

Recommendations

- Increase the ability of the Local Government Division of the DFA to monitor county DWI Programs for compliance to existing standards and any new standards that may result from this study and the Legislative Finance Council audit.
 - ~ Increase the administrative portion of the LGD budget to a level that is adequate to make program improvements.
 - ~ Continue the process of standardizing and centralizing some aspects of the Local DWI Grant Program.
- The LGD should continue the process of standardizing treatment criteria throughout the state of New Mexico and mandating that programs follow established criteria.
- Job descriptions and training standards for intensive supervision monitors should be established.
- Standards for supervision should be designed, mandated, and monitored to ensure adequate levels of supervision.

Report in Brief:

Local DWI Grant Program Statewide Evaluation

Introduction

The University of New Mexico Institute for Social Research (ISR) completed a two-year contract with the New Mexico Department of Finance Administration's Local Government Division (LGD) to provide research services, training and technical assistance to support the Local DWI Grant Program.

The purpose of this briefing is to outline the major findings and recommendations in the Local DWI Grant Program Statewide Evaluation Final Report. Details and appendices are available in the Final Report.

Information Sources

County program process survey
Interviews with DWI Coordinators
Review County program materials
Site visits to each County in NM
Review program materials maintained by DFA

Information and data came from the sources listed in the table as well as the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH), which maintains the

ADE screening and tracking system; the University of New Mexico's Division of Government Research (DGR); and the New Mexico Traffic Safety Bureau (TSB).

The evaluation focused on assessing four of the seven funded components funded by the LGD, i.e., screening, outpatient treatment, alternative sentencing, and intensive supervision.

Key Findings

A review of the literature found that states can take positive steps to reduce the incidence of DWI and the social harm caused by alcohol-related crashes and deaths. This can be accomplished by lowering the legal blood alcohol content (BAC) level to at least .08; establishing a higher legal drinking age; mandating license suspension for DWI; and enacting appropriate taxes for alcoholic beverages.

There is no one superior approach to reducing DWI incidents and recidivism, but the research advocates a combination of approaches to be the most effective.

Recommendations

continued. . .

- The LGD should develop measurable and consistent outcomes in collaboration with the counties and other impacted groups so that progress can be more objectively measured.
- Efforts should be made at the state and county level to increase the percent of those convicted who are screened using a standardized instrument.
- Increase the capacity to provide technical assistance and research for the Local DWI Program.
- The process of standardizing data collection procedures should be continued and expanded.
- A web accessed database should be designed to collect data from every program site.

The ISR completed a separate report for each New Mexico county based on information gleaned from site visits, interviews with site coordinators, and client files. These are available upon request.

Statewide Findings

Our findings cover a wide range of key elements related to the LGD funded programs. There are three important features that can be generalized to the state program: organization, supervision, and program elements.

Organization

County programs were evaluated based on several criteria:

ISR Criteria for Evaluating DWI Programs

Established and documented policies, procedures, goals, and objectives.

Ability to document and evaluate county program

Availability, completeness, and accuracy of program records and client files

Percent screened to convicted

Client satisfaction

Rate of alcohol-involved motor vehicle crash deaths

Compliance to DFA standards as indicated by the LGD during FY02

Counties were placed into two broad categories; exceeds or meet standards or does not meet standards in the administration of their DWI program in relation to the criteria.

We found some counties lack goals and objectives that would allow for a comparison of actual program outcomes to desired results.

The LGD should develop measurable and consistent outcomes in collaboration with the counties and other impacted groups so that

progress can be more objectively measured.

In general, county coordinators reported a favorable working relationship with their LGD program manager with only three counties expressing frustration with interference in what they saw as a county level program.

Program Supervision

Several county DWI Coordinators are relatively new to the job and are not adequately trained in program management or program evaluation, and are unaware of existing job duties described in the administrative manual and grant agreement.

Recent developments including the revision of the LGD endorsed *DWI County Coordinator Program Site Manual*, the creation of the ISR designed *Evaluation Guide*, and the establishment of a peer-to-peer network through the affiliate membership of DWI county coordinators in the New Mexico Association of Counties will bridge the gap to provide information and training to new county coordinators.

