
Final Summary Report

MCJRP Performance Measurement Framework

Prepared for the

**Multnomah County, Oregon,
Local Public Safety Coordinating Council
Data Team and Steering Committee**

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Introduction

Like many jurisdictions across the country, Multnomah County, Oregon has implemented a Justice Reinvestment strategy aimed at increasing public safety while reducing the demand for costly prison and jail resources. The centerpiece of the strategy is the Multnomah County Justice Reinvestment Program (MCJRP), which establishes a process to assess offenders and provide a continuum of community-based sanctions, services and programs that are designed to reduce recidivism, decrease the utilization of jail and prison beds, and hold offenders accountable for their crimes. The program began operations on July 1, 2014. Since its inception, MCJRP executives have recognized the need to measure and assess the program's performance in an objective, data-driven manner. To accomplish this, a data team comprised of analysts from various MCJRP partner agencies was established and charged, in part, with planning and implementing a rigorous performance measurement effort that would address the program's processes and outcomes.

During the first year of MCJRP operations, the data team was highly successful in developing and reporting on performance measures concerning MCJRP implementation and delivery. Despite this progress, members of the data team and the Multnomah County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (MCLPSCC) Steering Committee recognized that varying stakeholder expectations and levels of knowledge concerning performance measurement and formal evaluation contributed to inefficiencies in the data collection and reporting process and hampered the development of program outcome measures that are meaningful yet practical to collect. Given these challenges, the MCLPSCC engaged the services of an external consultant — Roger Przybylski, RKC Group — for the purpose of providing training on performance measurement and formal evaluation, querying stakeholders about their expectations for program success, and developing a framework for MCJRP outcome measurement that both data team members and program stakeholders could support. This training and technical assistance (TA) engagement was supported with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Training and Technical Assistance Center managed by Booz Allen Hamilton.

This final report presents the MCJRP performance measurement framework that emerged from the training and TA engagement. Since the data team was already collecting, analyzing and reporting on a robust array of process measures at the time the engagement started, only the guiding principles for process measurement are presented in this report. Outcome measurement, however, is addressed in detail. Measurement areas that might be pursued in the future should the requisite resources be available also are highlighted.

Process Measures

Process measures are concerned with a program's implementation and delivery. They focus on a program's internal dynamics and how program activities are organized and carried out. Process measures provide the basis for discovering what actually happened and how that compares with what was planned or expected. They can be used to identify implementation problems and deviations from program plans so that corrective action can be taken, thereby maximizing the program's effectiveness.

As mentioned above, a robust and informative set of process measures are currently being collected and reported. They document MCJRP case flow in a detailed manner, and provide stakeholders with an array of meaningful information concerning both program participants and operations. These measures include:

- Counts of cases/individuals at various stages of MCJRP case flow
- Program participant demographics
- Case eligibility by charge
- MCJRP opt outs
- Cases on warrant status
- Assessment results
- Jail booking, custody and release counts
- Court events and case dispositions
- Sentence types and lengths

- Victim service and offender restitution statistics
- Assignments to intensive probation services by risk level
- IPS sanctions imposed (including jail usage)
- Service referrals by type
- Arrests and contacts by law enforcement

It is recommended that the data team continue to collect and report on the process measures developed during the first two years of MCJRP operation. As recommended by members of the Steering Committee at their January 2015 retreat, the core group of measures used to document MCJRP case flow should continue to be reported and monitored on a monthly basis, as should data concerning assignments to intensive probation, referrals to services, law enforcement arrests, and the number of jail and prison days avoided or used by MCJRP participants. To free up data team resources for other important aspects of the performance measurement initiative, other process measures should be reported on a quarterly basis.

As part of the ongoing process measurement effort, it also is recommended that the data team document the policy and operational changes that occur from time to time during the life of the program. Documenting operational and policy changes, and understanding how they affect the makeup and handling of program participants, is essential for the proper analysis and interpretation of program outcome data.

Outcome Measures

On January 16, 2015, members of the Multnomah County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (MCLPSCC) Steering Committee held a retreat to discuss a variety of operational and policy issues related to MCJRP. A significant portion of the agenda focused on program performance measurement, with an emphasis on the identification of outcome measures that could serve as indicators of MCJRP success.

