



Applied Research in a Public Policy Setting

Legislative Budget Board
Criminal Justice Data Analysis Team
May 2012

Criminal Justice Data Analysis Team – Structure and Staff Members

- Michele Connolly – Manager
- Jamie Gardner – Adult Data Analysis
- Laurie Molina – Adult Data Analysis
- John Posey – Juvenile Data Analysis
- Ed Sinclair – Field and Qualitative Research

Criminal Justice Forum Logistics – Forum Parameters

- Diverse group of participants
- A learning opportunity for all
- Limited to a subject area
- Format:
 - 5 minutes for overview and orientation
 - 45 minutes for presentation of policy issues, methodologies, and key findings
 - 30 minutes for questions and answers

Criminal Justice Forum Ground Rules – Presenter Information

- Legislative Budget Board (LBB) staff
- LBB staff members are non-partisan
- Staff are not in a position to provide personal opinions
- Criminal Justice Data Analysis Team focus is on policy-oriented analysis

General Goals for this Forum

- Explain LBB's overall approach to applied research
- Provide overview of several applied research projects
- Share experiences and challenges we've encountered
- Provide examples of how our approach to applied research could be used in your line of work

What is Applied Research?

What is Applied Research?

- Solution-focused and often conducted in complex political environments with an emphasis on quick results
- Addresses specific issues at a specific point in time
 - Different from basic research which seeks to expand theoretical knowledge base
- Encompasses various academic fields of study (sociology, psychology, business, etc.)
- Increasingly incorporates mixed methods (hybrid quantitative/qualitative)

Bickman, Leonard and Debra J. Rog. 2009. The Sage Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

LBB Criminal Justice Data Analysis (CJDA) Team's Approach to Applied Research

LBB CJDA Team's Approach to Applied Research

- Objective
- Easy to understand
- Concise
- Relevant
- Reliable
- Valid

What is Applied Research?

■ Objective

- The LBB is non-partisan and relies on views of practitioners and experts in field to inform policy makers
- Current policy trends and issues direct our research questions

■ Easy to Understand

- Our primary audience is the Legislature
- Members digest information across many areas in short periods of time

What is Applied Research?

■ Concise

- The LBB must be able to communicate critical information quickly – there is often only a short time afforded for decision-making
- “I can read faster than you can talk”

■ Applicable

- Research must be applicable to current policy in order to be useful for policy makers
- Research questions must focus on current issues and anticipate issues likely to arise

What is Applied Research?

■ Reliable

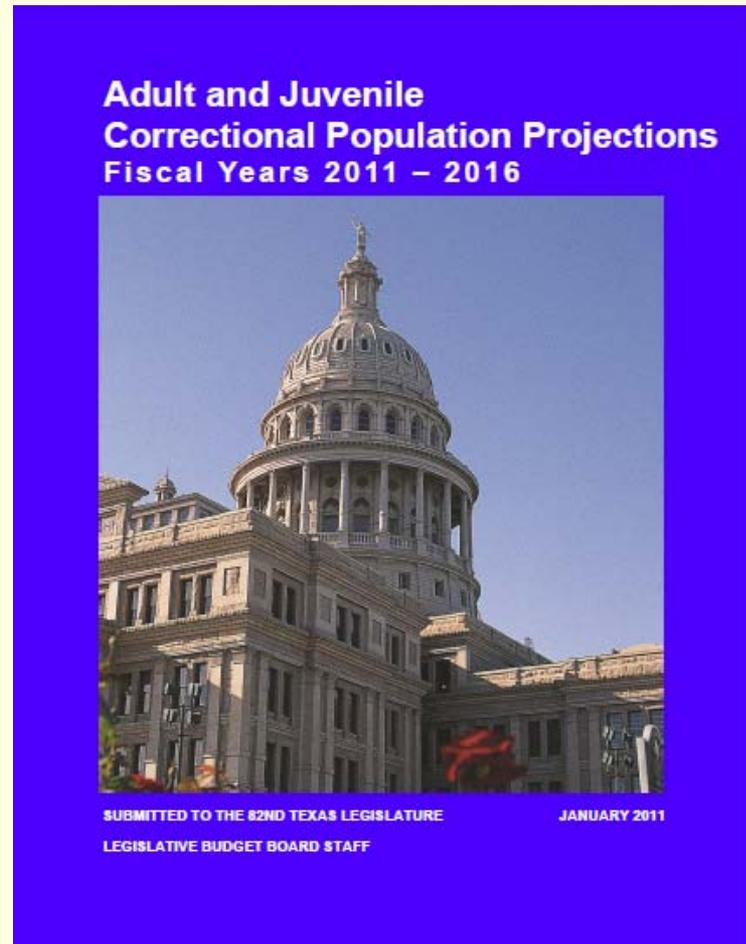
- The Legislature must be able to rely on the LBB for substantive, accurate information
- Texas is a large state with much local discretion – statewide research must include input from various regions

