



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2017.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince William County

Program Title: Evidence-Based Decision Making Policy Team

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

CONTACT INFORMATION

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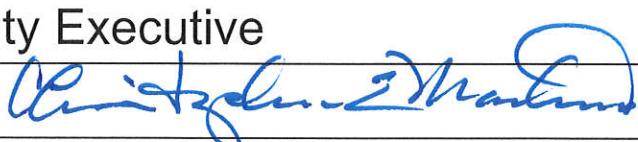
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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Christopher E. Martino

Title: County Executive

Signature: 

Prince William County, Manassas City, and Manassas Park

Evidence Based Decision Making Policy Team

In December 2013, the Prince William-Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center completed a comprehensive Community Based Corrections Plan (CBCP), which is required when jurisdictions in Virginia seek to expand a jail facility. The CBCP yielded systemic issues that may be causing an increase in the jail population. The study revealed that from 2000-2010 the population residing in the combined areas grew by 40% compared to the overall population in the State of Virginia, which grew by 13% over the same period. From 2008-2012 there was an approximate 30% increase in adult arrests; during the same period 61,284 adult arrests occurred. In 2008, Prince William Circuit Court concluded 38.1% of felony cases in 120 days. However, in 2012 only 15.2% of felony cases concluded in 120 days compared to statewide average of 45% of felony cases concluded in 120 days. Another key factor that may be contributing to an increase in jail population and perhaps a backlog within the court system is the Magistrate's discretion on issuing bonds has been reduced by changes in the Code of Virginia. The CBCP suggests that in FY 2028 the facility will need 1,817 beds if changes are not made to current processes. Because of the staggering statistics, a committee was formed to study and identify alternatives to incarceration. Two of the initiatives the committee focused on was re-entry services for individuals returning the community from incarceration and diversion efforts for individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) who become involved in the criminal justice systems. Both initiatives involved extensive collaboration and coordination among partners both within the criminal justice system and beyond, to include other government and non-profit agencies. These initiatives were multi-jurisdictional and included

Prince William County as well as the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. With the implementation of these initiatives, it seemed an appropriate time to expand on existing collaboration in a purposeful and coordinated strategy. With the assistance of the National Institute of Corrections, we submitted a competitive application for technical assistance supporting a collaborative initiative between Prince William County (PWC) and the independent Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park to improve the criminal justice system through Evidence-Based Decision Making (EBDM). Once our application was approved, this effort began in early 2015 with the development of the EBDM Policy Team that included a range of stakeholders from the Criminal Justice System as well as service delivery agencies and advocates. The EBDM Policy Team consists of Judges from the General District Court, Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court, and Circuit Court. It also includes leadership and membership from: the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Clerk of the Court, Law Enforcement Agencies (PWC, Manassas, and Manassas Park Police Departments), Adult Detention Center (ADC), State Probation and Parole, Magistrate's Office, Victim/Witness Program, Community Services Board, Bar Association, Mental Health Community Advocate, County Executive's Office, Manassas City Manager's Office, Faith Based Representatives, and the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS). This team is led by Sheriff Glen Hill and Co-Coordinated by Steve Austin (OCJS Director) and Major Amanda Lambert (ADC). The team meets regularly to review, plan, and implement strategies to improve the efficiency of our criminal justice system and to improve criminal justice related outcomes. Since inception, the initiatives of this collaborative, multi-jurisdictional workgroup has moved from coordination and planning to implementation of more effective and efficient criminal justice strategies to serve our communities.

The goal of EBDM is to create a framework for justice systems that will result in improved system outcomes through true collaboration, systematic use of research, and a shared vision of desired outcomes. It is a disciplined approach using data and research to inform and guide decision making across the justice system.

EBDM is a framework for criminal justice related decisions and organizational practices that are determined empirically based upon insights from the best available research and data in the field. Risk and harm reduction are the fundamental objectives of the EBDM team and are achieved by maintaining offender accountability, protecting victim rights, and enhancing public safety.

The EBDM framework developed by the National Institute of Corrections is based upon four key principles:

1. Evidence-based knowledge enhances the professional judgement of those making decisions within the criminal justice system.
2. Every interaction with the criminal justice system offers an opportunity to reduce harm.
3. Systems achieve better outcomes when all members of the system operate collaboratively.
4. The criminal justice system will continually improve when professionals make decisions based on the collection, analysis and use of the best available data to inform their understanding and processes.

