Illinois Juvenile Justice Research and Information Consortium
Briefing Document

Overview of Illinois'
Juvenile Justice Data Systems

This summary of Illinois systems for collecting juvenile justice system data is one in a series of briefing documents highlighting key programs or components of the state's juvenile justice system. These briefing documents are intended to inform and assist researchers, policy makers and practitioners and to respond to queries posed by the Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council.

Overview: In Illinois, information on youth involved in the juvenile justice system is collected in a patchwork of municipal, county and state data systems. Not only do the actual data systems or programs vary, but there is also wide variety in the types of data captured, the frequency with which data is recorded and the use of that data. Sharing information on youth involved in the justice system can take two basic forms: 1) sharing information as permitted by law and best practice regarding an individual youth or family for the purposes of informing or guiding a specific set of decisions; or 2) sharing data about a group or category of youth, typically to inform policy, allocate resources effectively, understand case processing or conduct research. Structured information collection and sharing on individual youth or in the aggregate is sporadic, inconsistent and varies widely across the state. This brief provides an overview of the data collection mechanisms in place at each key "decision point" of the Illinois juvenile justice system. It is based, in part, on the analysis of the Center for Prevention Research and Development, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana.

Law Enforcement Contact: A youth's first contact with the justice system occurs with some sort of interaction with police or sheriff's officers. This contact produces an informal exchange with a youth and / or parents, referral to a community-based program such as CCBYS[1], a formal or informal station adjustment or an arrest. There is no uniform data system utilized by law enforcement agencies to collect information on contacts with youth or the disposition of those contacts. Agencies may capture data manually or in a local database or web-based system. State law provides for reporting of crime and arrest data by law enforcement agencies into three systems:

1) The **LEADS** system maintained by the Illinois State Police is intended to provide comprehensive, timely and complete information on individuals and incidents statewide. Approximately 800 agencies – including municipal, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies, plus circuit court clerks, state's attorneys, probation departments, county jails and the Department of Corrections and Department of Juvenile Justice – have direct access, with over 20,000 workstations, laptops or other access points in service. LEADS includes information on "wanted persons," individuals believed to be dangerous to themselves or

---

[1] The Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services Program (CCBYS) is Illinois' primary crisis response system for youth, operated by the Illinois Department of Human Services to prevent young people from entering either the child welfare or juvenile justice (delinquency) systems unnecessarily. CCBYS programs are available in every Illinois community and provide immediate crisis intervention programs for runaways, youth locked out of their homes or in conflict with parents or caregivers, and young people in immediate physical danger. *For more information on the CCBYS system, see the CCBYS Brief in this series.*

others, missing persons, gang affiliations, orders of protection and stolen property. It also includes links to the Illinois Secretary of State's data systems, the Firearms Owners Identification system, the CHRI system (discussed below) and national criminal justice systems, such as the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS).

2) The **Uniform Crime Reporting** (UCR) program maintained by the Illinois State Police in accordance with federal law requires monthly reporting of aggregate and categorical information on crime and arrests. This UCR data is of limited utility, however, as it does not break down the information into juveniles vs. adults and reporting is not closely monitored.

3) The **Criminal History Records Information** (CHRI) program is maintained by the Illinois State Police and utilized by over 1200 agencies reporting into it. The purpose of the CHRI system is to make criminal history record information available to authorized users. It contains information on over 1.7 million offenders, including personal identification data, arrests, charging decisions, court disposition and sentencing data, and custody information. This information is collected pursuant to the Illinois Criminal Identification Act (20ILCS 2630/2.1), which provides for reporting of all felony offenses and allows (but does not require) the reporting of Class A or B misdemeanors for juveniles. While CHRI has limitations in content (for example, CHRI captures only race data and not ethnicity), accessibility and complexity, it does contain rich data on youth arrested in Illinois. It is also intended to capture additional information reported by State's Attorneys and Court Clerks, as a youth passes through the justice system, but it appears that this reporting is sporadic, as discussed below.

Detention Data: The Illinois Juvenile Monitoring Information System (JMIS) is a web-based data platform which gathers and disseminates data on the detention of youth in any detention facilities in Illinois. JMIS is a collaborative data system: the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission funded its development with support from the Illinois Department of Human Services; the Center for Prevention Research and Development at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign developed the program and infrastructure; and the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts requires counties to report data on every admission of a youth to detention and utilizes JMIS data for state and local analysis and planning. Created initially as a paper-based reporting system, the web-based version of JMIS was implemented statewide in July 2004, and now captures data from all active Detention Centers in the state.