■ Valid

- Our applied research is guided by cost drivers that have the greatest impact on state finances
- We use appropriate methodologies to address issues – frequently requires mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative)
- The LBB CJDA team only publishes qualitative findings based on statewide themes and patterns

Role of Correctional Population Projections in LBB Applied Research

Role of Correctional Population Projections in LBB Applied Research



Role of Correctional Population Projections in LBB Applied Research

- LBB Correctional Population Projections are the primary influence for various applied research projects
 - Correctional population projections allow us to “see the future” – we can learn how to address policy issues before they appear
 - Projections highlight issues in the near future that need additional investigation
 - Almost all supplemental LBB CJDA team research is based on a trend identified in correctional population projections
 - Completed every June of even-numbered years and every January of odd-numbered years

Applied Research in Action: Example 1

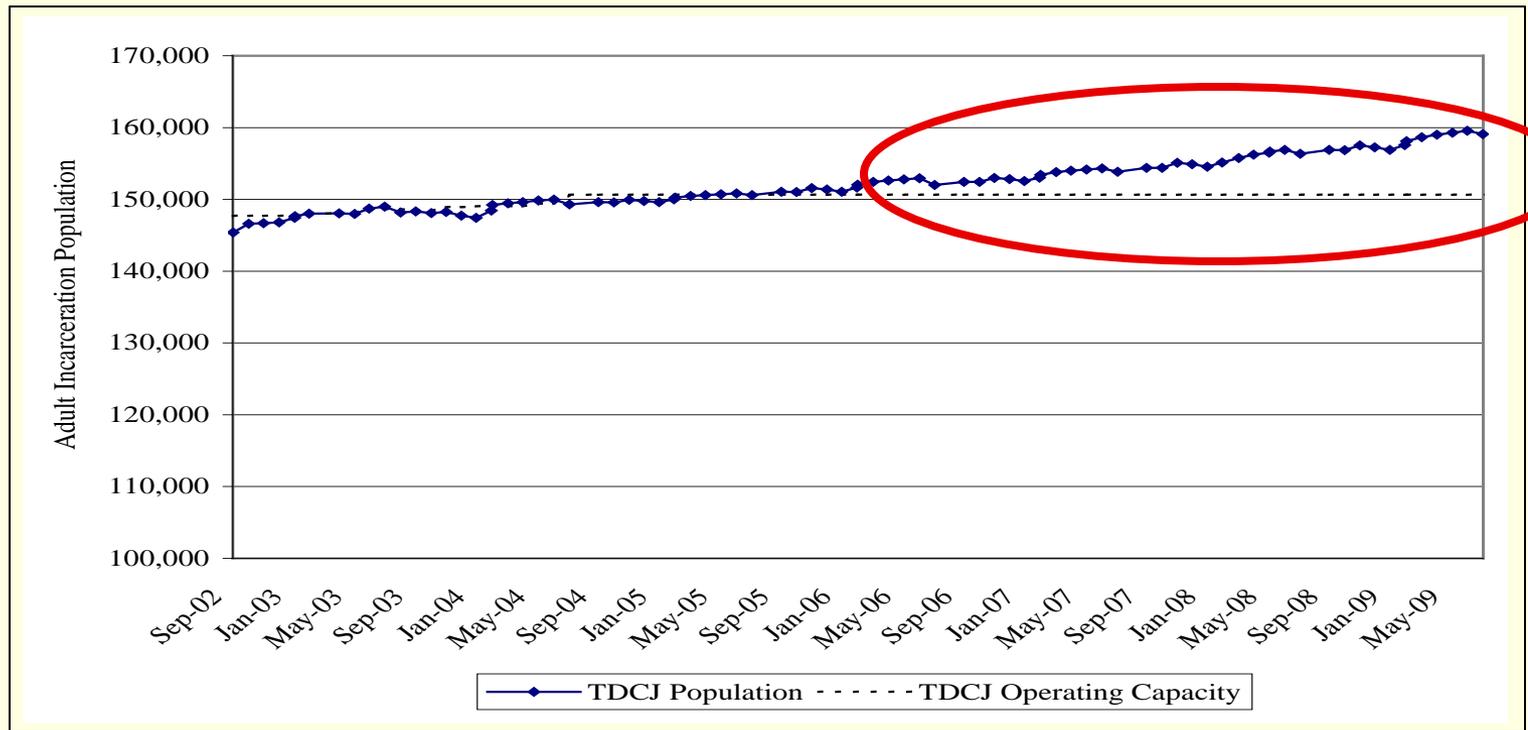
*Community Supervision Revocation Project
(CSRP)*