Outcome measurement has taken on increasing importance in recent years, primarily because funding agencies and the public want to know not only how public dollars are being spent, but also what those funds are accomplishing. Documenting a program's internal activities (i.e., the

number of offenders served by a program) is important, but process measures do not address program effectiveness in a meaningful way. Outcome measurement does address program effectiveness in a meaningful way because it focuses on the benefits or changes that occur as a result of program activities and that are of direct importance to the public. Outcome measurement addresses the all-important question of whether or not a program provides tangible, real-life benefits to people and communities.

The performance measurement discussion undertaken at the Steering Committee's January retreat sought to achieve two primary objectives. The first was to reach general agreement on an array of outcome measures that could serve as meaningful indicators of MCJRP success for both internal program management and external stakeholders. The guiding principle was to identify measures that are practical to collect, and that collectively would provide valid empirical evidence of MCJRP effectiveness in both the short- and long-term. The second objective was to reach agreement on which of the currently reported MCJRP *process* measures would continue to be reported to the Steering Committee on a monthly basis, and which could be reported on a quarterly basis. Given the limited resources that are available for performance measurement, members of the Steering Committee agreed that reducing the data team's monthly reporting burden was necessary if data team members are to have adequate time to devote to outcome measurement and reporting activities.

The outcome measurement framework presented below emerged from discussions that took place during the Steering Committee's January retreat. It was reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee at a regularly scheduled meeting on April 24, 2015. The framework describes an array of outcome measures that collectively are capable of providing objective and credible evidence on MCJRP effectiveness. The outcome measures are grounded in sound evaluation practice, they comport with measures used by similar initiatives in other jurisdictions, and they arguably will be meaningful to internal and external stakeholders, including representatives of MCJRP funding bodies.

Further, the outcome measures outlined below should enable MCJRP program management to demonstrate results to external stakeholders in both the short- and long-term. Indeed,

performance measurement experts have long stressed the need to conceptualize and measure outcomes in stages. Doing so facilitates the unraveling of causal chains and the identification of the full range of benefits a program might produce. Moreover, when performance measurement addresses both short- and long-term outcomes, positive results can be documented and reported relatively early in the life of the program, rather than only several years following implementation when the long-term impact of the program is revealed. Finally, although the framework does not address operationalization issues per se — such as the way data elements will be defined — key tasks that will need to be carried out to address operationalization are briefly discussed.

Outcomes in the Context of MCJRP

In its 2000 report titled *Transforming Probation Through Leadership*, the Reinventing Probation Council described a series of research findings demonstrating that citizens wanted five simple things from the correctional system.¹

- Safety from violent predators;
- Accountability for the offense;
- Repair of the damage done;
- Education and treatment of the offender; and
- Involvement in making decisions.

In discussing these findings, the report pointed out that the public (including victims, voters and taxpayers) wants the system to do what it says it is doing. They want the system to inform them if someone is dangerous, but also when the reverse is true. And they want the system to create value for the offender, for the victim and for the community. Finally, they want

¹ The Council consisted of a group of veteran probation practitioners (including former leaders of the National Association of Probation Executives and American Probation and Parole Association) and knowledgeable academicians assembled by the Manhattan Institute to address wide-ranging issues and concerns affecting probation in the United States.

safety. Ultimately, citizens want assurances that they'll be safe at home, at work, and elsewhere.²

These insights about what the public wants and expects have important implications not only for correctional practice, but also for the ways correctional agencies demonstrate their merit and value. Simply put, the outcomes that are pursued and measured by correctional agencies must demonstrate in tangible ways how offender accountability, victim repair, offender rehabilitation, and ultimately public safety are being achieved.

The outcomes identified below closely reflect what the public wants and expects from community corrections. Moreover, they reflect the multiple goals of MCJRP as articulated by members of Steering Committee, and the insights of Steering Committee members regarding meaningful indicators of MCJRP success.

Offender Performance on Intensive Supervision

Offender performance while on intensive supervision is an important short-term indicator of program success. Compliance with court-ordered terms of supervision and successful completion of the supervision period demonstrates that offenders are being held accountable for their crimes and that the program is producing positive results. And even though revocation from supervision might be viewed as the offender “failing,” revocations also clearly indicate that the program is holding offenders accountable. Hence, data concerning key aspects of offender performance while on intensive supervision should be collected and reported as part of the outcome measurement effort.

