



CRIMINAL JUSTICE PHASE II: DEFLECTION, DIVERSION, AND ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

Background Review

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Summary: In March 2021, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee directed our office to evaluate the effectiveness of a broad range of current criminal justice approaches, spanning from front-end crime prevention efforts all the way to post-incarceration transitions. We approached this assignment by dividing our efforts into two phases. The first phase focused on reentry programs that begin while individuals are incarcerated, and which may continue post incarceration for clients under parole supervision. These programs are aimed at promoting successful outcomes for clients when they return to the community. Success occurs when a person can reintegrate with the community after prison and not commit another crime. We published the results of the first phase evaluation in July 2023 under the title [Criminal Justice: Reentry](#). The evaluation found that limited capacity hampers reentry efforts and that more information and better metrics are needed to measure program effectiveness.

We conducted this background review as the second phase of the evaluation. It is intended to survey and examine the front-end of the criminal justice system, focusing on evidence-based approaches that promote public safety, prevention, and alternatives to incarceration. Our goal is to give the Legislature information on the array of approaches currently being employed in Idaho.

Introduction

In this background review, our main purpose is to give the Legislature an overview: what approaches are being taken, what kinds of programs are being offered, which governmental entities are involved, and what kinds of clients are being served.

Background reviews, also called 24-hour reviews, are expedited reports that summarize best practices and publicly available information to meet the needs of legislators. This report does not make the findings or recommendations typically found in our evaluations. However, this report does offer information that should be useful to policymakers considering further action.¹

As a framework for understanding when and where the front-end approaches occur, we describe three distinct ways that individuals may sidestep being introduced into the system, avoid being sentenced, or serve time outside of jail or prison. A new term of art within criminal justice refers to steps in this process as “sequential intercepts.”² In a later section of this review, we provide more information on how Idaho’s behavioral health and criminal justice systems are working together to use the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) for mapping gaps and resources in serving individuals with mental health and behavioral health disorders and making recommendations for improvement.

The diagram below displays the framework we use in this review for discussing the front-end efforts and programs employed in Idaho.

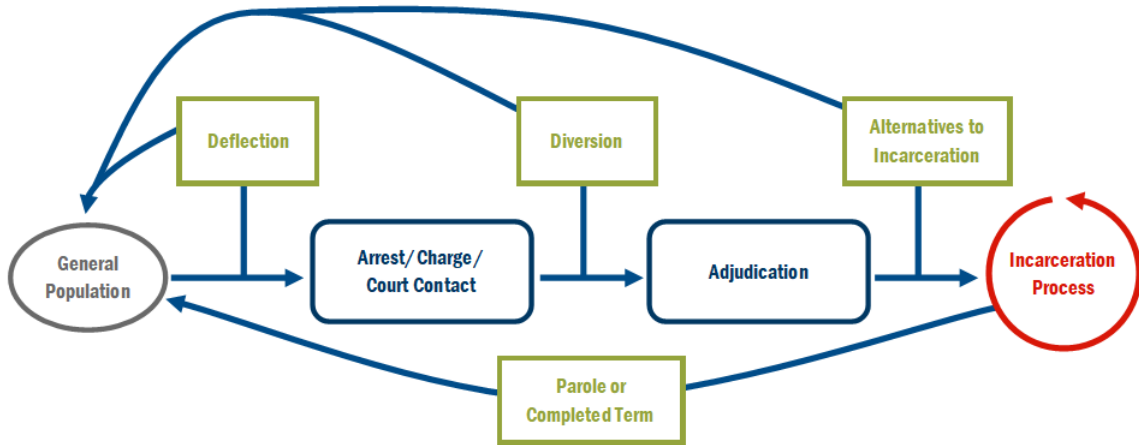
Deflection occurs when law enforcement (or other service providers who may respond to an incident) refers an individual directly to a community-based drug, mental health, or other intervention service, such as a crisis or assessment center. When deflection occurs successfully, it does not involve an arrest that results in a criminal charge. **Diversion** occurs after arrest and involves supervised probation granted by the court. It may result

¹ A 2016 WA state study of mental health jail diversion gives an idea of one option for the scope of such a study: [Jail Diversion for People with Mental Illness in Washington State, Study of Office of Financial Management](#). A more recent 2022 study from King County WA focused on just one county: [Incarceration Alternative and Diversion Programs: Improved Strategy, Data, and Coordination Could Help County Meet Goals - King County, Washington](#).

