

**Strategies to Promote Public Safety
Through the Effective Management of Sex Offenders in the Community**

**Recommendations to the Office of Justice Programs
from the National Summit Working Groups**

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Part I.
**Overview: The Management of the Sex Offender:
The Multiple Needs of the Field
And the Many Roles the Federal Government Might Play**

Background

The *National Summit: Promoting Public Safety Through the Effective Management of Sex Offenders in the Community* was held November 24-26, 1996, in Washington, D.C. The format of the Summit was a mix of plenary presentations by topical experts and facilitated working groups. One of the primary purposes of the event was for participants to provide recommendations to the Office of Justice Programs on the training and technical assistance needs of the field. Thus, the focus of the event was largely on the work of the Summit participants.

Summit participants were divided into *ten* working groups that remained together over the entire event. Nine of these were general; one was devoted exclusively to the issues of juvenile sex offenders. Participants were assigned to the nine general groups in advance to assure that each one had a representative mix of disciplines and geography. Each work group had a facilitator and at least one planning group member. The facilitator captured the significant points of each discussion and the final recommendations on a flipchart. Each group voted on its recommendations during the final session so that we could have a sense of the importance participants attached to their various suggestions. All of these flipchart sheets were returned to us, were transcribed, and form the basis for this report. In addition, the recommendations that follow include suggestions from the topical round tables and a few presenters whose remarks consisted primarily of recommendations.

Overview of the Recommendations

We have divided the recommendations into three main categories:

- ▶ Knowledge Development and Dissemination
- ▶ Training and Technical Assistance
- ▶ Public Education and Acceptance

As has been requested, we have placed the recommendations into bulleted lists in each category. We have listed them according to the importance placed on them by the work groups in their "voting". We avoided interpreting -- we have tried to stay as faithful as possible to the language from their discussions while also combining essentially the same recommendations made by more than one group.

In examining the recommendations of the work groups and the points from the discussions that preceded them, and reflecting on the larger picture that they present of the perceived needs of the field, we have realized that the responses the Summit participants are asking for are quite complex. Those responses require many different kinds of actions, over differing time frames, and are aimed at multiple levels of government and the public at the same time. Given the complexity of the task of managing sex offenders within the context of our current political climate, this complexity of needs should not be surprising.

We believe that the recommendations, when taken together as a whole, present a rich, dynamic, and full strategy for creating the optimal set of conditions for the effective management of sex offenders in our midst. To understand how full it is, however, requires looking beyond the lists of recommendations. As requested, Summit participants have provided specific, concrete recommendations. Each one is, therefore, by definition only a piece of a larger whole. We have attempted to describe briefly the overall strategy, including a summary diagram. The diagram is, of course, only a two-dimensional representation of a far more complex scheme.

To make the best use of the strategy offered by the Summit's recommendations will require a much fuller examination and discussion. What follows is a brief overview.

The Targets of Assistance

The efforts to manage sex offenders safely in the community go on at many levels of the government and within different public and community contexts. Because each one makes the others possible, the Summit participants are asking for assistance with all of them *at the same time*.

1. At the most basic level, effective sex offender management begins at the individual case management stage. It involves a *case team* of a treatment provider, a probation or parole officer, local law enforcement officers, and perhaps representatives of a victims' organization. The team operates within a local neighborhood or town where the offenders lives and/or works.

That team needs substantive assistance on management and treatment strategies, on working together as a team, and on involving and working with the community.

The community needs to be educated about sex offenders and about taking care of their own and their children's safety.

2. The work of that team happens in the context of the city, town, or county's criminal justice system, local government, victims' organizations, and health care

and social service delivery systems. Those agencies must work together to determine local policies, practices, and use of resources that permit the case team to do their work and to have the tools that they need.

That *local policy group* needs basic education on sex offenders and effective management strategies; they need assistance on working together as a policy group, on creating the inter-agency agreements and policies needed for effective management, and on educating their citizens.

The county, city, or town's citizens need education about sex offenders and about the best use of resources to manage them.

3. Much of what happens on the local level is made possible by the laws, policies, and funding decisions at the state level. Criminal laws, sentencing parameters and options, registration and notification laws, confidentiality laws, parental rights, parole conditions, funding of resources, and many other critical dimensions are determined by *state legislators, governors, and state agency directors*.

These state-level policymakers need basic education on sex offenders, their effective management, and the impact of ineffective management and dispositions on the rest of the system. They need opportunities to understand the impact of their laws, policies, and funding priorities on the safety of the community, and on the line staff throughout the criminal justice, social service, and mental health systems.

4. All the actors and agencies, whether state, local, or community-level, whose work impacts these issues are represented by national organizations. The individuals in those positions are heavily influenced by the opinions and activities of their national organizations.

