Evaluation Plan for the Offender Accountability Act

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January 2000

Washington State Institute for Public Policy

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Summary

The 1999 Washington Legislature passed E2SSB 5421, the Offender Accountability Act, reforming the way adult criminals, under the jurisdiction of the state, are supervised in the community. The legislation directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to carry out an evaluation of the Act. The Institute is required to report to the Legislature on the design of the evaluation by January 1, 2000. This report describes the research design the Institute intends to follow during the course of the evaluation of the Offender Accountability Act.

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Document Number: 00-01-1201

WASHINGTON STATE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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The Institute's mission is to carry out practical research, at legislative direction, on issues of importance to Washington State. The Institute conducts research activities using its own policy analysts, academic specialists from universities, and consultants. New activities grow out of requests from the Washington legislature and executive branch agencies, often directed through legislation. Institute staff work closely with legislators, as well as legislative, executive, and state agency staff to define and conduct research on appropriate state public policy topics.

Current assignments include projects in welfare reform, criminal justice, education, youth violence, and social services.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the Washington Legislature adopted Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5421. The bill modifies the way adult criminals under the jurisdiction of the state are supervised in the community. The new legislation is commonly referred to as the Offender Accountability Act (OAA).

The legislation directs the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to carry out an evaluation of the OAA and submit a research design by January 1, 2000. This document describes the overall approach the Institute will take for this evaluation, with the understanding that the specific research models will only be able to be identified as the OAA is actually implemented by the Department of Corrections (DOC). If substantial modifications are needed during the multi-year evaluation, the Institute will revise this document and re-submit it to the appropriate legislative committees.

The key policy and program elements of the OAA can be summarized in the following categories. Under the OAA the state will:

- **Establish community custody ranges.** The legislation directs the Sentencing Guidelines Commission to develop and present to the Legislature ranges of community custody for different offenses. The ranges will apply to those offenders placed on community custody after first serving a prison sentence.

- **Focus resources on higher-risk offenders.** The OAA directs DOC to concentrate its non-prison-based resources on higher-risk offenders. Using formal risk-assessment tools, and taking into consideration the harm done, the relationship with victims and victim input, as well as place safety, DOC will deploy resources—such as community corrections officers, funds for drug treatment, sex offender treatment, and employment counseling programs—to those offenders who pose the greatest risk of re-offending while in the community.

- **Hold offenders** a**ccountable.** The bill allows DOC to establish and modify an offender's community custody conditions. The bill also expands DOC's authority to sanction violators without returning to court. These graduated sanctions may include daily reporting, electronic monitoring, work crews, jail time, or other intermediate sanctions. Further, county clerks are authorized to assume the collection of the legal financial obligations of offenders.

- **Establish community partnerships and a community-oriented approach to offender supervision.** The Department intends to implement certain elements of the OAA with a "community-oriented" approach to offender management. Under this approach, at least some DOC community corrections officers will work with local police, community leaders, community groups—both public and private—crime victims, and businesses in geographically concentrated areas where community risk is the highest.

- **Evaluate the act's cost-effectiveness.** The legislation directs the Institute to evaluate the effect of the OAA on recidivism and other specific outcomes. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to provide the Legislature and executive agencies with "bottom line" information on the OAA and its implementation. That is, do the key elements of the OAA achieve the desired outcomes, and do they do so cost-beneficially?

SECTION II: EVALUATION APPROACH

This section discusses the approach the Institute intends to take to evaluate the OAA. The outcomes for measurement are listed first, then the overall research strategy is discussed, followed by a presentation of the cost-benefit analysis planned for the OAA evaluation. Finally, the principal data sources are identified.

1. Key Outcomes to Measure

The outcomes for this evaluation were identified by the Legislature in the originating legislation.[1] The Institute is directed to focus on ten specific outcomes, expressed here as the basic research questions for the evaluation.

