



Tennessee
Office of Criminal Justice Programs
Strategic Planning Process and Evaluation
Management Strategy



Prepared by the
Tennessee Office of
Criminal Justice Programs
312 Rosa R. Parks Avenue
Nashville, TN 37243



Strategic Planning Process & Management

The Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs (OCJP) manages a systematic, year-round cycle for determining the communities' needs, identifying the justice system's problems, setting program priorities, making grant allocation decisions, managing those funded projects, and evaluating the results of those decisions. *Strategic program management* is a structured process that looks three to five years ahead of daily grants management activities at the changing needs of Tennessee's justice system. OCJP tracks problems surfacing in the criminal justice system, monitors trends in Tennessee's communities, assesses the condition of the state's resources, and measures the recent performance of OCJP-funded programs. All this information helps OCJP focus its future program descriptions, set its funding priorities, prepare its budget requests, and direct its limited resources into areas that promise the best return for the public's investment.

OCJP Mission: Support and enhance responsive safety projects for communities in Tennessee.

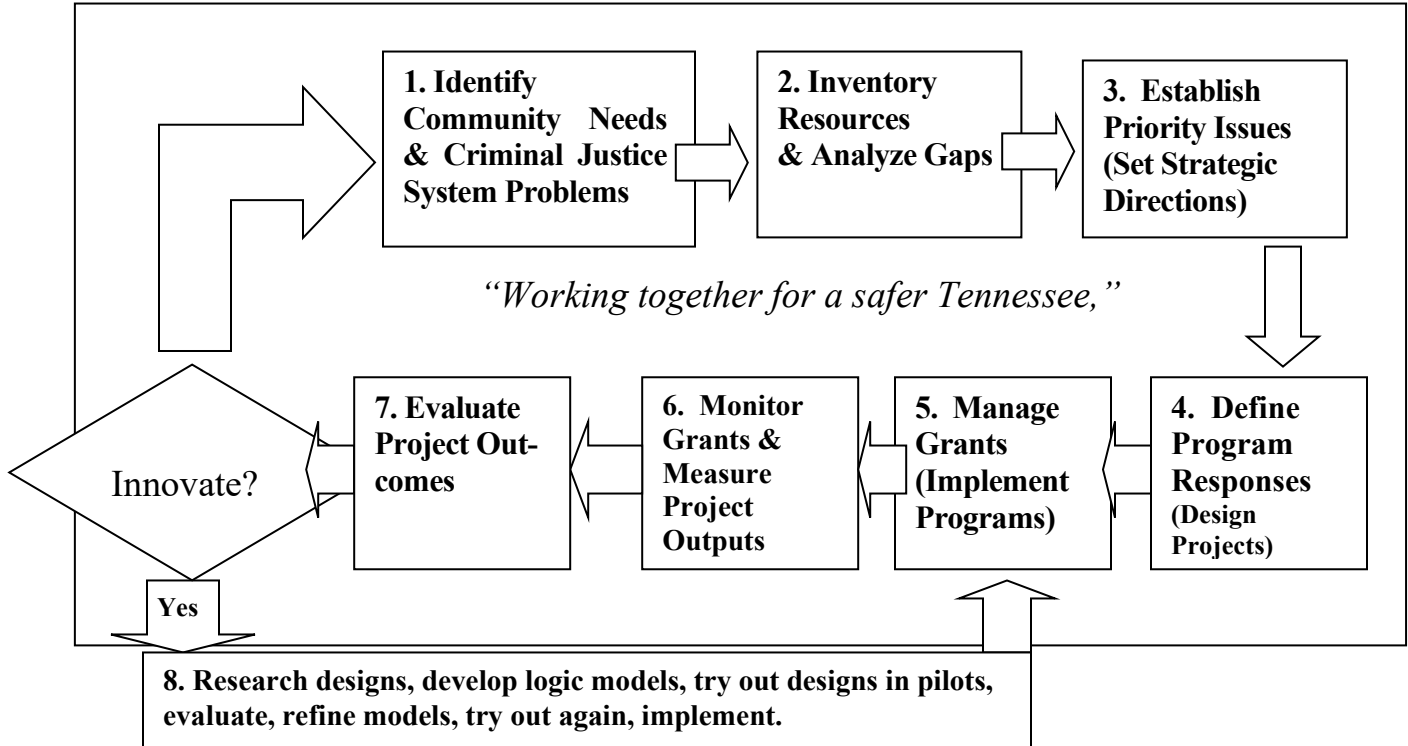
Strategic management is the work process of OCJP:

“The Office of Criminal Justice Programs is committed to a safer Tennessee for all of its citizens. OCJP functions as a strategic planning agency that secures, distributes, and manages federal and state grant funds for Tennessee. While collaborating with other public and non-profit agencies, OCJP utilizes these grant monies to support innovative projects statewide in efforts to reduce criminal activity, provide services for victims of crime and promote overall enhancement of the criminal justice system in Tennessee.”

OCJP's vision, *“Working together for a safer Tennessee,”* provides the day-to-day backdrop for grants management activities. A graphic depiction of OCJP's eight-stage strategic program planning and grants management process appears in Figure 2 below. It is a systematic, fact-based, stakeholder-driven approach to priority-setting which is facilitated by the staff of the Office of Criminal Justice Programs.

Purpose and Intended Outcomes: OCJP is in business to reduce criminal activity, provide services for victims of crime and promote the enhancement of the criminal justice system in Tennessee. Three procedural “tracks” are going on continuously throughout the year. First, OCJP is exercising management control over the numerous grants already in place. Second, OCJP is collecting and analyzing the data we need for directing the programs of the future. Thirdly, OCJP is constructing the multi-year planning and accountability documents that the funders require. By completing the eight steps in the strategic management process OCJP staff are attending to all three responsibilities simultaneously.

Figure 1. OCJP's Strategic Program Planning and Grants Management Process



1. Identify Community Needs and Criminal Justice System Problems

OCJP has programs and projects in place *now* to deal with *current* needs and problems. But for OCJP to make long-range improvements, we occasionally have to make changes in our funding priorities. Those changes will always be in response to the challenges surfacing in Tennessee’s communities and its criminal justice agencies. The professionals in the field will usually see these trends first, but OCJP strives to be among the first to know about changes in criminal justice and domestic violence issues, so that the Office can steer its *future* programs in new strategic directions. OCJP looks to the field for its information.