The *national associations, coalitions, and organizations* need to be educated about sex offenders and their effective management, and about the role of their constituencies in that management. They need assistance to educate their memberships so that *their members will be open to receiving the education and assistance provided at the local and state level*.

The Kinds of Assistance Needed

The assistance needed as identified by Summit participants falls into three general categories:

- I. **Knowledge development and dissemination.** Participants identified several

areas that need additional or original research. More urgently required, however, is the compilation of existing knowledge and information, and its packaging and dissemination in a wide variety of formats and settings to reach all of the different audiences described above. Videotapes, information briefs, short articles, clearinghouses, and personal case studies were just some of the vehicles suggested.

2. **Training and technical assistance.** Training and education needs vary according to the kinds of decisions that the individuals are called upon to make. These range from intense substantive training for treatment providers and probation and parole officers, to basic education for legislators. Other policymakers and decision makers, like judges, prosecutors, and mental health agency directors, need substantive education. Training needs to be provided in both single-discipline settings and to multi-disciplinary teams. These need to be provided simultaneously: That is, judges, prosecutors and legislators need to be attending educational sessions at their annual conferences, while receiving complementary training and technical assistance in their roles as members of working groups, commissions, or policy groups.

The content and format of the training must also be varied to respond to the different pressures, experiences, and responsibilities of the audiences. Legislatures, for example, need short, easily remembered facts, examples, and anecdotes that they can readily relay to their constituencies. Law enforcement officers, on the other hand, will respond more readily to case studies of actual offenders who resemble the all-too-human faces they see every day, and to the acknowledgment of their key roles in crime investigations and initial victim contact.

Like training, technical assistance must respond to differing needs related to roles and responsibilities. An elected prosecutor is both a public official with a fearful electorate to reassure and an agency director with many employees to direct and guide and with other agencies to negotiate critical working relationships. Police captains have to direct criminal investigations and lead community meetings. Judges have to sentence individual cases and work with prosecutors and probation chiefs to create policies on supervision and revocations.

3. **Public education and acceptance.** Everyone who works with, on, or about sex offenders needs help with educating the public. From the police chief charged with community notification to the legislator appropriating funds for treatment rather than a new prison, they all need assistance in getting real information to everyday, fearful citizens *and to their own peers who influence those citizens*. This means having articles in police, prosecutor, and legislators' newsletters and

magazines; it requires easy-to-reproduce fact sheets, judicial training sessions, speakers for PTA meetings, and videos to show at community meetings.

The Timing of Efforts

Because of the interdependence of all of these efforts, timing is crucial. If probation and parole officers are going to be encouraged to work in a collaborative manner with treatment providers, local police officers, and victims' groups, then the heads of all of *those* agencies have to understand the value of a collaborative approach. If local policy groups of judges, prosecutors, probation chiefs, social service and health care agency directors, and local government officials are to receive training on the collaborative approach and making needed inter-agency agreements then those individual policymakers have to know why they should agree to attend such training. Clearly, much early work must be done to prepare key constituency groups for later efforts.

Similarly, if longitudinal research is to be most useful, the sooner it is begun the more helpful it will be.

The Recommendations

The specific recommendations within the three categories are listed below. As indicated, we believe these are best appreciated within the context of the overall strategy described briefly above.

**OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON
TRAINING FOR TARGETED AUDIENCES**

AUDIENCE	TOPICS	METHODS	TRAINERS
Law Enforcement Officials	Effective management of sex offenders; and The collaborative model.	Presentation; Video.	
Judges	Etiology and treatment of sex offenders; Sensitivity training; and Sentencing options.	Through existing national judicial education programs; a Through participation in team trainings.	
Legislators	Strategies for managing the public's concern with sex offenders and Key issues around sentencing and managing sex offenders.	Through NCSL and ALEC.	Include victims
Probation and Parole	Identification of sex offenders; Risk assessment; Treatment; and Identifying qualified treatment providers.		Experienced practitioners
Treatment Providers with Probation and Parole Staff	Essential elements of effective treatment; Standards for providers; Collaboration; and Tracking progress in treatment.	Cross training for both disciplines.	

Part II.
Training and Technical Assistance for Teams

The primary recommendation to the Office of Justice Programs is the provision of team-based training to local jurisdictions around the country on the collaborative approach to managing sex offenders in the community. The Summit should be used as a model approach to this training.