Does the Offender Accountability Act…

1) …Reduce recidivism?
2) …Affect the number and seriousness level of violations of conditions of community custody?
3) …Increase the use of graduated sanctions by the Department?
4) …Reduce unauthorized absences from supervision?
5) …Increase the payment of legal financial obligations by offenders?
6) …Reduce the use of unlawful controlled substances by offenders?
7) …Reduce the use of alcohol when abstention or treatment for alcoholism is a condition of supervision?
8) …Increase the number of offenders who are employed or participate in vocational rehabilitation?
9) …Increase participation in vocational and education programs?
10) …Reduce the use of public assistance?

As discussed, the OAA is actually a combination of several key policy and program changes: staffing allocation based on offender risk, increased use of graduated sanctions, community-oriented offender management, and targeted drug, sex offender, and employment treatment programs, among other program elements. Therefore, the Institute's evaluation will estimate, where possible, how each of these programmatic and policy elements of the OAA affect the ten basic research questions listed above.

[1] These ten questions reflect the direction to the Institute in Section 16 of E2SSB 5421.

2. General Research Strategy

The evaluation strategy is intended to provide the Legislature and the executive agencies with "bottom line" information on the OAA and its implementation: *Do the key elements of the OAA achieve the desired outcomes, and do they do so cost-beneficially?* This type of program-specific information should be useful to Washington policymakers in making adult corrections policy, program, and budget decisions in the years ahead.

The Institute will rely on several evaluation techniques to gauge the effectiveness of key elements of the OAA. In all cases, we will select the technique that offers the greatest scientific certainty given the data that is available and the circumstances of implementation. The five techniques are summarized here and then discussed in more detail.

- First, wherever possible, we will use an *experimental design* to test the effectiveness of particular elements of the OAA. There may be only a limited number of opportunities to employ this strongest-of-all research design, but the Institute will use this approach whenever circumstances allow.
- Second, when experimental designs are not possible, we will use a *pre-post research design.* In this type of study, we will control statistically for factors measured with DOC risk assessment instruments, as well as other variables. This pre-post approach is possible because DOC began implementing a research-proven risk assessment instrument *prior* to implementing the OAA. It is anticipated that these instruments will allow the unique opportunity to control comprehensively for a wide variety of factors that might otherwise confound interpretation of OAA effectiveness.
- Third, in situations where the first or second design are not possible, we will use a *post-only statistical approach* to estimate the effect of certain OAA elements on particular outcomes. In these situations, we will attempt to control for sample selection bias using appropriate statistical techniques.
- Fourth, for some of the legislatively directed outcomes, data limitations may preclude the use any of the first three research designs. In this event, we will report *aggregate-level time trends* in the outcome and attempt, where possible, to determine whether the OAA had any effect on the outcome.
- Fifth, we will also implement a particular evaluation design, different from the previous four approaches, to estimate the effectiveness of DOC's community-oriented supervision model on reducing crime levels in Washington.

Collectively, these approaches will measure changes in the key components of the OAA. From there, the Institute will estimate the costs and the benefits of each component.

Step One: Use experimental designs when possible

Researchers consider random assignment evaluations to be the best method for conducting evaluations. These true experiments employ random assignment of participants to treatment and control groups. Any observed differences in outcomes can then confidently be attributed to the differences in the program being studied. In general, a random assignment approach is not feasible for evaluating the OAA, because the OAA is being implemented statewide and the sentencing and programmatic reforms cannot be randomly assigned to some offenders and not to others.

It may be possible, however, to identify some limited opportunities to use a random assignment approach, or "near" random assignment approach, for certain elements of the OAA. In particular, in attempting to determine whether certain programmatic options are effective—for example, drug treatment or employment assistance programs—DOC funding restrictions may create opportunities to use a "waiting line" research design, which is a form of random assignment. Suppose, for example, that more offenders are eligible for drug treatment than can actually receive the treatment due to funding restrictions. Those eligible offenders, matched by the risk assessment instrument, can be placed on a waiting list for drug treatment; some eventually will receive the treatment and some will not. If this situation arises during the course of the evaluation, the Institute will use the opportunity to test specific elements of the OAA—the drug offender program in this example—with the random assignment evaluation model. The Institute is using this approach in its evaluation of the Community Juvenile Accountability Act programs pursuant to 1997's E3SHB 3900.