2005-2008

Applied Research in Action: Example 1

Community Supervision Revocation Project

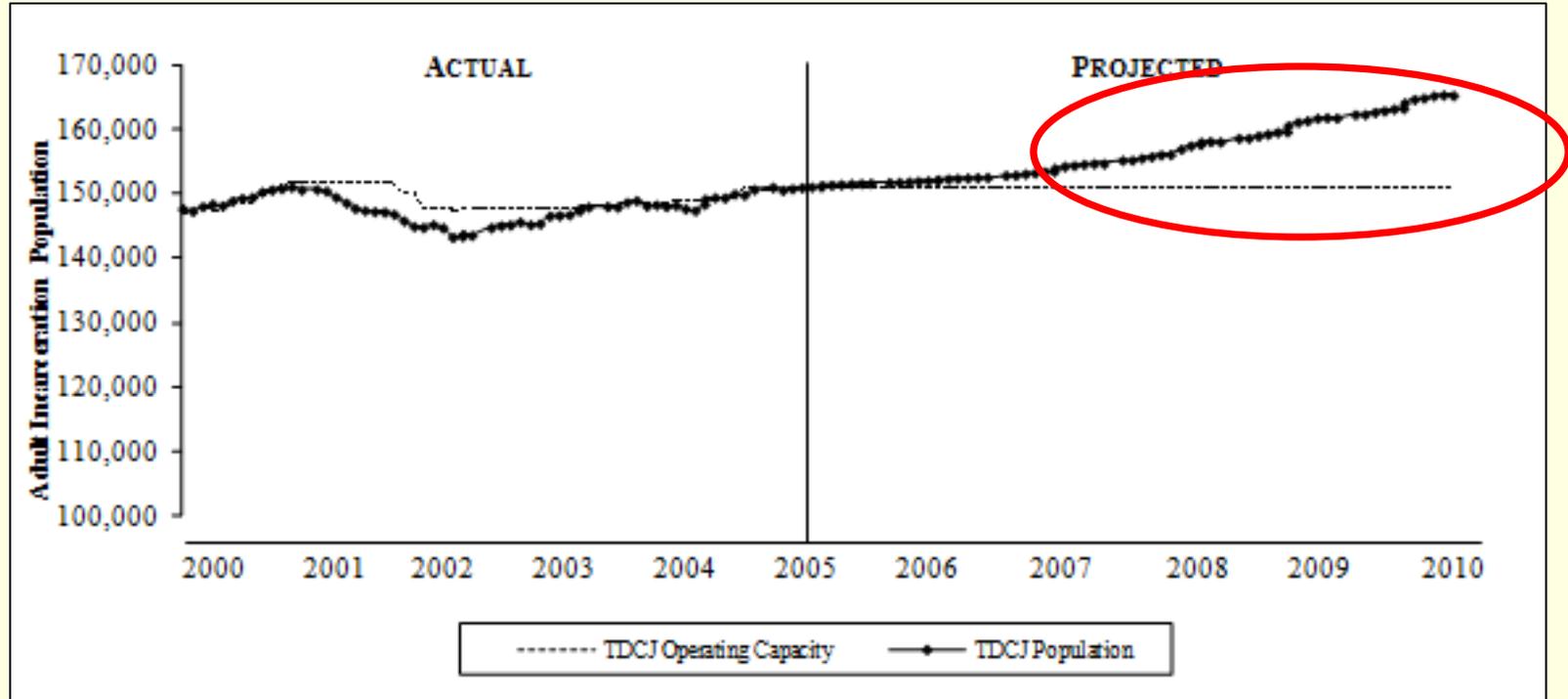
June 2004 – Adult Prison Population Projections