Presently, standard job descriptions do not exist for DWI County Coordinators or staff. Coordinators are discussing the issue of developing statewide standard job descriptions. This is an important undertaking for the future success of these DWI county programs. Job descriptions and training standards for intensive supervision monitors should be considered.

Program Elements

Some counties are doing better than others are in terms of planning, implementing, managing, and evaluating their county level program.

We identified some confusion regarding what defines an alternative sentencing program and intensive supervision program. The LGD should develop a list of programs that fit within each type of alternative program and clarify which types of programs are fundable within the two funding components in order to aid county coordinators in program development.

Future outcome evaluations could focus on the various types of alternative sentencing to determine which approach is most effective as an alternative sentence at preventing recidivism.

An examination of intervention data compiled by the ISR for the 15 counties that had screening data available from July 1, 1997 to June 30, 2000 revealed that the majority of DWI offenders in New Mexico have their jail time suspended or deferred. Less than 15 percent of all DWI offenders sentenced to jail time actually serve their full sentence.

Twenty-four counties had some type of compliance monitor, tracker, or probation-type officer during 1999-2000.

Supervision is defined differently across counties and not all counties provide the same level of DWI offender monitoring. Standards for supervision should be designed, mandated, and monitored to ensure adequate levels of supervision.

It appears that treatment works and is more effective if conducted as a combination of modalities. The problem for New Mexico is that

Some Alternative Sentencing Options in New Mexico

1. *Dedicated Detention Center:* Counties that funded treatment for DWI offenders while they were incarcerated were Chaves, Bernalillo, Lincoln, Curry, McKinley, and Eddy.
2. *Electronic Monitoring:* Torrance, Bernalillo, and Los Alamos counties reported using an electronic monitor during the study period while Valencia and Taos were reported to be studying the option.
3. *DWI/Drug Court:* Bernalillo and Dona Ana Counties partially fund DWI/Drug court programs that target DWI offenders.
4. *Wilderness Program:* The Local DWI Grant Program in Sandoval County has reported favorable results in their STARS program.
5. *Ignition Interlock:* Grant County used the ignition interlock system during the ISR period of study.
6. *Community Service:* While most counties have a community service component to their county DWI program, only Curry and Hidalgo listed community service under the category of alternative sentencing programs.

various modalities are not available in some areas of the state. This situation makes it difficult for the DWI program to secure the appropriate level of treatment for clients.

The LGD has recently taken steps to strengthen guidelines and define treatment under the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) patient placement criteria. The LGD should continue the process of standardizing treatment criteria throughout the state of New Mexico and mandating that programs follow established criteria.

In order to better advocate and fund treatment services, the LGD should review treatment needs and gaps in the State using existing resources that document such gaps (i.e. Behavioral Health Needs and Gaps in New Mexico, DOH 2002).

The use of a standard screening instrument greatly improves the states ability to measure the needs and problem levels of individuals who are screened. This is a

significant improvement over the decentralized process that existed prior to July 1, 1997. ADE Incorporated of Clarkston, Michigan, currently holds the contract for the screening instrument that is used throughout the State.

There are slight variations in each county as to the exact process of screening and assessment. These variations are due to, the availability of licensed professionals, court scheduling practices, and judicial discretion.

From July 1999 through June 2000, slightly less than 60 percent of all people convicted of DWI in New Mexico were screened using the ADE Inc. screening instrument. The percentage screened varied by county from 99.2 to 37.3.

The Department of Motor Vehicle Citation Tracking System file contained records on 12,042 DWI convictions with a court date between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000, but there were only 6,979 screenings for the same period.

The Local DWI Program Act

In 1993, the New Mexico State Legislature passed the Local DWI Grant Program Act that established a local DWI grant in the state treasury and mandated the Local Government Division of DFA would administer the fund spending no more than five percent of any appropriation during the fiscal year for administration.

Broad criteria for awarding DWI grants, the responsibilities of county DWI Planning Councils, county DWI plans, and guidelines specifying the composition and meeting frequency of the statewide DWI Grant Council were also legislatively defined. The Local DWI Program consists of two funding sources:

1. *competitive grants* for innovative or model programs, services or activities to prevent or reduce the incidence of DWI, alcoholism and alcohol abuse
2. *distributed allocation* based on a percentage of gross receipts sales tax from each county and the number of alcohol related injury crashes.