The following data elements should be collected for every MCJRP offender placed on intensive supervision:

- Date intensive supervision begins

² Reinventing Probation Council (2000). *Transforming Probation Through Leadership: The “Broken Windows Model*.

- Whether or not the supervision period was successfully completed
- For those offenders who do not complete supervision successfully (i.e., revoked), whether the unsuccessful discharge/revocation was the result of a technical violation or a new crime
- For those offenders who do not complete supervision successfully (i.e., revoked), when the revocation occurred
(Information about when the revocation occurred can be used to support survival analysis, which is discussed later in this brief.)
- In those cases where a an unsuccessful discharge/revocation resulted from the commission of a new crime, the type of crime (i.e., statutory reference)
- If a probation revocation or sanction results in jail or prison time, the length of sentence imposed and the actual length of stay should be documented.³

Conceptualization/Operationalization Tasks

Data team members will need to collaborate with representatives of the appropriate MCJRP partner organizations to define successful discharge from supervision as well as what constitutes unsuccessful discharge/revocation for a technical violation or new crime. Considerable thought needs to go into the development of all operational definitions used in the outcome measurement initiative to ensure that they 1) align reasonably well with the nuances of criminal justice system practice in Multnomah County; 2) can be applied as consistently as possible across all aspects of the MCJRP outcome measurement effort; and 3) adequately reflect the concepts the measures are trying to capture.

In addition, the data team will need to determine the best way to document the type of crime involved in any revocation that results from the commission of a new crime. Although this documentation is likely to be based on a statutory reference, whatever form and manner is used, it should allow for a determination of whether the offense was a violent, property or drug crime,

³ Of course, length of stay information can only be calculated in cases where release from incarceration has occurred.

as well as whether it was a felony or misdemeanor. The same form and manner for documenting crime types should be used throughout all aspects of the MCJRP outcome measurement effort.

Offender Performance in Treatment Programs and Other Services

Rigorous scientific research has clearly demonstrated that supervision alone does not reduce recidivism or produce a positive return on taxpayer investment. Supervision integrated with treatment, however, does reduce recidivism and produce a positive return on investment. Simply put, without treatment and other services that address criminogenic needs, many if not most offenders released from prison or given a community-based sanction in lieu of prison are likely to recidivate.

MCJRP's incorporation of treatment and other services aimed at addressing criminogenic needs is firmly grounded in evidence-based practice. Substance abuse treatment, mental health services, employment development, parenting skills, mentoring, and stable housing all have been recognized as effective, evidence-based approaches for reducing recidivism and promoting desistance from crime. But incorporating these types of programs into MCJRP is no silver bullet. These programs must be delivered with integrity, and the services they provide must be appropriate for a given offender's needs. Moreover, particularly in the context of treatment services, an offender must actually complete the program successfully in order to benefit fully from the intervention. In fact, the overall success of MCJRP in promoting public safety and reducing reliance on incarceration is arguably contingent on offender engagement in and successful completion of services delivered by external organizations.

Unfortunately, measuring the quality of services delivered by external treatment and service providers is beyond the scope of the performance measurement effort the MCLPSCC can support, at least at this time. However, performance measurement resources should be devoted to the acquisition of key data concerning MCJRP offender performance in these external treatment and service programs.

Counting *referrals* to treatment and other services does have value as an indicator of MCJRP's overall work effort, but referrals do not address offender performance in treatment and other services in a meaningful way. Thus, data concerning offender enrollment and successful or unsuccessful completion of substance abuse treatment, parenting skills, and employment development, and any other program deemed appropriate should be obtained when possible. Of course, data documenting offender performance is unlikely to be available from every relevant program, but the goal should be to develop the following types of individual-level data from as many of these relevant external programs as possible.

- Referral by type of program or service. This is straightforward, but in cases where different treatment modalities are used, such as substance abuse treatment, the basic type of treatment (i.e., inpatient, outpatient) should be documented.
- Enrollment; and date of enrollment
- Successful or unsuccessful completion/discharge
- For unsuccessful discharges, whether the discharge was the result of a rule violation or commission of a new crime. All new crimes committed/arrests should be documented by crime type (i.e., statutory reference). When the discharge occurred should be documented, particularly if it is in the context of substance abuse treatment, as time in treatment is directly related to positive outcomes.
- Voluntary withdrawals from the program also should be documented.