Applied Research in Action: Example 1

Community Supervision Revocation Project

January 2005 – Adult Prison Population Projections



Applied Research in Action: Example 1

Community Supervision Revocation Project

- 79th Legislative Session, 2005:
 - Appropriated \$55.5 million to the Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) for community supervision treatment initiatives and caseload reductions
 - LBB proposed evaluation of impact of additional funds
 - The *Texas Community Supervision Revocation Project* was developed to perform proposed evaluation

Applied Research in Action: Example 1

Community Supervision Revocation Project

- Methodological considerations
 - What does the Legislature want to know?
 - Needed a picture of community supervision before and after implementation of additional funds
 - No individual-level statewide community supervision data available – original data collection necessary
 - Time consuming, requires substantial staff hours and travel
 - Statewide random sampling not feasible
 - Largest Community Supervision and Corrections Departments (CSCDs) are cost drivers

Applied Research in Action: Example 1

Community Supervision Revocation Project

- Methodology highlights
 - Before/After snapshot study
 - Profile of revoked felons prior to additional funds and then again after funded initiatives were in place
 - Focus on CSCDs that had greatest impact on state prison population (based on revocation volume)
 - Case file review in September 2005 and September 2007
 - Qualitative review in 2006

Applied Research in Action: Example 1

Community Supervision Revocation Project

SEQ Revocation Project - September 2007

CSCD Bexar Dallas Harris Tarrant Travis

sid ssn dob **BLUE INK ONLY**

Identification

Sex: Male Female

Race: White Black Asian or Pacific Islander American Indian or Alaskan Native Unknown Other

Ethnicity: Hispanic Non Hispanic Unknown

Citizenship: US Citizen Permanent Resident Temporary Resident/Visa Holder Undocumented Immigrant

Probation Intake Type: Direct to Probation Return from State Boot Camp Return from Shock Incarceration Return from SAFP

pop - city pop - state fbi

Socioeconomic Factors at Placement

Marital Status: Married/Common Single/Never Married Widowed Separated Divorced Unknown

Living Arrangement: Living with Spouse and/or Children Living with Mother and/or Father Alone Other Unknown

Employed: Employed Student/Retired/Homemaker/Disabled Unemployed Unknown

Education: None 1st through 8th 9th through 11th Diploma or GED Associates Degree Some College College Graduate Advanced Degree Unknown

Complete ONLY if Employed: FT-Regular FT-Seasonal PT-Regular PT-Seasonal Unable to Determine

ADULT Previous Offense Identification and Information/Criminal History (include Class C Misdemeanors that resulted in arrest)

Prior Juvenile Record: Yes No Unknown

Arrests (do not include juvenile activity)	Charges			Convictions	
	Felony	Misdemeanor	Unknown	Felony	Misdemeanor
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

NOTES:

(Adult activity ONLY)

Was any charge an offense against a person? Yes No

Was any charge an alcohol related charge? Yes No

Was any charge a drug charge? Yes No

NOTE: Complete the Primary Drug of choice table only if the probationers offenses include a drug charge. If offenses do not include a drug charge, check the box marked "Not Applicable."