² [Criminal Justice System Sequential Intercept Model | SAMHSA](#)

in a suspended sentence or withheld judgment. **Alternatives to incarceration** refers to programs which may be available after sentencing, such as work release, house arrest, or assignment to work details or community service.

Exhibit 1 Pathways of the criminal justice process.



Source: Office of Performance Evaluations.

Deflection is a relatively new approach that has gained currency over the past decade.³ Parts of what we describe as deflection efforts in this review may still be considered diversion by different jurisdictions within the criminal justice system in Idaho. We make the distinction between deflection and diversion in this review because deflection does not involve an individual being charged and it may involve a variety of interventions and actors outside the criminal justice system.

³ [Deflection: A Powerful Crime-Fighting Tool That Improves Community Relations - Police Chief Magazine](#)

Deflection efforts in Idaho

There are a broad array of crisis intervention and treatment services in Idaho available to people in need. It is the availability and the capacity of the services that allow for the deflection of individuals from adjudication and incarceration. This happens by offering treatment that lowers their risk of committing offenses (prevention), or by directing them to services more likely than jail to address their needs and to protect the public. The Idaho Office of Drug Policy is the state agency specifically charged with coordinating prevention policies and programs that are aimed at reducing alcohol and drug use.⁴ In addition to the benefits from treatment for the individuals involved, there is the potential for costs within the criminal justice system to be reduced by housing and serving these people outside of jail or prison, and by reducing recidivism.⁵ For police officers, opportunities for deflection provide additional options for how they deal with individuals when they respond to events.

How much discretion law enforcement can exercise in deflecting people from arrest when minor offenses occur can vary by both policy and practice among jurisdictions. A program called LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion), which was pioneered in King County, Washington, has been gaining widespread interest nationally. This program focuses on individuals who have committed low-level drug crimes, prostitution, or crimes attributed to conditions of poverty. It deflects people who might otherwise be arrested into an intense, case management system.⁶ Several Idaho cities and counties have implemented or are exploring LEAD-like programs, such as ILED (Idaho Law Enforcement Diversion). Whether the program is truly deflection instead of a form of diversion, depends on the jurisdiction and how the program is structured. In a version of the program in Bonneville County, the focus is on first-time offenders who could benefit from substance abuse treatment. In cooperation with the Bonneville Prosecuting Attorney's Office, individuals referred by the police and approved by a Deputy Prosecutor can have their charges put on hold for up to a year. Upon successful completion of the program, the charges can be dropped. In other versions there are no initial charges made.

⁴ [About ODP - Substance Misuse Prevention](#)

⁵ [Jail Diversion for People with Mental Illness in Washington State, Study of Office of Financial Management](#)

⁶ [Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion \(LEAD\) - King County, Washington](#)



In the case of juveniles, deflection may take place when a youth is involved in or accused of a low-level violation. A police officer may exercise discretion to take no formal action, releasing the youth to a parent or guardian with a warning.⁷ It should be noted that for juveniles there are some offenses, called status offenses, which do not apply to adults. These include:⁸

Truancy (violation of school attendance policy)

