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**Enhancing and Evaluating Local Juvenile Justice Systems in Illinois:  
An Evaluation Manual**

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## *Thinking About Evaluation*

While evaluation may mean different things to different people, nearly everyone agrees that the main purpose is to determine whether programs are succeeding in what they set out to do. Evaluation looks at all aspects of a program, including how it was designed, how it was implemented and what it achieved. This evaluation manual is to serve as a companion piece to the guidebook. The manual is designed for those who are seeking basic introductory knowledge about what evaluations can do, as well as for those who may be familiar with evaluation, but would like to think more carefully about how to go about it. Most importantly, however, is the recognition that evaluation should be carefully thought out, planned and conducted. Attempting to conduct a complicated evaluation, with little or no expertise in the area, will often times do more harm than good.

Evaluations address many questions. One focal point of an evaluation is to determine how well a program was implemented and how well the programs' activities are being carried out. Process evaluation determines whether a program reached its intended target population and whether the activities of the program are working toward its objectives and ultimately its goal. Evaluations also focus on the impact and outcome of a project. That is, whether the project is indeed accomplishing its objectives, whether those objectives are working toward the ultimate goal of the program, and the final result or effect the program had. Therefore, an evaluation not only looks at how well a program operates, but whether it's really working to address the problem or issue that it was designed to.

Evaluation is also becoming more and more popular with funders of juvenile justice. To manage and make the best use of scarce resources, projects and grantees are being required to implement evaluation to some degree in order to achieve funding for projects.

## *Benefits of Evaluation*

While evaluations usually cost money, they can also save money as well as time and other resources. The main benefit of a project evaluation is to help policy makers and funders (and project staff) decide where resources are best used. There are limited dollars and resources for juvenile justice projects, and it makes sense to document whether those projects receiving funds are a wise investment. Evaluations aid in making sound decisions about programs, assist in the development of the best possible programs and give program staff and planners opportunities to learn from their mistakes.

For projects that are doing very well and succeeding in the accomplishment of their goals, evaluation can document that success. This documentation can serve a number of purposes, including justification for continued or increased funding and replication of the project in another area. A positive evaluation can also make project staff feel good about the work they have done - that they are really making a difference. For evaluations that show a project is weak, it can offer suggestions for improvement or point to areas of the project that may be contributing to unintended effects.

Evaluations can also reacquaint staff with their project. Many times a project will undergo a number of transformations or be operating for so long that it takes on a life of its own and digresses from its original plan. Projects can also undergo a number of staff changes and changes in the target population it serves. Evaluations can take a look at goals and objectives and determine if they are still appropriate or accurate as to what the project is now working toward. It can serve as a "face-lift" to projects that have grown somewhat removed from their original design. It can give project staff an opportunity to listen and reacquaint themselves with their target population. Participants in a project are often happy to hear an evaluation is being conducted because it can give them an opportunity to provide their feedback. Evaluations, however, should not substitute for day-to-day project monitoring. Project coordinators and granting agencies need to continue their monitoring efforts through site visits and collection of regular project data.

### *Myths of Evaluation*

Undoubtedly you will encounter people who feel that evaluation takes away scarce resources from the project itself. Perhaps you feel that way too. Some may feel that evaluations are intrusive and disrupt the project operations or that they place a burden on project staff. Many people also feel that evaluations are "audits" with the sole purpose of pointing out what a horrible job project staff are doing and thus giving funders an excuse to cut or reduce resources for the project.

When used correctly, evaluations serve the opposite purpose. Evaluations can document areas of project strength. They can also point out areas of weakness and determine what is contributing to this weakness and how the project can be improved. While there are some projects that cease to exist because of unfavorable evaluations, most agree that it is better to focus resources on methods that are proven to work, as opposed to those that keep resources from other initiatives. That is why it is important to become familiar with evaluation and to make sure that the team evaluating your project (whether that team is internal or external to the project) is in tune with what the project is and knows the best way to go about evaluating it.

### *Evaluatibility - What to Consider*

There are a number of things that you will need to consider before deciding if evaluation is appropriate, including:

- What is the purpose of the evaluation? (Evaluations designed to determine if the project should be replicated in other areas may have to be more stringent in its design than an evaluation designed to simply give feedback to staff on its operations)
- What specific questions do you want an evaluation to answer?

- What data sources would you need to tap to conduct an evaluation? (what data on performance indicators should be collected and who will collect this information, availability of other data, information on the target population); Will you (or the evaluator) be able to collect the data needed to answer these questions?
- Are the project design, goals and objectives realistic and logical? (formative evaluation can help assess this to some extent)
- What stage is your project in? (is your project stable and not in danger of significantly changing its focus or ceasing all together)
- What phase of evaluation is your project ready for (formative, process, impact or outcome)?
- What resources are available for the evaluation? (funding, evaluation personnel)
- What time frame is desired? Can a worthwhile evaluation be done in this time frame?
- How well can the effect of the project be isolated from other external effects? (A project that is short in duration with a large target population and seeking to achieve a fairly lofty goal may have results that are difficult to isolate from many other external factors that could influence the project's goal)
- Are sufficient resources invested in the project or is it a project that figures prominently in your juvenile justice plan?
- Was this project, or one similar to it, evaluated before?
- Is the project staff on-board and educated about evaluation?
- Are all members of the Juvenile Justice County Council in basic agreement that the project should be evaluated?

Perhaps one of the biggest questions regarding evaluation is cost. What you spend on an evaluation will depend quite a bit on the individuals you enlist to do the evaluation (internal vs. external, experience, education, etc.). Cost will also depend on how extensive a design you desire (experimental vs. quasi- or non-experimental and duration of the evaluation). Evaluations that deal with large populations or continue for long periods of time may be more expensive to evaluate. More and more agencies are building evaluations into their original project budgets. This allows a project to prepare in advance for evaluation and secure the funds up front. Some agencies partner with their local college or university for evaluations. Many professors are willing to conduct evaluations with assistance from their students in areas of data collection and entry.

## *Evaluation Components*

A plan for evaluation should contain basic information on what is needed from the evaluation and what aspects of the project should be assessed. Evaluation plans can help you start thinking about evaluation and help you design Requests for Proposals (RFP) if you plan to contract outside of your agency for an evaluation. While you can begin to design this plan as you think about evaluation, some of the plan components may have to be supplied by the evaluation team, such as detail on the type of evaluation design that is best suited for the project. Some basic components of this plan might include:

- A clear description of what the evaluation seeks to accomplish and by when.

This should include information on what aspects are to be evaluated (such as the project goals and objectives or the project design or model). This description will depend on what phase of evaluation a project is in. For example, a process evaluation would seek to assess the implementation of the project. The outcome evaluation would seek to determine if the project ultimately accomplished its intended goals. This part of the evaluation plan should include all questions that you want the evaluation to address. A timeline or date of completion should also be considered. If you are designing a Request for Proposals (RFP) this information should be included in the RFP to help guide the evaluation team in designing their proposal.

- A clear description of the project information that is to be collected and how it will be collected.

These data elements will be used to measure the effectiveness of the project design, its implementation, impact or outcome. These elements should be tied to the project objectives and goals and include the performance indicators that the project reports on a regular basis. The methods for collection include a number of tools that vary by the type of data desired. Qualitative data can be gathered through interviews or observations, while quantitative data can be gathered through official sources and records. The collection of baseline data (a measurement of something before a project begins) should be considered. Information for this part of the plan should pay attention to the questions listed in the prior step and what aspects of the project are to be evaluated. If you are designing an RFP, list the data elements that the project plans to collect on their performance indicators and any other available data that would be relevant to the goals and objectives of the project. Information on how this data will be maintained (whether project data will be entered in a database and made available to the evaluators) is also important. An RFP should also list any additional information that the evaluators should collect, such as recidivism data. The

collection of data and information also hinges upon the next component, the evaluation design.

- The most appropriate evaluation design.

There are distinct phases of evaluation and various methods or study designs that are tied to these phases. The appropriate selection of a method depends on the stage of the project - whether it is being conceptualized or has been in operation for a number of years. The evaluation designs available also vary. An experimental design may be suitable if you desire a rigorous impact or outcome evaluation with the most reliable results possible. A non-experimental design may be suited for an evaluation with a small budget or in the process evaluation stage. The level of data analysis desired, as well as the complexity of the study design, will govern the selection of the evaluator as it relates to the expertise, training and experience required. If you find you're having trouble deciding what evaluation design would be best, a consultant or someone familiar with evaluation may be able to advise you based on the specifics of your project. If you are developing an RFP, you can leave the details of the study design up to the evaluation teams that are submitting proposals, and then select the one that RFP reviewers feel most comfortable with.

- The target population that is the subject of the project's efforts.

This should detail the population that is the focus of the project, and any other relevant population related to the project's activities. If the project includes an experimental or quasi-experimental design, a description of the control or comparison group can be supplied. An RFP for an evaluation should always provide detail on the project's target population.

- How the evaluation results should be reported

This part of the plan can vary depending on the format you would like your evaluation results presented in. The findings of the evaluation can simply be reported in memo format or through a presentation by the evaluation team. Presentations give the project staff an opportunity to discuss the findings and ask the evaluation team questions. Full reports can provide all the details of the evaluation, but are sometimes technically written and difficult for someone without an evaluation background to easily understand. Executive summaries should always be included in full reports and should provide information on the basic tasks of the evaluation and the findings in a clear and concise manner. No matter what format is chosen to present the findings, it should be done in a manner that is clear and easily understood by project staff and stakeholders. An

RFP should specify how the results are to be presented. More information on how to report results is provided later.

If you are reviewing evaluation proposals, all of the above information should be included in the proposal (and requested in the RFP), as well as information on:

- A timeline and milestone chart that details the proposed progress of the evaluation;
- The number of deliverables, such as progress reports and survey instruments, as well as the final report;
- Qualifications of the evaluation team, including their education, experience, training and how staff will be utilized;
- The budget for the evaluation in as much detail as desired; and
- A literature review on the project topic that includes studies or evaluations of projects similar to the current project and demonstrates that the evaluation team has a basic knowledge of the issue the project is attempting to address.