Capacity-Building and Operationalization Issues

Obtaining the data needed to measure offender performance in external treatment and service programs will not be easy. MCJRP data team members will need to explore what's available and how it can be accessed. This will require outreach and collaboration, and perhaps liaison-related assistance on the part of MCLPSCC Steering Committee members. Whenever relevant data can be accessed, data team members will need to learn precisely how events such as successful and unsuccessful program completion are defined. When possible, efforts should be made to align

these operational definitions with those used in other components of the MCJRP outcome measurement initiative.

While the concept of client engagement (enrollment) seems relevant for all external treatment and service programs, successful and unsuccessful completion (as well as retention) may only be relevant for offenders enrolled in certain programs. Substance abuse treatment, specialty courts, and parenting skills programs seem to fall in this category. But even among these types of programs, not every provider is likely to have the capacity to provide the data team with the information needed to document MCJRP offender engagement, retention and successful or unsuccessful program completion. Nevertheless, the data team should strive to collect MCJRP offender performance data from as many relevant external programs as possible. Additionally, in those instances where data is unavailable from a relevant provider, the data team should explore whether capacity-building efforts aimed at producing the data at a later point in time might be possible.

It is also recommended that the data team explore whether data from any standardized assessment instruments used by a treatment provider might be available. Substance abuse treatment programs and drug courts, for example, will commonly use tools such as the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) to screen clients and gauge progress in treatment. Improvements in assessment scores over time can serve as an important intermediate outcome measure of MCJRP success. Urinalysis (UA) test results from substance abuse treatment programs or drug courts can serve a similar purpose, as a reduction in positive UAs is a direct measure of reduced substance abuse, and an intermediate measure of MCJRP success.

Finally, the data team also should explore whether other positive outcome information for MCJRP clients, such as GED's obtained, full- or part-time employment obtained, or stable housing obtained, can be obtained from either external provider or MCJRP partner organization sources. These data can be coupled with narrative information that demonstrates why these outcomes matter and are likely to contribute to desistance from crime and enhancements in public safety.

Demonstrating that MCJRP is on the Right Track when Data Concerning Offender Performance in Various Treatment or Service Programs is Unavailable

Recognizing that data concerning the performance of MCJRP offenders in external programs may not always be available, the data team and Steering Committee members should keep in mind that narrative information on the effectiveness of evidence-based programs can help bridge data availability gaps. For example, there is compelling evidence in the scientific literature that substance abuse treatment, drug and other specialty courts, mental health services, educational and vocational training programs, parent management training, and mentoring programs produce significant reductions in recidivism. Supplementing program referral and enrollment data with evidence on the capacity of these programs to reduce recidivism and produce a sound return on taxpayer investment can at least indirectly demonstrate that MCJRP is on the right track.

With regard to substance abuse treatment, for example:

The links between substance abuse and crime are well documented. Drug abusers often engage in crime to support their drug habits, and research has shown that rates of criminal behavior increase during periods of drug addiction. Studies of prisoners and probationers at the national level indicate that about half were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when they committed their current offense. Left untreated, alcohol and drug abuse are associated with elevated rates of failure on probation and parole, repeated contacts with the justice system, and higher rates of recidivism overall. Given the high percentage of offenders in need of treatment, it is unlikely that recidivism rates can be appreciably reduced without breaking the cycle of substance abuse and crime. Research has produced clear and convincing evidence that substance abuse treatment works. Treatment reduces alcohol and drug use and crime, and it works equally well for those who are coerced into treatment. Treatment also produces a significant return on taxpayer investment.⁴

⁴ Przybylski (2008). *What Works: Effective Recidivism Reduction and Risk-Focused Prevention Programs*.

Similar evidence is readily available for other types of external treatment and service programs incorporated into MCJRP, and the value of supplementing meager data with this type of narrative information can help demonstrate why MCJRP's program logic is sound, consistent with evidence-based correctional practice, and eminently capable of producing positive outcomes.