Running away from or being beyond the control of a parent

Alcohol and tobacco age violations

Curfew violations

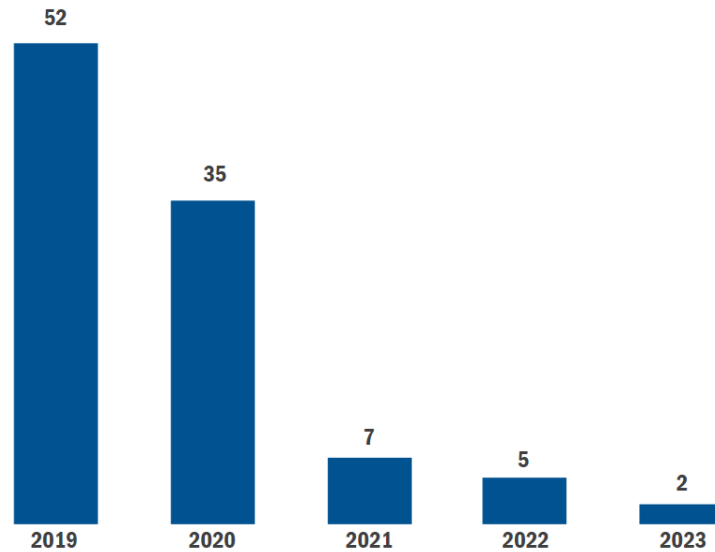
The occurrence of such status offenses, when law enforcement becomes engaged, offers opportunities to exercise their discretion. The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act⁹, reauthorized in 2018, calls on states to deinstitutionalize status offenders. The Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission, together with the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections and the Idaho Supreme Court, have worked to reduce the institutionalization of juveniles for status offenses in accordance with the federal requirements. As a result, status offenses violations have decreased 96 percent from 2019 to the end of 2023.

⁷ [The Court Process - Juvenile Court Ada County Boise, Idaho](#)

⁸ [IDJC Handbook for Families.pdf](#)

⁹ [Legislation - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#)

Exhibit 2 Status offender violations have decreased 96 percent since 2019.



Source: Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections

In lieu of institutionalization, and as a way to serve youth outside of formal contact with the justice system, referrals can be made to a Youth Assessment Center, such as The Bridge¹⁰ located in Boise. The Bridge is one of eight Youth Assessment Centers funded by the Idaho Legislature in 2023. These assessment centers provide a single point of contact where law-enforcement, schools, the courts, and community organizations can refer youth to services needed. The Bridge reports that approximately 54 percent of referrals for this center come from law enforcement. The centers are also places where youth can walk in on their own or with their parents to seek help.¹¹ During the most recent three quarters of reporting (July 2023 – March 2024) the centers served approximately 2,000 Idaho youth and families.

Title 20, Chapter 5 of Idaho’s Juvenile Corrections Act refers to a model called the Balanced Approach. The Act’s premise is that youth involvement in the justice system is socially and economically costly and that youth are best served by addressing needs and risk factors before behavior escalates to a level that necessitates involvement in the system. In the event that youth become involved, the focus then becomes how to limit their contact with the system. The functioning of the juvenile justice

¹⁰ [About Us - The Bridge](#)

¹¹ [FY24 Legislative Update.pdf \(idaho.gov\)](#); [Youth Assessment Centers - Juvenile Corrections](#)



system in achieving these goals was the subject of an evaluation and follow-ups by our office in 2014, 2016, and 2017.¹² The deflection efforts and programs described above directly serve to fulfill the intent of the Act.

Interventions to deflect both juveniles and adults from potential arrest and to direct them to services can be more effective if the professionals involved have the requisite training for dealing with people in crisis and knowledge of what services their community has to offer. Staff at the 911 call centers and the sheriff deputies who respond to calls are among those professionals.

The following is a list of examples of how local law enforcement in Idaho has been participating in the deflection process:

Providing Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for officers and having the officers work in teams with CIT clinicians.¹³

Dispatching officers to incident sites to assist clinicians when safety concerns exist.

Keeping vulnerable population registries, including information about repeat offenders, to help officers better know what to expect when there are behavioral health or other needs.

Using officers on patrol to transport people to crisis centers, assessment centers, or hospitals.

Having officers call crisis centers to get advice when dealing with crisis situations.

Participating in and developing LEAD-like programs.

Using school resource officers to promote school safety and crime prevention.¹⁴

¹² [1401 Confinement of Juvenile Offenders – Idaho State Legislature](#)

¹³ As an example of training, City of Meridian includes some training to recruits at the academy on how to deal with mental health issues, and then a more extensive 40-hour CIT course approximately two years after officers have gained experience on duty.

¹⁴ [School Resource Officer Program Outlined Example Document Edited 12-21-21.pdf](#)



Whether any of the interventions by officers lead to deflection depends on the outcome of the incident.

