

Minutes from the ARIOB Outreach, Technical Assistance & Communications Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 28, 2016, 1:30p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
ICJIA, 300 W. Adams Street, 2nd Floor – Small Conference Room, Chicago

ARIOB in attendance: Cristin Evans (for John Maki)

ARIOB by phone: Darlene Bearden (for Pat Hayden), Judge James Radcliffe (Ret.), Kathy Saltmarsh,

Non-ARIOB in attendance: Mary Ann Dyar, Lindsey LaPointe

Welcome and introductions

It was determined there was not in-person quorum so no votes would take place and the meeting would proceed for discussion-only purposes. The goals of the meeting were to discuss impact of budget impasse on ARI operations in SFY16, prepare recommendation to ARIOB on communication strategy with sites and external parties, and discuss outreach strategies for SFY17 given budget impasse.

Approval of minutes

Without quorum, the committee was unable to vote on the approval of minutes from the August 28, 2014; January 9, 2015; and July 21, 2015 meetings. These were deferred until a future meeting.

Brief review of technical assistance provision to sites

Lindsey reported that without a state budget, technical assistance to sites has been greatly curtailed; but contact with sites has continued through informal site visits, attendance at graduations, meetings with stakeholders around specific issues, and information-sharing about training opportunities, etc. She reported on a recent visit to Will County to attend a drug court graduation, which was also attended by a representative from the Illinois Policy Institute (IPI). The Will County State's Attorney's Office has hired drug court graduates. Kathy posed the idea of a "yearbook" of ARI graduates that could help with peer support and networking.

Staff has provided targeted technical assistance for Cook County related to the corrective action plan (CAP) process, and Judge Radcliffe has been working with the 20th Judicial Circuit, in particular in Randolph County where the cuts to Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) have put that local program on hold. A similar CAP process based on an outside evaluation could be helpful to the 20th.

Lindsey reported on an upcoming panel featuring ARI at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration. Normally at this time, ARI staff would be preparing for the All-Sites Summit, which has been cancelled without a state budget. Staff is planning an informal convening of ARI site representatives attending a community justice summit in Chicago in April.

Update on impact of the state budget crisis on ARI sites

Mary Ann said that staff has been conducting regular check-in calls with all 21 sites to collect updates on the impact of the budget impasse on operations and ask about their plans going into the SFY17 renewal process. She highlighted the Cook County Board's review of state-funded programs to make decisions on where to make cuts, with the two Cook ARI programs at risk. Kane County is terminating its contract with ARI in part due to burdensome reporting requirements. ARI has preferred to keep contracts open so that, once a budget is passed, payments can be made without delay. Other themes from the calls include: decisions to continue operating are being made by county administrators and service providers based on the amount of debt they can take on while awaiting a state budget, and most sites are unsure about continuing into SFY17 if there is still not a SFY16 budget by April.

Kathy asked whether sites' willingness to continue would be impacted if the governor includes an increased appropriation for ARI in his SFY17 budget, but it depends on whether sites trust the funds will actually be available. Mary Ann noted that some sites that used ARI funds to start drug courts to comply

with the state mandate would maintain the drug courts but possibly at reduced levels by developing other funding sources (drug court fees, non-profit donations). Lindsey mentioned that many sites have stopped new enrollments and/or have made cuts impacting fidelity to evidence-based practices. With fewer diversion options available, Macon County has reported increases in IDOC commitments and in the jail population. Kathy asked about the impact of the Affordable Care Act in mitigating treatment cuts.

The group discussed documenting the impact of ARI on local criminal justice systems and estimating the cost of bringing evidence-based practices to scale. This information would be useful for the Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform as it looks at the effect on community corrections of its 25% reduction goal in the prison population. Lindsey mentioned the current initiative in Cook County with the Center for Court Innovation, to bring to-scale the lessons learned by the ACT Court throughout the Criminal Division.

Discussion on communications and media

The group discussed how it would be best if messages on impact of impasse come from local sites. The more specific the human interest story, the better; and it would be helpful to build the narrative about how programs like ARI produce better outcomes than prison at less cost. It is also good to leverage how ARI aligns with the work of the Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform.

In terms of informing the Oversight Board and other external parties, staff prepared factual talking points about the impact of the budget impasse on ARI. Cristin suggested providing this information to the Authority Board, which represents the entire criminal justice system.

Discussion of outreach and SFY17 planning

Mary Ann raised the question of what the ARIOB should communicate to sites at this point and whether more caution should be urged. Kathy suggested continuing encouragement but leaving it up to local sites to determine their path forward with acknowledgement that it is difficult to plan in the current environment. Lindsey asked about posing different options to sites to consider, including suspending their programs. The suggestion was to hold off on communication until after the governor's SFY17 budget address, which will hopefully include positive news for ARI. Kathy noted that it is important to look at trade-offs between funding ARI, especially in top committing counties, and spending money on prisons.

Old business/new business

Staff reported that the 2014 annual report was released in limited distribution. Kathy suggested distributing it to budget staff and Commission members. As noted earlier, the 2016 All-Sites Summit is on hold until budget situation resolved, but staff will continue to look for ways to engage and support sites. Kathy suggested looking for foundation support. The Authority's Research & Analysis Unit is publishing a series of ARI-related evaluation reports (client feedback [across 10 sites], intensive supervision, etc.), and there is a plan to overhaul the ARI website. Kathy expressed interest meeting with different judges working on ARI programs across the state.

The meeting was adjourned.

(Approved 5/16/16)