Another situation—separate from the waiting line approach—that may afford an opportunity to use a "near" random assignment evaluation, could arise if DOC phases in different elements of the OAA at different times, such as the Spokane Re-Entry pilot project (a community oriented offender management program). To use drug treatment as another example, suppose that as the substance abuse treatment program is initiated, it is not available statewide, either in all institutions or in certain communities. If this situation arises as the OAA is implemented, it offers, for research purposes, the possibility of using a random assignment approach for testing whether a program achieves outcomes.

With the exception of these two possibilities for random assignment, however, the remaining steps in this research strategy rely on statistical models that are "quasi-experimental" in nature. That is, instead of using a random assignment approach, they use statistical methods to create comparison groups to test whether the elements of the OAA are effective. The type of non-random assignment research design that the Institute will use will depend upon the availability of data before and after OAA implementation. The following steps in the Institute's research strategy, therefore, are designed to provide information to the Legislature and DOC for the more likely case where random assignment is not possible.

Step Two: When experimental designs are not possible, use a pre-post "quasi-experimental" research design, controlling for offender characteristics with risk assessment and other information.

In this type of study, we will control statistically for factors measured with DOC risk assessment instruments, as well as other variables.

The difficulty in pre-post studies usually comes in knowing whether the groups that are being compared are alike. In this instance, however, the evaluation is aided by the risk assessment information that the Department has already implemented. The Department began applying a sophisticated risk assessment instrument, the LSI-R (Level of Supervision Inventory – Revised) in 1999. Thus, we have good information on a population of offenders who received traditional supervision services prior to the OAA.

For these types of pre-post studies, the general model will take the following form:

(1) OUTCOME = *f* (OAASTAFF, OAATREAT, OAASANC, OAACOS, LSI-R/OTHER-Risk, X, e)

where the variables are described in Table 1, and e is an error term. This model indicates that evaluating the outcomes of the OAA will be a function of the type of OAA program effect we are measuring and the controlling variables of the risk assessment instruments and other information about offenders under the OAA, compared to similar offenders prior to the OAA. For example, this evaluation model would be able to estimate the effects on recidivism (one of the OUTCOME variables) of the OAA staffing allocations changes (as measured by OAASTAFF) after controlling for risk assessment and other information (as measured by LSI-R/OTHER-Risk, and X). Because we have reason to believe that the risk-assessment instruments and other factors that we can measure (such as an adult offender's juvenile criminal history) have a demonstrated ability to predict recidivism, these pre-post models should be quite strong in their ability to test the degree to which OAA program elements are effective. While this type of research design is not as strong as a random assignment evaluation, it should be reliable enough to detect most program outcomes.

Step Three: When the previous designs are not possible, use a quasi-experimental post-OAA research design, controlling for offender characteristics with risk assessment and other information, and correct for sample selection bias.

In trying to measure the effect of the OAA on certain outcomes, we may not be able to employ either the random assignment or pre-post research designs just described. In this situation, we will use a post-only statistical approach to estimate the effect of certain OAA elements on particular outcomes. This means that instead of comparing similar groups of offenders before and after the OAA, we will use statistical techniques to test for program effects only for those *after* the OAA was implemented. It is usually harder to conduct reliable evaluations in this

situation and it is necessary to control for sample selection bias using appropriate statistical techniques.[2]

Examples of when this approach might be necessary could be when determining whether the OAA's drug treatment programs or graduated sanctions achieve reductions in the use of unlawful controlled substances or alcohol by offenders. In this case, it is unlikely that urinalysis data (a measure of the outcome) will be available for a pre-OAA group, so it will not be possible to conduct a pre-post analysis. In addition, it may not be possible to use a "waiting line" random assignment approach as described previously. We will then use a post-only research design where we estimate the effect in two stages. First, we will identify those offenders selected for the particular substance abuse treatment or sanction. Based on this statistical analysis, we then estimate whether the treatment or sanction had an effect, compared to a similar group not receiving the OAA effect, on the level of substance abuse. These models become more complicated than those described by the relatively simple equation (1) because sample selection adjustments are necessary to provide a fair test of outcomes.[3]

Step Four: When the previous research designs are not possible, use aggregate trends in outcome measures and test to see if the OAA made an apparent contribution to any observed changes.

