



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

**RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT
FOR AGENCY RESEARCH**

DATE: JANUARY 10, 2011

I. RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Principal Researcher: Laura E. House, Senior Program Analyst, Office of Research, Analysis and Development (RAD), PSA.

Title: Assessment of the DC Pretrial Services Agency's In-house Treatment and Substance Abuse Program

Institution: DC Pretrial Services Agency, RAD, through a contract with Maxarth LLC (RFP-10-00013), which has subcontracted for this project with the Urban Institute.

Description:

For more than 25 years, PSA has integrated drug use prevention, intervention, and treatment into its supervision framework. To enhance its in-house treatment services, in 2009, PSA launched its Support, Treatment, & Addiction Recovery Services (PSA STARS) program. This pilot effort created a single combined treatment program that provides Drug Court and New Directions defendants with a wider array of group offerings and allows PSA to better match individual treatment need to specialized group interventions. Enhancements include a more intensive group treatment regimen to lessen the demand for expensive residential treatment; gender specific groups; specialty treatment for defendants with co-occurring mental health disorders and substance abuse issues. Despite these successes, PSA has identified several potential shortcomings that may affect the availability or efficacy of its substance abuse treatment programs. The purpose of this project is to provide PSA this independent review.

This request applies only to PSA.

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

Type of Data and Analysis:

This is to be a multi-method research project involving quantitative data analysis as well as qualitative analysis. Evaluation activities supporting the qualitative analysis include

- 1) **Literature review of evidence-based practices (EBP)** recommended for intervening with substance-abusing adult offenders;
- 2) **Review of secondary data sources** such as program manuals and staff training materials, participant orientation materials and treatment manuals to chart current practice;
- 3) **Semi-structured interviews with PSA STARS staff** and other programmatic and substantive EBP experts to identify critical elements that should be applied to DCPSA STARS;
- 4) **Focus groups with STARS clients and their family members** (see pages 9-10 of proposal for details, including confidentiality and consent procedures provided in Appendices C and D of proposal); and
- 5) Possibly **observation of clients arriving for and interacting with staff at the beginning of group treatment sessions** (the treatment sessions themselves will not be observed by the vendors). These are designed to detail the organizational structure, policies, and practices of the STARS program, as well as the viewpoints of key stakeholders and clients, regarding the nature, purpose, and quality of the treatment; the extent to which treatment is perceived as instrumental in helping participants avert relapse and move in positive directions in other areas of their lives and possibly the effect of the STARS on the external treatment system.
- 6) The **quantitative analysis of program records** will be conducted to identify characteristics of the population screened, assessed and treated, as well client outcomes, and to assess performance measures currently used by DCPSA. Historical data from PRISM will be used from the period for which the STARS program has been in operation and possibly a year before that. All identifying information will be redacted and replaced by ID numbers that cannot be used to identify individual clients.

**CSOSA/PSA RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE
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II. RECOMMENDATION

The RRC recommendation for this study:

Support Support with Conditions Do Not Support

The RRC considers the proposed study to be Agency research as defined in Research and Evaluation Policy Statement 1201, including review by HCM with regard to the need for union notification. The RRC recommends support of this request as described in the proposal.

I ACCEPT the RRC recommendation	I DO NOT ACCEPT the RRC recommendation
Susan W. Shaffer, Director, D.C. Pretrial Services Agency	
Comments:	