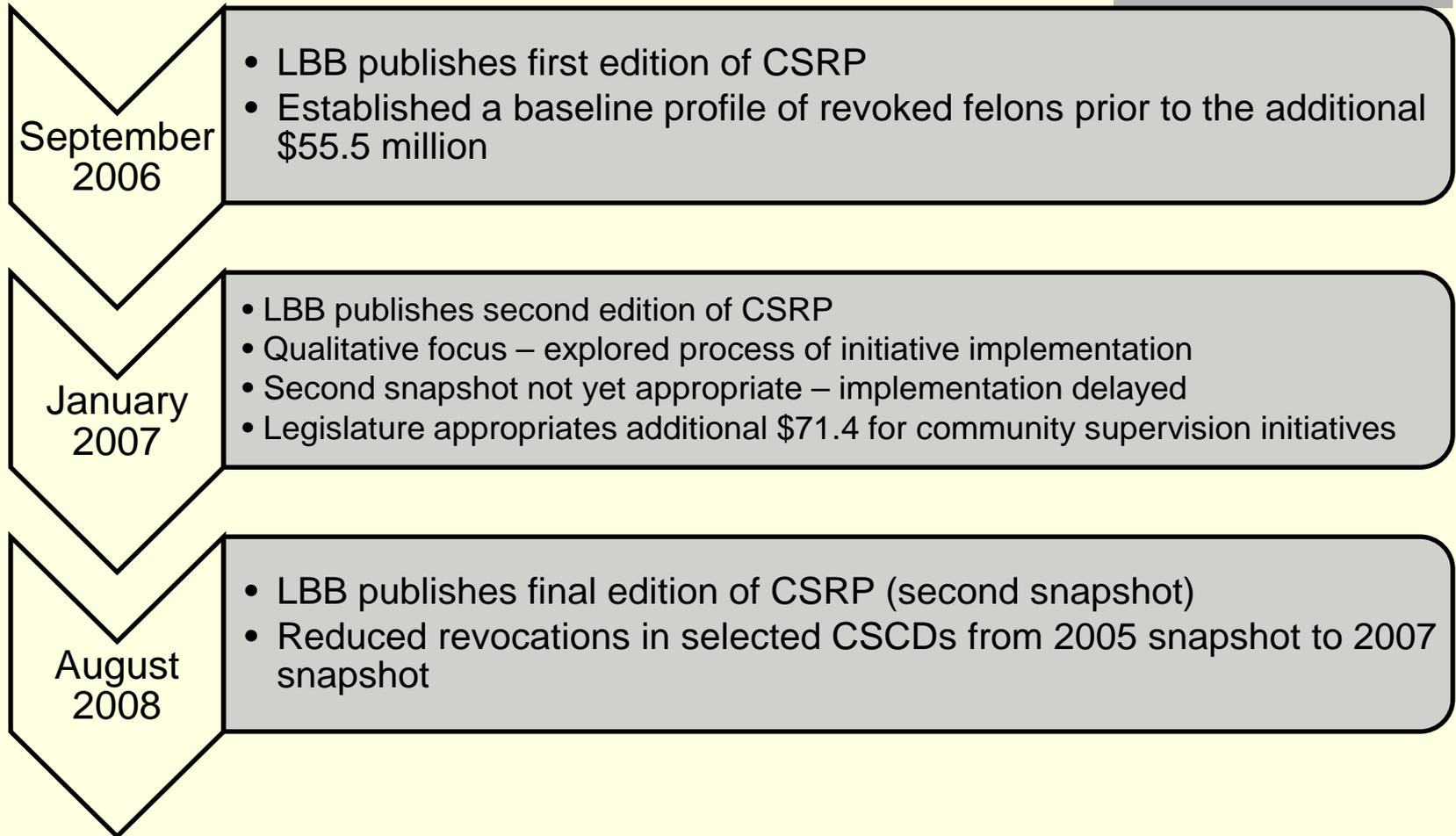
Primary Drug of Choice (you can select more than one if applicable): Cocaine Crack Meth Marijuana (THC) Inhalants Heroin/Opiates Prescription Drug Not Applicable Other