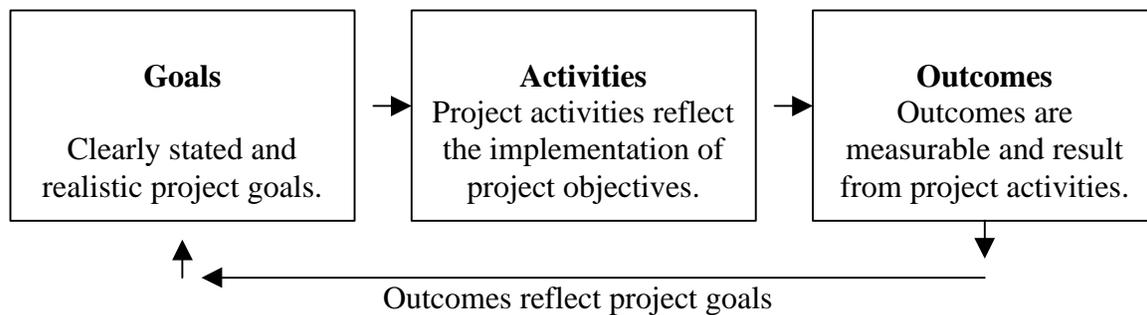
### *Advisory Groups*

During the course of an evaluation, it is important for both the evaluators and project staff to gain feedback from each other. One mechanism of gaining this feedback is the formation of an advisory group that meets on a regular basis. Advisory groups include at the very least the evaluation team and project staff, but they can also include other stakeholders, such as police chiefs, probation officers, teachers and community members. They can also include other researchers who have knowledge in the area of evaluation or the project topic, as well as advocates for the target population, such as victim service providers. Anyone who has a financial stake in the project, such as the granting agency, may also participate in the advisory group.

Advisory groups serve a number of functions. They guide the development of the evaluation and discuss developments or changes in the projects. They can help overcome evaluation problems, such as access to data or observation of program operations. Sometimes they serve as a mediating body for the evaluation when there are disagreements between the evaluators and project staff. They can also guide any recommendations that the evaluators may have for improving the project as the evaluation continues. Often times, advisory groups make sure that the evaluation is proceeding as it was set forth and is making scheduled progress. Group members can make sure that confidentiality and human subjects concerns are addressed and stipulations adhered to. Finally, advisory groups provide a forum for discussion regarding pertinent research findings from other evaluations or studies and facilitate the sharing of knowledge about the topic of the project.

### *Logic Model*

One tool for identifying the relationship between project activity and results is a logic model. Logic models can take different forms and vary in complexity, but basically they follow a continuum beginning with project goals, then project activities and finally project outcomes. Ideally, the model shows how project outcomes reflect the project's goals. By using a logic model, you are assuming that there is a relationship between the activities or services provided and the outcome or impact on the targeted population. By asking why the activities were chosen to accomplish the project's goals, you should begin to identify the expected results, including initial, intermediate and long-term outcomes. The model provides a continuum that facilitates questions of why project staff are providing the services or doing the activities and how they influence the ultimate goal.



### *External vs. Internal Evaluations*

Once you have decided to evaluate a project, deciding who will actually conduct the evaluation is the next step. This often depends on financial resources and the nature of the project. Most of the time, external evaluators are the best choice. They are generally more likely to be familiar with evaluation and have experience conducting them. They are also more likely to be objective and unbiased about the project and offer a new perspective when looking at the project. The approach that external evaluators may take varies. Some partner with the project staff and become fairly engrained in the project while others stay on the sidelines and simply observe. The level of training and expertise of an external evaluator also varies. Many agencies issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) that includes all the specifications of the evaluation and the qualifications desired. A panel can then review the proposals submitted in response to the RFP and determine the most qualified candidate. You should feel comfortable that an evaluator is working with your needs in mind. References from other agencies can also be helpful in selecting an external evaluator.

An evaluator internal to your agency or organization, however, is sometimes more cost-effective. They can be more familiar with the project and more in-tune with the project's needs from an evaluation (i.e., the types of questions they need addressed). It is best that an internal evaluation team have no personal stake in the project and is able to do an

objective assessment. Close ties to a project or agency can taint the findings of an evaluation. Whenever possible, the evaluator should not be directly involved in the management or operation of the project.

Another type of internal evaluation is a self-evaluation. While the concept of self-evaluation automatically violates the principle of not having the evaluator directly involved in the project, it can still serve a useful purpose. The project manager or coordinator generally does self-evaluation of their project on an on-going basis. Self-evaluations and other internal evaluations can also be supplemented with formal external evaluations if desired or a consultant can be hired to advise on the process. Self-evaluation can involve the use of the same tools that many evaluations use, such as assessment of project data, interviews, surveys, focus groups, observations and so on. If funds are limited and project staff are objective and truly desire an accurate assessment of their project, self-evaluation can be the answer. However, the person or persons involved in the self-evaluation should make sure that they have the time available to devote to both the evaluation and their responsibilities to the project.

### *Evaluating Multi-Site Projects*

There are a few things to keep in mind when evaluating similar projects that are active in multiple sites. Evaluations should avoid comparing projects or judging them against each other. General comparisons regarding the operation or description of the projects are useful, but if an evaluation starts comparing the effectiveness of one against the other - without taking into account the different environments they operate or different resources, offender population or other constraints - the result may be some very unfair comparisons and negative reactions. Evaluations of multiple site projects should always note how the projects differ from one another, so the reader realizes these differences, as they may attempt to compare the projects themselves.

Evaluation is a good opportunity to encourage the projects to learn from each other. As noted earlier, advisory meetings are great forums to discuss how one county is handling a problem that may be common to them all. Evaluations should also spend equal time with the different projects - even if one has a more interesting caseload or more accommodating staff. The same standards, as much as possible, should be employed to measure project success while still taking into account the differences of the project designs. Holding similar projects to different standards without good reason will result in unfair and unreliable evaluation findings.

Finally, evaluation teams should be prepared to alter their workplans for each site. A workplan that details the number of site visits, access to staff and collection of data may work well for one site and not another. The availability, collection or automation of data in one site may vary dramatically from another. While one site may have automated case file data and be able to provide that information on disk, another may require the manual collection of information from the files themselves.

### *Choosing an Evaluation Team*

No matter what type of evaluation method you choose, it is important to keep the following points in mind:

- The evaluator and evaluation team should be familiar with evaluation and have some training or experience in the methods of evaluation;
- The evaluator should be objective and impartial regarding the assessment of the project;
- The evaluator should be familiar with the type of the project he or she is evaluating (for example, someone who is unfamiliar with domestic violence or the literature on domestic violence may not be the best choice for an evaluation of a project that trains officers about domestic violence);
- The evaluator should have good communication skills and be willing to produce an evaluation that fits your needs and relate the findings in a clear manner;
- The evaluator should be willing to design an evaluation that minimizes disruptions to the project and does not place an undue burden on staff; and
- The evaluator should report results and progress in a timely manner and keep staff up to date on the status of the evaluation.

## *The Phases of Program Evaluation*

Evaluation should be an on-going process that spans the life of a program. Ideally, evaluation should begin with the first conception of a program idea and continue for as long as the program is in operation and even after its conclusion. You can save significant resources and effort by factoring in evaluation at the time the program is developed. Not only will this help you think carefully about whether or not the program is appropriate or feasible, it will help establish baseline information that will assist assessment of whether or not the program achieved what it set out to do. Factoring in evaluation early can also help identify problems or limitations that can be caught early in the program's development (before time and money are wasted) which may also increase the program's chance of success.

Traditionally, most evaluations reference two main types of evaluation: process (sometimes referred to as implementation) and impact. However, there are additional stages in the evaluation process that can assist in planning and replication of programs. This manual identifies four complete stages or phases of evaluation: formative, process, impact and outcome. It also provides a fictional, sample project and outlines some of the questions that would be posed in each evaluation phase. The following describes the sample project, AIM.

Example Project:	Baird Junior High School After-School Initiative and Mentoring (AIM) Project
Project Development:	<p>A survey of students and parents has shown that many of the youth enrolled in the school are unsupervised during the hours after school while their parents are at work. The survey also showed that students would be interested in various after-school activities if they were provided. Statistics from law enforcement also show that many juvenile offenses occur during the hours of 3pm and 5pm. Based on a needs assessment, the AIM Project was developed to provide youth with alternatives to time spent alone or in the community unsupervised.</p>
Project Description:	<p>An after-school project designed to provide students with activities, tutoring, supervision and mentoring during the hours of 3 - 5pm, during the school week. A project coordinator, staff and volunteers will organize and supervise activities. Sporting activities will include basketball, baseball, volleyball and soccer. Other activities will include art instruction, help with school assignments and tutoring, age-appropriate movie screenings, snacks and general mentoring of the youth by the adult volunteers as positive role models. The project is grant funded and will be based in the junior high school gym, the outside soccer field and ball diamond and an available classroom. A van or bus will be available to take youth home after the program at 5:00pm.</p>
Target Population	<p>All youth enrolled in Baird Junior High School. Student must attend school during the day to participate in the project after school.</p>
Goal:	<p>To reduce the incidence of juvenile crime and delinquent behavior by a third in the City of Baird during the peak hours between 3-5pm by providing youth attending Baird Junior High School with an alternative to unsupervised after school time. This decrease of one-third should be evident after one school year.</p>

Process Objectives:

- 1) Organize at least one team-building sporting or entertainment activity per day that will appeal to the target population and encourage their participation in these activities after school, thus providing an alternative to unsupervised after-school time.
- 2) Provide assistance with homework assignments and tutoring at any time for those students who request assistance and hold at least one general tutoring session per week.
- 3) Provide mentoring for youth with staff members acting as positive role models by encouraging constructive behavior and building self-esteem and educating youth on the negatives of delinquent activity throughout the project and through one organized discussion group per week.
- 4) Encourage youth to talk to AIM staff about problems or issues they may be facing by developing a positive relationship with youth and offering forums for discussion by organizing at least one guest speaker or focus group per month.

Process Performance Indicators:

The number of basketball, volleyball, soccer and baseball games organized and the number of youths who participated in these games.

The number of movies screened or other entertainment activities (such as art instruction) organized and the number of youths who participated in these activities.

The number of discussion groups, guest speakers and focus groups organized and the number of youths who participated in these activities.