OCJP monitors the following sources of community and criminal justice system trends to be able to identify the “nature and extent of the problem in Tennessee”:

- National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS)
- Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS)
- Drug Production, Sales and Use Data
- Corrections Populations (TDOC)
- Domestic Violence and Rape, Sexual Assault and Stalking Data (various sources)
- Information on Other Criminal Justice System Problems and Issues:
 - Geographic coverage of enforcement, prosecution, and victim services
 - Under-served populations
 - Mentally ill in jails and other special populations in corrections

- Other issues (victims' rights, gangs, child pornography, racketeering, immigration, parental abduction, money laundering, human trafficking, etc.)

OCJP program managers concentrate on their own program areas, using state and local participation to gather and document information on the “nature and extent of the problem” in Tennessee’s communities and its criminal justice system. They continuously:

- Monitor the data sources (i.e., NIBRS, TIBRS, Internet, professional literature, federal grants management sources, university offerings, National Drug Control Policy, etc.) routinely, documenting findings in a record for periodic discussion at OCJP
- Maintain routine contact with other state agencies (e.g., state Departments of Safety and Homeland Security, Corrections, Children’s Services, Health, Human Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, TN Bureau of Investigation, Board of Parole) and the U. S. Attorneys and Law Enforcement Coordinators
- Attend and sponsor conferences, retreats, and work groups for grant sub-recipients and leaders in the field, keeping records of developments and topics of interest to OCJP
- Attend routine public gatherings of the professionals OCJP considers *stakeholders* in the criminal justice system (such as the TN District Attorneys General Conference, the Sheriffs’ Association, the TN Chiefs of Police Association, the TN Narcotics Officers Association, the Administrative Office of the Court, the District Public Defenders Conference and the TN Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Maintain regular phone and in-person contact with grant sub-recipients, and maintain a log of information obtained about system issues and community needs
- Conduct surveys, focus groups and other forms of first-hand data collection
- Meet regularly with advisory committees of system participants, such as the OCJP Strategic Planning Roundtable; regional victim focus groups, Domestic Violence State Coordinating Council, the Integrated Criminal Justice Steering Committee, and the STOP Violence Against Women Program Planning Group, etc.

2. Inventory Resources and Analyze Gaps

Given limited resources, OCJP must balance the expectations of criminal justice system stakeholders with what the data say about the communities’ needs (i.e., service demands). By continuously assessing Tennessee’s funding capacity (such as federal and state grant prospects) OCJP maintains the best possible balance between the community’s needs and Tennessee’s resources. When OCJP compares state resources with the needs and demands for quality services, there is usually a gap. That analysis helps OCJP make responsible budget decisions. Keeping an inventory of resources also helps us avoid managing for crises by responding in ways consistent with OCJP’s strategic direction. OCJP grants managers monitor the condition of the following federal and state grant sources for Tennessee:

- *Edward Byrne Memorial Grant Program:* OCJP administers the Edward Byrne State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Formula Grant. OCJP awards Byrne grants to state and local governments to make communities safe, improve the criminal justice system, and reduce crime, violence, and drug abuse. Special issues addressed by this program include improvement of criminal justice records in Tennessee, domestic violence prevention and intervention, prevention of school violence, drug offender prosecution and

treatment, information system technology, community-based program support, court and drug task force support and correctional systems improvement.

- *National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP)*: OCJP coordinates the state level interagency taskforce which leads the effort to improve the collection and reporting of criminal histories throughout Tennessee's criminal justice system. The Office administers grant funds and coordinates activities statewide to improve this system.
- *NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)*: OCJP coordinates the state level interagency, pursuant to 34 U.S.C. §40912, the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 which addresses the gap in information available to NICS about prohibiting mental health adjudications and commitments and other prohibiting factors. Filling these information gaps will better enable the system to operate as intended to keep guns out of the hands of persons prohibited by federal or state law from receiving or possessing firearms. The automation of records also reduces delays for law-abiding persons to purchase firearms. The OCJP office administers grant funds and coordinates activities statewide to improve this system. This is discretionary funding and OCJP may not receive an annual award.
- *STOP Violence Against Women Program*: OCJP coordinates, plans and serves as the administrative agency for Tennessee's STOP Violence Against Women Grant.
- *Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)*: OCJP administers the RSAT Grant for state prisoners. The program encourages the establishment and maintenance of drug-free prisons and developing and implementing specialized residential substance abuse treatment programs that identify and provide appropriate treatment to inmates with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders or challenges.
- *Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (Coverdell)*: OCJP coordinates the state level interagency application to improve forensic science and medical examiner/ coroner services for the State of Tennessee. The OCJP office administers grant funds and coordinates activities statewide to improve this system.
- *Project Safe Neighborhoods Program (PSN)*: OCJP coordinates the state level interagency taskforce as the fiscal agent for this funding. Each regional USAO which holds a PSN program is responsible for establishing a collaborative team of federal, state, and local law enforcement and community partners to implement a strategic plan for investigating, prosecuting, and preventing violent crime.
- *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)*: Tennessee's VOCA program is designed to provide high quality services that directly improve the health and well-being of victims of crime. Priority is given to victims of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault and services for previously underserved victims.
- *Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)*: This federal program offers funding to OCJP to redistribute to agencies who serve the victims of sexual assault. Tennessee also has a complimentary state funded sexual assault services program. A variety of programs serve these specific victims with these funds.
- *Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)*: This federal program provides grants for shelter and related services to victims of family violence and their dependents. Tennessee also has a complimentary state funded family violence services program. Funded shelter services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They include shelter, crisis hotline, counseling, advocacy, transportation, referral, follow-up and community education.

- *State Fingerprinting Program*: This program allows the F&A, OCJP to award grants to local governments for the purchase and maintenance of electronic fingerprint imaging systems and line charges for the submission of those fingerprints to TBI.
- *Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification System*: This program instructs the Department of Finance and Administration, Office of Criminal Justice Programs to make an annual grant from the fund created in 67-4-602(h)(2), to the Tennessee Sheriff's Association for the purpose of supporting implementation and management of the statewide victim notification system.
- *Ignition Interlock System Program*: This program mandates F&A, through OCJP, to award grants to halfway houses whose primary focus is to assist drug and alcohol offenders (additional restrictions apply).
- *Domestic Violence Community Education Fund*: Supports the functions of the Domestic Violence State Coordinating Council and the Certification of Batterers' Intervention Programs.
- *State Appropriations*: Regional Internet Crimes Against Children; Family Violence; Tommy Burks Advocates of Crime Victims training and the Methamphetamine Initiative.

