching and mentoring process in the adopted modalities. This will include written critiques of their taped skills, skill rating workshops and coaching sessions with peers. As skill base builds, CAs will model the newly acquired skills within their agencies, thereby beginning the process of knowledge transference. Once proficiency is achieved, selected CAs will then begin training/coaching their peers in participating agencies in the selected modalities, continuing the path toward EBP sustainability throughout the demonstration sites. Implementation of this grant project is anticipated to yield data revealing reduced recidivism, thus grant plans include the collection of a multitude of data elements in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the use of the adopted EBPs.