Impact on the use of jail and prison beds

Reduced reliance on incarceration is an important goal of MCJRP. Whether offenders are being held in jail prior to trial or serving a sentence in prison, incarceration is far more expensive than community-based supervision. In addition, research undertaken in recent years is demonstrating that incarceration has little positive impact on recidivism and desistance from crime. Hence, it is important for the MCJRP outcome measurement effort to examine whether there has been a reduction in the use of jail and prison beds due to the program.

The MCLPSCC data team recognized the importance of collecting and reporting data in this area early on, and the data elements that have been incorporated in their monthly reports to the Steering Committee should continue to be collected. Additionally, the data team should use its understanding of the criminal justice process both within Multnomah County and within the context of MCJRP to ensure (if possible) that data are collected that will allow the following concepts to be measured:

- Months (or days) in prison avoided by accepting placement on MCJRP probation
- Jail days avoided by accepting placement on MCJRP probation

For any offenders on MCJRP probation

- Length of jail or prison sentence imposed upon revocation from MCJRP probation (2nd sentence)
- Length of stay on 2nd sentence if the offender has been released

Restitution and Fines Collected

Restitution paid is an indicator of both offender accountability and victim repair. Fines paid also are an indicator of offender accountability.

The following data should be collected for every MCJRP offender ordered to pay restitution or a fine:

- Dollar amount of restitution ordered
- Dollar amount of restitution paid
- Dollar amount of fines imposed
- Dollar amount of fines paid

Although restitution paid is an important indicator of victim repair, Steering Committee members voiced concerns about using restitution paid as a percentage of restitution ordered as an indicator of MCJRP success. The amount of restitution paid will always be directly influenced by the financial status of program participants, and as both conventional wisdom and empirical evidence suggest, a large percentage of offenders in the criminal justice system are indigent; hence, they don't always have the financial means to pay restitution or fines in an expedient manner. Thus, caution should be exercised when reporting restitution data to ensure that the data are properly interpreted.

Victim Services

The provision of victim services is an indicator of responsiveness and concern for crime victims on the part of the criminal justice system. Although data concerning the number and percentage of cases involving a victim that have been assigned a victim advocate do not address the effectiveness of victim services per se, these data should continue to be collected, reported and monitored. Ongoing monitoring of the data for unexplained changes, unexplained variation by charge type or other patterns that raise concerns about victim responsiveness can help program management identify and bridge service gaps.

Post-Discharge Recidivism

Earlier in this report, public safety was identified as an important goal of community corrections. As the Reinventing Probation Council aptly stated in its *Transforming Probation* report:

As part of their public safety mandate, probation practitioners must own recidivism rates for those in their charge. ...Ownership in this context means accepting the responsibility for pursuing aggregate and individual reductions in the overall rates of recidivism. It means embracing accountability for designing supervision strategies and programs that target reduced recidivism as one of the agency's long-term public safety goals.⁵

An important implication of “owning” recidivism rates is that success in probation and other community corrections programs ultimately has to be measured through long-term recidivism reduction. Ensuring that offenders remain crime free while they are in the MCJRP program is critically important, but if offenders continue to victimize the public following discharge the overall success and value of the program comes into question. Hence, even though recidivism and desistance from crime can be influenced by many external factors, measuring the recidivism outcomes of MCJRP clients after they are discharged from the program is critical.

Defining Recidivism

Even though the basic meaning of recidivism is rather clear cut, recidivism rates are often measured differently from one study to the next. In some studies, recidivism is defined as an arrest, in others it may be a charge, or conviction. In some studies of offenders released from prison, recidivism is defined as a return to prison, even for a technical violation of the conditions of release. There are a variety of reasons why one definition might be employed in lieu of others, but it is critically important to recognize that different ways of measuring recidivism rates can

produce substantially different results, and comparing rates that were derived in different ways can lead to inaccurate conclusions. Hence, an operational definition of recidivism that is appropriate for MCJRP and endorsed by the MCLPSCC Steering Committee has to be developed and applied consistently in all recidivism analyses.

During the retreat held in January, Steering Committee members discussed the pros and cons of various definitions of recidivism (i.e., arrest vs. conviction), as well as the definition endorsed by the State. During that discussion, a consensus appeared to emerge that it would be best to define recidivism as an arrest for the purposes of MCJRP outcome measurement. The data team should confirm with the Steering Committee that this is the preferred approach.