2.1. Coordination Among State and Federal Governments and Funding: OCJP's many federal programs place it in a good position to coordinate and leverage state funded programs with other federally funded programs in Tennessee, particularly those supporting state and local drug abuse treatment, education and prevention. This coordination extends beyond the funding that comes directly to OCJP but also includes coordination between OCJP and other state departments and agencies and their federal and state funding. Examples of this are provided below:

- Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for State Prisoners: This program, also administered by OCJP, provides for substance abuse treatment for state prisoners with an emphasis on the under-served population of women inmates. These inmates are held in state and local correctional facilities. RSAT funds and JAG funds are being used to establish a continuum of care for substance abuse treatment that includes assessment, out-patient care, inpatient care, and aftercare for a variety of offenders with a need for this type of intervention. JAG funds are used to purchase substance abuse prevention, outpatient, and aftercare services, while RSAT funds are used to address the needs of offenders requiring substance abuse treatment while in state facilities.
- State Recovery Court Program: The Drug Court Treatment Act was designed to facilitate the implementation and continuation of existing drug court treatment programs in Tennessee. The Act recognizes a need in the criminal justice system to reduce the incidence of drug use and abuse, drug addiction and crimes committed as a result of these offenses. The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services administers the drug court treatment program by offering support, training, and technical assistance to drug courts as well as awarding, administering, and evaluating drug court treatment grants.
- Administrative Office of the Courts: The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) provides support to the Tennessee Supreme Court and the entire Tennes-

see Court System. Duties of the office include preparing the court system's annual budget; providing judicial education; maintaining law libraries, computers, other equipment; offering training and technical assistance and other administrative and support functions.

- Department of Health: The Department of Health plays a crucial role in Tennessee's efforts to fight crime and delinquency in addition to its more traditional role of pursuing a broad public health agenda. One program that OCJP coordinates with its victim-witness and domestic violence training programs is the Department's grant with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for sexual assault education and prevention (RPE). OCJP is collaborating with the state's Bureau of Health Services Violence Prevention Unit to train and support public health educators and rape crisis centers for effective measurement of prevention results in its statewide rape and sexual assault prevention projects. As the agency of state government tasked with the prescription monitoring program they are key to the State's efforts to identify prescription drug abuse. The Department of Health oversees the Child Fatality Review Board and the Maternal Mortality Review Committee and OCJP looks to their vast experience as it explores options to increase the number of Domestic Violence Fatality Review Boards across Tennessee. Tennessee's Chief Medical Examiner is housed within this department and assists with coordination of the Coverdell funding. OCJP looks to partner further with this department as it explores the needs of sexual assault victims across Tennessee and the role certified SANE nurses in prosecution and community service coordination (SARTs or Sexual Assault Response Teams).
- Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (DMHSAS): The Tennessee DMHSAS is an important partner in facilitating reform within Tennessee's criminal justice system. Important crossover issues such as the mentally ill in jails and prisons and responding to underlying mental illness among drug and substance abusers are examples of shared agendas. The Department plays a leadership role in assuring that TennCare directed at mental health services plays an important part in addressing the problems of mentally ill people who reside in our criminal justice system. As the agency of state government tasked with targeting substance abuse use disorders, it directs an important part of Tennessee's efforts to combat drug-related crime and delinquency through prevention efforts aimed at youth and adults. Treatment, intervention and rehabilitation services for thousands of Tennesseans are provided each year through out-patient and residential treatment facilities across the state.
- Department of Education (DOE): OCJP collaboration with the Department of Education occurs around a number of issues, particularly school safety and drug, gang and violence resistance training. Additionally, OCJP and DOE are both members of the BSB initiative and their focus on Trauma Informed Schools. OCJP has partnered with the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police to increase training and implementation of the Handle with Care program that notifies schools when a child has witnessed or experience a traumatic law enforcement

event so that appropriate interventions can support the child within the school environment.

- Department of Human Services: The Department of Human Services is the state agency responsible for administering a variety of services throughout Tennessee, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, Medicaid, Child Support Services, Child Care Services, Adult Protective Services, and Rehabilitation Services. There are areas of significant collaborative importance to criminal and juvenile justice collaboration and coordination. TANF is especially important to achieving goals of self-sufficiency and economic independence, often a critical barrier to resolving family violence situations. OCJP is a member of the DHS Vulnerable Adults Coordinated Community Response; a multidisciplinary collaborative coalition of state agencies and departments involved in the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of elder and vulnerable adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In an effort to reduce this abuse, neglect, and exploitation, the coalition shall develop and undertake strategies to increase communication with the public and state agencies, propose educational outreach, and promote the sharing of existing resources and information.
- Commission on Children and Youth: The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) was created in 1988. TCCY is an independent state agency that advocates for improvement in the quality of life for children and families; collects and disseminates information on children and families for the planning and coordination of policies, programs and services; administers the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (OJJDP) in Tennessee; and administers and distributes funding for teen pregnancy prevention programs.
- Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security: The Governor created the Public Safety Subcabinet which is overseen by this department. This department spearheads many public safety initiative and campaigns, supports coordination across law enforcement agencies and has the primary responsibility for maintaining safety on Tennessee highways. As a result, they are active with many of the multijurisdictional drug task forces and the work they do.

Information sharing, networking, joint planning, and evaluation are some of the ways that agencies coordinate the federally funded program efforts. Concerted efforts are made each year to coordinate availability of grant funds to local and state entities from these sources annually to reduce duplication and fragmentation.

2.2. Inventory of Resources: OCJP grants management personnel develop and maintain an informal “database” of information that describes the “state of the art” in Tennessee law enforcement, prosecution, courts, public defense, offender treatment, jails and prisons, and victim services. These data are obtained by monitoring the trends and attending the gatherings of the state’s criminal justice system components. OCJP merges this in-house pool of knowledge and experience with OCJP’s own Access database of grant funds by program year. That database specifies a great deal of detail about the grant con-

tracts (e.g., organization, geographic location, contacts, amounts) of all grant sub-recipients. Grant managers also track the federal and state funding sources for information on Congressional and state Legislative trends in decision-making, such as anticipated funding cuts or enhancements. Finally, grants managers are also building the storehouse of knowledge when they maintain good records on the performance (and performance issues) of their existing grant sub-recipients – Tennessee’s core resources for criminal justice and victim services.

2.3. Resources Gaps Analysis: OCJP grants managers slip into a planner role on those occasions when new funding sources or additional funding becomes available, when old grants change or are reduced, or when a significant community need or criminal justice system problem surfaces. On those occasions grants manager/planners are called on to analyze the data from all these sources, and to draw preliminary conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the current spending patterns. In those places where the funding falls short, where there are demonstrable gaps in the geographic distribution of the funds, or where there is a verifiable population that is under-served or un-served, OCJP has discovered a *gap* in its support of the system.