The number of youths requesting and receiving assistance with homework or tutoring.

The number of general tutoring sessions held and the number of youths who attended.

The number of youths who approached AIM staff regarding a problem or issue in their personal lives or in school.

The number of youths who were provided with a referral to other specialized services.

The number of youths, overall, participating in the AIM Project.

The number of youths that were transported to their homes or other approved residence after the program.

Impact Objectives:

To have 75% of youths participating in the project for one year show an improvement in attitudes regarding self-esteem and positive behaviors.

To have 75% of youths participating in the project for one year show an improvement in attitudes and behaviors regarding at-risk behavior, such as substance use and gang activity.

To have a 30% of the youths participating in the project for one year show improvement in school performance as measured through grades.

Impact Indicators:

Changes in attitudes regarding self-esteem and positive behaviors as measured through pre and post-test surveys.

Changes in attitudes and behaviors regarding at-risk behavior, such as alcohol and drug use and associating with gang members as measured through pre and post-test surveys.

Changes in the completion of homework and class assignments and test scores, and changes in letter grades as provided by teachers.

Outcome Objective

The goal of reducing the incidence of juvenile crime and delinquent behavior by a third in the City of Baird during the peak hours between 3-5pm by providing youth attending Baird Junior High School an alternative to unsupervised after school time. This decrease of one-third should be evident after one school year.

Outcome Performance  
Indicator:

The number of offenses committed by juveniles during the  
hours of 3:00-5:00pm.

Other Indicators:

The change in the level of juvenile crime overall near the  
school and in the city.

The number of in-school disciplinary actions against  
students currently participating in the project.

Improvement in grades and class participation.

## *Formative Evaluation*

Formative evaluation begins with the conception of the project idea. It provides an assessment of the project's procedures, activities and resources to make sure that the project is implemented in a manner that will allow it to work toward its purpose. Formative evaluations, to some extent, assess the project design itself by identifying strengths and weaknesses in design prior to implementation.

Formative evaluation can also help a project determine whether or not its goals and objectives are clear, measurable, and reasonable. Goals or objectives that are too lofty or vague can hinder not only the implementation of the project, but pose difficulties during evaluation. Goals and objectives should be well-defined and the mechanism for measuring them clear. Project goals can specify exactly what the project is designed to change and by how much (for example, a decrease in arrests by 33% the first year). Goals can also, in some instances, be more general. However, the objectives for implementing or operating a project should always be specific and measurable. The clearer and more measurable goals and objectives are, the easier it is to evaluate effectiveness of the project.

Formative evaluation should also address the performance indicators that the project plans to report on regularly to demonstrate its progress toward objectives. These indicators should be tied to the objectives and also be clear and measurable. The project should decide early on what performance indicator data to collect, and how it will be reported. It is important for projects to regularly maintain this data, in an automated fashion if possible, for evaluation.

A formative evaluation can save quite a bit of time in the launching of a project by serving as a "quality control" test. Obviously a project that is not well thought out in the beginning or misses essential elements will not be implemented effectively and will not yield the desired impact or outcomes. Formative evaluations, like the other phases of evaluation, can be conducted by an outside party or in-house.

Formative evaluations should center on standard questions regarding the project. Examples as to how these questions can be posed for the sample juvenile justice project, AIM, are provided. As described earlier, our sample project is an after-school activity project designed to keep youth occupied and supervised during the after school hours.

Some of the formative evaluation questions that evaluators may want to pose for the AIM Project include:

- *When should the project begin and how should it be introduced?*

Example questions: Should the project ideally begin at the start of the school year?

How should parents and school staff be notified or made aware of the project?

Is training necessary for staff?

How should performance data on the project be collected? How often? How will it be maintained?

- *Is the project strategy well designed?*

Example questions: Is the project description well developed and likely to succeed in accomplishing its goals and objectives?

Have the targeted youth expressed an interest in after-school activities and a project of this type?

Is there a need for a project of this type?

What other projects are currently available to address this need?

Have projects similar to this one been implemented elsewhere and are evaluations available? Does the project strategy take this information into account?

Will the project be able to keep track of statistics related to performance measures in a meaningful and consistent manner?

- *Are the implementation strategies likely to be effective or do they exhibit flaws?*

Example questions: Is the use of the school grounds feasible and not likely to conflict with other school activities?

Is transportation home well-organized and needed?

Are sufficient resources and staff available?

Are the staff screened and qualified to work in the project's capacity and with the target population?

Are the project hours sufficient and appropriate?

- *Are the activities of the project geared toward its goals and objectives?*

Example questions: Will an activity schedule be planned out well in advance and suited to the needs and desires of the youth participating?

How will the rules of the project be introduced and enforced (such as no drug or alcohol use, no gang clothing or symbols)?

Are the activities age-appropriate and will the sporting activities include teams of comparable age and skill levels?

Are there a sufficient number of activities available for a wide range of interests? (Are there art or reading activities for those not interested in sports?)

- *Are the project personnel on-board with the project and its goals and objectives?*

Example questions: Are staff willing to work the designated hours and be consistently available for the project activities?

Are staff willing to plan and organize activities ahead of time?

Are staff willing to work with school personnel to secure and schedule space?

Are staff comfortable with the project and do they believe in the project's goals and objectives?

Are the staff likely to be respected and looked up to by youth?

- *What are the obstacles or limitations to the success of the project?*

Example questions: Does the project have the support of school personnel and parents?

Will students be willing to spend their after-school time on school grounds?

Will the students most at risk for after-school delinquent behavior participate in the project?

### ***When to use Formative Evaluations***

Some of the questions asked in formative evaluations are also addressed to some extent in process evaluations, but they are best utilized before a program is actually implemented and in operation. The main goal is to determine whether a program will work as intended or what changes or modifications need to be considered.

Formative evaluations are also conducted when an existing program is replicated elsewhere. The success of a program in one area does not ensure that it will be successful in another location, with another target population or if it is redesigned to address a different problem. Formative evaluations can also be used for existing programs that are undergoing modifications to their original design or when an operating program is struggling with problems and the solution is not apparent. By taking another look at the design, plans, target population and modifications that a program has gone through, you can sometimes identify or uncover reasons as to why a program is not performing up to its expected level.

### ***Tools that can be used in Formative Evaluations***

The tools or target of a formative evaluation can vary depending on the program. Field testing is one common way to gauge the possible implementation and effect of a program. Field testing can involve the distribution of program materials (brochures, for example) to a random group that would represent your target population and you can gain their feedback on the material.

Whether a formative evaluation is conducted by an outside party or in-house, it is important that the evaluator be completely honest with the assessment of the project and its limitations. Surveys, interviews and focus groups can provide you with information as to whether a project would be welcome, utilized or attended. Various statistics can help you gauge the need for the projects. Formal needs assessments (see sample needs assessment provided in Appendix B of the guidebook) often combine official statistics and data from law enforcement, social services, health organizations, schools and other agencies. They may include survey data from youth or criminal justice professionals. Primarily, needs assessments serve to support what criminal justice and youth service professionals see in the field and identify as needs (though at other times, the data may dispute what the criminal justice community perceives as a need).

Data collected at the formative evaluation stage and related to the need for the project can also serve as a baseline measure that will help measure the difference a project has made after its implementation and operation. This is especially important if an impact or outcome evaluation is desired at a later date. For example, AIM may want to collect data on youth attitudes and behaviors in a pre-survey or focus group. Later, during an outcome evaluation, a post-test asking the same questions can be done to measure any change that the project may have contributed to. The tricky part, however, is that to be accurate a pre- and post-test must be done on the same group of individuals. If students drop in and out of the project, these measurement tools may not be as reliable. Data that was collected as part of the needs assessment, such as official law enforcement statistics, can also be used as a baseline to measure change after the project has been in operation.

It is also important to consider the manner in which project data will be collected as it relates to its performance measures. Implementing a good data collection protocol is important if you want to continue the evaluation process and gauge whether or not your

project is working as intended. If you are implementing a number of similar projects in different jurisdictions, try to keep the performance measures common and comparable, while allowing for variations in the individual projects. This will allow you to compare the projects across sites while taking into consideration any unique attributes of the projects. Data collection forms on project activity and performance indicators should be developed prior to the project's implementation and completed on a regular basis, usually every month or quarter.

### *Process Evaluation*

Process evaluations, sometimes referred to as implementation evaluations, are used to assess whether the project was implemented the way it was intended. Process evaluations follow formative evaluations and begin as soon as the project is implemented. In process evaluations, the evaluator looks at what the project activities are in reality regardless of how the project was originally intended to operate. One distinction that a process evaluation makes is the difference between the actual project activities and population receiving the services and the intended project activities and target population. Process evaluations also look at the implementation efforts of the project and its "growing pains". Communication, collaboration, personnel issues, and services rendered are all things that make up the life of a project and play into how the project will ultimately achieve its goals and objectives.

Process evaluations lay the groundwork and are generally necessary before an impact and outcome evaluation can begin. They serve as an excellent way to document a project's growth and changes. For example, when replicating a project in a different location, it is helpful to know what limitations the original project design encountered and how they were addressed, how the project modified its goals and objectives over time, and what were the essential elements that benefited the project the most. Process evaluations also identify project barriers and limitations that were not anticipated or evident early on. Adjustments can then be made before time and resources are wasted. Projects are often more flexible early in their life and modifications are more easily incorporated at that time.

Some of the process evaluation questions that you may want to pose for our sample project, AIM, might include:

- *What type of environment is the project operating in?*

Example questions: What is the relationship between project staff and school personnel, parents and the youth?

How do youth perceive the project (positively - "interesting" or "cool", indifferent - "better than being home alone", or negatively - "boring" or "babyish")?

Is there good communication among project staff?

Do project staff collaborate on ideas and problem-solving?

Is the scheduling of facilities, fields and rooms going smoothly?

- *How are the project activities being carried out?*

Example questions: How many sporting events were organized and took place?

How many entertainment events were organized and took place?

How many group speakers were scheduled and appeared?

How many focus or discussion groups were scheduled and took place?

- *How many contacts with the target populations are being made?*

Example questions: How many youth received assistance with homework or tutoring?

How many youth participated in sporting events?

How many youth participated in entertainment events?

How many youth attended the speaking engagements?