Follow-Up Periods

With some exceptions, it is relatively standard practice in recidivism research in correctional settings to employ a three-year follow-up period when examining an intervention's long-term recidivism reduction effect. Since it will take considerably longer than three years for a cohort of offenders large enough to support a meaningful analysis to complete MCJRP and then be at risk for a three-year period, it is recommended that post-discharge recidivism be examined using one-year, two-year and three-year follow-up periods. This approach provides the means for examining increases in recidivism rates over time. It also allows recidivism to be analyzed using the largest treatment and comparison group (see the comparison group section below) sizes possible during the post-program follow-up period, thereby increasing the accuracy of statistical tests.

Specifically, the larger the sample size, the smaller the margin of error, and the greater the likelihood that a small program effect can be accurately detected. As offender cohorts decrease in size due to a requisite two- or three-year post-program time period at risk to reoffend, the power of the analysis degrades and the potential to detect a significant effect also declines. Thus, examining recidivism using a one-year follow-up period may provide the best opportunity to

⁵ Reinventing Probation Council (2000). *Transforming Probation Through Leadership: The "Broken Windows Model*.

detect a program effect at a level that meets statistical significance because far more individuals will have been at-risk for one year compared to two or three years after leaving the program. Nevertheless, examining two- and three-year recidivism rates also is important because it provides a fuller accounting of post-program reoffending behavior.

Survival Analysis

Many recidivism studies measure only the percentage of offenders who return to crime by the end of specified follow-up period. This traditional approach might reveal, for example, that 30% of the sample recidivated within the one-year follow-up period. These “fixed period observation” studies generate important information, but they fail to account for the “pace” of recidivism across the follow-up period.

Survival analysis is a technique for examining the pace of recidivism over a given follow-up period. It specifies the proportion of offenders who “survive” by not recidivating (and conversely, the proportion who fails by recidivating) across specified intervals within the follow-up period. Survival analysis can determine whether there are critical periods in which offenders, or certain types of offenders, are likely to recidivate, and whether some sub-groups of offenders are more likely to recidivate sooner than others. As a result, survival analysis provides more precision and specificity than does the fixed observation method.

Survival analysis provides another important advantage over fixed-interval observation because it takes into account and controls for the amount of time each offender is exposed to the risk of recidivism. Fixed-interval observation can underestimate the rate of recidivism because some of the non-recidivists may not have been at risk in the community for the entire follow-up period. By standardizing the at-risk time for all study subjects, survival analysis yields a more accurate estimate of recidivism.

Importance of Using a Viable Comparison Group in the Recidivism Analysis

Insights concerning the long-term effectiveness of MCJRP can best be obtained by comparing the observed recidivism rates of MCJRP clients with those of comparable offenders who did not experience the program. While the most trustworthy evidence concerning an intervention's recidivism reduction effect and its duration over time is obtained when randomization is used to assign individuals to program participation (treatment) and non-participation (control) groups, this approach is currently untenable in the context of MCJRP for many reasons, including the inherent cost and administrative and organizational constraints.

When random assignment cannot be used, researchers typically employ the next best approach, which is to compare program participants with a group of comparable individuals on the outcome of interest, in this case recidivism. This approach is typically referred to as a quasi-experimental research design, and when properly designed and executed, it is capable of generating trustworthy evidence about a program's effectiveness. In practice, comparison group subjects in a quasi-experimental study are typically chosen based on their similarity to program participants on factors such as demographics, criminal history, risk level, and other characteristics related to the outcome of interest.

Following the January 2015 retreat, members of the data team began to explore how a viable comparison group might be identified. Given the nature of MCJRP and its participants, two possible options for constructing a comparison group were presented to the Steering Committee at its April, 24th meeting: 1) a comparison group constructed from a cohort of matched probationers placed on intensive supervision in an Oregon jurisdiction other than Multnomah County; or 2) a comparison group constructed from a cohort of matched probationers placed on intensive supervision before the inception of MCJRP in Multnomah County. There was widespread agreement among Steering Committee and data team members that option 2 was the most viable, and it is recommended that option 2 be pursued.