Crisis centers are for adults (18 years and older) who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. People in crisis can stay at the centers for less than 24 hours. There are currently seven centers in the state, one in each of the state's Public Health Districts. The centers are operated by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Behavioral Health.¹⁵

The examples of ways that law enforcement participates in deflection only scratches the surface of the many ways that deflection is occurring. In the SIM mapping process, referenced above, the participating counties report on the role of call lines, such as 988 (the crisis and suicide hotline) and 911 dispatch, and describe the efforts of other crisis teams and services, hospitals, behavioral health providers, and other first responders. In addition to mapping SIM in the county, these reports identify gaps in the system and priorities for change.¹⁶

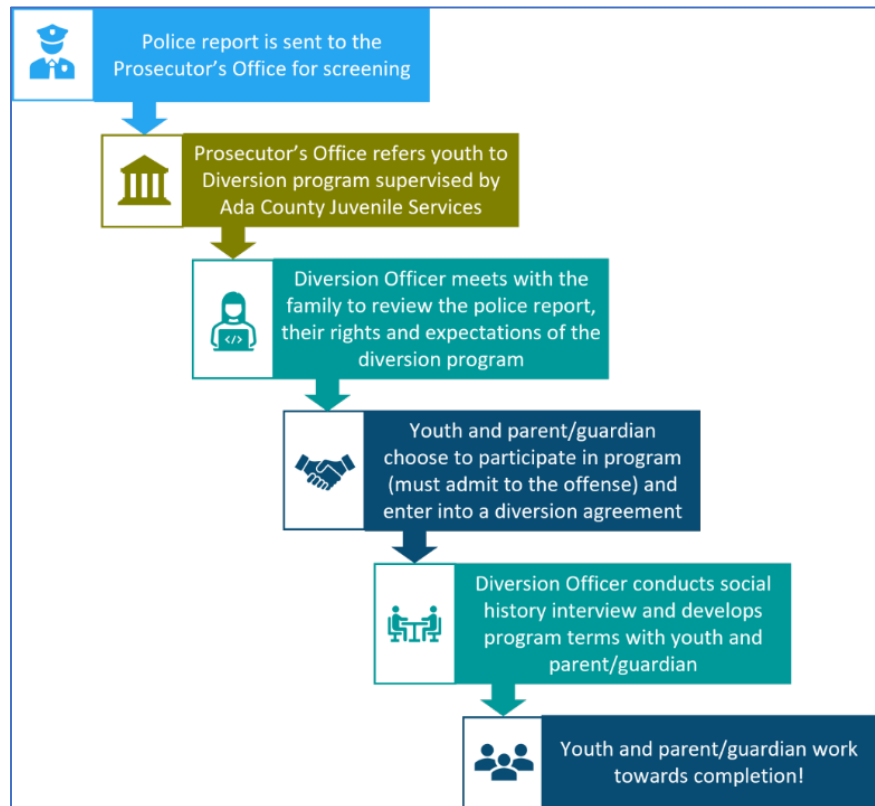
¹⁵ [Statewide Crisis Centers - Idaho Department of Health and Welfare; Behavioral Health Crisis Resources - Idaho Department of Health and Welfare](#)

¹⁶ The Statewide SIM Report, published in January 2024, together with individual reports from seven participating counties, can be found on the website of the Idaho Behavioral Health Council: [IBHC Resources - Idaho Behavioral Health Council \(IBHC\)](#)

Diversion efforts in Idaho

After an arrest occurs, diversion programs involve cooperation among multiple agencies and services: police, prosecutors, court staff, probation officers, service providers, and, particularly in the case of juvenile offenders, the involvement of family members or guardians. For juvenile clients, the following diagram from Ada County illustrates a step-by-step process for diversion.¹⁷ This process is a collaborative effort by police, prosecutors, the court, and families to address a juvenile’s offense without creating a formal court record.¹⁸ For other jurisdictions, processes and methods of diversion may differ.

Exhibit 3 Juvenile diversion program process.