Funding can be applied to any of seven components which are briefly described below:

Enforcement – law enforcement approaches to prevent or deter DWI behavior

Prevention – community-based outreach activities to promote alcohol awareness, juvenile alcohol use and DWI prevention.

Screening – empirically based procedures used to identify DWI offenders who are at high risk of DWI recidivism.

Outpatient Treatment – an array of individual, family, group, or social program or activity alternatives directed to intervene and address DWI, alcohol problems and alcohol dependence, alcoholism or alcohol abuse.

Intensive Supervision – program which strengthens tracking, follow-up, or other supervised probation type efforts with DWI offenders to assist courts in the monitoring of offenders for compliance with court sentence recommendations

Coordination, Planning and Evaluation – all activities assigned to a full time DWI professional including: monitoring all grant activities; plan-

ning and funding requests; development, maintenance and reporting of the offender profile and tracking system; evaluation of the grant project progress and impact; submission of all required financial and program reports regarding grant activities; staffing the Local DWI Planning Council; and public information, awareness and other such activities. *Alternative Sentencing* – program that provides the courts with a sentence alternative to traditional incarceration for the DWI offender

Prior to 1999, the LGD administered the Local DWI Project fund on an annual budget of \$250,000 and since then on a budget of \$100,000 - a decrease of 150%.

At the same time, the fund has grown from \$5.5 million in 1993 to \$13.3 million today – an increase of approximately 240%.

The LGD administers the program on a disproportionately smaller budget today than at any time since the creation of the fund and this has impacted the ability of the LGD to administer the fund.

There is no information available for the other 5,063 convicted DWI offenders. This situation points to the need that all persons who are convicted of a DWI should receive a screening on a standardized instrument like the ADE, Inc. Efforts should be made at the state and county level to increase the percent of those convicted who are screened using a standardized instrument.

An examination of tracking information from July 1, 1997 to June 30, 2000 showed large improvements each year. The number of reporting counties increased and the volume of

information increased during this period of time.

There are numerous issues surrounding the protocol and capacity for individual counties to store, access, and use available screening and tracking information for DWI offenders. We recommend the creation of a centralized data information system that is used by all counties and includes screening, tracking, intervention, and disposition data. Further, we recommend that this information be web-based and real time.

Specifically, we recommend that this new database could include the

following features:

- various levels of user access depending upon role in the system.
- an automated ADE screening instrument.
- a clear understanding of the basic data set required by the LGD.
- strict referential integrity structures in order to maintain data quality.
- standardized processes outlining who is responsible for data entry quality and compliance.
- an improved method of tracking.
- a related web page to distribute correspondence and promote communication.
- the ability for the LGD to do more

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- cost-effective program audits.
 - the ability to generate real-time reports.

Conclusion

Overall, the Local Government Division of the Department of Finance Administration in collaboration with the counties, the Department of Health, ADE Inc., and others, continue to make progress in improving the operation of the Local DWI Program. While progress has been made and continues to be made, there are several areas that need to be addressed and changes made that will improve the operation of the Local DWI Program. Some of these changes are short term and some should be implemented for a longer period of time.

Most importantly, this evaluation shows the need to increase the

ability of the Local Government Division of the DFA to monitor county DWI Programs for compliance to existing standards and any new standards that may result from this study and the Legislative Finance Council audit. This includes two components:

1. Increase the administrative portion of the LGD budget to a level that is adequate to make program improvements. The administrative portion of the LGD budget is currently less than 1 percent of the overall Local DWI Grant Program.
2. Continue the process of standardizing and centralizing some aspects of the Local DWI Grant Program. This includes job descriptions for county DWI Coordinators and treatment standards for clients.

DFA should also increase capacity to provide technical assistance and research for the Local DWI Program. Research is necessary to continue documenting the development of the LGD program and its outcomes. Technical assistance is necessary to provide local county programs with the capability to conduct their own local evaluations.

The process of standardizing data collection procedures should be continued and expanded. The tracking process should be expanded to more completely document the provision of services and disposition.

A web accessed database should be designed to collect data from every program site. This will improve the integrity of information, timely collection, reporting, and the value of the system.