As of 2013, there are 16 juvenile detention centers in Illinois, each of which submits data (either live or through uploading) into JMIS. The system also allows detention facilities, probation departments and circuit courts to review their own aggregate data, generate standardized reports and determine if a youth held has been held in the state anywhere before. Demographic, case, offense and transportation data are captured on each youth entering a detention center, along with information on that youth's stay in a secure facility.   There are no youth names, social security numbers or fingerprint identifiers captured in JMIS; consequently there can be no youth positively identified through JMIS. JMIS does, however, create a unique identifier for each juvenile record created and these juvenile records can be systematically linked to other data systems to gather a more comprehensive view of a youth's involvement in the justice system or to support research activities.

The JMIS website includes a number of standardized reports that authorized users can generate at any time. These standardized reports were generated by a JMIS users-group, to identify the information most needed by state and local practitioners. CPRD can also generate customized reports at the request of participating agencies and partners. The JMIS system currently has 400 users, with varying degrees of access for entering, editing, viewing and analyzing detention data. *(For more information on the JMIS system, see the JMIS Brief in this series.)*

State's Attorneys Information: Data on prosecutors' decisions to divert a youth from formal justice system involvement or to file a delinquency petition is largely unavailable at a local or state level. While every prosecutor's office presumably utilizes some method of capturing this information in individual cases, the methods of doing so range from paper case files and records to local electronic data systems for internal and confidential use.   While state law requires reporting on disposition of felony arrests (cite needed) by prosecutors, and the CHRI system (discussed above) maintained by the State Police creates the mechanism for capturing this data at the state level, reporting by state's attorneys is minimal.

Juvenile Court Functions: Information on juvenile justice cases from the point of filing a delinquency petition through adjudication and sentencing / disposition is maintained by Circuit Court Clerks. Clerks are elected county officials, with a great deal of autonomy in implementing systems and policies to capture and manage court information. As a result, court data systems vary widely. As with state's attorneys, there is incomplete reporting of court data or dispositions to the statewide CHRI data system by Circuit Court Clerks. While the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts collects annual aggregate / summary reports from trial courts, this reporting is not typically handled with an electronic platform, nor in a format that allows disaggregation or significant analysis.

Juvenile Probation: As at prior decision points, collection and sharing of juvenile probation information varies widely, with no uniform data systems or standards in place. However, CPRD's analysis found several excellent data systems in place in probation offices around the state.   Most probation departments utilize one or more data bases, spreadsheets or systems which may or may not be connected or linked with juvenile detention or adult probation functions. Use of probation data at the local level for planning or management purposes varied widely as did practices for sharing this information. Probation data (including information on the numbers of petitions, intakes, fees / restitution ordered, placements ordered, etc.) is reported to the AOIC on a monthly basis in an aggregate format; much of this data is collected and tallied by hand.

On the other hand, information collected by probation through standardized assessment protocols is potentially rich and readily available. In 2003, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts adopted the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) as the statewide juvenile assessment tool to be utilized by all probation departments in Illinois as part of its efforts to implement effective, evidence-based probation practices across the state. Since 2005-1006, Illinois probation departments have been required to perform a YASI with every youth placed on probation, with the tool now in use by all 64 probation departments serving Illinois' 102 counties.

Today, YASI assessment information is maintained, through a web-based application, in the state's "Caseworks" system. Caseworks allows probation officers to access and manage comprehensive information about an individual youth's risk levels, risk factors, strengths, protective factors and needed interventions, as well as progress made while on probation. Caseworks also contains aggregate data regarding individual officers' caseloads, each department's overall caseload and thus the population of youth placed on probation in that community.   The YASI was fully implemented through local servers / data storage in all Illinois counties in 2005 and the web-based Caseworks program was implemented in 2010. Since then, all departments have utilized YASI with youth placed on juvenile probation[2], with all but one utilizing the on-line Caseworks system and database. *(For more information on the use of YASI, see the Assessment in Illinois Brief in this series.)*

---

[2] Probation departments are authorized to utilize a YASI prescreen to identify low-risk youth who would benefit from reduced intervention. Youth scoring "low risk" on the pre-screen may not be required to undergo full assessment.

Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice: When a youth is committed to IDJJ, no information is shared with the Department electronically. Instead, staff at IDJJ's Reception and Classification units in St. Charles, Harrisburg and Warrenville must embark upon a laborious process of piecing together information from paper documents such as the presentence investigation or social history reports compiled by the probation department in the committing county and the typically one-page commitment order. IDJJ also attempts to track down and request other key documentation, including a youth's medical and / or mental health history and education records from his or her home school. This process of gathering information on a youth's basic needs and history can take weeks.

IDJJ's data system is called JTS. First developed in the 1980s, JTS captures administrative and demographic data as well as the key elements of the data gathered by Reception and Classification. While JTS is antiquated, complicated and difficult for DJJ administration and staff to use, it is in the process of being replaced by a new system, to be called Youth 360, in the next 6-12 months. The goals for Youth 360 include standardized queries and methods to make the system more useful to line staff and administrators as well as to produce better aggregate reports on the youth committed to IDJJ, their needs and strengths, the interventions offered by IDJJ and the short-term outcomes those youth achieve.