



The Multi-site Evaluation of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative

Sustaining Juvenile Reentry Programming after SVORI

By Laura Winterfield, *Urban Institute*, and Christine Lindquist and Susan Brumbaugh, *RTI International*

June 2007

In 2003, the US DOJ, DOL, ED, DHUD, and DHHS funded 69 agencies to implement reentry programs for prisoners. The SVORI funding has supported 89 programs nationwide that are being evaluated by RTI International and the Urban Institute.

The Multi-site Evaluation team provides succinct and practical information on SVORI programs and interim evaluation findings through our *Reentry Research in Action* (RRIA) series of topical briefs. In this brief, we report the views of the program directors for the *juvenile* programs regarding the systems changes that have occurred through SVORI. We also describe their plans for continuing elements of reentry programming begun under SVORI, and we present the mechanisms they identified as necessary to take reentry programming "to scale."

Although much of the focus on reentry has been on adults, reentry programming for juveniles has a long history. In the late 1980s, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) began supporting a long-term, multi-stage research and development initiative to design an intensive juvenile aftercare model. Implementation and an experimental evaluation of the Intensive Aftercare Program Model (IAP) were funded by OJJDP in early 2000 and the final research report was issued in 2005. The results identified few differences between the IAP participants and control subjects; however, incomplete program implementation and small sample sizes for the research limited the ability to identify

positive treatment effects. Accordingly, interest in improving reintegration programming for incarcerated juveniles has remained high.

It is no surprise, then, that juveniles were included as an eligible target population for the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) funded by the Office of Justice Programs in 2003. The eligible grantees for SVORI were departments of corrections and departments of juvenile justice; the age ranges for eligible offenders were 14 to 18 (juveniles), 18 to 24 (youthful offenders), and 18 to 35 (adults). SVORI was designed not to be a new program, but rather to allow states to fill gaps in existing programs and create linkages to services and programming. The recipients of SVORI grants were to develop a locally responsive initiative that included assessments, case management, and enhancements to both in-prison and post-release services; however, the specific attributes of the local SVORI program were left to the grantees. Thus, SVORI is best understood as a funding stream to support reentry programming rather than as an intervention of a specific program model.

The 69 SVORI grantees developed 89 SVORI programs. The initial grant award period ended June 2006; however, 66 programs requested and received no-cost extensions, allowing them to continue operations for up to 1 year. The vast majority of SVORI grants will have ended by July 2007. Now that this funding stream is ending, it is important to understand whether gains in reentry programming made under SVORI will be maintained.

The research team has conducted three surveys of the SVORI program directors (PDs). The first one, in 2004, was used to develop the *National Portrait of the Serious and Violent Reentry Initiative*. The second, in 2005, focused on identifying current issues confronting the programs, such as implementation status and barriers, and collected descriptive information regarding the programs, such as program focus and services. The PDs were asked in 2005 whether they planned to continue or expand their SVORI programs once federally provided SVORI funds had been expended (*Sustainability of SVORI Programs Reentry Research in Action*, December 2005). At that time, 88% of juvenile program PDs reported that they planned to continue or expand SVORI and that the political climate in their communities was favorable to reentry programming.

In 2006, the research team surveyed the PDs again. This second survey provided an opportunity to determine whether the PDs believed that systems change occurred through SVORI and to ask whether perceptions regarding sustainability persisted as the initial SVORI funding ended. This *Reentry Research in Action* brief presents information provided by the PDs of the juvenile programs (N = 35) regarding systems changes, sustainability strategies, the specific components that will be maintained, and the factors that are seen as essential to bring

Exhibit 1. Systems-Level Changes Attributed to SVORI	Juvenile Programs (N = 35)
Collaboration/coordination	19
Partnerships, agency collaboration	12
Establishment of a unified system	1
Coordination of service delivery	4
Resource sharing	2
Practices	17
Permanent change in policies/procedures	10
Begin reentry planning at entry	6
New technologies implemented	1
Philosophy	12
Culture change ("the way we do business")	7
Change in focus/awareness	3
Establishment of common mission/goals	2
Expansion/support	7
Program expansion (statewide; criteria)	4
New reentry partnerships/initiatives established	3
Legislative support	0
No obvious systems-level changes	4

reentry programming to scale in the states. This information provides insight into the degree to which federal funding can lead to changes in key processes and whether those changes are likely to be maintained.

The PDs were asked to describe the most significant organizational or systems-level changes that occurred as a result of SVORI (Exhibit 1). In response, the juvenile program PDs reported changes in four main areas: (1) collaboration and coordination, (2) practice, (3) philosophy, and (4) expansion and support. Although most PDs identified specific changes that had occurred in their agencies, some could not: four PDs left the question blank, admitted that there had been no lasting changes, or provided vague answers.