While it is difficult to anticipate the challenges that may emerge in constructing a comparison group retroactively, it is important to keep in mind that equivalence between the comparison and

treatment groups can be hard to achieve. Hence, analyses that assess the comparability of any potential comparison group with MCJRP program participants should be undertaken before outcome comparison are made. Statistical techniques can sometimes be employed to control for observed differences between the two groups, thereby increasing the validity of any outcome analysis.

Finally, measuring post-discharge recidivism in the manner described above is more akin to formal evaluation than performance measurement. Hence, any post-discharge recidivism analysis employing a comparison group will be resource intensive. It inherently will require time, data collection and analytical expertise, and the cooperation of one or more partner or external organizations. Additional financial resources to support the work may also be needed. None of this, however, should deter the data team from exploring how a post-discharge recidivism analysis employing a viable comparison group can be undertaken. Given the importance of enhanced public safety as an indicator of program success, developing the capacity to measure the program's effect on recidivism in this manner is imperative.

Individual-Level Data and Sub-group Analyses

Both performance measurement and formal evaluation are powerful tools not only for meeting accountability demands, but also for generating feedback about a program that can be used to improve performance and maximize program effectiveness. One method for obtaining more nuanced feedback about program performance that can be used to better understand program effectiveness is sub-group analysis. In outcome studies, sub-group analysis typically attempts to examine program effectiveness for various sub-groups of program participants based on offender characteristics or program performance factors. It often helps discover factors that mediate or moderate program effectiveness, and findings often can be used to make program improvements that can help maximize program effectiveness for a broader range of program's participants.

Sub-group analyses are often designed to answer the following types of questions:

- Was the program more effective for some participants than for others?

- For whom was the program most and least successful?
- What information obtained at intake might assist program management in predicting who will have difficulty completing the program successfully, or desisting from criminal behavior after leaving the program.
- What information obtained at intake or during the course of program participation might assist program management in making operational or policy adjustments that might improve program effectiveness for any sub-groups of program participants who are not benefiting from the program.

The ability to perform subgroup analyses is contingent on having individual-level data on the characteristics and program performance of program participants. In practice, this means that each program participant must have a unique identifier that analysts can use to “track” an individual through their participation in the program and any post-discharge recidivism analysis follow-up period. Tracking the program performance of an individual program participant is not the goal per se; but analysts must be able to examine various outcomes for sub-groups of program participants that share common characteristics or program experiences. Attributes that are often used to construct sub-groups for analytical purposes include but are not necessarily limited to demographic characteristics, offense type/severity, criminal history, assessed risk levels, criminogenic needs, services provided and treatment engagement, retention and completion. Simply put, as the quantity and quality of information analysts have about the characteristics and experiences of program participants increases, so does the potential for discovering moderators and mediators of program effectiveness.

It is strongly recommended that the data team incorporate sub-group analyses into their overall outcome measurement efforts. This will require a careful assessment of existing data collection activities to ensure that they provide the requisite information needed to support meaningful sub-group analyses. Where capabilities are limited or non-existent, appropriate strategies for bridging gaps and building capacity should be explored and pursued. Any additional resources that are needed to support capacity building should be identified and quantified.

Other Basic Analyses

Several other basic analyses that are typically part of assessment efforts of similar programs are outlined below. In some cases, these analyses can be carried out by aggregating data already collected for various outcome measurement purposes described above. In cases where those data are insufficient to support the following analyses, the data team should take steps to develop and capture whatever additional data is needed. These other basic analyses include:

- Successful completion of MCJRP
- Unsuccessful completion of MCJRP
- Sub-group analyses aimed at predicting successful and unsuccessful completion of MCJRP
- In-program arrests
- Sub-group analyses aimed at predicting in-program arrests
- Retention rates (A retention rate indicates the percentage of program participants, who, in a specified time period after entering the program, had either been successfully discharged or remained an active program participant. Retention rates can be compared over time to determine whether a program is becoming more adept at reducing program failures.)

Finally, if offender risk and need assessments are performed more than once during program participation, the data team should explore the possibility of obtaining and analyzing assessment score data to determine if scores have improved over time. Reductions in risk or criminogenic need are empirically linked to enhanced public safety and they are direct indicators of program effectiveness.

Future Considerations

During both the January retreat and the April 24th Steering Committee meeting, various members of the Steering Committee identified areas where documentation and/or measurement efforts

should be considered in the future. These include system improvements that have resulted from MCJRP, costs avoided due to the reduced use of incarceration by MCJRP participants, and victim satisfaction with the services they receive.