The EBDM team identified five key areas in the criminal justice system to improve with the efforts of multiple agencies working together towards a common goal of reducing harm, preventing recidivism, and reducing victimization. These key areas consist of the following:

1. Pretrial defendants who likely pose lower risk to the community are served through pretrial services or other programs without compromising public safety.
2. Individuals with mental illness who are involved in the justice system will be diverted to services that are more appropriate when possible.
3. Court cases will be resolved in the most effective and efficient manner possible.
4. Re-entry services provided to offenders will be more closely matched to their needs to improve outcomes.
5. Victims will be directed to services when appropriate to address their needs and to reduce harm.

Through collaboration, the EBDM team realigned resources with what works. For example, the Intensive Community Supervision (ICS) Program provides supervision for defendants who would otherwise occupy a jail bed and costs significantly less. In 2015, a jail bed day cost \$113.39 per day, while the ICS program costs \$20.86 per day. The realignment of resources has helped to reduce the growth rate of the jail population while providing public safety. Since this process began, the jail has seen a decrease in the population growth and has been able to reduce “farming out” inmates to other detention facilities, creating a significant cost savings to the ADC and the local jurisdictions.

During the same period, Pretrial Services observed an increase in caseloads, and the emerging collaboration enabled the shifting of resources from the ADC to Pretrial Services. The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) has seen a 46% increase in Pretrial placements and overall the pretrial caseloads have grown by 16%. Through the EBDM efforts, the Magistrate’s office now makes direct referrals to Pretrial services, which has resulted in an additional 65+ cases placed on Pretrial Supervision as opposed to being committed to the ADC. Each success demonstrates

the judiciary's desire to utilize alternatives to pretrial detention. With these systemic changes taking place, there has been no adverse change in court appearance rates and new law violations for defendants released to Pretrial Supervision while awaiting trial.

Another area of concern for the EBDM Policy Team was Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System. The Team dedicated time and resources to meet the mission of increasing public safety while reducing the costs of mental illness related to crime by identifying and treating defendants diagnosed with mental illness. As a result the DIVERT Docket (Diversion Intercepts for Varied Emergency Responses), was created to specifically address defendants that are identified as having mental illness. This docket allows for coordination between defense attorneys, prosecutors, probation, the jail, mental health providers and the courts to identify defendants with serious mental illness and when possible, divert them from jail as quickly as possible in order to receive court ordered evaluations, restoration or other treatment services, and to expedite the case through the court system. Once an individual is identified he/she is then removed from the regular docket and placed on the DIVERT Docket. This docket allows the treatment providers an opportunity to work collectively in providing "wrap around" services for the defendant, which may include any necessary evaluations, medication monitoring, and counseling. If determined to be incompetent, the court will decide if restorative services are necessary to bring a defendant to competency. This approach enables these defendants to make a positive lifestyle change. It preserves families, and reduces the chances of re-offense. Evaluations are conducted efficiently and in a timely manner. Those identified for services are expedited and benefit from the DIVERT Docket as it is an alternative to incarceration for both pre and post-conviction. With additional funding received for treatment services, the DIVERT docket was expanded in 2016 to include a treatment component provided by PWC Community Services and a new process was

implemented to identify seriously mentally ill defendant before their first court appearance. Since August 2016, the DIVERT docket has saved the ADC 10,237 jail bed days by safely releasing individuals identified as SMI to treatment or evaluation services in the community while their cases are pending. In many cases, these individuals are supervised on pretrial supervision as well to ensure public safety.

Establishing Re-Entry Services in the ADC was another area of concern for the EBDM Policy Team. In the fall of 2016, the ADC opened the Re-entry dorm. This program is a designated unit within the ADC working towards an inmate's smooth transition back to the community by providing the inmates with the necessary tools to be successful upon release from jail. The Re-entry dorm assists inmates in obtaining necessary services to be successful in the community such as health insurance, birth certificates, social services, housing, clothing, life and employment skills, etc. This is based upon a release plan that is created for each inmate in the program according to his or her individual need. The program builds on the resources of a well-established Re-entry Council that provides many of the services in the program.

As result of the EBDM efforts, the ADC recently received a grant from the Department of Criminal Justice Services to increase mental health and re-entry services for female inmates. Additionally, the team has implemented the use of risk assessments in multiple areas of the criminal justice system to assist in determining a defendant's risk level in the community.

In the law enforcement community, the EBDM Team has piloted the use of the Proxy Risk Assessment with the Manassas Park Police Department. The use of this tool may assist officers in determining custodial arrest or release on summons. The City of Manassas and Prince William County police officers are also considering using this same tool in the near future. Currently, the ADC is using the Proxy Risk Assessment to determine the need to complete a

needs assessment to develop re-entry services. Additionally, the PWC police Department is in the initial stages of planning implementation for the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) to assist victims in connecting quickly to services in instances of domestic violence.