How many youth participated in the focus or discussion groups?

How many youth took advantage of transportation home?

- *Are there any project development issues?*

Example questions: Are there are barriers or limitations that the project is facing now that it is operating? Any unexpected costs?

Is the project operating on schedule?

Are youth and their parents aware of the project?

Has any training been provided to staff?

Is staffing and supervision adequate?

Is the project perceived positively in the school and community?

What other types of collaborations or interactions exist among project staff and other entities (businesses, police department, non-profit or volunteer organizations)?

Are there incidences of youth fighting or solidifying gang membership ties during the project? How can the project address this?

### *When to use Process Evaluations*

Although a process evaluation ideally begins when a project begins it shouldn't end before the project ends. Projects often undergo various adaptations and changes both early in their life and also as the target population, needs and resources change over time. Therefore, it is important that a process evaluation continue to some extent for the duration of the project. Although changes to address project barriers are best done early in the project, a process evaluation should continue because barriers and problems can occur at any time.

Again, process evaluations are often necessary to do before an impact or outcome evaluation takes place. While an impact or outcome evaluation can tell you whether or not you are working successfully toward your goals or having the desired effect, the process evaluation is necessary to determine how you got there. For example, an impact evaluation may show that attitudes toward community beautification and reporting of vandalism have changed for the better due to the door-to-door distribution and discussion of a brochure that outlined what residents can do to help keep improve their neighborhood. An outcome evaluation shows, as a result, that acts of vandalism in a particular area have been reduced. Without a process evaluation, you may think that the brochure-distribution project was responsible for the reduction. However, a process evaluation could show that the number of contacts actually made with residents in the area affected were nearly non-existent. Perhaps the project was not able to reach residents in that particular area due to the time of day that the contacts were attempted or a lack of workers in that area. Based on this information, it would likely to concluded that some other factor(s) were responsible for the reduction. Regardless, it is important to do a process evaluation to determine what actions and activities your project is really accomplishing. That information will lead you toward determining if any impact or outcomes stem from those activities.

### *Tools that can be used in Process Evaluations*

Process evaluations rely on the two main types of data collection that takes place during evaluations: quantitative, or numerical data and qualitative, or more descriptive data.

Project activity data includes documentation about the project, including:

- Project budgets and fiscal report to determine if estimated costs are meeting the project's needs;
- The project description to determine if the project is being implemented according to plan;
- Correspondence and meeting minutes to determine the level of collaboration and communication;
- Documentation on the number of activities organized and conducted;
- The number of participants or project contacts;
- The types of participants contacted (in other words, was the project making contacts with its target population);
- Data about the project participants (age, race, gender, etc.);

Other data related to project activity can include:

- Interviews with project staff. For the AIM example, school personnel, law enforcement and parents could be interviewed to gauge their perceptions about the project, collaborations and communications;
- Observations of project activity;
- Surveys, discussions or focus groups with project participants;
- Surveys or interviews with non-participants or drop-outs to determine why they are not, or no longer, participating in the project;
- Literature reviews or prior evaluations of similar projects; and
- Case studies of a particular participant(s), documenting how the project affected them directly.

## *Impact Evaluation*

Impact evaluations measure how a project is working toward its goals and whether the project is having its intended impact. Impact evaluations are often desired, sometimes required, and along with outcome evaluations, they provide the findings that people are most interested in. The main idea behind an impact evaluation is to determine if the project's activities affect the target population and lead to the desired change in their behaviors and/or attitudes.

Impact evaluations really go hand-in-hand with outcome evaluations and are often combined. One distinction is that while an impact evaluation determines if the desired change in behaviors, attitudes or beliefs took place because of the project, an outcome evaluation addresses whether these changes actually resulted in achieving the ultimate goal. For instance, the goal of the AIM project is to reduce the incidence of juvenile crime and delinquency during the peak hours between 3-5pm by providing youth attending Baird Junior High School an alternative to unsupervised after school time. It proposes to accomplish this goal by providing activities, encouraging youth to build relationships with staff through mentoring, building self-esteem and constructive behavior, etc. An impact evaluation will determine whether project activities have resulted in a change in how the students perceive themselves, the relationships they have built with staff, and how they use their after-school time. The project feels these changes will contribute to the ultimate goal (i.e. the outcome) of a reduction in after-school crime in the Baird area.

Some impact evaluation questions that evaluators may want to pose for the AIM Project might include:

- *What is the change that the target population exhibits as a result of exposure to the project?*

Example questions: What were the attitudes and beliefs toward crime and delinquency and at-risk behavior prior to the project and after (such as drug use, gang activity, vandalism)?

Are students exposed to the project exhibiting more positive behaviors and more self-esteem that would contribute to a decline in juvenile offending? (Perhaps the target population is now less likely to hang out with gang members or in areas known for drug dealing. This change would perhaps reduce their chance of being involved in crime or arrested).

Have the grades of participants improved?

What aspects of the project seem to contribute most to these changes (sporting activities, discussion groups, tutoring, relationship building with staff?)

What other external factors might have contributed to the changes in attitudes, behaviors or beliefs?

Has the project encouraged youth to make positive use of their after-school time as a result of the project?

### ***When to use Impact Evaluations***

Steps toward an impact evaluation should begin when the project begins. Baseline measures are important because the key to a successful impact evaluation is that the project produced a desired change in the target population. Impact evaluations document whether these changes became evident over the course of participating in the project. Changes can then be measured immediately after the first encounter or over a period after participation in the project.

### ***Tools that can be used in Impact Evaluations***

Impact evaluations rely on data gathered at the beginning (baseline) of the project, even before it starts, and after exposure to the project. Comparing these two measurements will give you an idea of what occurred as a result of your project.

Surveys are a primary means to measure changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. Both closed-ended and open-ended items can provide this information. Focus groups, if conducted by someone trained in facilitating focus groups, may also provide evidence of change. Observations are another manner in which to gauge impact, although they are conducted a little differently at this stage. An evaluator would have to observe the behavior of the target population and listen or watch for signs that would point to their attitudes or beliefs (perhaps turning down a cigarette or shying away from groups that are involved in delinquent behavior or situations that are likely to lead to delinquent behavior).

Again, it is important to consider external factors that may have also contributed to changes in the target population. Other initiatives that were implemented, such as increased patrols by the police department or the beginning of baseball season where a number of students participate in after-school practice, can all have an influence on the change the impact evaluation documents in the target population.

Often, positive impact evaluation results are proof that a project is worthwhile. This can justify additional resources or funds to build the project, or at least maintain it in the wake of budget constraints. Impact evaluations also offer proof that a project is indeed making progress toward its ultimate goal. If an impact evaluation shows that the attitudes, behaviors and beliefs that would contribute to a reduction in crime are not at all evident or that youth are not participating in the manner intended, it is impossible to

connect a reduction in crime to the activities of the project. One hypothetical example for the AIM project would be if the sporting activities are becoming so competitive that it contributes to fights and rivalries outside of school, or is solidifying gang ties.

### *Outcome Evaluation*

If a project seeks to only change attitudes and beliefs about something, an impact evaluation may be the stopping point. However, almost always, projects seek to have those changes translated into a change in actions or results. For example, it is not enough for the AIM Project to document a favorable change in student attitudes and use of after school time if that does not translate into a decrease in crime - the ultimate goal. Outcome evaluations are a natural extension of impact evaluations and are oftentimes done together or the terms used interchangeably. The main purpose of an outcome evaluation is to document whether or not the goal of a project was achieved. In other words, what difference the project made. Obviously, this is of primary interest to those operating and funding the project.

Some outcome evaluation questions that evaluators may want to pose for the AIM Project might include:

- *What were the results or net effects of the project as it pertains to the project goal(s)?*

Example questions: What level of improvement was seen in the number of juveniles arrested in Baird for offenses committed during the after-school hours as the project was underway?

What about the number of informal police contacts?

What about the number of reported offenses that can be associated with juveniles?

Did these measures contribute to a reduction of at least one-third (33%) in the incidence of juvenile crime in the city of Baird between 3-5pm after a year?

At what level does the need or problem still exist?

How do residents feel about any reduction in the incidence of juvenile crime during the after school hours?

After an outcome evaluation, there may be other questions that a project may be interested in, such as:

- *Has the project produced other outcomes not directly related to the project goal?*

Example questions: Has the level or incidence of juvenile crime decreased during hours outside of the after-school hours perhaps as a result of the project?

Has the level or seriousness of juvenile arrests or reported offenses changed during the project's operation?

Has the level or seriousness of in-school offenses changed?

Have the grades or attendance of participating students improved?

- *What types of program adjustments might be needed to better affect the needs or problems identified in the project goal(s) or minimize adverse impacts/outcomes?*

Example questions: Were there any displacement effects (did crime increase during the evenings and weekends)?

If the project did not achieve its desired outcome, what is the disconnect between the assumed success of the project's impact, but unsuccessful achievement of its desired outcome? (For example, although attitudes, beliefs and even the behaviors of youth participating in the project may have changed for the better, police are arresting more youth than even and juvenile crime continues to increase during the after-school hours.) An evaluator may go back to a formative evaluation to determine the answer.

### ***When to use Outcome Evaluations***

Outcome evaluations should be conducted after participants have been exposed to the project for a period of time. They can be conducted on a regular basis to see if the desired outcomes are being maintained or as new participants are involved. If the project is of a limited duration, after conclusion of the project is generally when outcome evaluations begin. Outcome evaluations may continue to be done a number of years after exposure to the project to see if the project had a lasting effect. Of course, it is much more difficult to document that these long-term changes were the result of the project. Rigorous long-term experimental designs are best equipped for that purpose.

The AIM Project might want to conduct an outcome evaluation at the end of each semester, but at least after every school year since the goal notes that the desired change be evident after one school year. A project of this type might see their goals achieved early in the life of the project and then drop off if students lose interest. This issue of participation would likely be identified in the process evaluation phase. Each phase of the evaluation ultimately feeds into the impact and outcome phase. A solid and well thought-out project design has the best chance of producing a useful outcome evaluation.

### ***Tools that can be used in Outcome Evaluations***

Like an impact evaluation, preparation for an outcome evaluation is done well ahead of time with baseline measures that capture data on the target population prior to the project's implementation. The data captured must be specific enough to measure the elements that the project proposes to affect or change.