System Improvements

System improvements that result from innovative programs are often overlooked in performance measurement and evaluation efforts. While they can be difficult to document in a quantitative manner, system improvements arguably are among the most valuable benefits a program produces due to their long-lasting and transformative nature.

Indeed, there is growing recognition in the criminal justice community that collaboration between agencies is a critical component of an effective public safety strategy. This is particularly true in the context of correctional programs, where collaboration between agencies has been shown to produce greater reductions in recidivism and more cost-effective use of public resources. There also is a growing recognition that programming and policy making are likely to be most effective when they are informed by data analysis and research. Given these dynamics, the new partnerships and mechanisms for collaboration that emerged from MCJRP, and the embrace of data analysis for planning, assessment and operational decision making should be viewed as important outcomes of MCJRP that will benefit the citizens of Multnomah County well into the future.

It is strongly recommended that the data team explore ways to document the following benefits qualitatively and ensure that they are included in reports to internal and external stakeholders:

- Enhanced collaboration between criminal justice agencies in Multnomah County that resulted from MCJRP and the county's Justice Reinvestment Initiative
- The development of system-wide, coordinated data analysis capacities (the data team), and the institutionalization of data-driven decision making processes.

Cost Avoidance Due to a Reduction in the Use of Prison and Jail Beds

As previously stated, reduced reliance on incarceration is an important goal of MCJRP, and the data team has been collecting data on prison and jail days avoided because of placement in MCJRP, as well as prison and jail days used due to a MCJRP revocation (2nd sentence) or sanction. Coupled with information on the daily marginal cost of a prison or jail stay, these data provide a basis for tracking and reporting cost avoidance information which can help demonstrate the economic value of MCJRP to stakeholders.

The marginal cost associated with the use of a prison or jail bed for a given period of time can be difficult to calculate in any jurisdiction. Fortunately, marginal cost estimates related to incarceration in Oregon have been calculated as part of Oregon's Results First Initiative undertaken by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission.⁶ These estimates provide the basis for monetizing incarceration costs, and they can be used by the data team to calculate both the incarceration costs imposed and the incarceration costs avoided as a result of MCJRP participation.

If MCJRP indeed reduces reliance on incarceration, cost avoidance data are likely to be among the most important indicators of program success in both the short- and long-term. Economic impacts typically resonate with stakeholders — including funding sources — and they often are part of the decision making equation when funders are considering whether a program should be eliminated, continued or expanded. Given the importance of economic impacts, it is strongly recommended that the data team explore ways to access and use the marginal cost estimates produced through the Criminal Justice Commission's Results First Initiative for the purpose of calculating and reporting incarceration costs avoided as a result of the MCJRP program.

⁶ The Results First Initiative is a multi-state program designed to help states implement an innovative cost-benefit analysis approach that helps them invest in policies and programs that are known to work. The Results First Initiative is supported with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Satisfaction with Victim Services

Although the provision of services to victims of crime has long been recognized as an important component of the administration of justice, victim services are rarely assessed for their quality or effectiveness. Resource limitations and methodological challenges often constrain organizations that deliver victim services — such as prosecutor’s offices — from pursuing even rudimentary assessments that could be used to better understand and improve service impact. While the constraints are indeed formidable, an assessment of victim services was identified by the Multnomah County State’s Attorney’s Office as an important consideration for the future.

One type of assessment that may be feasible is a study that examines victim satisfaction with the services they are provided. If adequate resources for such a study are available, meaningful information can be obtained through a self-administered questionnaire provided to a sample of victims receiving services. Instruments for obtaining information about victim satisfaction have been developed and successfully used in other jurisdictions, and they may be able to be adapted for use in Multnomah County. Compliance with the Oregon Crime Victims’ Bill of Rights is another area where assessment might be relevant and feasible.

While an assessment of victim services could help ensure that Multnomah County is being responsive to victim needs, any compliance or victim satisfaction study would need to be funded and staffed independently from the existing MCJRP performance measurement effort. The development and administration of even a relatively simple questionnaire, and the analysis and interpretation of the responses received, would arguably require considerable staff time and expertise as well as financial support.