DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COURT SERVICES AND OFFENDER SUPERVISION AGENCY &
PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY
RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE

EXPEDITED REVIEW RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT

DATE: August 11, 2005

I.   RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Principal Researcher: Calvin C. Johnson, CSOSA Director of the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) and Project Lead; and Michelle Pelzer (Program Analyst) and David Huffer (Senior Statistician) as primary research staff

Title: The CSOSA Recidivism Tracking Project

Institution: CSOSA, ORE, Washington, DC

Type of Data: Aggregate-level data.

Subjects: To support the measurement CSOSA's primary outcome measures, the study will assess recidivism data for yearly cohorts of offender samples. Each cohort will be tracked for a period not to exceed three years from the point of CSOSA intake and discharge.

Description: The primary objectives of this project are:

1.   Document the three-year recidivism patterns for an offender intake cohort,
2.   Document the three-year recidivism patterns for an offender discharge cohort,
3.   Conduct data mining exercises to determine the utility of existing records data in segmenting offenders within cohorts into groups based on probability of recidivism

Recidivism will be measured using three distinct indicators: arrest for a new charge, conviction of a new charge, and incarceration for a new charge.

We expect that these exercises will produce exploratory findings that begin to highlight those community supervision-related factors that are associated with recidivism during reentry and up to three years thereafter.

This study pertains only to CSOSA.

II.   QUALIFICATION FOR EXPEDITED REVIEW

This is a request for aggregate-level data which poses no risk to individual offenders and does not require Agency resources in excess of those already allocated toward ORE staffing.

III.   RECOMMENDATION

The RRC recommendation for this study:

■ **Support**   ☐ Support with Conditions   ☐ Do Not Support

The RRC recommends support of this request as described in the researcher's proposal.

III.   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Regulatory:

The proposed research shows no evidence of non-compliance with Agency policies pertaining to research.
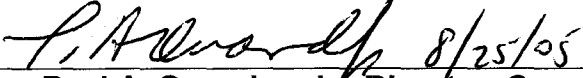
Benefits to Agency:

The proposed research is consistent with Agency priorities and/or interests as follows:

- These analyses will serve as the starting point for CSOSA executive staff to begin discussions about strategic operations and programming activities that target the precursors to recidivism.

- This research will provide ongoing monitoring and tracking of performance on CSOSA's key outcome measure - recidivism.

- The initial study years will only produce findings associated with a limited number of covariates. As we continue to construct samples and collect associated recidivism data, we expand analyses to focus on program participation and other supervision support factors.

Related Issues or Concerns:

- None

I **ACCEPT** the RRC recommendation	I **DO NOT ACCEPT** the RRC recommendation
P. A. Quander 8/25/05	
Paul A. Quander, Jr., Director, Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency	
Comments:	

(1) **Name(s) and current Agency and Agency component of the employee(s) conducting the research;**

Calvin C. Johnson
Community Justice Programs
Office of Research and Evaluation
633 Indiana Avenue NW, 13th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 220-5332
Calvin.Johnson@csosa.gov

(2) **Title of the study**

The CSOSA Recidivism Tracking Project

(3) **Purpose of the project**

To support the measurement CSOSA's primary outcome measures, the Office of Research and Evaluation will assess recidivism data for yearly cohorts of offender samples. Each cohort will be tracked for a period not to exceed three years from the point of CSOSA intake and discharge. Recidivism will be measured using three distinct indicators: arrest for a new charge, conviction of a new charge, and incarceration for a new charge. Whenever possible, we will report separately those arrests, convictions, and periods of incarceration associated with violation of term of community supervision.

The primary objectives of this project are:

1. document the three-year recidivism patterns for an offender intake cohort,
2. document the three-year recidivism patterns for an offender discharge cohort,
3. conduct data mining exercises to determine the utility of existing records data in segmenting offenders within cohorts into groups based on probability of recidivism

We expect that these exercises will produce exploratory findings that begin to highlight those community supervision-related factors that are associated with recidivism during reentry and up to three years thereafter. Specifically, these exercises will (1) produce descriptive comparisons ('recidivators' v. 'non-recidivators') on demographic, program participation, and technical violation data, and (2) produce bivariate statistical analyses that begin to highlight the effect of specific supervision components on recidivism.

These analyses will serve as the starting point for CSOSA executive staff to begin discussions about strategic operations and programming activities that target the precursors to recidivism.

(4)   Location of the project

The project will be conducted at 633 Indiana Avenue NW and 300 Indiana Avenue NW.

(5)   Research methods to be employed

The Office of Research and Evaluation will incorporate a mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods include sampling of offender cohorts and assessment of online national criminal history checks. Qualitative data collection will support our understanding of the quality of data used to complete this study. Specifically, we will follow-up with CSOSA staff familiar with relevant records data regarding limitations that must be considered.

As mentioned above, the data will be analyzed using descriptive and/or multivariate statistics. After extraction of the cohort samples, we will conduct criminal history records check for each member of the cohort. These data will be used to construct separate criminal history databases for each cohort.

(6)   Anticipated results

This research will provide ongoing monitoring and tracking of performance on CSOSA's key outcome measure. With preliminary analysis to focus on identifying correlates of recidivism, we hope that the findings will highlight areas of opportunity to target for intervention those underlying factors associated with supervision failure.

(7)   Duration of the study

This project each fiscal year in support of CSOSA's performance measurement and budget activities.

(8)   Sample size required and/or time frame for sample collection

When appropriate, the Office of Research and Evaluation will employ sampling techniques to determine effective strategies required to generalize findings to the overall offender population. All offender-related data will be extracted from archived versions of SMART (starting FY03). Criminal history data will be compiled using online systems maintained by the FBI.

All data will be analyzed using an identification code that protects the identity of all respondents and associated data. The identification code is a linkable value that requires

a level of access not offered to staff outside OIT/ORE.

(9)   Number of agency staff needed to support the study and description of the support needs

1.   Calvin C. Johnson (Project Lead) will direct the implementation of study methods and analytical approach.
2.   David Huffer (Senior Statistician) will lead sampling extraction and statistical analysis.
3.   Michelle Pelzer (Program Analyst) will conduct criminal history data extraction.
4.   Dwight Estrill (Program Analyst) will design the criminal history database.
5.   Jenny Mlinarcik (Statistician) will provide data entry and analysis support.
6.   Heather Fogg (Research Intern) will provide data entry support.

(10)   Specific resources required from the Agency

Most of the Agency resources required to implement this project are already in place. Specifically, we will need to have ongoing connectivity to the ORE server that contains monthly instances of SMART (backup copies) as well as nightly SMART backups. Whenever we experience database-related problems, we will need to coordinate corrective actions with Database Administrator in CSOSA OIT. We will need CSOSA OIT staff to ensure that statistical and statistical support applications are accessible and available for use between normal business hours. Finally, we will need to have IT security issues associated with NCIC and Triple-I criminal history check addressed in a timely manner. Establishing a backup account for an ORE staff member may allow the criminal history component of the project to operate with limit disruptions.

(11)   Description of any anticipated effects of the research project on Agency programs and operations

As mentioned above, we anticipate producing initial findings that highlight community supervision-related factors that are associated with recidivism during reentry and up to three years thereafter. The initial study years will only produce findings associated with a limited number of covariates. As we continue to construct samples and collect associated recidivism data, we expand analyses to focus on program participation and other supervision support factors.

(12)   List of deliverables

1.   Evaluation Updates (yearly)
2.   Special Topic Studies (yearly – when approved by AD for Community Justice

Programs)

3.   Summary Findings for FY Congressional Budget Justification (Performance Budget Sections)