Many of the same measures used in an impact evaluation can be used in an outcome evaluation, such as surveys and focus groups that document a change in behavior (such as self-reports of delinquent activity). Official sources of data are usually used to document project outcome. Crime statistics from the police department would be a primary data source for the AIM Project. As discussed later in the section on evaluation instruments and designs, working closely with the agency providing the data can help you get the level of detail you desire at the periods of time that are necessary.

When evaluating for outcome, it is also important to know what defines a "successful project". While the main goal of the AIM Project is pretty clear - reducing arrests - that may not be the only factor considered when looking at outcome. An evaluator may want to look not only at arrests, but also other contact with law enforcement (warnings, station adjustments), referrals to court, and maybe even school disciplinary actions or law enforcement contacts outside of the after-school hours. It is important to choose factors that are most closely related to the participant's behavior, as opposed to the factors that may be more a function of organizational policy, like a police department's tendency to use informal adjustments. Also keep in mind other factors that can influence these outcome measures. One example may be a community policing or citizen awareness program in the city that results in citizens being more aware of their neighborhood and thus more likely to report crimes and seek help from the police

Additional ways of measuring outcome can be used if it is difficult to measure the direct effect that the project had on a large population. When a long-term and in-depth outcome evaluation is not possible, evaluators may look at data that is available on the changes in behavior or attitudes that were seen in the impact evaluations and tie them to prior research that documents a relationship between the changes and the project's goal. To do this, evaluators need to show that prior research from other studies have shown that certain characteristics or changes in behavior or attitude leads to or has an effect on certain other behaviors. For instance, an evaluation may provide prior research findings that show youth who complete their school assignments on a regular basis and have a favorable attitude toward school are less likely to vandalize school property. If the evaluation can document that the project contributed to more students completing their homework assignments and improving their attitude toward school through the tutoring it provides, compared to before the project began, it may be able to draw a connection between this change and the reduction in vandalism on school grounds. Using this method is best left to evaluators that are familiar with the detail and limitations of the research they are drawing from.

Once again, evaluators should be careful not to use strictly "black-box" evaluations that examine the impact or outcome of the project without examining the internal operations of the project. In other words, looking only at the outcome goals limits the evaluation usefulness. If it was found that the goals were not achieved, it is necessary to know why and how the project could be improved. If, on the other hand, an evaluation shows that goals have been met, but there are other unintended consequences, those factors need to be addressed. In projects where there are many outside factors that could contribute to or influence the change or improvement the project was seeking to accomplish, a simple outcome only evaluation would place severe limitations on the interpretation of the findings.

### *Examples of Evaluations Instruments and Designs*

Formative, process, impact and outcome evaluations all use various tools as outlined in their preceding descriptions. The following contains descriptions of these tools as well as sample data collection forms that staff might use, sample interview and focus group questions, sample observation points, and sample survey questions. As the collection of data begins, it is also important to keep matters of confidentiality and the consideration of human subjects in mind. Ideally, people who are objective and trained in the particular measurement instrument should implement the methods below. The descriptions below are very summative and designed to give you an idea of the types of tools and designs common to the evaluation of juvenile justice projects. Much more detail and information is available on these types of instruments and designs from the resource references noted as the end of this manual.

Evaluations normally rely on two main types of information: quantitative data that looks at numerical data to help assess the project, including project data, survey data, statistics and rates and qualitative data that involves mostly descriptive information such as written descriptions, correspondence, interviews, focus groups and observations. Some evaluation instruments can yield both types of data.

#### *Project Data*

As was stated in the section regarding formative evaluations, it is important to consider the manner in which project data will be collected as it relates to its performance measures. The method and manner of data collection should ideally be determined prior to project implementation and remain consistent through the project's operations. Sometimes it is beneficial to have the team that will be conducting the evaluation have input into the design of the data collection forms. This way, information that is relevant to the operation of the project (information that funders and managers may require) and information that would be relevant to the evaluation can be captured consistently. It is burdensome when evaluators have to go back and recapture data that could have been recorded as the project began.

Your data collection protocol will help determine whether or not your project is working as intended and will set the stage for the continuing process of evaluation. Similar projects in different jurisdictions should try to keep performance measures common and comparable, while allowing for variations in the individual projects. Caution should be exercised, however, when comparing like projects - taking into consideration their target populations, location, staffing, etc.

Data collection forms on project activity and performance indicators should be completed on a regular basis, usually every month or quarter. This data should be automated whenever possible. Automation, or the entry of data in a computerized database format, will allow the evaluators and project staff the ability to run queries, do analysis and capture summative information about the project.

Other areas of project data collection can include timesheets for personnel, training logs and participant daily attendance. Qualitative project data can include correspondence, marketing materials, and staff job descriptions. A sample data collection form to capture information on project activity for the AIM Project is provided in Appendix A of this manual. In addition to the data form that captures project activities, AIM staff may want to collect information that will help them keep track of school disciplinary actions and school performance.

### *Surveys*

The key to gaining useful information from a survey is taking the time to design a survey that truly elicits responses that pertain to the project you are implementing. A survey can be a quantitative source of data when the collection of information can be expressed numerically. A survey is more qualitative if it takes the form of an open-ended questionnaire. Surveys are self-reported instruments that commonly collect information about knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of the target population and contain a standard set of questions administered most often to a group of people at the same period of time. Surveys can also collect self-reported information about past behaviors, such as the number of times a respondent committed a crime. It is often helpful to conduct surveys of the target population (and control group if applicable) before and after the implementation of a project (a pre-test / post-test method). Surveys may be conducted in a variety of ways, either by telephone, mail, or administered in a group setting on paper.

It is important to select the correct group for surveying. If you are interested in collecting baseline information, survey individuals that will be participating in your project. If you are attempting to assess general need or awareness, survey a sample of the general population (a sample is a sub-set of the population). If you are attempting to assess change, survey those participating in the project after they have been exposed to the project for a period of time and survey those that have not been exposed to it (this would be the control group).

The survey should be clear and easy to understand. Avoid questions that would encourage or sway the respondent to answer one way or the other. Each survey question should address only one item and not combine topics, such as "Do you approve of after-school projects that involve sporting events and community service?" Separating items will allow you to get a better and more specific idea of what your respondent's opinion is of the project. Be as specific as possible in your survey questions. Sometimes you will need several questions on the same topic, dealing with different aspects of the topic, to gain the most meaningful results.

There are a few drawbacks to surveys. One is that sometimes they have a low response rate (particularly mail surveys that may never be returned). Another drawback is that there is a lack of control over the quality of data, that is, a respondent may fill out the form incorrectly or incompletely. The reading and comprehension level of a survey is also a concern, especially if respondents read at a certain grade level or require the survey in another language. An advantage of surveys is that they are relatively low in cost to administer. You may also be more likely to get true and accurate responses due to anonymity (if it is an anonymous survey).

Forced-choice types of questions will also yield an easier analysis of the survey data. While "yes/no" and "agree/disagree" survey responses are often used, more meaningful response options, such as those that offer more options and gauge the intensity of the response, can be more useful. Open-ended questions, while sometimes difficult to analyze across many respondents, can provide information that a forced choice question would not allow. An example of an open-ended survey question might be "What would improve the AIM Project?" Many surveys contain a mix of forced-choice, or close-ended, with a few open-ended questions. Finally, a pre-test of the survey can help you determine if you are measuring what you intended to measure, whether the questions are easily understood, and feedback as to the length and design.

Surveys continue to be popular research tool due to their relatively low cost and fairly simple administration. A sample survey is provided in Appendix A of this manual and is designed to measure the attitudes and behaviors of participants prior to the AIM project. It could then be administered again after participation in the project to see if there are any improvements. A survey could also be developed for AIM participants to measure their reaction to the project after they have been exposed to it for a period of time. A similar type of instrument could be used to gauge parent and school personnel attitudes regarding the project.

### *Standardized Assessments*

Somewhat similar to surveys, but much more structured, are standardized assessments or tests. These tools are rigorously designed and tested with large samples to establish their validity. They are used to assess needs, attitudes and behaviors among other things. When administered in a consistent manner, the results can be used to compare differences between the participants and other populations. They are popular with clinical types of

programs where a standardized and generally accepted test allows clinicians or therapists to determine results that are not as open to dispute or interpretation as other types of instruments. For example, a commonly accepted individual personality assessment is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). An example of a standardized survey is one that the Blueprints for Violence Prevention Program, Bullying Prevention, uses to assess need. The Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire is an anonymous survey to assess information regarding level and seriousness of bullying. The Blueprint Program, Functional Family Therapy (FFT), uses tests for supervising and gauging the continuing development of FFT therapists. Standardized instruments can be used in the evaluation of the project by measuring changes in participants or need, as well as the development of staff implementing the project.

### *Interviews*

One measurement tool that can take many forms is interviewing. Interviews can be done with those implementing the project, managing the project, working in conjunction with the project, or participating in the project. Interviews can even be done with individuals that are not directly involved in the project, but may have an opinion on it. For example, evaluators assessing the AIM Project would be interested in interviewing staff that organize and coordinate the sporting activities, the project coordinator that schedules facilities and manages staff, school personnel and parent of participants, and the participants themselves. They may also be interested in interviewing community members and law enforcement officers to see what their perception of the project is and whether they feel it is making a difference in the community.

Interviews can either be closed-ended and structured or unstructured and open-ended. For example, an interviewer may have a list of specific questions to ask the respondent or just ask how they feel in general about the project and then capture their thoughts. Interviews are usually done face-to-face, but can also be done over the phone. One difference between a survey and an interview is that in an interview there is an opportunity to clarify responses or ask a respondent to expand on their thoughts. Interviews are often tailored to the subject being interviewed. For example, you may have a different set of questions for the project staff than you would for the coordinator because their roles and the role of the project as it pertains to them differs somewhat.

Interviews, however, while fairly easy to prepare and conduct, can be time-consuming as they generally take more time than a survey would. Scheduling interviews with busy people is also an obstacle. Anonymity and confidentiality are also an issue, since the respondent is identified to the evaluator, even if they are not identified by name in the evaluation report. Interviewees may also be reluctant to give an honest answer if they feel it reflects unfavorably on the project. It is also important to use the information obtained in an interview accurately and not draw inferences. Nevertheless, interviews are often a useful measurement tool for evaluations. Sample interview questions for the AIM Project are provided.

