



## Selecting an Evidence-based Program

As the juvenile justice system in Nevada moves toward adopting evidence-based programs, many agencies and service providers may need to identify new evidence-based program options for their service continuum. Many may find the task overwhelming and are unsure of where to begin. Fortunately, there are great resources available to assist in the selection of evidence-based programs. This newsletter provides guidance and resources to simplify the process of choosing a new evidence-based program.

### 1. Determine Needs

The first step in selecting a new evidence based program is to determine which type of program is needed in your jurisdiction. It is best to include a group of stakeholders when discussing programming needs within your jurisdiction. Research has shown that programs are more effective when they address identified risk factors and needs of youth<sup>1</sup>. Criminogenic risk factors and needs drive delinquent behavior<sup>2</sup>; therefore, they should also drive program selection. These risk factors and needs can be gathered by aggregating data from a validated risk need assessment tool, such as the YLS/CMI, or through a community youth survey. For example, risk need assessments or a community youth survey may indicate that substance abuse, antisocial attitudes and poor academic performance are common risk factors and needs for youth in your jurisdiction. Review currently available program options within your jurisdiction to determine if service gaps may exist for these risk factors. Prioritizing risk factors will help you target a specific programming need, saving valuable time and resources.

### 2. Explore Registries

Once a specific need for programming is identified, for example substance abuse, explore evidence-based program registries for program options. Registries such as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's [Model Programs Guide](#) and the National Institute of Justice's [CrimeSolutions.Gov](#) categorize programs as effective, promising, and no effect. Programs included in these registries have robust research to determine their level of effectiveness. These registries include a program description, targeted outcomes, and evaluation results as well as implementation details such as required training and cost. This research evidence can be used to determine the program's placement on [Nevada's Evidence-based Practices Matrix](#) to determine if it is eligible for state funding. Programs in the registries are searchable by various criteria that are important to consider when selecting a new program including:

- Target population
- Duration of program
- Educational requirements for facilitators
- Anticipated outcomes

### 3. Make an Informed Selection

Identify a few programs that meet your needs and then review them closer to determine if you are able to meet implementation requirements. Not all evidence-based programs work the same in every jurisdiction or with every population. It is important to consider which program works best considering your population and your capacity to implement and sustain the program. Compare the populations studied in the research evidence to your population to determine if the program has been shown to be effective and is culturally appropriate for your target population. Similarly, be sure the outcomes align with your needs and adequate funding and appropriate staff are available to implement and sustain the selected program.

Selecting a new evidence-based program is an important step towards improving outcomes for youth in Nevada's juvenile justice system. The [NCJJI](#) is staffed with knowledgeable researchers to assist you in the process. Contact the NCJJI for additional support and guidance.

<sup>1</sup> Bonta, J., & Andrews, D. A. (2007). Risk-need-responsivity model for offender assessment and rehabilitation. *Rehabilitation*, 6(1), 1-22.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Wormith, S. J. (2006). The recent past and near future of risk and/or need assessment. *Crime and Delinquency*, 52, 7-27.

## Creation of the NCJJI

Evidence-based practice is at the heart of Nevada's juvenile justice reforms under [AB 472](#) which establishes policies for reducing recidivism rates and improving other outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system. Juvenile court-involved youth, their families, and their communities have a right to know that court-imposed programs and interventions are effective. AB 472 established an evidence-based program resource center, later named the Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation, to support the implementation of evidence-based programs and practices. The resource center is maintained by the [National Center for Juvenile Justice](#), the research division of the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#).

## News

### March:

The NCJJI team is meeting with selected juvenile probation and tribal representatives from each judicial district during NCJFCJ's National Juvenile Justice Conference in March. Participants will learn more about NCJJI's plan to help jurisdictions implement evidence-based programs and practices, and discuss their current resources, capacities, and needs.

## Additional Resources

### [EBP 101: Selecting an EBP](#)

Explore a series of short videos created by the PA EPISCenter that focus on selecting an evidence-based program.

### [Selecting an EBP](#)

Youth.gov is a U.S. government resource that supports programs and services for youth, and can help you identify and select evidence-based youth programs.

## We are eager to hear from you!

Contact us to learn more about how the Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation (NCJJI) can help you. Feel free to share this email with your colleagues and other juvenile justice stakeholders in Nevada. If you would like to add your email to our distribution list, contact Andrew below.



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