2.4. Areas of Greatest Need: The most critical of these resource gaps must be filled if funding will allow. These are the areas of greatest need. OCJP grant manager/planners may develop an issue paper or a data analysis memo drawing conclusions about the “areas of greatest need” to use in engaging their stakeholder partners in conversations about the issues and alternative approaches for solutions. The alternatives may in some cases evolve into new program designs or models for funding.

3. Establish Priority Issues (i.e., Set Strategic Directions)

OCJP places a high value on quality working relationships with Tennessee’s criminal justice system stakeholders. Their satisfaction is a goal for OCJP. Therefore, the Office engages local government and community leaders, grant sub-recipient administrators, state agency partners and other stakeholders whenever OCJP needs help setting new priorities. These partnerships help OCJP envision new directions for existing programs and encourage “ownership” for solutions that go beyond what state and federal grants can do alone. The experience and wisdom of those partners help OCJP craft its multi-year strategies and program plans for funding sources.

3.1. Participatory Priority-Setting Process: Before OCJP articulates changes in the primary Programs to be funded, it convenes advisory groups of stakeholders. OCJP uses one type group for criminal justice priorities and one for victim services priorities. OCJP facilitates these topical or profession-specific work groups to obtain advice for OCJP planners on the following:

- The problems, issues and trends OCJP has identified in community needs and the state’s criminal justice system;
- The condition of state and federal grant revenues available for allocation to Tennessee agencies and local governments;
- The staff’s suggestions for program priorities and program descriptions; and

- Their recommendations on the final design of that year's grant solicitations.

3.2. *Timing of the Priority-Setting Process:* Issue-analysis meetings happen as the need arises, but only if there is reason to believe a change is needed in the *programs* OCJP will fund. When community issues or justice system problems demand a change in programs, OCJP's Director convenes the Roundtable Advisory Committee to review the recommendations of the issue-analysis work groups, to help OCJP establish priority issues for funding. These Priorities will drive any changes to the core programs OCJP will fund, by clarifying any changes in the federal Program Abstracts or to innovative victim service programs. Generally, this happens every fall and are summarized in the annual addendum to the agency's five-year strategic plan.

4. *Define Program Responses & Project Design Requirements (Logic Models):*

Seldom will any planning cycle yield a wholesale change in the Programs funded by OCJP grant awards. In those years when a new issue or challenging new set of circumstances forces a change in the state's array of Programs, OCJP outlines this new priority in the annual addendum to the Strategic Plan and when necessary make adjustments to the corresponding Program Abstracts; logic models and solicitations. The program responses are the central component of the state's application for federal funds under the various grant programs. These programs, in turn, define the types of projects that will be funded by OCJP. OCJP offers these specifications in its solicitations of local government and non-profit agencies. Desirable project designs are usually stated in the form of "logic models" that spell out the intended project purposes (i.e., outcome-driven project designs) and the measures of success that will be used by OCJP in year-end project evaluations. These performance measures address the accomplishment of program purposes, which tie back to the "nature and extent of the needs and problems" discovered during the needs assessment stage of OCJP's planning approach.

4.1. *Development of Program Abstracts:* The Abstracts are the formal descriptions noting the problems to be addressed, the target populations, the activities to be performed, and the measures of success envisioned for an area of funding.

4.2. *Federal Grant Application Process:* OCJP's Quality Assurance Unit works with program managers who have assigned responsibilities for completing the state's narrative sections of the applications for federal Byrne JAG, RSAT, NCHIP, NARIP, PSN, Coverdell, STOP, Family Violence, Sexual Assault Services Program and VOCA grants. Each grant application has its own rigorous requirements, deadlines, and formats.

4.3. *Development of Strategy Documents and Annual Updates:* OCJP prepares a Statewide Multi-year Strategy for Drug Control, Violence Prevention and Criminal Justice System Improvement, which includes responding to the needs of victims of crime. The Strategy is updated annually to report changes in the state's strategy. In Tennessee, this development process is not a paper-compliance exercise designed simply to comply with federal funding. It is an attempt to bring together the local criminal justice commu-

nity in a shared vision for the improvement of system in Tennessee – independent of the federal or state revenue streams. Parts of this plan are specific to the needs of various fund sources, (JAG, STOP, etc.) however the plan is developed cohesively with consideration towards decreasing crime and assisting victims; of addressing the needs of both the criminal justice system as a whole and its unfortunate victims.

5. Manage Grants (Implement Programs)

OCJP views program implementation as the assurance that federal and state funds are used in ways that produce high-quality *project* performance. That is, a program’s success is the sum total of the performance of the projects that address that program. Program implementation begins with the sub-recipient awards process. OCJP’s grant management responsibilities begin there as well.

5.1. State Sub-Grant Awards Process: The process for soliciting applications from local governments and state agencies begins before the announcement of the state’s grant award. Some significant work is completed before OCJP receives notice of the federal grant amount, but once the Office knows about funding availability the announcement of the sub-recipient application due dates is released. OCJP leadership develops “boiler-plate” contract shells. Over the next few months:

- A work group of experienced and qualified sub-recipient administrators usually helps OCJP staff develop the state’s solicitation. When a new program or a new type of project is envisioned, the work group helps OCJP develop a project design (“logic model”) to spell out the purpose, goals, inputs, activities, outputs and desirable outcomes of a successful project proposal. Often the new priority is based on an evidence-based program or an evidence-based approach which informs the abstract and logic model for the projects.
- OCJP staff members develop the solicitations for their own program areas, customizing standard formats and modeling after previous successful solicitations. In addition, staff develops weighted rating criteria for guiding the application review process and train their advisory groups in the criteria.
- When time permits, OCJP staff travel around the state in teams on “road trips” to disseminate the solicitations, which are structured “requests for applications.” These sessions are usually delivered in public gathering places in half-day training and Q & A sessions when possible.
- OCJP staff process the applications, arrange meetings of advisors to discuss the applications, and facilitate the groups’ reviews of the sub-recipients’ applications.
- OCJP staff maintain detailed records of the selection decisions, “populate” the database, notify the sub-recipients of the state’s decisions, and address questions.
- OCJP staff distribute contracts, establish and maintain the sub-recipient’s project file, trouble-shoot the contract’s signing and distribution, and ensure that the initial project reports are filed by the sub-recipient as required.