specify

Date Coded Primary Coder Initials Secondary Coder Initials

Applied Research in Action: Example 1

Community Supervision Revocation Project



Applied Research in Action: Example 1

Community Supervision Revocation Project

Lessons learned:

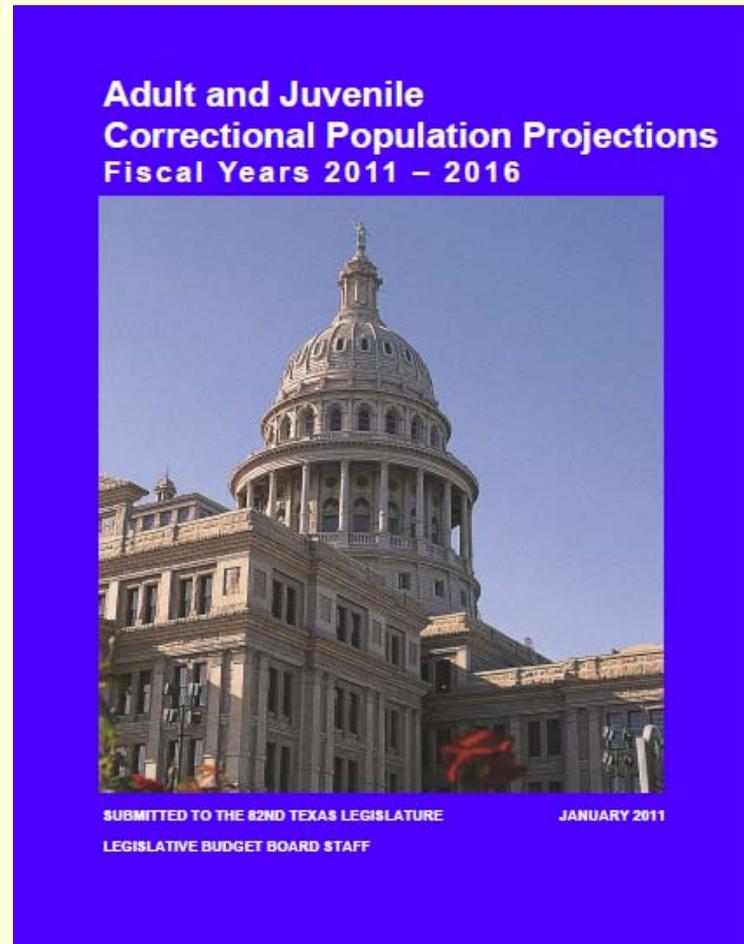
- If the data aren't available – collect your own
- Must consider implementation period before evaluating impact of any initiative
- Focus on cost drivers = most bang for our research buck
- Data gathering process enhances understanding of policy
- Additional funds typically equate to additional required research and evaluation

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional
Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