Each of the ten working groups strongly recommended that the Office of Justice Programs provide training to local teams on the effective management of sex offenders in the community. The following sub-recommendations also emanated from a number of the working groups:

- ▶ In order to ensure the success of this approach, the training effort should be preceded by efforts to “get the teams ready” for this training and “create the environment for collaboration.” For those jurisdictions that do not already have experience with local collaborative teams, emphasis should be placed on building these teams in advance of the training. Where local planning groups or policy teams already exist, this effort should build on those experiences and groups.
- ▶ The recipients of the Office of Justice Programs’ training should be local, multi-disciplinary policymakers and practitioners. They should be considered local planning groups with responsibility for planning local responses to effectively managing sex offenders.
- ▶ Summit participants underscored the essential presence of judges, law enforcement and community members as a part of these planning groups. There was strong sentiment that victims groups should be included in the local communities’ efforts. Other critical team members include prosecution and probation and parole.
- ▶ Several working groups recommended that this training be provided as broadly as possible, potentially reaching every state. One working group underscored the need to ensure that this training saturate each state, including rural areas. Videos and video conferences were recommended as methods to accomplish this saturation.
- ▶ Similarly, one working group recommended that the Office of Justice Programs sponsor a “train the trainers” event for a representative from each state -- an effort to build the capacity within each state to train state and local officials on this topic.

Follow-Up Technical Assistance

Half of the working groups emphasized the importance of making available follow-up technical assistance to local planning groups following the team-based training events described above. The following sub-recommendations related to follow-up technical assistance were made:

- ▶ One group recommended that the follow-up technical assistance for local planning groups include site visits to jurisdictions that have developed model approaches to some aspect of this work.
- ▶ Similarly, another working group recommended the establishment of “mentoring sites.” These jurisdictions would serve as training sites to jurisdictions from around the country and would be prepared to train or advise visiting jurisdictions on key elements of the successful management of sex offenders.
- ▶ It was also recommended that funds be made available to support jurisdictions that had participated in team-based trainings. These funds would be used to support activities such as consultation from expert technical assistance providers, and for retreats and other key events for local planning groups.

Part III.
Training for Targeted Audiences

In addition to recommendations for team-based training, a number of Summit working groups also recommended specific training efforts for targeted audiences. Although the recommendations that follow generally came from only one working group, the recommendations themselves were high on the priority list for the group that proposed them. In addition to standard workshop settings, working groups frequently recommended the use of videos and video conferencing as a method to reach a broad audience economically.

Training for Law Enforcement

- ▶ Provide training to law enforcement on what is known about the most effective management of sex offenders, including and emphasizing the collaborative approach to the management of sex offenders. This training would be enhanced by using actual cases as examples, particularly focusing on successful treatment interventions. This training can be provided either through presentations or through videos.

Training for Judges

- ▶ Provide training to judges on the following topics: the etiology and treatment of sex offenders, sensitivity training on working with victims and offenders, and sentencing options. Provide this training through the existing national judicial educational programs.

Training for Legislators

- ▶ Provide training to legislators on effective strategies for managing the public's concern with sex offenders, focusing on the issues of effective strategies to manage sex offenders and the role sentencing plays in this. Include victims in these training efforts and provide the training through organizations such as the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

Training for Parole and Probation

- ▶ Provide training to probation and parole staff on the following issues: identification of sex offenders (understanding that not all sex offenders are charged with sex offenses), risk assessment, treatment approaches for sex offenders, and the development of criteria to assess and monitor the effectiveness of treatment providers. Use experienced field practitioners as trainers.

Training for Treatment Providers and Probation and Parole

- ▶ Provide a cross-training program for treatment providers and probation and parole staff on: assessing and monitoring the effectiveness of treatment providers, the essential elements of effective treatment, collaboration, and monitoring an offender's progress in treatment.

Part IV.
Knowledge Development

In addition to recommendations on training and technical assistance efforts, many working groups strongly recommended investment in additional research. The following recommendations were made:

- ▶ Conduct research that will result in the development of juvenile typology profiles.
- ▶ Develop or refine a taxonomy of sex offenders.
- ▶ Conduct additional research on risk assessment, including: validation and cross-validation of risk assessment instruments on diverse samples of offenders, and risk assessment of female offenders.
- ▶ Conduct an outcome-based study of the effectiveness of the collaborative model.
- ▶ Identify a standard, or universal, set of measurable outcomes by which to gauge the effectiveness of treatment programs.
- ▶ Conduct research on the efficacy of various treatment and supervision approaches with specific offender populations.
- ▶ Conduct research on the fiscal impact of various legislative efforts to respond to sex offenders. Further, it was recommended that this effort result in a “tool” that jurisdictions can use to measure the fiscal impact of their own legislation.
- ▶ Conduct research on female sex offenders.
- ▶ Conduct research on victim trauma, including: the impact of the delay of detection on the victim, and the trauma victims experience when their victimization is detected through the polygraph and acted upon by the authorities.
- ▶ Conduct research on the biological contributors to sexual offending.
- ▶ Conduct research on the integration of the polygraph and the sexual predator law.

