# Pending Research Prioritization

## Research Staff Availability

Three research lines that were either required or of high priority and that involved WSCCR’s two AOC-funded researchers have recently closed or matured so that less staff time is required. The result is a **staff availability of 0.65 FTE that can be assigned to new, high-priority research**.

* The legislative requirement to produce the **Residential Time Summary Report** was removed during the 2018 session. Staff time available: 0.05 FTE.
* The influential, recurring, and high-priority **Evaluations of Juvenile Probation Evidence-Based Interventions,** were taken over by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in 2018. Staff time available: 0.5 FTE.
* Aspects of **Recidivism Analysis and Reporting** have matured from development to routine. Staff time available: 0.1 FTE.

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* **Racial and Ethnic Disparity**: WSCCR has neither updated the 2012 Juvenile Court results nor expanded analysis and reporting to include dependency or any part of adult criminal case processing.
  + Justification: 2011 BJA Resolution, item (4) “Measure and evaluate progress in addressing…”
  + Staff estimate: First year activities will include conferring with stakeholders, development and testing of analysis and reporting modes, identification of data gaps, and outreach to courts, jails, and law enforcement to close the gaps. The first year will also see development of communication plans and dissemination of results. The second year will continue to require substantial work related to data development, and each year will require engagement with stakeholders. **First year staffing of 0.65 FTE, second year 0.4 FTE, following years 0.25 FTE.**
* **Therapeutic Courts:** There are at least 83 treatment courts operating in Washington State, and the number is likely to increase as more jurisdictions implement courts funded by the 0.1% local option sales tax. Evidence-based effective practices have been developed for adult drug courts, and experience with other forms of therapeutic courts is leading to similar development of practices for them. Therapeutic courts, their clients, and the public need to know whether effective practices are being used and whether individual courts are contributing to reductions in offending through their efforts.
  + Justification: 2012 BJA Resolution, item (3) “development, identification, and adoption of best practices,” and item (4), “collection of data through the Washington State Center for Court Research on Drug Courts and Other Problem-Solving Courts to evaluate and monitor outcomes and performance.”
  + Staff estimate: The number and diversity of therapeutic courts in Washington and the amount of work needed to engage with them all will require a phased approach. The easiest place to start would be where work has already begun, with adult drug courts. But even there, the **staffing required would be at least 0.5 FTE for at least the first three years.** There are four major components of the work:
    1. Data development: WSCCR has developed data for only one type of therapeutic court—adult drug courts—and even there the data omits important information about screening clients, treatment, and use of sanctions and incentives.
    2. Recommendations for research-based practice: these are well-developed for drug courts only, not for veterans’ courts, mental health courts, juvenile drug courts, or others.
    3. Assessing and providing feedback on program implementation: Site visits to all adult drug courts in 2014 and 2015 showed major departures from recommended practice in several courts.
    4. Reporting and engaging: A key factor affecting whether information is actually used is whether affected staff and managers are enlisted in a co-design process.
* **Pretrial Analysis and Reporting:** Data development, collection, analysis, and reporting are required so that stakeholders, administrators, and staff can understand operations and outcomes for pretrial and so that courts will be able to attempt incremental improvements and to see the results of attempts. Although courts should be encouraged to adopt validated pre-trial screening instruments and to review local policies on the use of bail, we lack the data from pre-trail decisions to be able to assess operations for any court.
  + Justification: There is steadily increasing attention and effort devoted to pretrial reform. National policy direction expected this summer (from the National Center for State Courts / Conference of State Court Administrators / Conference of Chief Justices) and Pre-Trial Task Force recommendations scheduled to follow in the fall will likely lead to changes in policies and procedures. The Judiciary should provide measurement, reporting and engagement in support of pretrial accountability and improvement.
  + Staff estimate: First year work will include conferring with stakeholders, developing standards for risk screeners’ to have comparable risk levels, identification of data gaps and working with pretrial units/ courts and jails on data development, co-design of measures and reporting with the courts, and supporting courts in the use of results for review of process and outcomes and for development of attempts at improvement. The second year will also require substantial effort with data development**. First year staffing: 0.65 FTE, second year 0.65 FTE, following years 0.3 FTE.**