The EBDM framework requires all members of the Criminal Justice System to make decisions based on sound research and empirical evidence. This increases the collaboration among each of the agencies reducing potential for actual and perceived institutional bias and provides greater consistency and outcomes for victims, offenders and society. Through the EBDM framework, this team is improving the Criminal Justice System. Additional resources has been obtained to implement the new strategies through some grant and special funding, but the work of the policy team for planning and collaboration has been achieved through existing resources. The program is innovative, demonstrates partnerships and collaboration that serves as a model for other localities. Therefore, we would like to nominate the Prince William County, City of Manassas and Manassas Park Evidence Based Decision Making Policy Team for the VACo Achievement Award.

Program Overview

Evidence Based Decision Making Policy Team

In 2015, Prince William County, and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park established an Evidence Based Decision Making (EBDM) Policy team with the assistance of the National Institute of Corrections. This team meets regularly to review, plan, and implement strategies to improve the efficiency of our criminal justice system and to improve criminal justice related outcomes. The goal of the EBDM team is to create a framework for justice systems resulting in improved system outcomes through true collaboration, systematic use of research, and a shared vision of desired outcomes. This disciplined approach uses data and research to inform and guide decision making across the justice system. The EBDM Principle consists of the following:

Professional judgment of criminal justice system decision makers is enhanced when informed by evidence-based knowledge; Every interaction within the criminal Justice system offers an opportunity to contribute to harm reduction; Systems achieve better outcomes when they operate collaboratively; The criminal justice system will continually learn and improve when professionals make decisions based on the collection, analysis, and use of data and information.

EBDM is a framework for criminal justice related decisions and organizational practices that are determined empirically based upon insights from the best available research and data in the field.

Risk and harm reduction are the fundamental goals of the EBDM team and are achieved by maintaining offender accountability, protecting victim rights, and enhancing public safety.

Through collaborative efforts, each agency has developed a better understanding of one another's role in the criminal justice system and we have a better understanding of how changes in processes affect each other. As a result, we are all more aware of the services each agency provides and we understand that in order to improve the criminal justice system and provide public safety strong collaboration is required at all levels.

Evidence Based Decision Making Summary

With the assistance of the National Institute of Corrections, a joint initiative was implemented between Prince William County (PWC) and the independent Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park to improve the criminal justice system through Evidence-Based Decision Making (EBDM). This effort began in early 2015 with the development of the EBDM Policy Team that included a range of stakeholders from the Criminal Justice System as well as service delivery agencies and advocates. The EBDM Policy Team is made up of Judges from the General District Court, Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court, and Circuit Court. It also includes leadership and representation from: the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Clerk of the Court, Law Enforcement Agencies (PWC, Manassas, and Manassas Park Police Departments), Adult Detention Center (ADC), State Probation and Parole, Magistrate's Office, Victim/Witness Program, Community Services Board, Bar Association, Mental Health Community Advocate, County Executive's Office, Manassas City Manager's Office, Faith Based Representatives, and the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS).

The team meets regularly to review, plan, and implement strategies to improve the efficiency of our criminal justice system and to improve criminal justice related outcomes. The goal of EBDM is to create a framework for justice systems that will result in improved system outcomes through true collaboration, systematic use of research, and a shared vision of desired outcomes. It is a disciplined approach to using data and research to inform and guide decision making across the justice system.

The EBDM team identified five key areas in the criminal justice system that could be improved with the efforts of multiple agencies working together towards a common goal of reducing harm, preventing recidivism, and reducing victimization.

While focusing on the key areas of improvement the EBDM Policy Team has noticed some improvements in our local system including a reduction in the jail population growth rate which has reduced the rate of “farming out” as many inmates; decreased the number of jail bed days; increased the use of pretrial and intensive supervision services; and helped to reduce overcrowding at the jail while maintaining public safety. The EBDM Policy Team established a DIVERT docket (Diversion Intercepts for Varied Emergency Responses), which diverts defendants from jail and allows them to return to the community to receive mental health and restorative services. In partnership with the local Re-Entry Council, the team implemented the Re-Entry Dorm in the jail. This program assists inmates in obtaining the necessary tools and skills to assist them in transitioning back to the community. As result of the EBDM efforts, the ADC recently received a grant from the Department of Criminal Justice Services to increase mental health and re-entry services for female inmates. The team has implemented the use risk assessments in multiple areas of the criminal justice system to assist in determining a defendant’s risk level in the community.

The collaborative efforts of these agencies working towards a common goal of reducing recidivism and harm while providing public safety has shown to be beneficial to all facets of the criminal justice system. The EBDM Policy Team has made great strides and plans to continue working together on improving the criminal justice system in this region.