The most frequently mentioned systems-level change related to collaboration and coordination, primarily surrounding the development and continuation of reentry partnerships among the organizations providing reentry services. Additionally, several reported the creation of a

unified system with improved coordination of service delivery and resource sharing, suggesting that these juvenile justice system agencies intended to maintain working relationships that provide for service continuity.

The PDs also highlighted changes in practices, policies, and procedures. For example, one state expanded its system of aftercare to include all counties rather than a single county of release, and described developing cross-systems protocols to address long-term support. Another state described integrating principles and practices into standards and operations at the juvenile correctional facilities. Still others described more general institutional changes to facilitate reentry, with the most common being increased assessments and policies surrounding continuity of care.

The philosophical changes mentioned by the PDs included a culture change in how participating organizations "do business." Furthermore, the PDs described an organizational change in "focus" and "awareness" of reentry. Several specifically mentioned the establishment of common cross-agency goals, missions, and terminology, all related to reentry.

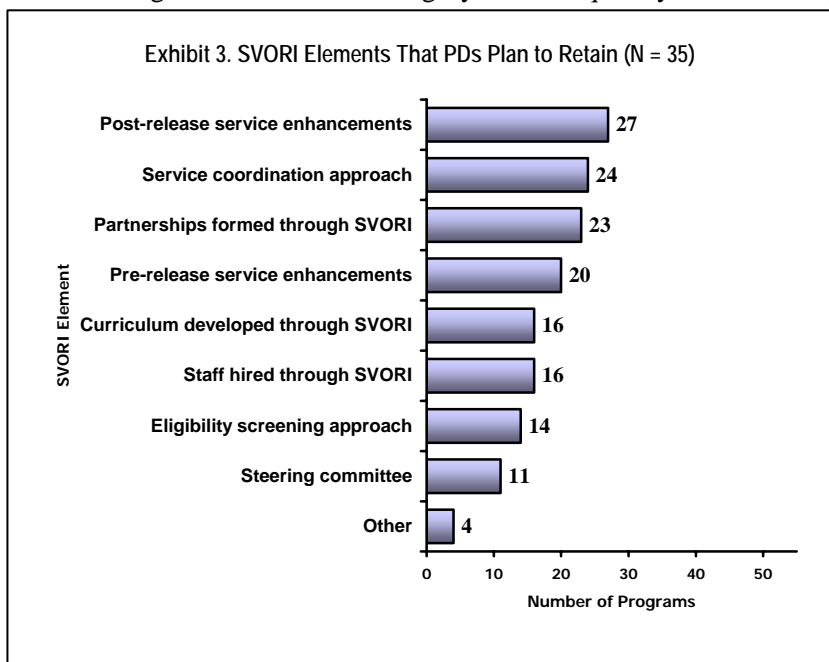
Finally, the PDs also felt that expanding the program and developing either new linkages among organizations providing reentry services or new state initiatives that were built on SVORI efforts were evidence of systems change. Several of the PDs highlighted the increased partnerships and collaborations that had been formed and will be continued. They also listed increasing legislative support as evidence of systems change. Thus, the types of changes reported by many PDs provide evidence that advances toward comprehensive systems changes are underway.

We also asked the PDs to identify specific activities they used when developing sustainability strategies; the results are displayed in Exhibit 2. Although approximately three-quarters of the 35 juvenile programs indicated that they would pursue additional funding (ranging from 17% who pursued private funding to 60% who pursued state funding [data not shown]), the most frequently used strategies reported by the PDs were activities that do not depend on funding, including assessing resource needs, determining the degree to which goals have been met, reaching out to various partners to convene meetings, and extending formal working relationships.

Exhibit 2. Sustainability Strategies	Juvenile Programs (N = 35)
Assessed resource needs	33
Assessed progress achieved with original goals	31
Sought out other partnering agencies	28
Held sustainability planning meetings	27
Developed sustainability plan	24
Cross-trained staff	21
Continued MOAs with partnering agencies	20
Reallocated resources in grantee agency	18
Reallocated resources across partners	7

Note: MOA = Memoranda of Understanding.

