SPOKANE COUNTY
DETENTION SERVICES
DIRECTOR JOHN C. MCGRATH

DATE: November 4, 2013

TO: Ms. Stephanie Happold, AOC

From : Ron Cunningham, Case Management Coordinator

RE: Access to Adult Static Risk Assessment

Ms. Happold,

We have been working with Regina McDougall in your office, via Mr. Gary Berg, Chief Deputy of the Spokane County Clerk's Office, to obtain access to the Washington State Adult Static Risk Assessment tool, (ASRA.) Ms. McDougal has requested we send you a formal application as our request now needs to go before the Data Dissemination Committee for consideration.

As you may know, in an effort to reduce recidivism, many of the nation's Corrections agencies are moving towards Evidence Based Practices to determine who is to receive attention in our financially strapped, overcrowded systems. All of the latest evidence shows that to have an impact on recidivism, efforts need to be steered toward the high risk offender, the ones most likely to commit subsequent crimes, and that those who are low risk should be diverted in other directions. Principle in these EBP programs is the use of a Risk Assessment tool to determine not only who remains in custody or moved to custody alternatives but which offenders need to be assessed further for the intensive programing that may keep them out of the system down the road.

Spokane County has been involved in a comprehensive evaluation of our Criminal Justice system for some time in an effort to increase efficiencies, reduce overcrowding and better utilize limited funding. One of the outcomes from this process was to separate the Detention Services Division from the Law Enforcement side of the house and make it an independent operation. As a result, Spokane County Detention Services is no longer a part of the Sheriff's Department and is now a separate county department reporting directly to the Board of County Commissioners. Additionally, the need to utilize a Risk Assessment instrument became apparent early on in the evaluation process. With the help of consultants hired by the county, various tools were reviewed and it was decided that the ASRA would be the best choice. It is validated for our population (an important factor when selecting a tool,) is automated and is currently in use and accepted by the local courts and our other partners in the system.

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We will be screening virtually everyone who remains in the system following first appearance, both felonies and misdemeanors, to further determine who needs to remain in custody or be released to other custody alternatives like EHM, partial confinement work crew, etc.) and, for those who remain in custody, who will receive a subsequent needs assessment to determine treatment/programming options. By using this accepted and validated tool, we hope to have an impact on our population numbers and focus our attention and limited resources where they are likely to have the greatest effect. Please rest assured we will treat this information with the same high level of confidentiality we already give the DISCUS, SCOMIS and ACCESS databases we use daily.

We respectfully request access to and use of the ASRA tool. We would be grateful with a timely response to our request as we are in the final stages of putting together our new screening and custody alternative programs and they all hinge on the use of the risk assessment. Our hope would be to have the ASRA in place by the end of this month so we can start the screening process in December. We plan to implement our changes at the first of the year.

Thank you for your consideration, if I can provide any further information or clarification, please contact me.