Source: Ada County Juvenile Court

¹⁷ [Diversion Program - Juvenile Court Juvenile Diversion Program](#)

¹⁸ Juvenile Diversion is governed by state statute: [Section 20-511 – Idaho State Legislature](#)

Juvenile clients may also be served in special treatment courts if they have substance abuse disorders or serious emotional disturbance.¹⁹

For juveniles who are sentenced by the court, probation is still an option in lieu of detention. The juveniles are assigned probations officers, and detention alternatives may include community service, participation in programs, and substance abuse testing.²⁰

For adults, the administration of probation depends on the level of conviction. The Idaho Department of Correction is responsible for supervision of those convicted of felonies, whereas counties are responsible for supervision of those convicted of a misdemeanor.²¹ Each county decides where misdemeanor probation fits within its government structure, in many cases, for example, in the sheriff's office.

Under probation, participants may be given a suspended sentence or withheld judgment. A suspended sentence occurs when a judgement of conviction is officially entered, and the court imposes a sentence but suspends the execution of that sentence. A judgment withheld means that a sentence has not been imposed and the case is dismissed once the client successfully completes a probationary period. The ability to say that a case has been dismissed can be an important benefit to a former probationer seeking employment or housing.

The jurisdiction under which probation occurs and the type of offense that results in arrest does not necessarily predict the intensity of supervision nor the level of service that best meets the needs of the participant and the community.

For example, a person may appear in magistrate court on a misdemeanor charge, but that same person may have a history of committing serious felonies and be both high risk and high need due to substance abuse and/or mental health issues. By the same token, someone on probation for a felony charge may be low risk and low need, and therefore require a very low level of supervision and reporting requirements.²²

¹⁹ [Types of T.C. - Supreme Court](#)

²⁰ [Probation Services - Juvenile Court Ada County](#)

²¹ [Idaho State Constitution Article X; Section 31-878 - Idaho State Legislature](#)

²² An excellent source for understanding how the risk/need profile of people entering or reentering the criminal justice system affects their progress through the system can be found at the Annals of Research and Knowledge website: [ARK Stages \(allrise.org\)](http://allrise.org)



A special kind of probation occurs in Idaho’s treatment courts. It involves the participation of multiple governmental and non-governmental service agencies and offers intensive supervision and interaction with participants.

The Kootenai County Drug Court, established in 1998, was the first of Idaho’s treatment courts that focused on dealing with a growing drug-related caseload and with the understanding that drug dependency contributed to the revolving door of incarceration. The development of treatment courts in other counties soon followed.²³ In 2001, the Legislature, in recognition of the importance of treatment courts, passed the Idaho Drug Court and Mental Health Court Act. The act provided that the district court in each county could establish a treatment court. The goal of the act was “to reduce the overcrowding of jails and prisons, to reduce alcohol and drug abuse and dependency among criminal and juvenile offenders, to hold offenders accountable, to reduce recidivism, and to promote effective interaction and use of resources among the courts, justice system personnel, and community agencies.”²⁴

²³ [Development & History - Supreme Court](#)

²⁴ [Idaho Code | Chapter 56 - Idaho Drug Court and Mental Health Court Act](#)



Beginning in July 2024, with the addition of a veterans' treatment court in Kootenai County, there will be sixty-nine different treatment courts spread across the state. These courts serve a variety of special need offenders and work with circumstances related to drug use and mental health.²⁵

- 31 Felony Drug Courts
- 11 Mental Health Courts
- 7 DUI Courts
- 7 Veterans Treatment Courts
- 4 Juvenile Drug Courts
- 3 Misdemeanor Drug / DUI Courts
- 2 Child Protection Drug Courts
- 2 Juvenile Mental Health Courts
- 1 Domestic Violence Drug Court
- 1 Young Adult Drug Court

A map of the treatment court locations can be found at: [Idaho Treatment Courts - Google My Maps](#).

Another type of probation may occur under retained jurisdiction, commonly referred to as the Rider Program. This program can be thought of as a hybrid program that includes both incarceration and diversion. When a court imposes and executes a sentence that involves a period of incarceration, custody of that person convicted is transferred to the Idaho Board of Correction. However, the court retains jurisdiction to subsequently suspend the execution of that judgement for the first 365 days of the sentence. During this time, the Department of Correction may provide programming and evaluations of the person and send reports of progress to the court. Based on the reports, the court may choose to exercise its jurisdiction, suspend the remainder of the sentence, and place the person on probation.