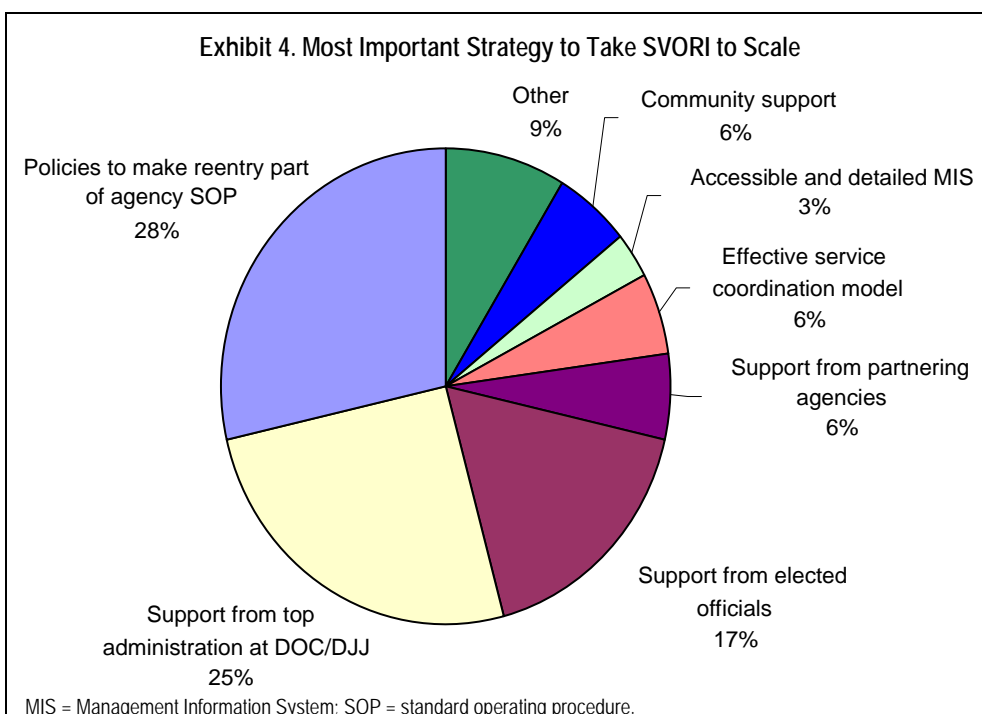
In 2006, we asked the PDs to identify the elements of SVORI that they planned to continue (Exhibit 3). Eighty-nine percent of the juvenile programs planned to continue at least some elements of SVORI once SVORI funds were no longer available. The category most frequently mentioned by the PDs to be continued was post-release service enhancements made through SVORI.



Although the 2006 survey did not ask the PDs to identify the specific services that were going to be retained, the post-release services mentioned by at least two-thirds of the PDs in 2005 were treatment plan development, case management, and reentry teams. We also used data from the 2005 survey to determine those services that had at least a 20% difference in these proportions and that at least 75% of the SVORI participants received. In 2005, these enhanced post-release services included counseling and family reunification. The inclusion of the latter is, most likely, unique to juvenile programs and was only available to about half of the non-SVORI offenders, as compared with 75% of those participating in SVORI.

The next element most frequently mentioned as a component to retain was the approach to service coordination. From the 2005 PD survey, we found that at least three-fourths of the PDs believed that SVORI had enhanced service coordination through continuity of care (defined as using the same case manager for both the pre- and post-release phases), the use of a boundary spanner (defined in the survey as a specific staff person whose responsibility it is to create and maintain cross-agency linkages), and a wrap-around approach (defined in the survey as a suite of services available to both an offender and his or her family). Many PDs of juvenile programs also reported that they would sustain the partnerships that had been formed with other agencies.

Finally, we asked the PDs to identify the primary factor necessary to take reentry programming to scale in their states (i.e., make available to all offenders). The results are shown in Exhibit 4. When asked about factors other than funding, the factor most frequently chosen was the development of policies that would make reentry programming part of the agency's standard operating procedures (cited by 10 PDs). This was followed by support from the top administration at DJJ (cited by nine PDs) and support from elected state officials (cited by six PDs).



In conclusion, although the SVORI funding stream is ending, several key elements are being institutionalized in the states. State-level examples of changes are shown in Exhibit 5. Although sites continue to seek additional funding, the PDs reported increased systems integration as a key type of change that is underway. PDs expect to maintain post-release service enhancements, the approach developed for coordinating services, and those inter-agency partnerships that have been developed. Finally, PDs see changing standard operating procedures as the key element necessary for whole-scale expansion of reentry programming. All in all, this bodes well for juvenile reentry programs and practices.

Exhibit 5. State-Level Examples of Systems Change and Sustainability Outcomes

Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice: Concept of allowing outside agencies to become very involved in the agency's institutional program, the coordination of services, and joint decision making

Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority: Integration of the principles and practices learned into the Community Supervision Agency standards and operations at the juvenile correctional facilities

Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS): DYS efforts to advocate to the state legislature that the initiative should be institutionalized into the DYS system as a regular practice

North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Emphasis on the value of generating evidenced-based data to support hypotheses that increased and intensive support (via community support coordinators, as well as reentry teams) will have a significant impact

Multi-site Evaluation of SVORI Principal Investigators

Pamela K. Lattimore, Ph.D.

RTI International
3040 Cornwallis Road
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
Phone: 919-485-7759
Fax: 919-485-7700

Christy A. Visher, Ph.D.

Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: 202-261-5593
Fax: 202-659-8985

