



Get to Know the Technical Assistance Team for the Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Yolo County

The Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) at Community Resources for Justice has brought together five well-informed and highly experienced individuals to serve as the primary Technical Assistance Team for the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) in Yolo County. In addition, Meghan Guevara, JRI Project Director and Zach Dal Pra, JRI Technical Assistance Coordinator, provide leadership and oversight across all of the local JRI sites with which CJI is working.

Judith Sachwald

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for Yolo County Justice Reinvestment Initiative

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For 31 years, Ms. Sachwald worked for the State of Maryland in 10 different agencies including the Office of the Governor. During her 7-1/2 year tenure as Maryland's Director of Parole and Probation, Ms. Sachwald led and managed a community corrections agency with nearly 1,400 employees who supervised approximately 70,000 individuals assigned to probation, parole, mandatory supervision or home detention. She guided the development and implementation of a research-based, data-driven approach to supervision designed to increase public safety, hold offenders accountable to victims and the public, and assist offenders in becoming law-abiding, responsible and productive. External research found that under this new approach to supervision, offenders were 38 percent less likely to be arrested or violate the rules of supervision.

Since November 2007, Ms. Sachwald has been working as a consultant assisting jurisdictions with leadership, organizational development and evidence-based practice implementation challenges. She served as the editor for the recently published text book, Implementing Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections and Addiction Treatment (by Faye S Taxman, PhD and Steven Belenko, PhD.) Ms. Sachwald has served on numerous committees and task forces and she chaired the Executive Board of the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA in 2002-03 and 2006-07. She was a member of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center for a more than a decade and continues to be actively involved the Center's work. Ms. Sachwald currently serves on the Editorial Board for Perspectives, the professional journal published by the American Probation and Parole Association.

Ms. Sachwald has received a number of awards including the 2007 Innovations in Public Service Individual Award from the Maryland Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration and the 2007 Maryland Champion for Crime Victims Award from the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center.

Kristin Bechtel

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Kristin Bechtel serves as a Senior Research Associate at CJI. Ms. Bechtel's research background focuses on corrections, risk and needs assessment development and validation, development and validation of risk screener tools, and risk instruments for specific offending population, program evaluation including process, outcome and program evaluations, reentry programs, case management, implementation and training of core correctional practices, as well as policy development and analysis. She is currently supporting several CJI initiatives aimed at identifying data-driven strategies to inform correctional policy and practice.

Ms. Bechtel has conducted extensive research and has multiple research reports and publications in the validation of adult, juvenile and pretrial risk and needs assessment tools and the development of risk screener tools and trailer assessments as well as program evaluation. She has designed case management tools to assist with providing feedback to case management positions on their use of core correctional practices. Regarding program evaluation, Ms. Bechtel is trained on the CPC, CPC-Group form, CPAI, CPAI-2000 Core Correctional Practices and has evaluated a variety of treatment modalities as well as different treatment and educational process groups using these instruments. In addition, Ms. Bechtel has developed a group observation form and training to monitor fidelity and group facilitation.

Overall, this varied training and research experience has afforded Ms. Bechtel numerous opportunities to engage legislators, key stakeholders, systems directors, and practitioners in the development, implementation and evaluation of various criminal and juvenile justice policies and practices. Ms. Bechtel is committed to synthesizing current research with a project's particular data, and then communicating the results in a framework that is readily interpretable to a variety of audiences and fully supported by evidence. Drawing on her diverse experience, Ms. Bechtel is able to build and analyze complex data sets, distill the findings into policy recommendations, and provide guidance and advice to key leaders as they navigate complex policy decisions. Her understanding and manner for presenting the research and its practical implications in real world settings are geared toward policy implementation and successful collaboration.

Kristen Nielsen, MSW

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Kristen Nielsen joined the CJI team in December of 2010 and brings excellent organizational, problem solving, and communication skills. She works across a variety of projects including organizing logistics for complex projects, such as technical assistance work in California and the Justice Reinvestment Initiative. In addition, she is currently part of the team working in New York to assess organizational functioning as part of a comprehensive effort to implement evidence-based correctional policy and practice. As part of this work, Ms. Nielsen has been trained in Qualtrics software, an online survey system.

Ms. Nielsen has been in the social work field for the past twelve years and prior to working for CJJ, she spent eight years working with offenders on the county, state and federal level in the pre-release and reentry realms. Her experience includes time as a Program Director, Manager and therapist. She has worked with offenders throughout the country including in Harlem, NY, where she worked for one of the first Parole Reentry Courts in the country.

Ms. Nielsen received her Bachelor's Degree in Human Services from Northeastern University in Boston, MA and her Master of Social Work degree from New York University.