5.2. Policy Management: OCJP program managers monitor their assigned grants’ administration sources, such as the Federal Register and the federal grant administrators’

web sites, and stay abreast of developments in the field. They review sub-recipient manuals, trouble-shoot consistency with contracts policy changes, and keep the manuals current by revising them as needed. Grant managers also arrange for training and sub-recipient staff development as needed to keep the sub-recipient's performance at its best.

5.3. Federal Collaboration: OCJP staff collaborate with the federal grant managers in Washington D.C. and in the regional offices. Many federal managers conduct regular phone calls, conference calls, email communications, and the occasional site visit to Tennessee. The OCJP staff is responsible for coordinating these methods and for ensuring quality communications with the federal manager of the grant.

5.4. Grant Coordination: Program managers coordinate all OCJP-administered, federal-funded programs in Tennessee. OCJP enhances the effectiveness of several federal programs in Tennessee by integrating their use: the Violence Against Women Act (STOP or SASP grant), Byrne JAG Program, National Criminal History Improvement Plan (NCHIP), Paul Coverdell Grant Program, , NARIP, PSN, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), and the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Grant. OCJP also coordinates with other state agencies that receive block grant and discretionary federal funding to help leverage the funding coming to Tennessee and maximize the benefit of each dollar.

5.5. Compliance Management: Program managers coordinate with the OCJP fiscal staff, making regular contacts to discuss the program/fiscal monitoring status of all grant sub-recipients. Fiscal monitors review the financial aspects of the agency and grant contract. Program Managers also are responsible for monitoring their own grants; to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations and to ensure the project is implemented properly and achieving expected project outcomes.

6. Monitor Grants and Measure Project Outputs

Monitoring is a quality-control enterprise. Each grant manager functions as a quality assurance expert. Grant managers routinely collect and analyze the key performance data required by the sub-recipients' contracts, both because the funders require the data to be reported and because the data are the most reliable way of managing the grant.

6.1. Monitoring Grant Performance: Each program manager is responsible for collecting and analyzing project performance data contained in the grants' required output reporting. The task involves notifying sub-recipients about the upcoming reporting deadlines, answering questions about the required reports, and processing the reports as they arrive at the Office. Once the data are in hand, the program manager examines the patterns, looking for clues about the nature of the productivity, comparing the units of service delivered or the number of arrests made against the overall project budget. Managers are encouraged to do "benchmarking" and "baselining" to determine how the project's performance compares to others like it (and against its own past performance). Performance data can offer the program manager huge opportunities for clarifying grant expectations, provide technical assistance, and coax the best performance possible from the project's budget.

6.2. Performance Reporting: Program managers work with the Quality Assurance Unit and the Assistant Director of Programs to prepare and submit quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports to the funding agencies. Adhering to the grant's requirements, managers aggregate the data into summaries that match the formats prescribed by the federal programs. They submit the data in automated form and track the submission to be sure it meets federal requirements. Requirements are different for criminal justice and victim services projects.

7. Evaluate Project Outcomes

OCJP believes that evaluation provides essential information for completing the strategic management cycle. The data on outcomes tell funders whether the programs and projects they designed and funded were effective in addressing the source problems identified during the assessment stage of the planning cycle. In that way, evaluative data not only “look backward” over past project performance, but they “look forward” to drive future innovations at the state level. Routinely collected program outcome data helps OCJP see what is working, what is not working, and what to invest in for the future.

In Tennessee, OCJP evaluates its grant *programs* by evaluating its *projects*. The sum total of *project* performance is the statement of *program* effectiveness. Moreover, routine evaluation at OCJP is a grassroots-oriented approach because more rigorous approaches are too expensive to conduct on every program every year. At OCJP the grant sub-recipients themselves are responsible for collecting and reporting their own performance data. That way, the sub-recipient (which stands to learn the most about how to improve) gets the information first-hand, and outside evaluators will have actionable data on hand when they need them. OCJP's grant sub-recipients explain what their agency will measure (and how) at the time of their grant applications, then OCJP monitors to ensure they follow through on those commitments. Evaluating victims' outcomes and the impacts of law enforcement on community safety is entirely different from monitoring and measuring project outputs (i.e., the “production” data). The focus is on what changes were affected in the community or the victim.

7.1. Sub-recipient Training and Technical Assistance: To get the outcome data, OCJP program managers take responsibility for preparing their sub-recipients in the basic information they need for obtaining clarity on their project's purpose. Then they coach sub-recipients about the measures and data collection they will need to use. They do informal training on “logic models,” then integrate evaluation with their routine technical assistance and grant support functions.

7.2. Outcome Reporting: The Quality Assurance Unit, Assistant Director of Programs and individual program managers work together to prepare and review annual reports on outcomes to the funding agencies that require them. Adhering to the grant's requirements, managers aggregate the data into summaries that match the formats prescribed by the federal programs. The Quality Assurance Unit submits the data in automated form and tracks the submission to be sure it meets federal requirements. Outcome reporting requirements are different for law enforcement and victim services projects.

8. Innovate (Program Innovation Cycle)

To keep its programs effective OCJP needs to promote innovations both in the operation of existing projects and in the ways the criminal justice system defines its primary issue areas and program responses. OCJP often accomplishes this through working with the Strategic Planning Roundtable and other advisory committees to identify evidence-based programs and practices that could address an emerging gap or need in Tennessee. OCJP circulates the project performance data it collects, in order to drive innovations in project designs and improved service delivery processes. And, of course, the Office must use the evaluative data on what works to “seed” innovative new projects when the funds are available. In their “strategic planning mode,” OCJP staff can compare project outcome data with national “state-of-the-art” practices and “best-practice” trends, develop a new logic model and craft alternative program designs. Or, they can facilitate these same tasks with working groups of field professionals. In their program manager mode, OCJP staff can help sub-recipients capture and analyze performance data, conduct self-assessments, plan for in-house performance improvements, and make those improvements. In either case, the challenge is in how OCJP uses the data already in hand.