When it is not possible to scientifically test the effects of the OAA, policymakers can benefit from a description of trends. For some of the ten outcomes listed on page 3, it will probably not be possible to design a research model such as those described in the previous steps of the evaluation strategy. In those cases, the Institute will attempt to at least report time-series trends in the outcome variable. It is hoped that at least some analysis can be made with these time series, particularly toward the end of the OAA evaluation. If these situations do allow for some analysis, it may be possible to test for statistical significance in any observed pre-OAA and post-OAA differences in the outcomes. A standard statistical procedure in this case would be to test for significance with a Chow test.[4] These models seek to determine if there is a "structural break" in a time series plausibly related to the event (in this case, the implementation of the OAA). This is clearly a weaker approach to estimating whether the OAA was responsible for certain outcomes, but for some variables it may be the only realistic alternative. The Institute will only use this approach if the superior alternatives described above are not available.

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[2] Sample selection bias can also distort findings in pre-post studies but, as mentioned, we have reason to believe that we will be able to control for that problem in the "Step Two" type studies. It may be necessary, however, to make an adjustment for sample selection bias in the pre-post studies described in Step Two, above.

[3] An example of these selection bias adjustment models as applied to adult corrections programs is provided in a U.S. Bureau of Prisons research paper: Pelissier, B., Rhodes, W., Gaes, G., Camp, S., O'Neil, J., Wallace, S., and Saylor, W. (1998) *Alternative Solutions to the Problem of Selection Bias in an Analysis of Federal Residential Drug Treatment Programs.* U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

[4] See, for example, Ramanathan, Ramu (1998) *Introductory Econometrics With Applications*, Fourth Edition, Fort Worth: The Dryden Press.

Step Five: Special study of community-oriented supervision: use a multiple time series analysis to test whether DOC's community oriented supervision approach reduces crime in Washington.

As described earlier, the Department intends to implement certain elements of the OAA with a "community-oriented offender management" approach to community corrections. Under this approach, at least some DOC community corrections officers will work with local police and community members, community groups, crime victims, and businesses in geographically concentrated areas where the risk of crime is the greatest. For example, unlike the more traditional community corrections model where an offender reports to a centrally located community corrections office, DOC intends to have its community corrections officers work in neighborhoods or communities as much as possible.

To evaluate this geographically based "community oriented offender management" approach, the Institute will use a research design that has increasingly been adopted to test the effectiveness of sentencing laws in the United States.[5] It is a design that employs pooled cross sectional and time series information in the analysis. Dependent variables in the regressions will include crime reported to the police by local city police departments and county sheriffs' offices. These total crimes will be broken down to the standard categories of crime contained in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, and they will be converted into crime rates by dividing by local population (data from OFM). This design will use data from all jurisdictions in Washington covering a period that includes several years prior to implementation of the OAA and several years after implementation of the OAA. Independent variables in the regression will include information, constructed by the Institute, on the degree to which DOC implements its community-oriented approach in different locations in Washington. Other independent variables will include an array of controlling variables that describe the social and economic conditions of the locales in Washington. The standard regression procedure for this type of research design is called the Fixed Effects Model. In such a model, dummy variables are included for each location in Washington and for each year in the analysis. These variables help control for underlying differences in particular locales as well as statewide yearly changes.[6]

For this study, the general model for the evaluation will take the following form:

(2) CRIMERATE = *f* (OAASTAFF, OAATREAT, OAASANC, OAACOS, LSI-R, X, D, e),

[5] See, for example, Marvell, Thomas B., and Moody, Carlisle E. (1996) "Determinate Sentencing and Abolishing Parole: The Long-term Impacts on Prisons and Crime." *Criminology* 34: 107-128. Marvell, Thomas B. (1995) "Sentencing Guidelines and Prison Population Growth." *Journal of Law & Criminology* 85: 696.

[6] Standard references for these types of studies include Hsiao, Cheng (1986) *Analysis of Panel Data.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Pindyck, Robert S., and Rubinfeld, Daniel L. (1991) *Econometric Models and Economic Forecasts*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

where the variables, described in Table 1, are defined geographically for specific locales in Washington and cover an annual time series before and after the OAA. The variable CRIMERATE is the Uniform Crime Report rate in a locale for a particular time and a particular crime, D is a set of dummy variables for each locale in the analysis and for each year in the analysis, and e is an error term.