### *Focus Groups*

Another qualitative measurement tool is the focus group. Focus groups range in size, but should be small enough (usually under 10) to elicit responses from everyone participating. Facilitators generally head the groups and pose questions for discussion. The forum is usually unstructured and free-flowing. Facilitators should draw out those participants who seem reluctant to give their thoughts while maintaining order and the flow of discussion.

The composition of the group should be so that the members consider themselves peers or equals. Combining project staff with project participants may not yield the most accurate and candid responses. Often, a comment from one participant in a focus group stimulates the comments of others and so on. However, individual responses can also influence the opinions of others or discourage someone from giving their opinion. Information obtained from focus groups can also be limited because focus groups may be comprised of only those who volunteered to participate. A number of focus groups can be conducted to gauge the development of a project. As with interviews, it is important that the information gained in focus groups is conveyed accurately. Sample focus group questions for the AIM Project is provided.

### *Observations*

Observation is another tool that can be used in evaluation and is often paired with interviews. Typically, you can gain quite a bit of information about a project by observing project meetings, staff interactions and project activities. Observations should be done as unintrusively as possible to minimize disruptions to project operations and to also allow for observation of the most candid and realistic manner in which the project operates. However, when project staff or participants are aware of an observer, they may behave in a manner that is especially favorable and not how they would act under a normal situation. Observations should always be backed up by other methods of data collection.

Observations are a good way to learn in detail how a project is operating, but it lacks the focus that other evaluation tools have and can be more subjective - that is the information gained from the observation may depend on who was doing the observing. Specific forms or protocols can be used to gain more reliability, especially if there are multiple observers. Observations are generally most useful during the process evaluation phase when a project is developing and you are interested in documenting project activities. Some sample points of observation for AIM are provided.

### *Case Studies*

Case studies are a qualitative measure of data collection that looks intensively at one or a small number of participants to determine in detail how the project may have affected

them. Case studies use other tools of measurement, such as interviews and observations to gain information. It provides a real-life context as to how the project is working and affecting certain members of its target population. Individuals chosen for case studies should represent the different variations in the target population so evaluation can better assess the impact the project might have on various participants.

Interviews are the primary mechanism for case studies, including in-depth interviews with the participant as well as with project staff and others who can comment on the project as it affects the participant (teachers, law enforcement, parents, etc.). Interviews are generally semi-structured and allow the interviewee to elaborate as much as they desire. Case studies also use observations to assess how the participant is reacting to the real-life operations of the project. Quantitative data, such as official records concerning the youth and individual-level project data on the youth are also used. Since case studies are limited in that they only focus on a few individual members of the target population, they should be combined with more encompassing measures of data collection.

### *Official Sources of Data*

Official sources of data are often easily available, but sometimes have to be collected with the help of the school and local police department or other agencies. Official sources of data for the AIM Project, for example, may include the number of offenses committed by juveniles during the hours of 3:00-5:00pm or the number of in-school disciplinary actions against students currently participating in the project. By talking early on to entities that can supply you with data to help gauge the effectiveness of your project you can get a sense of what data is available and how it is maintained. They may even be able to begin tracking certain data that would be helpful. For instance, in developing the AIM project, organizers may have talked to police and obtained information as to the time of day that offenses committed by juveniles (those that would be likely to attend Baird Junior High) occurred. From this information, they could begin to see a need for a program and continue with a formal needs assessment. This type of data can then continue to be tracked throughout the project to see if the numbers change or fluctuate perhaps as a result of the project. If the local police department does not routinely enter the time of day that an offense occurred, in some automated fashion, they may be able to begin entering this information or keeping track of it for the evaluation. Evaluators may also be able to track individual arrest or disciplinary records of students participating in the project. However, caution should be exercised to ensure that all legal and confidentiality measures are adhered to. Thorough needs assessments (like the sample needs assessment provided in the guidebook) capture much of the information that official sources, such as police departments, social services and the court system provide.

### *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*

Impact and outcome evaluations make the most use of experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Experimental designs generally produce the strongest evidence as to whether a project succeeded in its mission. Many formal evaluations use an experimental design that compares a group that participated in a project with a control

group, or group that did not participate. A control group is sometimes referred to as a comparison group. While this type of evaluation is generally more involved and expensive, it does yield the most beneficial results. After conclusion of the project, or after a specified period of time, comparisons are made between the two groups. Theoretically, any differences could be the result of participation in the project. Many experimental designs feature randomization - that is subjects are either assigned or not assigned to the project at random.

While pure experimental designs are the ideal way to determine a project's impact and outcome, they are the most difficult to implement. It would be difficult to randomly assign students to the AIM project because parents might complain if their child was not (or was) chosen. It may be more difficult to isolate the effects of the project. It is also difficult to justify giving one group of students the perceived benefit of this activity and not others.

Since the AIM Project is a voluntary project, evaluators may elect to conduct a quasi-experimental design method. This design does not require that randomization occur, but the group that is exposed to the project is compared with a control group that is not. Control groups should always be matched as closely as possible to the target population - in demographics, exposure to other treatments or stimuli, locations - taking into account anything that would set them apart or differentiate them from the target population other than exposure to the project. Both groups should be observed during the project's operations to ensure that these differences are not evident.

In our AIM Project, evaluators could select a sample of students from the area that are very similar to Baird Junior High students (but attending a school other than Baird, with a similar rate of after-school crime by juveniles) and compare the rates or change in rates of juvenile offending during after-school hours between the groups. They could also be compared on their attitudes toward negative behavior through a survey instrument. There are a few obstacles here, however. Since AIM is voluntary, there may be differences, or selection bias, in those Baird students that choose to attend the project activities and those that do not. Therefore, they may also be differences between those Baird students that attend and those from another school that would not have attended, even if given the chance. These differences need to be taken into consideration and controlled for, if possible.

Remember that an evaluation with a control group should be carefully designed so the control is truly similar in as many ways as possible to the target population. While in field research, there are always outside conditions that may influence the groups, there should be as few outside factors as possible or influences on either group that may contaminate the results. If a control group cannot be found, a non-experimental design consisting of a simple pre-test and post-test of the participating group's behaviors and attitudes or the change in their offending rates can be used.

Another option is a time series, or longitudinal, design that collects data over a long period of time- before, during and after the project. This type of design allows analysis as

to whether the trend of the time series after the intervention differs from what it was before. A time series for AIM might chart the number of juvenile offenses committed during the after-school hours a number of months or years prior to the project implementation and then a number of months or years after.

### *Limitations*

For many of these evaluation designs and tools, a number of things must be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. Internal validity is defined as how well an evaluation truly assesses the effect of the project. It indicates the trustworthiness of the conclusions. External validity, on the other hand, refers to how the findings of an evaluation can be applied to other projects in other settings, or to the same project operating at different times with different people. It is often referred to as the generalizability of the project to populations or contexts other than those used in the original design. Most evaluations are primarily concerned with threats to internal validity, such as history, selection, maturation, testing and mortality, which are discussed below.

Extraneous threats that could affect the interpretation of evaluation results include history, where the changes exhibited by the observed populations may be caused by other events that take place during the same time period. For example, if the AIM Project found that fewer participating students were involved in locker thefts during after-school hours than before the project, you would have to determine whether that result was a function of the project or some other factor (e.g., a new security system was installed during the project's operation).

Another threat is selection. Selection threatens the internal validity of evaluation findings when there are differences in populations being compared, usually as a result of a non-randomized sample. Selection may be a threat to the AIM Project because it is a voluntary project and there may be differences in those that choose to participate and those who do not.

Maturation refers to changes that occur in the population studied that are really the result of the passage of time. The age of participants is an example of how maturation factors into the interpretation of results. As subjects age, they may be more inclined to cease certain behaviors or develop others, not as a result of being exposed to the project.

Evaluators implementing pre- and post-test designs must sometimes be aware of the effect that testing has on the scores. A bias or foreknowledge can be instilled in participants as a result of a pre-test. The experience of the first test may impact reactions to the project or to the post-test. Mortality is also a threat to the internal validity of an evaluation when participants withdraw or drop out of a project.

## *Confidentially of Data and Human Subjects Protection*

As you or the evaluators collect information on your project, it is important to be aware of any confidentiality issues that may apply to information sensitive in nature. For example, in project AIM evaluators may be interested in collecting information on criminal histories or disciplinary actions taken against participating students to see if these decrease while they are participating in the project. There are a number of hurdles the evaluators may have to go through in order to obtain this information in the first place, and one requirement may be to keep the data confidential and not use easily identifiable elements in the dataset they maintain. Formal agreements as to the manner in which confidentiality is ensured should be established, as well as agreements that ensure the information will be used only for evaluation purposes.

Project staff also have a responsibility to keep project information confidential if it contains identifying information or could cause potential harm to the participants. If an AIM participant disclosed a problem to a staff person that they trusted, it would be important that this information not be reported or maintained in an identifiable manner in a database that is easily accessible.

Additionally, research that may put a subject at risk or deny benefits to another can be a human subject concern. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Justice Assistance, has established guidelines on the treatment of human subjects. Many research organizations and universities have established Institutional Review Boards (IRB) that review applications for studies and evaluations for the protection of human subjects. Be aware of any elements of your evaluation that may cause potential harm to your participants or others and ask to see the approved application from the evaluators' IRB.

## *Data Analysis*

A significant part of evaluating for project impact and outcome is data analysis. Statistical analysis is used to determine whether a change that occurred is statistically significant, or if the probability of it happening by chance. These analyses help determine the relationship between variables. The ability to conduct meaningful statistical analyses is contingent upon the collection of adequate and reliable data, and data that is quantitative in nature. This section will only provide a very basic and general description of some of the more common types of statistical analyses conducted in evaluations and to get you familiar with some of the terminology as you read evaluation reports or review proposals. Space does not permit a thorough discussion of how to conduct statistical analyses, its appropriateness and its limitations.