²⁵ [Treatment Courts - Idaho Supreme Court Annual Report](#)

Alternatives to incarceration in Idaho

After an individual is sentenced, depending on the offense committed and other factors, there may still be opportunities for the individual to stay out of jail, serve the community, maintain pro-social ties, and continue to work. The availability of post-sentencing alternatives to incarceration varies by county and city, with the larger, more urbanized areas offering the most opportunities.

Ada County provides a variety of alternative sentencing programs. Participants must be court-ordered to “All Options” or to the specific programs, and eligibility is at the discretion of the sheriff.²⁶ The programs offered in Ada County include:

Community Transition Center

Participants prepare for reentry back into the community while residing at a non-custodial facility. Work release from the Center allows participants to continue to earn a living and gain skills while serving their sentence. Participants are assigned reentry specialists who help them get the resources they need. Some participants serve their sentences at the Community Transition Center on an interim basis, serving one to seven consecutive days at a time.

Sheriff’s Labor Detail

Participants work on community projects and receive a credit of one jail day avoided for eight hours of work performed. The work involves manual labor at places such as parks, roads, greenbelts, etc.

Community Service Program

Participants perform community service at non-profit organizations. Work time, at a required twenty hours per month, takes the place of jail time on the basis of eight hours of work for one jail day, unless otherwise ordered by the judge.

House Arrest Program

This is an electronic home detention program that allows participants to complete jail time at their own residences. The location of participants is monitored electronically, and their trips

²⁶ [Alternative Sentencing - Ada County Sheriff](#)



outside of their residences are limited to pre-approved appointments, such as court appearances.

Detailed descriptions of the programs can be found at the Ada County Sheriff's website, cited below. Fees charged to participants help to offset the costs of the programs, while reducing the jail population also reduces costs to the system.²⁷ A variety of similar programs operate from sheriffs' offices throughout the state.

²⁷ [Alternative Sentencing Fees - Ada County Sheriff Ada County](#)

Examples of proactive quality assurance

As we discussed in the introduction to this review, a full evaluation of front-end programs would require detailed information about the degree to which programs are evidence-based, how faithfully they adhere to best practices, and an analysis of any gaps in the system and the consequences of those gaps. In looking at each stage in the framework of deflection, diversion and alternatives in Idaho, we saw numerous references to how programs were based on best practices, professional guidelines, and evidence-based practices.

Within the confines of this background review, we could not be comprehensive in reviewing how well the programs are working and why. We do, however, want to highlight two examples of proactive quality assurance. These programs are proactive in the sense that they are self-initiated within the criminal justice system and have the aim of program improvement. These are not exclusive examples of quality assurance among the many front-end programs, but they are representative of the kind of efforts that can enhance program effectiveness. In a broader evaluation, learning more about the degree to which programs engage in quality assurance and promote coordination could assist policymakers in understanding areas for systemwide strategic planning.

Treatment Court Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan

In 2020 the Idaho Supreme Court adopted a Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan for the Treatment Courts.²⁸ The purpose of the plan was to ensure adherence to evidence-based best practice standards for treatment courts by establishing a process for surveying the courts, conducting peer reviews, and applying a scoring mechanism to certify the degree to which the courts comply with standards. Courts receiving high scores (80 percent and above) would be certified as compliant for three years. Courts with lower scores would be required to submit performance improvement plans, may receive site visits, and could be subject to a range of sanctions. The implementation of the plan was delayed due to challenges during the pandemic but is now starting to go forward. At the Treatment Court Committee meeting in February 2024, it was announced that draft surveys would soon be sent out

²⁸[ISC TXC QA Plan 030620.pdf](#). This followed an earlier version of the plan from 2018: [ISC PSC QA Plan - final.pdf](#)



for review and feedback by stakeholders, including prosecutors, defenders, court coordinators, and judges.

An important concept that underlies the plan is program fidelity. A best practice must be shown to work elsewhere and have positive results that can be replicated. Efforts supporting program fidelity are meant to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved by faithfully adhering to the best practice.

Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping

We have already discussed SIM briefly in the introduction to this review. Following a recommendation from the Idaho Behavioral Health Council's 2021-2024 Strategic Action Plan, the Administrative Office of the Courts facilitated SIM workshops in each of the state's seven judicial districts. The workshops took place in 2022 and 2023, with the lead county in each district issuing a SIM mapping report illustrating how people with behavioral health needs intersect and flow through the criminal justice system. The objectives for each workshop were the same, and included:²⁹

Development of a comprehensive picture of how people with mental illness and co-occurring disorders flow through the criminal justice system along six distinct intercept points.

Identification of gaps and opportunities at each intercept for individuals in the target population.

Development of priorities for activities designed to improve system and service level responses for individuals in the target population

One thing we found particularly noteworthy about this mapping effort and SIM itself is that it focuses on the entire front-end to reentry criminal justice process. This is illustrated in Exhibit 5 showing the six intercept points.³⁰

²⁹ These goals are quoted from the Bannock County report but are the same for each workshop. [SIM Report Canyon County](#)

³⁰ [IBHC Resources - Idaho Behavioral Health Council \(IBHC\)](#). A more detailed diagram can be found at: [PRA SIM Letter Paper 2018.pdf \(prainc.com\)](#).

Exhibit 5 List of key interactions for the six justice system intercepts.

Intercept 0	Intercept 1	Intercept 2	Intercept 3	Intercept 4	Intercept 5
Community Services	Law Enforcement	Initial Detention Initial Court Hearings	Jails Courts	Reentry	Community Connections

Source: Idaho Behavioral Health Council

Additional information at each intercept is provided in the individual mapping reports. The information is specific to the county and describes the interactions of agencies, services, and programs.

Especially noteworthy is the fact that the mapping process includes the participation of criminal justice and behavioral health system stakeholders from within the county. In other words, the people most knowledgeable about how cooperation and coordination within the system functioned where gaps in the system existed, and what might be the highest priorities for improving the performance of the system. Cross-intercept deficiencies identified in the workshops included:

- workforce shortages,
- delays and backlogs due to lack of capacity,
- housing and transportation challenges, and
- the need for better data collection, sharing, and communication.

Although the workshops were not referred to as quality assurance efforts, gap analysis when looking at a system is a fundamental part of quality assurance.

A statewide report summarizing the results of the SIM mapping exercises was released in January 2024 and included recommendations for statewide and local follow-up efforts for system improvement.³¹ At least two more SIM workshops are scheduled for 2024.

³¹ [IBHC Statewide SIM Report March 2024.pdf](#)

Conclusions and suggestions for possible next steps

As discussed in the introduction to this review, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee directed our office to evaluate the effectiveness of a broad range of current criminal justice approaches, including a focus on prevention and alternatives to incarceration. The original evaluation request in 2021 asked about what evidence-based programs Idaho should undertake to prevent initial incarceration, including pre-arrest and pre-adjudication interventions. The emphasis of the requestors was on understanding the effectiveness of current programs and identification of additional efforts that should be taken.

This background review looked at deflection, diversion, and alternatives to incarceration that are currently in place. We not only learned about efforts at the front end, but also learned about reentry programs offered by local jails, a topic we did not cover in our first phase evaluation. Understanding how these different kinds of intercepts function may help in determining the direction a future evaluation could take. A focus on one or more of the key themes and questions that have emerged from our research and interviews could help further define the scope of a future evaluation. They include:

System Capacity

Is there sufficient system capacity and are resources adequate to serve the individuals in need in the most appropriate manner? This includes assessing whether there is adequate geographical distribution of service providers, recognizing the challenges of the urban-rural divide in Idaho. Our office's 2021 evaluation of Volunteer EMS services in the state identified some of the many challenges rural areas have with funding, recruitment, and logistics due to population density and geography.³² Many of the same kinds of challenges may exist for the front-end programs described in this review.

Training

Is there a need for, and what would be the benefits of, more training and coordination of the personnel who interact with the populations at risk? In all the current front-end efforts we reviewed as part of this study, the professionals involved in running the programs emphasized the importance of training and

³² [2108 Volunteer Providers of Emergency Medical Services – Idaho State Legislature](#)

the need for more of it. Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training was frequently emphasized for personnel who directly work in situations where proper assessment of a crisis can be essential for resolving it satisfactorily.