Table 1

Types of Variables in the Evaluation Models to Estimate the Effects of the Offender Accountability Act

Variables	Description of Variable
OUTCOME	This variable is one of the ten legislatively directed outcome variables listed in this report. For recidivism measures, the Institute will use the definitions of recidivism prepared pursuant to legislative direction and described in the Institute report: *Standards for Improving Research Effectiveness In Adult and Juvenile Justice* by Dr. Robert Barnoski (December 1997). Specific data definitions of the other outcomes will be identified during the course of the evaluation.
OAASTAFF	This measure is a set of variables describing OAA staffing allocation patterns. A principal purpose of the OAA is to deploy community correction officers (CCO) to higher-risk offenders. With limited resources, DOC is to focus its attention on those offenders posing the greatest risk for re-offending while in the community. DOC will use formal risk assessment instruments, the LSI-R and other instruments, to gauge an offender's risk. DOC will then allocate its staff to the higher-risk offenders. The theory of this approach is that by deploying its staff based on risk, DOC will be able to reduce re-offending either through a rehabilitative effect or because the officers will be able to monitor offenders more closely and sanction them before offenses are committed. Offender-level variables describing these staffing level effects will be constructed as part of the evaluation.
OAATREAT	This measure is a set of variables describing program treatment participation. Another element of the OAA is a focus on drug treatment and employment counseling for indicated groups of offenders. The theory underlying these approaches is rehabilitative in nature; that is, the programs are designed to make a statistically significant reduction in the rate of recidivism, among other outcomes. The Institute will develop a set of offender-level variables to measure program participation, and the intensity of that participation.
OAASANC	This measure is a set of variables describing graduated sanctions used by DOC. An important element of the OAA is the increased use of graduated sanctions. These sanctions may include, for example, daily reporting, electronic monitoring, work crews, jail time, or other actions. DOC is directed to apply these sanctions with the intent that they will help reduce the risk of recidivism. The Institute will construct a set of offender-level variables describing the use of these sanctions.
OAACOS	This measure is a set of variables describing community-oriented supervision as implemented by DOC. DOC intends to implement a "community-oriented supervision" model as part of the OAA. The premise behind this approach is that assigning some CCO staff to neighborhoods, and working jointly with the police and others in a community, will lead to improved outcomes for offenders. The Institute will construct a set of offender-level variables describing the use of this approach by DOC.
LSI-R and other Risk Assessments	The "LSI-R" is the risk assessment instrument that DOC is using to categorize the relative risk of offenders sentenced to state supervision. The Institute will use the variables on this instrument in the evaluation models of the OAA. The Institute will also perform a validation study to determine how well the LSI-R actually predicts recidivism. DOC also has other risk assessment instruments, such as a sex-offender risk assessment instrument, that the Institute will use in the program evaluation models.
X	This is a set of other controlling variables that are not otherwise available for offenders in DOC's risk assessment instruments. Examples of these other variables might include an adult offender's juvenile criminal history, officially recorded employment history, and officially recorded substance abuse treatment history. In the geographically-based pooled cross-sectional time series model in Step 5, these variables will include information that describes a community's social and economic condition over time, among other covariates with crime.

3. Cost-Benefit Analysis of the OAA

The previous evaluation strategies will test whether the OAA, in its component parts, achieves changes in any of the ten outcomes of legislative interest. Once effects, if any, are determined using the models described above, the Institute will estimate the costs and benefits of the changes. The Institute will use its criminal justice cost-benefit model to estimate the "bottom line" impact of the effects. All of the analytical steps necessary to carry out these cost-benefit calculations will not be presented here; rather, they are described in the Institute's report *The Comparative Costs and Benefits of Programs to Reduce Crime: A Review of National Research Findings With Implications for Washington Sate (May 1999)*. It is anticipated that improvements will be made to that cost-benefit model during the course of the OAA evaluation and the latest version of that model will be used in the cost-benefit evaluation of the OAA.