Sarah Savage

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Sarah Savage joined CJJ in February 2011. Her focus has been on assessing readiness for evidence-based practices (EBP) and building capacity for measurement, evaluation, and reporting. Additionally, she is supporting an initiative aimed at identifying data-driven strategies to inform correctional policy and practice. As a member of the Roca team, she is involved in implementation evaluation activities aimed at assessing the practice components of Roca's intervention model targeting at-risk young people. Ms. Savage is also working on multi-method organizational assessments of New York State's Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and New York City's Department of Probation to assess readiness for EBP. As part of the Bureau of Justice Assistance Justice Reinvestment Initiative, Ms. Savage is part of the Technical Assistance team working with two JRI sites in California – Santa Cruz and San Francisco. Lastly, Ms. Savage is a member of a CRJ cross-agency initiative with representatives from the Community Strategies (CS) division of CRJ referred to as the Collaborative, with members from CJJ and CS working on a multi-phase project to increase readiness of CS for a systematic program evaluation.

Prior to her work at the Crime and Justice Institute, Ms. Savage spent a year as an Assistant Research Scientist at the University of Georgia, Institute for Behavioral Research. While at UGA, she analyzed data from the National Treatment Center Study on substance abuse treatment programs at the organizational level for multiple manuscripts and poster presentations. Before UGA, she worked as an Assistant Director of Evaluation at the Walker School in Needham, MA, a residential and day treatment facility for children presenting serious emotional disturbance. At Walker, Ms. Savage provided evaluation and measurement support internally, assisted with the implementation of an electronic clinical treatment planning and reporting system, delivered training sessions to staff across agency departments, and also worked in a compliance capacity with respect to critical incident reporting. Ms. Savage's responsibilities include quantitative and qualitative data analysis, technical assistance and training, project administration, writing and editing. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of New Hampshire and a BS in Marketing/Communications from Babson College.

Michael Wilson

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Michael Wilson works around the country as a cost-benefit and criminal justice research consultant. In this role he works as a peer reviewer for the Washington State Institute of Public Policy's cost-benefit model and provides technical assistance in implementing cost-benefit models to multiple states. He also teaches cost-benefit seminars and webinars through the Vera Institute of Justice, the Pew Center on the States, and the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA).

In his previous position, Michael worked as an economist for the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) and as the Statistical Analysis Center Director. He analyzed sentencing policy and projected fiscal impacts for the Governor's Office and State Legislature. He also created the cost-benefit model for Oregon's criminal justice system. In addition to presenting this model nationally, he used it to help inform Oregon's Legislature, the Governor's Office, and other commissions and taskforces. He has been recognized by the JRSA for his criminal justice research in Oregon and has received the Phillip Hoke Award for Excellence in Analysis multiple times. Prior to joining the CJC he worked as an economist for the Oregon Employment Department and also worked as an adjunct faculty member at Point Loma Nazarene University. Michael received his bachelor's and master's degree in economics from the University of California at San Diego (UCSD).

CJI Leadership and Oversight for JRI**Zachary Dal Pra**

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Zach Dal Pra joined the Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice in 2011. His technical assistance work is focused on helping state and local jurisdictions to implement evidence-based practices and develop justice reinvestment strategies along with utilizing his facilitation skills. Mr. Dal Pra recently retired as the Deputy Chief of Administration for the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department. Mr. Dal Pra has served as deputy chief for thirteen years and had been with the department since 1981. As a deputy chief, he has served as Community Supervision Chief, Assessment & Programs Development Chief and Administration Chief, responsible for the Staff Development and Training office, Research & Policy Development, Information Technology, and Compliance Monitoring division, which includes Indirect Services Unit and large administrative caseloads of low risk offenders. Mr. Dal Pra has a B.A. in Psychology from Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois and a Master of Education degree from Northern Arizona University. He has written articles on reengineering community corrections and identifying risk instruments for community corrections. Mr. Dal Pra has also worked as a consultant for the National Institute of Corrections for 10 years.

Meghan Guevara, MPH

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Meghan Guevara joined the Crime and Justice Institute in 2005. She currently focuses her technical assistance efforts on data-driven system reform initiatives, with the goal of using corrections resources effectively and efficiently. Ms. Guevara has informed the development of research-based public safety policy at the state and local level, facilitated organizational change efforts in adult and juvenile corrections agencies, and provided training to corrections professionals on diverse topics including evidence-based practices, quality assurance, and leadership. She currently manages several technical assistance initiatives, including Justice Reinvestment, support to California probation agencies on the evidence-based implementation of recent legislative reforms, and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. Ms. Guevara is also a member of CJI's Leadership Team.

Prior to joining CJI, Ms. Guevara worked extensively in program development, training, and education. Ms. Guevara managed community-based wellness initiatives and specialized in developing and implementing health education and violence prevention curricula with juvenile offenders and other high-risk youth. Ms. Guevara received her Master of Public Health Degree in social and behavioral sciences at the Boston University School of Public Health.