Part V.
Knowledge Dissemination

The Development of Resource Materials

Many working groups recommended that the Office of Justice Programs fund the development of written materials in order to disseminate existing knowledge. The terms “manual,” “source book,” and “a set of briefing papers” or “fact sheets” surfaced repeatedly within these recommendations. Several working groups suggested that the Office of Justice Programs develop these materials and distribute them through the national professional associations. Summit participants suggested that these source materials be developed on the topics listed below:

- ▶ The collaborative process. This document would describe the collaborative process in terms of the roles various actors play and how to engage these individuals in a collaborative process. One working group specifically recommended the inclusion of information on the most effective ways to involve victims and recovering offenders in the process.
- ▶ Confidentiality.
- ▶ A synthesis of current research and practice. Some working groups described this as a short document that takes a case study-approach that illustrates what is working, for whom, and why. Others described this as a “state of the art” document that describes the state of knowledge and research. Other groups recommended that through this process, a state of the art model be developed and described.
- ▶ Risk assessment. Several groups suggested a document that describes the state of the research on risk assessment and risk assessment instruments, written specifically for judges, attorneys, and other criminal justice practitioners (i.e., non-researchers). One working group was even more specific, recommending a document that describes risk assessment instruments and other psychological tests, written specifically for judges and attorneys, to enable these consumers to evaluate individual examiner’s procedures when they are described or presented.
- ▶ Terminology. Create a manual of terms that advances a universal language in this field.

The Development of Protocols, Guidelines and Standards

In addition to the written materials described above, a number of working groups recommended the promulgation of standards and guidelines for the field. Those recommendations include:

- ▶ The development of model legislation/laws. It was recommended that a group of legislators, lawyers, civil liberty representatives and policymakers be convened to draft model legislation/laws that are constitutionally sound and respond to the complexity of both adult and juvenile sex offenders.
- ▶ The development of guidelines for the use of the polygraph, including emerging policies and procedures.

- ▶ The development of a training curriculum to be disseminated nationally and used in a variety of training settings.
- ▶ Most notable and frequent was the suggestion that a set of nationwide standards of practice be developed, to include standards for supervision of sex offenders and standards for treatment providers. At least one working group suggested that a set of licensing criteria be established for treatment providers. Several groups suggested that standards be developed to use as criteria for the selection of appropriate treatment providers for sex offenders.

Part VI.
Public Education and Acceptance

In addition to those recommendations that clearly fell into the training and technical assistance categories and the information development and dissemination categories, there were several additional recommendations that surfaced repeatedly across working groups.

Establishment of a Resource Center

A number of groups called for the establishment of a repository of information on sex offenders including best management practices, treatment strategies, collaboration, research and so on, to provide information on the best thinking and most current knowledge in the field. Various called a “clearing house,” a “living inventory,” or a “place people can go to get more information,” the key theme was for a complete, up-to-date, synthesized repository of information that is easy to access. (Several groups recommended the Internet as a sensible medium.) At least three of the working groups recommended this specifically and one group identified it as their highest recommendation.

Development of Public Education Campaigns

At least three of the ten working groups offered recommendations focused on public education efforts. The following specific recommendations were offered:

- ▶ Develop a public education campaign to better inform the public about the sex offender and dispel pervasive myths about this population.
- ▶ Develop specific and individualized education “campaigns” for the following targeted audiences: legislators, media, victims, and practitioners. These education efforts should be designed to educate individual audiences on basic information about sex offenders (who they are, who their victims are, how the system responds to them, etc.) and on promising practices in the field.
- ▶ Recognizing that victims and victims groups are powerful forces in the establishment of a communities’ approach to sex offender management, provide education to victims groups on effective lobbying.

Working groups suggested using print, audio, video, video conference and the Internet to disseminate these educational materials and messages.

Articulation of Victims Rights

Two working groups recommended that the Office of Justice Programs take a leadership role in developing a "Victim's Bill of Rights," articulating what victims should expect from the criminal justice system -- (e.g., rights to be heard, privacy, notice, attendance, confrontation, restitution, counseling, etc.) and to promote a common understanding of those rights nationally.

National Oversight

Several working groups recommended that the Office of Justice Programs convene a group of "best thinkers" to monitor, guide and facilitate the spread of knowledge and experience throughout the nation on this topic. The National Summit served as the first event of its kind: the bringing together of the myriad of individuals, agencies and constituencies critical to the effective management of this unique population in our communities. Participants spoke to the need for a continuation of this exchange through both training and documentation efforts, and suggested that this be accomplished under the oversight of a national task force or "think tank."