Treatment

From a systems perspective, are the various treatment interventions working effectively, in concert, to help individuals avoid their introduction into the criminal justice system or their return to it? And importantly, does the system improve the quality of life of those individuals whose behavior puts them at risk? Are there alternative approaches that could work better? These are broad questions even if limited to a focus on people with behavioral health issues. We mention behavioral health because of the long-standing understanding of the linkage between behavioral health problems, criminal behavior, and other societal impacts.

Evidence-Based Programs and Best Practices

How evidence-based are the current front-end programs, do they faithfully adhere to best practices, and how well do they achieve performance goals? Seventeen years ago, the Idaho Criminal Justice Commission engaged the Department of Criminal Justice at Boise State University to conduct a review of relevant research on alternatives to incarceration.³³ As defined at that time, alternatives to incarceration included the possibility of all the front-end approaches we describe in this review. This review, published as a whitepaper, emphasized the importance of understanding the rigor of the evidence basis for a program, the fidelity of a program to its prototype or experimental test, whether implementation of a program avoids net-widening (serving individuals who otherwise would not necessarily be incarcerated), and made recommendations for further research. The conclusions of that whitepaper are still relevant today.

³³ [Review of Research on Alternatives to Incarceration for Adults.pdf \(researchgate.net\)](#)



Reentry Programs at the Local Level

As part of this background review we learned from interviews with sheriff's offices about their involvement in front-end deflection, diversion, and alternatives efforts. In each interview we also learned about programs within local jails aimed at promoting successful outcomes for clients when they return to the community. These programs offer such things as counseling for domestic violence and behavioral health, assistance in obtaining a GED, medication assisted treatment for addiction, and providing courses specifically targeted to reduce recidivism³⁴. These efforts are similar to programs in prison and parole that we discussed in our [Criminal Justice: Reentry](#) evaluation, published in 2023. However, our 2023 evaluation was focused on the Idaho Department of Correction and not on local jails. A potential area for further evaluation could be how local law enforcement in Idaho is promoting post-incarceration transitions.

³⁴ The [IGNITE Program](#) (inmate growth naturally and intentionally through education) is a National Sheriffs' Association effort which offers tailored course work and training to jailed individuals with high risks to reoffend. ["Something Works" in U.S. Jails: Misconduct and Recidivism Effects of the IGNITE Program - NBER](#)

Methods

Interviews

We employed semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth understanding of organizational efforts related to deflection, diversion, and alternatives to incarceration programs. We inquired about program successes, challenges encountered, best practices implemented, and program fidelity adherence.

We interviewed a diverse range of stakeholders across the criminal justice system. These stakeholders represented various organizations, including:

Treatment Courts, State of Idaho Judicial Branch

Idaho Administrative Office for the Court

Idaho Commission of Pardons and Parole

Idaho Department of Correction

Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections

Idaho Office of Drug Policy

Department of Criminal Justice, Boise State University

Association of Idaho Cities

Idaho Chiefs of Police Association

Ada County Sheriff's Office

Bonneville County Sheriff's Office

Kootenai County Sherriff's Office

Meridian Police Department

The Bridge Youth and Family Resource Center



Literature and data review

To contextualize our findings within the national landscape, we conducted a review of existing literature and data on prison diversion programs and alternatives to incarceration. This review looked at national standards and best practices to gain a clear understanding of current trends and approaches. We specifically examined reports, surveys, and assessments from organizations such as the Idaho Behavioral Health Council, National Conference of State Legislatures (NSCL), Idaho Criminal Justice Commission (ICJC), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Council for State Governments Justice Center (CSG), National Center for State Courts (NCSC), National Criminal Justice Research Service (NCJRS), National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) - National, State of Washington Pretrial Reform Task Force, King County (WA) Auditor's Office, Annals of Research and Knowledge (ARK), and Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

We also reviewed the reports from seven Sequential Intercept Model workshops and attended the February 2024 Treatment Court Conference. We reviewed resources from the Department of Juvenile Corrections, such as information on assessment centers and the National Center Association (NAC) for their framework and best practices.