To summarize how the cost-benefit model works, the Institute begins by estimating what a "unit" of crime is worth (long-term present value) to Washington taxpayers. This basic accounting includes both state and local marginal criminal justice costs, and case processing and sentencing probabilities in Washington. These marginal taxpayer costs include both operative and capital costs. Additionally, since most crime "units" are officially recorded crime measures such as the number of convictions or arrests, the model also estimates the number of criminal victimizations that are likely to be associated with the officially recorded crime units. The model then applies estimates of the value per victimization (again, in present value terms) to the estimated number of victimizations avoided. Thus, the benefit side of the cost-benefit model includes both taxpayer resources saved and victimization costs avoided. Additional work is planned for the cost-benefit model to measure the value to taxpayers and the economy of any change that a program can achieve in employment, public assistance, and substance abuse outcomes. If these effects are successfully added to the Institute's cost-benefit model, they will be included in the benefits of any changes that the OAA is estimated to bring about.

After estimating the benefits, the Institute's model subtracts the program costs from the benefits. As part of the OAA evaluation, the Institute will estimate the costs of implementing the OAA and its component parts. Once all benefits and costs are estimated, the resulting stream of cash or resource flows allows for the calculation of standard investment measures such as benefit-to-cost ratios, net present values, internal rates of return, and years to positive cash flow. Again, the Institute describes all of the steps required to complete these calculations in the aforementioned report.

4. Data Sources

The main data sources for this evaluation are administrative data sets maintained by the state of Washington. The principal offender-level data sources include:

- Department of Corrections OBTS (and its successor) database;
- Employment Security unemployment insurance wage file;
- Office of the Administrator for the Courts SCOMIS and DISCIS databases;
- Department of Social and Health Services ACES database;
- Sentencing Guidelines Commission criminal history database;
- Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs reported crime data;
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

In order to use these data for this project, the Institute will initiate, where necessary, a request with the Human Research Review Board to gain confidential access to this information.

After securing permission to use these data sets for purposes of evaluating the OAA, the Institute must merge the data to carry out the OAA evaluations proposed in this report. For example, to test whether the OAA employment programs work, the Institute will merge the Employment Security job data with the DOC offenders data. Then, using the research designs listed in this report, we will be able to estimate whether the OAA program has any effect on the number of offenders who are employed—one of the ten legislatively required OAA outcomes to be evaluated.

With the exception of the definition of recidivism, it is not possible at this time to specifically define the variables that will be constructed from these data sets for the analyses proposed in this research design. The recidivism variables will be defined to be consistent with the definition prepared for the Washington State Legislature.[7] The other variables, which will be constructed from the data sets listed above, will be defined as the evaluation proceeds and as the Institute works with the agencies and the data sets.

[7] See Barnoski, Robert (December 1997) *Standards for Improving Research Effectiveness in Adult and Juvenile Justice,* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

SECTION III: TIMETABLE FOR REPORTS TO THE LEGISLATURE

The legislation directing the evaluation contains a reporting schedule. The bill notes that by January 1, 2001, and

> *each year thereafter, the institute shall report to the legislature on the progress and findings of the study and make recommendations based on its findings. By January 1, 2010, the institute shall provide to the legislature a final report on the findings of the study.*

This long-term follow-up will allow sufficient time to test whether the OAA has significant effects on the ten outcomes listed by the Legislature.

Two Types of Reports. In keeping with this legislative requirement, the Institute intends to produce a series of annual reports on the OAA. These reports will fall into two general classes: "baseline reports" of the implementation of the OAA and preliminary examinations of its outcomes, and "outcome evaluations" of the OAA.

During 2000 and 2001, a significant task for the evaluation will be combining, for research purposes, the data sources listed on page 12 of this report. These data will be the primary source of information that will allow the Institute to estimate for the Legislature whether the OAA is achieving results. As these data are studied, the Institute will begin reporting baseline and outcome information to the Legislature in the annual reports, beginning with the January 1, 2001 report.

The "Baseline Reports" will be produced by the Institute annually. These reports will not be outcome evaluations describing whether particular aspects of the OAA has or has not achieved desired outcomes. Rather, these baseline studies will describe trends in most of the ten outcomes listed on page 3. While the baseline reports will not be outcome evaluations, they will be available early in the overall OAA evaluation and they will supply some preliminary descriptive views of the outcome data.

