



One less offender.

One less crime.

One less victim.

What would you like from Yamhill County's criminal justice system? One Less Victim? One Less Crime? One Less Tax Dollar spent on offenders? How about all of the above?

Your county leaders have been working on a strategy for a safer community. In August 2010, Yamhill County was chosen as one of seven nation-wide seed sites for Phase II of the National Institute of Corrections' Evidence- Based Decision Making Initiative (EBDMI). This was a technical assistance grant designed to help jurisdictions analyze their criminal justice systems according to an established framework, with the goal of creating an implementation plan for evidence-based decision making throughout the system.

The Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making is based on four core principles. First, the professional judgment of criminal justice decision makers is enhanced when informed by evidence-based knowledge, i.e. what has been proven to work. Second, every interaction within the criminal justice system offers an opportunity to contribute to harm reduction. Third, systems achieve better outcomes when they operate collaboratively at the individual, agency, and system levels. Finally, the criminal justice system will continually learn and improve when professionals make decision based on the collection, analysis, and use of data and information.

Yamhill County engaged leaders and key stakeholders, and created a Policy Team consisting of Presiding Circuit Court Judge John Collins, Commissioner Mary Stern, Sheriff Jack Crabtree, District Attorney Brad Berry, Defense Attorney Carol Frederick, McMinnville Police Chief Ron Noble, Newberg Police Chief Brian Casey, Victim Services Director Debra Bridges, Health & Human Services Director Silas Halloran-Steiner, and Community Corrections Director Ted Smietana. This team developed a Charter that includes our Vision, Mission and Values; a system-wide scorecard; and specific goals with action plans.

Our Mission: As a team of criminal justice professionals, we will act collaboratively to improve long term public safety by implementing proven, cost-effective system improvements in our jurisdiction. Our mission will be to reduce crime, have fewer victims, and promote safer communities.

Our Vision: We envision a safer Yamhill County community where criminal justice professionals work together, utilizing data, research and evidence-based practices. Yamhill County will experience enhanced public safety, a reduction in the number of victims, greater offender accountability, and a

reduced threat of harm through application of proven practices at all phases of the criminal justice system.

Through the EBDMI, we conducted a comprehensive review of our local criminal justice system from arrest through discharge from probation or post-prison supervision. This work resulted in the creation of four workgroups focused on the following areas: 1) pre-trial release; 2) prosecution and sentencing; 3) correctional treatment programs; and 4) special needs offenders (those with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and/or traumatic brain injury). The work groups are comprised of many knowledgeable and dedicated people currently working in the system. The strategies we developed are designed to ensure offender accountability while increasing efficiency, reducing community harm, promoting public safety, and producing tangible cost savings through reinvestment in cost-effective measures.

Yamhill County has already made significant progress in analyzing our criminal justice system and is developing a strong plan to implement improvements across the system that will significantly broaden the use of evidence-based decision making. We should note that evidence and data will always be used to supplement, not replace, the knowledge and experience of our criminal justice professionals.

Through the EBDMI process, Yamhill County has enhanced our already strong collaboration and communication among stakeholders. Your county leaders understand that the goals of risk reduction and community harm reduction are paramount. Your safety and security are of the utmost importance to us.

Last month Yamhill County was chosen by the National Institute of Corrections to receive 18 more months of technical assistance in Phase III of the EBDMI to implement the improvements we agreed upon in Phase II. As funding decreases and public awareness is raised, the EBDMI comes in the midst of a perfect storm. Your county leaders understand we cannot conduct business as usual; we must spend the limited resources we have in the most effective and efficient ways.

This is an exciting time in the field of criminal justice and we are thrilled to be involved in this process. We look forward to providing information and updates about our progress. Please check out the county website for more information about the EBDMI at www.co.yamhill.or.us or contact us at EBDMInfo@co.yamhill.or.us with your questions or concerns.