Figure 2, Strategic Program Planning and Management at TN OCJP

Stage of Process	Cycle	TN OCJP Program (Grant) Management Activities
Clarify OCJP Mission, Vision & Grant Purpose	Jan-Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remain abreast of OCJP logic model, mission, vision, values. Review Federal guidelines & trends in the field for changes in grant program purposes, priorities and target populations.
Identify Nature & Extent of Problems and Needs	Aug-Dec Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plot and review data sources (e.g., Census, TIBRS, CTAS, key conferences, focus groups & survey results: justice system & SR assessments of community needs performance & evaluation data). Summarize current and anticipated problems for monitoring.
Analyze Resources: Identify Gaps and Opportunities	Nov-Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze expected state/federal funds for increases/decreases in amounts. Analyze sub-grant spending and distribution of current grants to identify total obligations and state “coverage” with grants. Identify grants that are ending or being curtailed (see program monitoring & evaluation), and fund amounts released. Identify resources that can be reallocated: innovation/expansion. Determine service gaps, unmet or under-met needs & geo-map.
Set Strategic Direction	Dec-Jan Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine priority of funding for next grant cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define program purposes in abstracts & identify priority areas and projects for funding; Engage advisory committees and steering groups; Develop & submit grant applications Formulate action plans for contending with budget cuts. Inform communities & providers of funding availability. Train sub-recipients on contractual and performance requirements.
Manage Grant Evaluations & Award Process	Apr-May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the proposal review process (selection panels, grant proposal evaluations). Make awards of sub-grants. Send notices of award and negotiate contracts.

Stage of Process	Cycle	TN OCJP Program (Grant) Management Activities
Identify and Design Innovative Projects	July-June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate action plans for “seeding” innovative projects. • Identify innovative projects for funding or replication. • Facilitate logic model designs of new model projects. • Develop core outcome measures for new programs/projects.
Monitor and Measure Programs	Jul-June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review monitors reports, audit reports and project evaluations. • Require improvement or corrective action plans, as required.
Evaluate Projects and Programs and Report to Funders	Jul-June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review annual reports of actual outputs and outcomes against each sub-grant’s intended (funded) success measures. • Develop annual OCJP program performance report. • Review current array of grants/programs/projects against grant purposes, priorities and targeted populations. • Develop & submit Annual Reports to feds.

Evaluation Strategy

Evaluation is a systematic assessment of the results or outcomes of a program's efforts. It is a critical component of any effective strategic program management scheme. At the Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs, evaluation sheds light on six targets of management focus. That is, we use evaluation "to measure actual outcomes against the intended outcomes of the program; to discover achievement and results; to discover deviation from planned achievements; to judge the worth of the program; to identify unintended consequences; and to recommend expansion, contraction, elimination, or modification of the program." ⁱ

Building Program Effectiveness through Evaluation: Assumptions

Most experts would agree with Steven Aos, the principal researcher at Washington State's Institute for Public Policy. Aos recognizes that few criminal justice programs evaluate at the most sophisticated and reliable levels. Few can afford to! Nor is it easy to find a state criminal justice planning agency equipped to conduct the so-called "five-point evaluation designs" favored by University of Maryland researchers, i.e., random treatment and control groups using rigorous statistical methods to examine a range of intervening variables besides participation in the intervention itself.ⁱⁱ Tennessee typical in that sense. OCJP simply cannot evaluate *every* project for impacts *every* year.

However, Tennessee's strategy does recognize the importance of pursuing rigorous evaluation designs. This is accomplished by judiciously combining in-house process analyses with ongoing monitoring of sub-recipient output and outcomes data and periodic evaluation studies using outside experts. Our rationale is that even the most rigorous evaluation designs are based on good process analyses and readily available outcomes data. By gathering those data on an ongoing basis, we generate the baseline requirements for future studies at a much lower cost than that required by contracting for those services. The staff at Tennessee's Office of Criminal Justice Programs is beginning to excel at producing these important tools, which can serve as inputs for sophisticated research designs. Meanwhile, OCJP can use the process evaluation data to improve the performance of our funded projects and our own grants management processes.

The Tennessee evaluation strategy for grant funded programs takes a multi-part approach:

- A. *Clear Project Designs (Program Logic)*:** OCJP insists on well-defined project "logic models" in all grant applications. Applications are reviewed for explicit analyses of the needs that form the basis for a project, specific statements of project purposes and goals, and indicators of intended results. To receive a grant award projects must be able to demonstrate what they intend to accomplish and describe how they will produce and measure results.
- B. *Performance Analysis and Process Evaluation with Performance Data (including outcomes)*:** Funded projects must produce actionable data for determining whether they have implemented what was funded, and with what results. OCJP provides a great deal of technical assistance and support to ensure that funded sub-recipients are able to produce data that measure critical project outputs and outcomes. Program managers at OCJP monitor the program performance data carefully and intervene as

necessary. OCJP manages a performance improvement process, not just a compliance monitoring process.

- C. *Impact Evaluations of Funded Programs:*** Tennessee contracts with proven external researchers for comprehensive evaluations of its most significant programs as a complement to outcome measurement and process evaluation. Additionally, subrecipients of grant funds are encouraged to use outside evaluators on larger projects.
- D. *Training and Technical Assistance:*** Tennessee contracts with local and national training and technical assistance providers at times to assist local projects with implementing an evidence based program or practice; to gather data and evaluate adherence to the model and to increase compliance with practices that are known to produce the desired impact.

Tennessee's Evaluation Design

Tennessee's comprehensive evaluation strategy was designed to address BJA's criteria for effectively managed programs.ⁱⁱⁱ OCJP has built this strategy into its grants management processes. The components essential for a complete evaluation system are in place and working. The three components of Tennessee's design follow:

- A. *Clear Project Designs (Program Logic):*** In 2000 few Tennessee grants spelled out clear project designs and performance measurement procedures. Since 2000 sub-grant recipients have been trained and applicants have been required to supply logical descriptions of their projects' goals and objectives. Our grant review teams analyze and rate their logic models.

Tennessee's evaluation design is simple: Evaluation should be built in from the beginning of each management cycle, whether at the state program or local project level. As new initiatives are undertaken in Tennessee OCJP will ensure that new and existing sub-recipients are (a) capable of identifying their measures of important performance outputs and intended results, and (b) capturing and reporting those data to OCJP. This cycle began in 1998 by assisting victim services sub-recipients to develop logical evaluation designs for their projects. By 2001 OCJP had trained nearly 150 victim services sub-recipients and supported over a dozen JAG correctional treatment sub-recipients as they developed baseline project designs and performance management techniques. Tennessee is continuing to use these experiences as a model process for other sub-recipients. Most recently, OCJP conducted Logic Model training regionally for all VOCA, STOP, SASP and FVPSA subrecipients. We intend to repeat this approach periodically for other types of funding.

