



**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. Other ORE staff include David Huffer (Senior Statistician), Dwight Estrill (Program Analyst), and Jenny Mlinarcik (Statistician). Jerome Robinson (PSA's Director of Forensic Research) will serve as and advisor to the project.

**Title:** Exploratory Analyses of CSOSA's Offender Drug Testing Protocols

**Institution:** CSOSA, ORE, Washington, DC

**Type of Data:** Aggregate-level data and staff interviews.

**Subjects:** The research will incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data to include sampling of offender cohorts, extraction of offender drug testing data from WinTox, and interviews with staff in Community Supervision Programs and Toxicology. Qualitative data collection will involve interviews with CSOSA staff familiar with relevant records data regarding limitations that must be considered.

**Description:** The primary objectives of this research exercise are to:

1. Explore the current protocols and the patterns of compliance across different segments of the offender population;
2. Determine whether underlying non-compliance patterns are systematic and lend themselves to statistical modeling; and
3. Identify quasi-experimental approaches that, if successfully implemented, will enable CSOSA to augment current protocols to adjust for relevant public safety factors and provide even closer monitoring of high-risk offender groups.

We expect these exercises to result in a set of exploratory analyses that will help guide decision-making with respect to offender drug testing. Specifically, these exercises will

(1) produce descriptive analyses of current drug testing compliance, (2) produce statistical algorithm for probabilistic approaches to offender drug testing, (3) produce research designs to support quasi-experimental approaches to testing newly proposed drug testing protocol.

When appropriate, the data will be analyzed using descriptive and/or multivariate statistics. After collecting data, we will analyze data and present findings in easy to read evaluation updates.

This research 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:

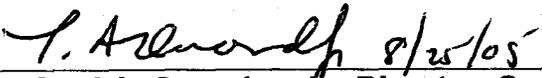
- A probabilistic approach to drug testing will enable CSOSA to more accurately detect substance use among it offender population (**CSF: *Intermediate Outcome [Drug Use]***).
- Although this may result in a substantial increase in the percentage (not incidence) of positive drug tests, this provides an opportunity to better assess Agency performance in the area of reducing drug use among the offender population.
- Enable the Agency to be better equipped to address treatment needs of a group of offenders for whom drug use detection is more challenging.

**CSOSA/PSA RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE  
EXPEDITED REVIEW RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT**

---

**Related Issues or Concerns:**

- None

<b>I ACCEPT the RRC recommendation</b>	<b>I DO NOT ACCEPT the RRC recommendation</b>
	
<b>Paul A. Quander, Jr., Director, Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency</b>	
Comments:	

05-07

**(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, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
(202) 220-5332  
[Calvin.Johnson@csosa.gov](mailto:Calvin.Johnson@csosa.gov)

**(2) Title of the study**

Exploratory Analyses of CSOSA's Offender Drug Testing Protocols

**(3) Purpose of the project**

Current offender drug testing protocols are structured to detect drug use, monitor patterns of substance abuse, and an additional sanction option. Every offender entering supervision is placed on an identical regimen regardless of other known factors (e.g., public safety risk, substance abuse history, etc.). Such an approach is extremely costly with a limited return on the upfront investment.

The primary objectives of this research exercise are to:

1. explore the current protocols and the patterns of compliance across different segments of the offender population,
2. determine whether underlying non-compliance patterns are systematic and lend themselves to statistical modeling,
3. identify quasi-experimental approaches that, if successfully implemented, will enable CSOSA to augment current protocols to adjust for relevant public safety factors and provide even closer monitoring of high-risk offender groups.

We expect that these exercises will result in a set of exploratory analyses that will help guide decision-making with respect to offender drug testing. Specifically, these exercises will (1) produce descriptive analyses of current drug testing compliance, (2) produce statistical algorithm for probabilistic approaches to offender drug testing, (3) produce research designs to support quasi-experimental approaches to testing newly proposed drug testing protocol.

The expected benefits to CSOSA are measurable in terms added value in the areas of increases public safety and offender re-entry support. We estimate that roughly 10 percent of all drug screens are positive. This is likely the result of over testing at the screen and offender level. By testing this assumption, we hope to identify improved methods for accomplishing the same supervision goals – increased public safety and re-entry support – by making more informed decision about the use of drug testing resources.

**(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, extraction of offender drug testing data from WinTox, and interviews with staff in Community Supervision Programs and Toxicology. 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.

When appropriate, the data will be analyzed using descriptive and/or multivariate statistics. After collecting data, we will analyze data and present findings in easy to read evaluation updates.

**(6) Anticipated results**

We anticipate that research findings will highlight areas of opportunity to increase efficiencies and target high-risk offenders for enhanced testing regimen. These findings will enable CSOSA to target offender drug testing resources for closer monitoring of offenders that present the greatest risk to public safety.

**(7) Duration of the study**

These research exercises will be conducted throughout the course of the 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 the effective strategies required to generalize findings to the overall offender population. Most sample selections will involve extracting either an entry or exit offender cohort. All data will be extracted from archived versions of SMART and/or WinTox (starting FY03).

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. Dwight Estrill (Program Analyst) will conduct initial data extraction and cleaning activities.
4. Jenny Mlinarcik (Statistician) will conduct initial data extraction and cleaning activities.
5. Jerome Robinson (Director Forensic Research) will serve as advisor the project.

**(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. Finally, we will need CSOSA OIT staff to ensure that statistical and statistical support applications are accessible and available for use between normal business hours.

Additionally, ORE will use contract support to assist with project design(s), validate statistical models, and draft interim and final documents. Therefore, we will need to promptly attend to payment following delivery of products and invoices.

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

As mentioned above, we expect that these exercises will move us from a decision-making to decision-ready posture. CSOSA is prepared to explore whether more efficient and effective ways exist for offender drug testing. Following full-implementation of study

findings, we anticipate that CSOSA executive staff will be in position to make an informed decision pertaining to its offender drug testing procedures.

Additionally, we expect that the probabilistic approach to drug testing will enable CSOSA to more accurately detect substance use among its offender population (*CSF: Intermediate Outcome [Drug Use]*). Although this may result in a substantial increase in the percentage (not incidence) of positive drug tests, we see this as an opportunity to better assess agency performance in the area of reducing drug use among the offender population. At a minimum, we will be better equipped to address treatment needs of a group of offenders for whom drug use detection is a bit more challenging.

## **(12) List of deliverables**

1. Evaluation Updates (yearly – when funded)
2. Proposed Study Methodology (yearly – when funded)
3. Summary Findings for FY Congressional Budget Justification (Performance Budget Sections)