## *Types of Data*

Data is also categorized in terms of measurement, which include nominal, ordinal and ratio/interval. Nominal data are not mathematical in nature and the number assigned to a

respondent category does not necessarily have meaning. An example would be religion, where one type of religion, Protestant, would be labeled as "1" and another, Catholic, labeled as "2". Nominal data cannot be rank ordered and is often used to put people or events in categories. For example, assigning race a number (such as black = 1, white = 2, etc.) allows you to compute statistical analyses on variables that do not have mathematical properties. The numbers assigned to the data are completely arbitrary.

Ordinal data is just that – there is an order, or the ability to rank, the data. However, these data are also not considered mathematical in nature. For example, when students rank their favorite activity, the best liked-activity is 1 and the second is 2, and so on. There is reason and an order behind the assignment of the numbers. What this does not tell us, however, is how different the activities are from one another, such as whether the activity ranked first is liked twice as much or just a little better than the one ranked second.

Interval data are mathematical in nature and can also be rank-ordered. Interval (or ratio) data requires that the numbers provide an indication of position as well as information on relative position. Age is a common type of interval data. For example if one respondent noted they were 60 years old and another indicated that he was 30, we know not only that the first respondent is older than the second, but that the first respondent is twice as old as the second.

### *Descriptive and Inferential Statistics*

Statistics are often classified in two categories – descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics give you summary information or a general feel of the data. They often tell how many times a question was answered a certain way (frequencies), or provide information on trends. Inferential statistics attempt to reach a conclusion that goes beyond what the data alone shows. Inferential statistics can be used to infer the probability that an observed difference between groups is dependable or that it might have happened by chance. For example, the average test score of a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class based on a random sample of students from that class. The following section discuss some of the measures used in descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

### *Measures of Central Tendency*

Descriptive statistics often include measures of position (or central tendency) such as the mean, median and mode. The mean is basically the average of a set of numbers. It is commonly used and a good way to get summary information. However, numbers that lie far outside the average (i.e., outliers) can influence the mean. For example, the number 150 in a set of numbers all under 10 can really influence the average. The mean should be used for interval/ratio data.

The median is the middle point of a data set after it has been rank ordered. For example, in the set of 2,5,7,9,10, the number 7 is the median. Half of the numbers are below it and half fall above it. If you have an even number of numerals, the median is the average of

the two that fall in the middle. The median can be calculated with ordinal and interval/ratio data.

The mode is the observation with the highest frequency or the one most often reported. The mode can be calculated with nominal data, but is sometimes not the most appropriate measurement choice for other types of data and is infrequently used.

### *Measures of Variability*

Descriptive statistics also use measures of variability to determine the dispersion or spread of data. The range is the difference between the largest point in a data set and the smallest. Because it depends on only two numbers, it can be somewhat deceiving, but it does provide information on the distribution of the data. Variance takes into consideration all data points in a set. The variance will be larger as the distribution is more spread out. A common measure of variability is the standard deviation. The standard deviation is the square root of the variance and indicates how close the observations are to the average, or mean. Again, the standard deviation will be larger the more the observations spread out. These measures can only be used with interval/ratio data.

### *Measuring Relationships*

Evaluators studying how one variable affects another may use correlational techniques that determine the degree to which the two are associated. For example, high grades on homework assignments may be highly correlated with high test scores. Caution should be used, however, when determining correlation. For example, when analyzing the test results of a group of children, there is a strong correlation between height and high test scores. This does not mean that the taller someone is, the smarter they are. If simply means that age may be a more accurate predictor of intelligence in young children, and as children age, they usually become taller. Correlation is typically referred to as “Pearson’s  $r$ ” or Pearson product-moment correlation and is measured within a range of -1.00 to +1.00, with 1 equaling a perfect positive correlation, 0 indicates no relationship and -1 indicates a perfect inverse relationship. Correlations are used with interval data.

Chi-square is a common statistical analyses for nominal data. It examines the observed frequencies in a category and compares it to what would be expected if there were no relationship between the variables. Like correlation, it tells us if a relationship exists, but not that one causes the other.

The t-test is used to compare the averages, or means, of two groups and whether those two averages are different enough from each other to be statistically significant. For example, let’s assume an evaluator is interested in whether or not there are differences in youth who receive classroom instruction in large groups as opposed to small groups. The evaluation would collect performance data on both groups and conduct a t-test where its value is compared to a table indicating whether the observed averages are statistically different. T-tests are often used with interval data.

If an evaluation is interested in more than two groups, an analysis of variance (or ANOVA) is used to tell us if those groups are different on some variable. If the evaluators wanted to look at the performance of students in class sizes categorized as individual, small, medium and large, they would use ANOVA.

### *Variables*

Since many statistical analyses are used to determine the relationship between variables, it is important to know what the different types of variables are. Dependent variables are used to refer to what is expected to change or be affected as a result of your project's activities. For the sample project, AIM, the dependent variable is the change in the number of crimes committed by juveniles after school. Independent variables are the things that are believed to influence or cause the change. In project AIM, the independent variable is inclusion in the project activities. Other things can also be referred to as independent variables, such as the age or gender of the students if there is reason to believe they may have an effect of behavior.

The choice of what statistical analyses to use depends on what you want your evaluation to measure and answer. The type and distribution of data will lend itself to certain analyses, while excluding others. While some of the more basic analyses, such as percentages, frequencies and averages, can be conducted rather easily, more complex types of analyses should be conducted by evaluators who are knowledgeable in the area of statistical procedures and familiar with its limitations. A number of books and other resources are available to provide you with additional information on data analysis.

### *Special Evaluation Considerations for Juvenile Justice Projects*

Juvenile justice projects pose special evaluation concerns. Listed below are a few of the special considerations evaluators should take into account when assessing juvenile projects:

- *Attrition* - It is often difficult to persuade juveniles to participate in activities or projects offered by schools or youth based service agencies. An after-school project may seem immature to students who would rather spend unstructured time with their friends. Juveniles are at an age when they begin to explore their independence and structured activities may be met with little enthusiasm. While many juvenile projects are mandatory, such as programs through the juvenile justice system, many others are voluntary in nature. Voluntary projects have a number of limitations - they may have high drop-out rates, there may be differences in the types of juveniles who are targeted for the project and those who actually participate, or very few youth participate to begin with. Voluntary projects also limit the ability to use experimental designs since there is not an opportunity to randomize subjects. Projects targeting youth should make efforts to determine what activities would be of interest to the

target population, how staff can engage youth and gain feedback on what they feel could improve the project.

- *Outcome Measures* - Some juvenile projects use recidivism or number of probation violations as an outcome measure. Evaluations should be careful to consider other measures, such as improved family functioning, positive behaviors or a reduction in negative behaviors, positive changes in peer groups, changes in self-esteem and attitudes, substance abuse, school work, etc. These more qualitative changes can be measured through standardized assessments, surveys and interviews. It is important to not limit outcome measures on items that can be easily influenced by other external factors or to define success narrowly.
- *Confidentiality and Consent* - Evaluators may experience resistance as they attempt to gather information on juveniles. Juvenile records are generally kept confidential and may require a court order to gain access. School records may also be confidential. It is of primary importance that the evaluators keep identifying and sensitive information on juveniles confidential. Consent is also important. Any participation of the juvenile in the evaluation, whether it is taking a survey or participating in an interview, must be voluntary in nature. This can present a problem, as often has, when evaluators are attempting to gather youth for a focus group or survey. Sometimes evaluators offer incentives, such as snacks or a pizza party, to get youth and others to participate.
- *Isolation of Project Effects* - Because there are so many external factors influencing juveniles, it is often difficult to isolate these effects from the effects of the project. Evaluations should take careful note of any other interventions, efforts, programs, policies or initiatives that may have also contributed to the changes seen in the targeted population. Control groups in experimental designs attempt to address these external factors, but experimental designs are not always feasible. Evaluations can attempt to gain qualitative information from participants on how other external factors have affected their behavior, such as school, family and peers.
- *Consistent Definitions* - While this may seem like an issue this is easily addressed, project staff and advisors on juvenile projects may not be on the same page even when they are using the same words. Before an evaluation begins, staff and advisors should make sure that they interpret goals, objectives, and especially performance measurements in the same manner. Definitions of "gang" "recidivism" and "delinquency" can vary. These definitions must also be communicated to the evaluation team. For example, if a project seeks to reduce the level of gang crime and defines gang crime as crime resulting directly from gang activity, the evaluation team may incorrectly include crimes involving gang members, but not necessarily stemming from gang activity. Gang members may be involved in domestic offenses that may have little to do with their direct involvement with the gang.
- *Appropriate Staff* - Especially in projects geared to provide services for youth, it is important to secure qualified staff. Background checks, reference checks and

verifying previous employment or certifications is important. However, the element of having appropriate staff on board may also play into the evaluation. For example, staff that don't relate well to young people or have little patience for youth that may have short attention spans may adversely affect the outcomes of the project activities. In our sample project, AIM, it would be important to enlist staff that relate well to teens, that are respected and maybe even similar in the areas of race, gender, where they live or soci-economic background. Youth that can relate to project staff will be more likely to confide in them and participate.

- *Reading and Comprehension Level* – When conducting surveys, questionnaires and interviews, it is important to use language and terms that are easily understood by juveniles. Take into account your target population's reading and comprehension level when designing these types of measurement tools. Youth may not admit that they don't understand a question or a term and responses may not be as accurate as they should be. Taking into account reading and comprehension levels is also important when designing the project activities. While challenging youth is important, juveniles will soon lose interest in an activity that they have a hard time understanding. On the other hand, they will also lose interest in an activity that is overly simplified or boring.

### *Using and Reporting Your Results*

The final report on an evaluation serves a number of purposes, including

- Aid in the continued planning, development and funding of a project or overall plan;
- Documentation of the history of the project and its evolution;
- Promotion of the project (if the evaluation showed positive results) to other jurisdictions;
- Add to the research literature by providing information on the benefits and limitations of the effort.

All information gathered from an evaluation should be included, even that which is deemed non-significant statistically. Even if your project was found to be unsuccessful in achieving its original goals, the evaluation report can provide information on any aspects that did show promise as well as what efforts failed and why. Learning what does not work is as important as learning what does.