OCJP has been advising potential applicants that we require applications, in program areas where performance outputs are measurable, (e.g., offender rehab and treatment, victim advocacy, and some forms of apprehension) to be stated in clear descriptions of the proposed project's purpose and intended results. Tennessee insists that these applications for OCJP-administered funds describe in "logic model" terms their project's purposes, goals or intended outcomes, funded activities, and measures of success. OCJP continues to communicate our expectation that *funded and trained* sub-recipients must be gathering performance data, so that there is data in hand for every year of the grant. Each new grant cycle OCJP expects projects will have logical, clear project designs, with specific baseline measures and at times

milestones for the project design phase through the full implementation phase. A good logic model is more than a strong application, it is the basis of ongoing programmatic evaluation which can be conducted by the agency on a regular basis. In training agencies about logic models, it was stressed that the logic model should be used regularly to assess the effectiveness of the program. Staff can review activities to see if they are achieving the outputs that were intended, are they on target, do adjustments need to be made to remain compliant with the project as submitted? Furthermore, do their outcomes reflect the kind of changes they were seeking to create? The logic model and the program activities, outputs and outcomes should be reviewed by direct service staff, supervisors and agency leaders as well as board members or county commissioners. It is more than just accountability for the funding but also accountability to the community and the citizens the project is attempting to serve.

In future award cycles OCJP will be positioned to award the grants to the most feasible applications that meet OCJP program priorities and offer readily measurable performance criteria. That, in turn, should permit OCJP to base part of its future allocation decisions on analyses of sub-recipients' performance data.

B. Performance Analysis and Process Evaluation with Performance Data: More sophisticated evaluations depend on process evaluation to produce management data describing a project's adherence to its design and its actual performance before they may address benefits or cost-benefits. Performance analysis describes what a program intends to accomplish and what is being delivered. Process evaluation describes how well the project performed according to its design, and at what cost. Outcomes measurement describes the results of the intervention (i.e., what happened to participants), given the project's objectives.

OCJP's program managers are responsible for supervising their sub-recipients' data collection and reporting. OCJP program managers also use regular sub-recipient contacts and other sources of information (e.g., observation, monitoring, audit reports) to verify project activities in selected program areas. OCJP is making a concerted effort to visit the field more often for practitioner gatherings and occasional site visits.

C. Impact Evaluations of Funded Programs: Impact evaluations are, by nature, complicated research studies. Reliability and validity issues generally necessitate control groups for comparison with the populations participating in the funded interventions – or longitudinal analyses of what happened to a sample of participants over time (e.g., recidivism studies). Although some such studies can be conducted by targeting example projects, more often they are statewide examinations of a number of projects and their populations. These are usually conducted by highly trained and experienced professionals. Variables such as these make impact evaluations expensive. In conjunction with ongoing process analyses and performance measurement, research studies can make sense to an agency like OCJP, but they must be planned and managed wisely.

OCJP acknowledges the empirical reliability issues raised by measuring performance alone. Reliable control-group and longitudinal studies *do* matter. But it is also true that evaluation designs must “fit” the conditions under which projects are operated if they are to generate useful management information. The evolving nature of local criminal justice programming in Tennessee dic-

tates that OCJP concentrate the limited resources on process evaluation: discovering which projects have drifted away from what they planned to implement, getting them back “on track,” and identifying the actual results they produce when they actually perform as designed. More rigorous research designs addressing the spectrum of project types statewide can occur among major programs on a rotating basis, given a five-year cycle. Central to Tennessee’s evaluation design, then, are these two assumptions:

- *The reason outcomes are measured is to support ongoing improvements in local performance and state program management.* Tennessee’s grant programs are intended to accomplish certain outcomes (e.g., reduce recidivism, raise street prices of illegal drugs, , or produce other changes in participants, such as new vocational skills, reduce trauma symptoms for victims of violent crime, or increase understanding of the criminal justice system). Using Tennessee’s evaluation strategy helps us know when we have accomplished those outcomes, and when changes in programming might enhance those outcomes. Such an approach permits Tennessee to remain abreast of project performance routinely, between major research studies.
- *OCJP manages state criminal justice programs by evaluating local project performance.* That is, the success of Tennessee’s programs depends primarily on how well local *projects* meet local needs. Evaluating projects provides us with the knowledge of what works so that we can apply that knowledge over the long term to improve both the performance of the project and the results on the criminal justice system for the public. Although OCJP has an obligation to conduct evaluations for federal and state funding sources, Tennessee OCJP’s highest priority lies securely on producing information that can be used on a daily basis for managing the success of local projects.

Rationale for Tennessee’s Evaluation Design

System ineffectiveness may be *identified* by evaluation, but finding solutions depends on better program development, i.e., problem identification, issue identification, priority setting, program identification. These, of course, are all activities that take place *before a program is announced, applications are received, and awards are made*. OCJP realizes that to improve program performance we must cycle evaluation findings back into our program development practices. Integrating evaluation into the strategic management process is the key.

Integrating Evaluation with Strategic Program Management: OCJP recognizes the importance of integrating evaluation.^{iv} BJA has recommended that states can enhance integration by involving evaluators in grant review processes and allowing them to control project monitoring. At OCJP evaluators are *not* separate from program management. OCJP is tasked as the policy-makers, planners, project monitors, project directors and evaluation managers. OCJP is taking two important steps to address the critical issue of integrating evaluation:

- First, incorporating evaluative findings with performance improvements is a major function of the strategic program management process (see previous section). This office stresses evaluation as a major responsibility of the OCJP program manager and has built staffing patterns and workload assignments around this assumption. As OCJP has incorporated evaluation activity into the grant management cycle, we have re-assessed our workloads and staffing patterns to match these responsibilities.

- Second, OCJP continues to improve integration by insisting on evaluative data reporting as a minimum requirement for grant awards and for our own program development and design work. This stance has required that staff become more proficient in providing technical assistance and training for grant applicants and sub-recipients. These functions have been a challenge, but our staffing patterns and our workload assignments have been built on these expectations as well.