For example, in the January 1, 2001 Baseline Report to the Legislature, we will provide information on the annual employment status of non-prison-based offenders by DOC risk-assessment score. This will provide some useful insights into the employability of offenders, but it will not be a program evaluation indicating whether the OAA increases employment rates of offenders. That later study—an outcome evaluation—cannot be prepared until a few years after the OAA community custody sentences are imposed and treatment programs have begun. As the schedule indicates in Table 2, during 2000 the Institute will prepare baseline information on seven of the ten outcomes for inclusion in its January 1, 2001 report to the Legislature.

These baseline reports will also include "validation" studies of the DOC risk assessment tools. A validation study analyzes the degree to which a risk assessment instrument, such as the LSI-R, actually predicts recidivism. The studies can be useful in developing the weights that must be used in "scoring" an individual offender's risk and protective factors. During the course of the Institute's evaluation of the OAA, we will undertake a comprehensive validation study of DOC's risk assessment instruments and report the results in the annual "Baseline Reports" to the Legislature.

In the annual Baseline Reports, we will also present "process" information on the implementation of the OAA by DOC. The process information will include a general summary of the steps taken by DOC to implement the principal elements of the OAA.

The "Outcome Evaluations" are those studies described in the main body of this report. They are the studies designed to answer the ten legislatively directed questions of the OAA. These outcome evaluations, however, will not be ready for several years since the OAA will be phased in. The timing of the outcome evaluations is contingent on DOC implementing the OAA on a particular schedule, the length of follow-up time it takes to observe significant changes in each of the ten outcomes, and a period of time to perform the statistical analysis and report writing.

More significantly, certain aspects of the OAA will only begin as offenders receive, as part of their OAA sentences, "community custody" as defined by the OAA. These sentences will not take effect until July 1, 2000. So, for those offenders sentenced immediately to community custody, the evaluation "clock" can begin no sooner than the second half of 2000. For those offenders sentenced to prison, on the other hand, the evaluation "clock" will not begin until they serve their prison sentence and are released to community custody. Depending on the crime for which the offender is sentenced, the length of prison time will delay the OAA evaluation for most of the outcomes, such as recidivism.

Table 2, shows a tentative list of when we expect the first Baseline Reports to be published. We also show a column for the Outcome Evaluations, but we do not yet have dates for when we expect the first Outcome Evaluations to be produced. We should have a much better idea of those dates for the Institute's January 1, 2001 report to the Legislature, at which time we will update Table 2 with a list of the dates for the Outcome Evaluations.

Table 2

Expected Date for First Publication of Annual Baseline Reports and Outcome Evaluations to the Legislature on the Offender Accountability Act

OAA Outcomes to Be Evaluated (as listed in §16(1) of the Offender Accountability Act) ***Does the OAA Program Element...***	**Date of First Annual Baseline Report**	**Date of First Annual Outcome Evaluation**
...Reduce recidivism?	January 1, 2002	*
...Affect the number and seriousness level of violations of conditions of community custody?	January 1, 2001	*
...Increase the use of graduated sanctions by the Department?	Not applicable	*
...Reduce unauthorized absences from supervision?	January 1, 2001	*
...Increase the payment of legal financial obligations by offenders?	January 1, 2001	*
...Reduce the use of unlawful controlled substances by offenders?	January 1, 2001	*
...Reduce the use of alcohol when abstention or treatment for alcoholism is a condition of supervision?	January 1, 2001	*
...Increase the number of offenders who are employed or participate in vocational rehabilitation?	January 1, 2001	*
...Increase participation in vocational and education programs?	January 1, 2002	*
...Reduce the use of public assistance?	January 1, 2001	*

* As noted in this report, the first dates for Outcome Evaluations cannot be estimated at this time; the dates will depend on the community custody sentencing ranges to be adopted by the 2000 Legislature and the OAA implementation schedule by the Department of Corrections. The Outcome Evaluations should be ready for the Institute's January 1, 2001 report to the Legislature.