### *Content of the Final Report*

Earlier in this manual, we discussed the different formats available to convey findings. No matter which method you choose - full reports, presentations, memo – it is important

to maintain a full accounting of the evaluation and its findings. This is usually done in a full report format. Impact and outcome evaluations, for example, should contain the following information:

- *Executive summary* – A summary should always accompany a full report. They are usually 5-10 pages and highlight the main findings of the evaluation.
- *Thorough description of the project* - Remember that not everyone who reads the report will be familiar with the project.
- *Evaluation of the implementation* - Even if the implementation evaluation was done in the past and evaluators are now preparing a report on the impact or outcome, it is important to provide a context in which the project operates, its progress toward objectives, and project developments. The findings from an implementation evaluation provide important detail for interpretation of the impact and outcome. Evaluation reports should always contain information from any previous evaluations.
- *Evaluation design* – This includes the questions the evaluation seeks to answer, how they relate to the projects goals and objectives and how each question will be answered.
- *Methodology, data collection and measurement instruments used* – This should be included for implementation, impact and outcome evaluations. Depending on the target audience, more or less detail on the methodology can be provided. If the audience are mainly project staff and practitioners, language describing the methodology should be as easily understood as possible. For publication in a journal, more detail is necessary. Copies of the instruments used (blank surveys, interview questions) are often useful to provide.
- *Data analyses and findings* – Again, the detail on the data analyses should be tailored to the audience, and conveyed so it is clearly understood. Findings should provide as much information as possible as they pertain to each evaluation question. Graphs and other visuals can be used to better explain the findings.
- *Discussion of results and limitations* – This section should pull all of the findings together and synthesize them to convey an overall assessment of the project. Detail as to what factors may have influenced the findings, data limitations, project accessibility, changes in the project structure and other issues that may have influenced the course of the evaluation should be discussed here.
- *Conclusion / Recommendations* – Based on the discussion of results, evaluators should provide recommendations to improve the project, modify it or replicate it. This section should include what elements of the project are essential and working the best, which (if any) can be eliminated or scaled back and any new initiatives that should be considered. If the project is recommended for replication, any issues that

should be considered before implementation in another jurisdiction should be addressed.

Evaluation reports on implementation would contain the same basic information, with a description of what the formative evaluation assessed.

### *Dissemination of the Report*

Take advantage of the opportunity to share the findings of your evaluation with others who are interested or active in your field. Advertising the results in community meetings can acquaint the community with your project and help build support (and possible volunteers). Press releases, newspaper articles or newsletters can help get the word out. The report can be made available on a web site or through the public library. You can also make presentations at county board meetings or with the funding agency to build support and make a case for additional resources. In particular, sharing your results with other juvenile justice councils or agencies serving youth will help you network and allow you to gain information from their projects.

### ***Resources***

Now that you know about evaluation and how important it is, what else is out there to assist you? There may already be someone on staff or on the juvenile justice council that is qualified to conduct or assist in a needs assessment or evaluation. A resource that nearly every county has access to is the local community college or other nearby college or university. Check with professors in the criminal justice, sociology, social work, psychology or public administration departments to see if there is interest in conducting a needs assessment or evaluation. Many students are interested in assisting in evaluation projects and volunteer their services to gain the experience. In addition, a number of web sites and other resources are available to provide assistance in preparing for and conducting evaluations:

*Agency:* Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)  
120 S. Riverside Plaza  
Suite 1016  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Phone - (312) 793-8550  
Fax - (312) 793-8422  
[www.icjia.state.il.us](http://www.icjia.state.il.us)

*Resources:* Copies and summaries of criminal justice based evaluations and research studies are available and can be accessed through the web site. Basic information on evaluation and program planning is also available.

Information on ICJIA-administered grant programs is also available through the web site, including Local Law Enforcement Block Grants, Juvenile Accountability and Incentive Block Grants (JAIBG), and the Bryne Memorial (Anti-Drug Abuse Act) Grant Programs. Grants are generally administered to units of government through a needs based assessment, request for proposal process or formula allocation. Information on administrative requirements and eligibility for these grants is available through the web site.

*Agency:* Justice Research and Statistics Association  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.  
Suite 801  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 842-9330  
Fax: (202) 842-9329  
[www.jrsa.org](http://www.jrsa.org)

*Resources:* Information on criminal justice programs, data, research and evaluations; contact information for state statistical analysis centers (SACs); JAIBG technical support center; and the Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center - a web-based resource designed to build juvenile justice evaluation capacity. Information on federal grant programs and funding through foundations is also available.

*Agency:* Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
810 Seventh Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
Phone: (202) 307-5911  
Fax: (202) 307-2093  
[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org)

*Resources:* Provides data and numerous publications and informational materials through the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse. Also offers an opportunity to subscribe to their electronic newsletter. The site provides information on OJJDP funding opportunities, requirements and grant announcements.

*Agency:* Bureau of Justice Assistance  
Office of Justice Programs  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/)

*Resources:* Information is available on federal grant programs, training and technical assistance, publications and conferences. A wealth of information on evaluation is available through the BJS Evaluation Web Site.

*Agency:* National Center for Juvenile Justice  
710 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3000  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-3000  
Phone: (412) 227-6950  
Fax: (412) 227-6955  
[www.ncjj.org/](http://www.ncjj.org/)

*Resources:* Information is available on juvenile justice administration, data, publications and evaluation.

# *APPENDIX A*

SAMPLE DATA COLLECTION FORM  
AIM Project

Report for the period of \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the number of sporting events scheduled, the number that took place, and the number of youth attending each event for this report period:

<b>Sporting Event</b>	<b># Scheduled</b>	<b># That Took Place</b>	<b># of Youth Participating</b>
Basketball			
Volleyball			
Soccer			
Baseball			
Other (indicate)			

<b>Entertainment</b>	<b># Scheduled</b>	<b># That Took Place</b>	<b># of Youth Participating</b>
Movie Screenings			
Art Instruction			
Other (indicate)			

<b>Discussions</b>	<b># Scheduled</b>	<b># That Took Place</b>	<b># of Youth Participating</b>
Focus/discussion Groups			
Guest Speakers			
Other (indicate)			

Number of youth receiving assistance with class assignments: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of youth receiving tutoring assistance: \_\_\_\_\_

The number of youth who approach AIM staff regarding a problem or issue in their personal lives or in school. \_\_\_\_\_

The number of youth provided with referral to other services. \_\_\_\_\_

The number of youth, overall, participating in the AIM Project. \_\_\_\_\_

Demographics of youth participating in the project this reporting period:

<b>AGE</b>	Number of youth
< 11	
12	
13	
14	
15 or older	

<b>Race</b>	Number of youth
American Indian or Alaska Native	
Asian	
Black or African American	
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	
White	

<b>Ethnicity</b>	Number of youth
Hispanic or Latino	
Non-Hispanic or Latino	

<b>Gender</b>	Number of youth
Female	
Male	

The number of youth that were transported to their homes or other approved residence after the program. \_\_\_\_\_

Any limitations or problems that the project experienced this reporting period:

Any other relevant comments:

## SAMPLE SURVEY FORM

### AIM Project

*(The following are only sample questions, in reality this survey would contain additional questions about attitude and behavior)*

This survey is designed to gather information about attitudes and behaviors. The results will help us design and improve ways to meet the needs of our students. Please respond to each question carefully and circle the answer that best describes your response. This is an anonymous survey, so please do not put your name on it.

1. How old are you?
  - A. 11 years old or younger
  - B. 12 years old
  - C. 13 years old
  - D. 14 years old
  - E. 15 years old or older
  
2. What is your sex?
  - A. Female
  - B. Male
  
2. What types of activities do you typically do after school on a regular basis? (Circle as many as apply)
  - A. School-related sports
  - B. Other school-related activities (band, theater, computer club, etc.)
  - C. Non-school related activities or clubs (church groups, park district sports, etc.)
  - D. Job or volunteer work
  - E. Getting together with friends / hanging out
  - F. No activities
  
3. How often are you unsupervised after school (parents are working or no adults are around)?
  - A. Never
  - B. Hardly ever
  - C. Once in a while
  - D. Most of the time
  - E. Almost always
  
4. How often do you feel bored after school?
  - A. Never
  - B. Hardly ever
  - C. Once in a while
  - D. Most of the time
  - E. Almost always

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS  
AIM Project

Interview Questions for the Project Coordinator:

1. Tell me about the early development of the project.
2. What have been the most beneficial or positive aspects of the project?
3. What have been some of the limitations or obstacles you've had to overcome?
4. Have you encountered any issues in staffing the program and recruiting qualified personnel?
5. How would you describe the relationship between the project and the school?
6. How have parents been involved?

Interview Questions for Project Staff:

1. What have been the most beneficial or positive aspects of the project?
2. What have been some of the limitations or obstacles you've had to overcome?
3. How do you feel the students perceive the project?
4. How do the day-to-day activities change?
5. What activities do youth seem to enjoy the most?
6. What activities do they seem to enjoy the least?
7. What do you think could be done to improve the project?

Interview Questions for School Personnel

1. Do you perceive the project as beneficial?
2. What do you think could be done to improve the project?
3. Do you feel the project has contributed to the way youth are behaving during school hours?

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS  
AIM Project

The following focus group questions could be posed to youth participating in the project:

How did you find out about the AIM Project?

What got you to participate? (Prompt: friends, teachers, parents, etc.)

How often do you participate?

When you don't participate, why?

Before the project, what did you do during the after-school hours?

How do you feel about the types of activities the project offers?

What are your most favorite activities and why?

What are your least favorite activities and why?

How do you think other students feel about the project? What have you heard?

What would make this project better or increase participation?

Do you think that you are better spending your after-school time now that you are in the project as opposed to before?

Do you think your schoolwork has improved?

Do you think are getting into trouble less?

## SAMPLE OBSERVATIONS AIM Project

Some possible events to observe related to the AIM Project could include:

- Observe staff meetings and meeting with cooperating or partnering agencies.
- The carrying out of project activities - How are they organized and coordinated?; Do they keep the attention of participants?; Do some activities seem silly or boring?; Do some activities seem to excite participants or gain their interest?
- Observe how potential participants are identified or approached.
- Observe how the project is marketed.
- Observe the involvement of participants in the project - are they participating in the manner that was originally conceptualized?
- Observe the characteristics of those positively and negatively participating in the project.
- Observe how conflicts are resolved.
- Are appropriate safety precautions being observed?