Methodology for Process Evaluation and Performance Management: OCJP program managers review all grant funded projects yearly, if not quarterly. Each major OCJP project receives a performance review based on annual performance and spending data each year. Other OCJP evaluative efforts (e.g., site-visits, frequent telecommunications, statewide meetings, and exchanging correspondence) occur for most programs on a rotating basis. Field visits are made to a selection of projects or to gatherings of sub-recipient agencies. Details on these approaches follow:

- ***Annual Reports:*** Applicants are required to submit a plan for evaluation as part of their project's design. Projects that are funded are required to submit annual reports of project performance data. The projects' narrative addenda also address challenges or obstacles that have surfaced during project implementation. OCJP staff use written reports submitted by projects to track their progress, and to determine whether a project accomplished what it said it would accomplish in the period specified. Taken together, the projects' performance reports also contribute to process evaluation when used in conjunction with other sources of information on a program (e.g., site visits and monitoring, etc.). OCJP is continuously in a cycle of process improvement annually. OCJP looks for opportunities to improve logic model and project designs; defers to the use of EBPs when available and enhances output and outcome measures regularly. In addition to improving the quality and timeliness of OCJP's evaluative data, the automation of report submission adds the advantage of supplying its own mechanism for aggregating and tracking program data, thus permitting more effective and efficient methods of tracking and documenting changes in a project's direction. Improved reporting is yet another reason for building the logic model analysis into the program development process at grant award time.
- ***Site Visits:*** Tennessee's unique geographic pattern requires OCJP to pay special attention to what is important information to gather. The real issue is how to gather information that is relevant and useful for program performance management most efficiently. When evaluation resources are limited, the key is to appreciate the important variations or typologies of a program, and to gather and share crucial data on each variation (if not each project). Involving "people," not simply relying exclusively on paper methods of gathering information, is important. But placing too much emphasis on geographic representation, as if performance can only be addressed by observing the physical location of each project, can over-extend the evaluators' capacity, at the expense of effectively managing the program. It is often more efficient to have group meetings with similar sub-recipients, often at the site of one project, as a means of gathering and sharing information. OCJP will continue to review its data collection processes to make better use of electronic and virtual forms of distance interaction.

Methodology for Impact Evaluations: The State of Tennessee contracts with experienced research providers for impact evaluations. OCJP is dedicated to the state's contract-solicitation and provider-selection processes. That involves the development of a detailed solicitation (request for proposals), competitive bidding and a careful proposal review and award cycle.

OCJP's goal is to support impact evaluation of a least one program or significant project every five years. OCJP will explore approaches to maximizing limited resources with the Statistical Analysis Center, local universities, and the advisory board.

Evaluation Staffing: Program managers in Tennessee carry primary responsibility for a range of evaluation functions, from helping sub-grantees firm up their project designs to tracking their reports of performance data, from analyzing sub-grantees' process improvements to managing external impact evaluations. We fit these approaches to the circumstances of the projects administered and to the sizes of the investments in the sub-grantees. Each program manager integrates evaluation with his or her program technical support and project grant monitoring functions. In so doing OCJP uses staff time to establish a description of what is being implemented in projects where (a) goals and objectives have been insufficiently articulate, (b) models for effective service activities are non-existent, and (c) where actionable data are sparse. Our evaluation design requires our program managers to manage process evaluations as part of their role, in order to build up the "evaluability" of our grant sub-recipients.

Funding for Evaluation: OCJP obtains its evaluation capacity both by conducting it in-house with existing staff and by "buying it," (i.e., contracting for evaluation capacity from third parties, such as independent contractors and the Statistical Analysis Center.) When contracting for evaluation services OCJP first defines the desired evaluation products then assesses the competing options. Selection is based on the option most likely to provide the output at the lowest available cost, given OCJP's in-house evaluation capacity. The evaluation function is no less subject to evaluation than are other OCJP-funded activities. Tennessee purchases evaluation capacity through a contract with a knowledgeable outside evaluator and uses resources available for evaluation from the Tennessee SAC (Statistical Analysis Center). All programs administered by OCJP are monitored programmatically and fiscally at least once during the contract cycle. Monitoring can consist of conducting on-site visits, information gathering, program assessment and individual project evaluations.

Capacity Building at the Office of Criminal Justice Programs: Evaluation processes imposed unilaterally by the state cannot be as effective as we want them to be. However, our experience at OCJP is that sub-recipients will willingly gather and report performance data if they see the data as valuable for leading and managing their own performance. That is the reason OCJP began the approach in 2000.

Working independently OCJP project units have re-examined their mission, vision and values and have adjusted self-improvement goals and measures of success based on these self-assessments of progress. The adjustment of work processes and workloads allow for changes in staffing to fit. Our staff has continued to integrate the transition in their roles, functioning

as resource planners and project evaluators even while maintaining their grants management responsibilities. We continue to share the Office's evaluation design with our new criminal justice system and new victim service partners in meetings and natural gatherings of our sub-recipients. OCJP will continue to clarify the planning and evaluation demands spelled out in our Statewide Strategy. We will continue to orient our new criminal justice system and new victim service partners informally and formally to this process of project implementation and ongoing evaluation through OCJP.

Summary

This evaluation plan and the larger Strategy of which it is part, charts a course of continuous improvement that strengthens OCJP's strategic planning and program execution. Opportunities exist throughout the life cycle of OCJP's strategic management process to improve the quality and efficiency of its evaluation system significantly. That is especially true for the beginning of the process, during future program development; especially as evidence-based programming and practices are relied upon more heavily. It is during the pre-award stage of program development where OCJP can accomplish the most important management objective for system improvements, namely the articulation of clear program priorities and measures of intended outcomes. Assistance with logic model development is now an accepted part of the application and award process in Tennessee and training is available on the OCJP website. By linking the award with evaluation OCJP has created a situation in which grant sub-recipients *expect* to gather and report performance and outcome data. OCJP also *expects* sub-recipients to use their performance and outcome data to evaluate their own program and make informed decisions regarding improving the quality of their programs and projects.

Grant funding and evaluation requirements will continue to provide the catalyst for building knowledge about what works. OCJP is committed to applying that knowledge over the long term for the benefit of Tennessee's own criminal justice system. OCJP's evaluation design and technical assistance sessions are making strategic planning happen in Tennessee.

ⁱ BJA Technical Assistance Workshop on Program Development, Evaluation and Reporting, August 16, 1999, Nashville, Tennessee. Conducted by Robert Kirchner, Ph.D. Based on "Linking Performance Measures to Policy and Strategy," 1999 Annual Conference on Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation, Kirchner & Venell, 7/99.

ⁱⁱ "Getting to the Bottom Line: Estimating the Comparative Costs and Benefits of Different Ways to Reduce Crime," A Presentation to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Steven Aos, Washington State Institute for Public Policy. May 20, 1999. Drawn from The Comparative Costs and Benefits of Programs to Reduce Crime: A Review of the National Research Findings... May 1999.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Op cit.* Kirchner & Venell. Acceptable goals and objectives; links between objectives and activities, performance data reports, and acceptable performance. p2.

^{iv} Kirchner, Robert A., Marylinda Stawasz, Kellie J. Dressler, and Laura Parisi, Evaluation Desk Reference Manual Series, March 1999, Vol.1:" Orientation to Program Evaluation" Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, p.34.