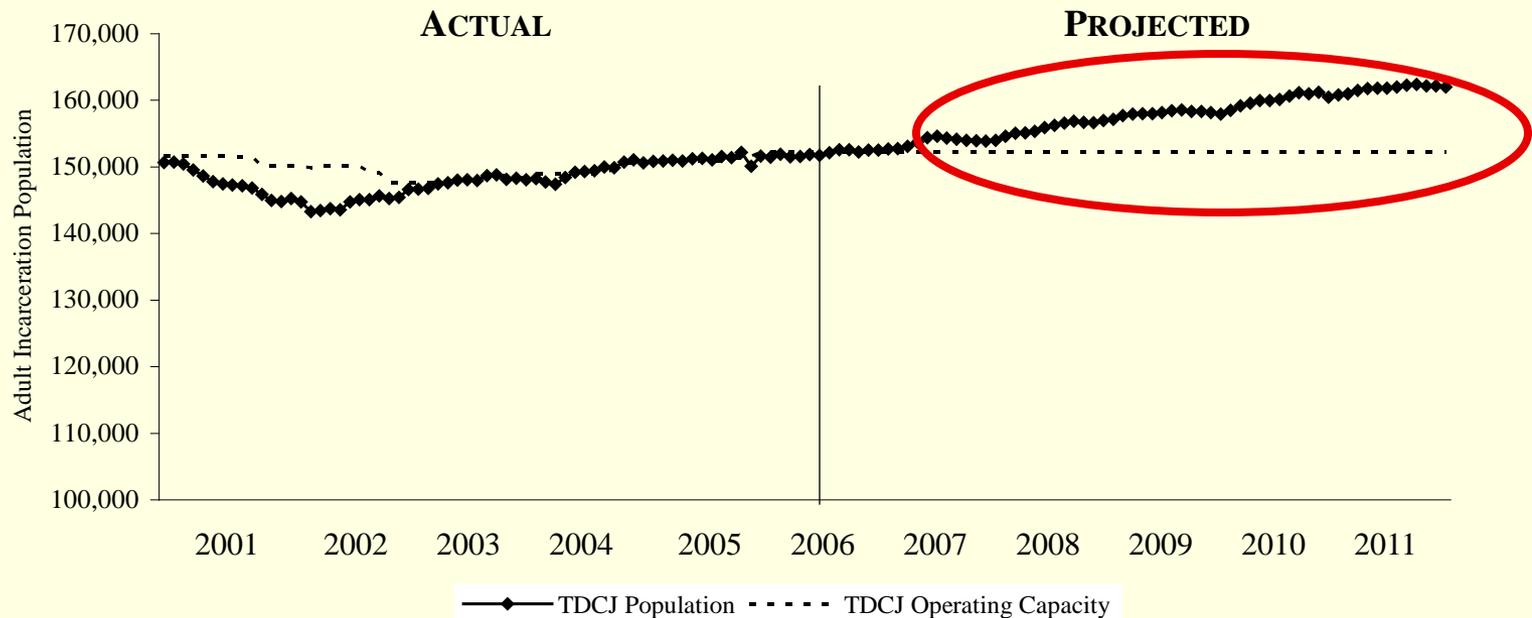
Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues



Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

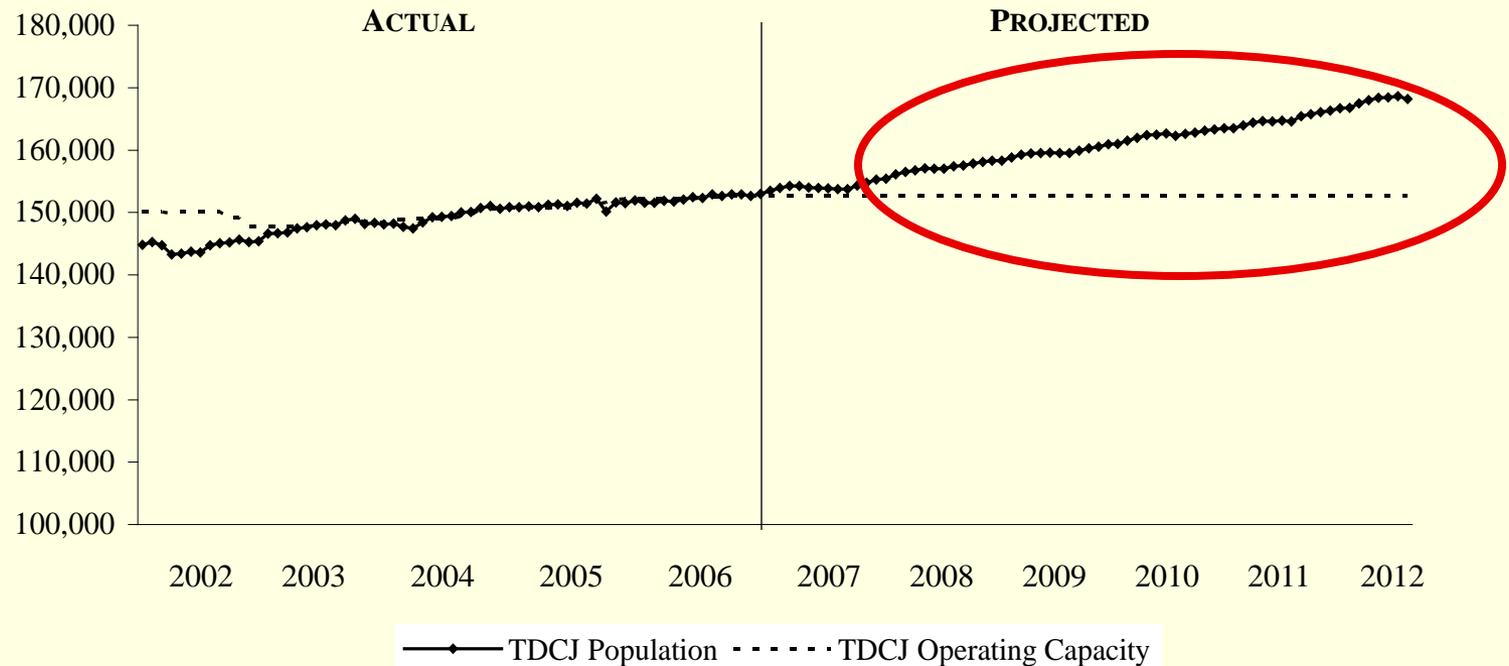
June 2006 – Adult Prison Population Projections



Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

January 2007 – Adult Prison Population Projections



Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

- January 2007 – Adult prison population projected to increase beyond TDCJ capacity
 - By 2007, TDCJ's population was expected to exceed capacity by 3,015 offenders
 - $3,015 \times \$42.54 \times 365 = \text{\$46.8 million/yr}$
 - By 2012, TDCJ's population was expected to exceed capacity by 17,332
 - $17,332 \times \$42.54 \times 365 = \text{\$269.1 million/yr}$

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

- January 2007 – Adult prison population projected to increase beyond TDCJ capacity, cont.
 - Focused January 2007 qualitative review of projections report on exploring reasons for upward projection and solutions to reverse trend
 - Specific issue
 - Specific point in time
 - Specific policy-related goals for upcoming legislative session

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

- Methodology highlights
 - Semi-structured interviews and focus groups
 - Participants from various regions of state
 - Captured through selected travel and focus groups with statewide professional organizations
 - “Piggy-backed” qualitative projections needs while conducting qualitative component of *Community Supervision Revocation Project*
 - Maximized staff and travel resources

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

■ Participant details

- 279 total participants, including:
 - State district judges
 - District attorneys
 - Defense attorneys
 - Parole supervisors
 - Community supervision administrators and officers
 - Adult offenders (male and female), representing the following populations:
 - State prison
 - State jail
 - Private prison
 - Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility (SAFPF)
 - Community supervision (regular and specialized caseloads)

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

- Major findings:
 - Lack of substance abuse and mental health treatment options were primary explanations for projected prison population growth
 - Community supervision was not an attractive option for many offenders, so many were opting for prison time instead

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

- Lessons learned:
 - Adult offenders are sources of rich data
 - Just ask – they'll tell you
 - Juvenile offenders are not sources of rich data
 - Liability issues prevent in-depth questioning
 - Obtaining statewide input from criminal justice practitioners can be maximized by accessing statewide professional organizations
 - Conferences
 - Steering committees
 - Meetings in Austin

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

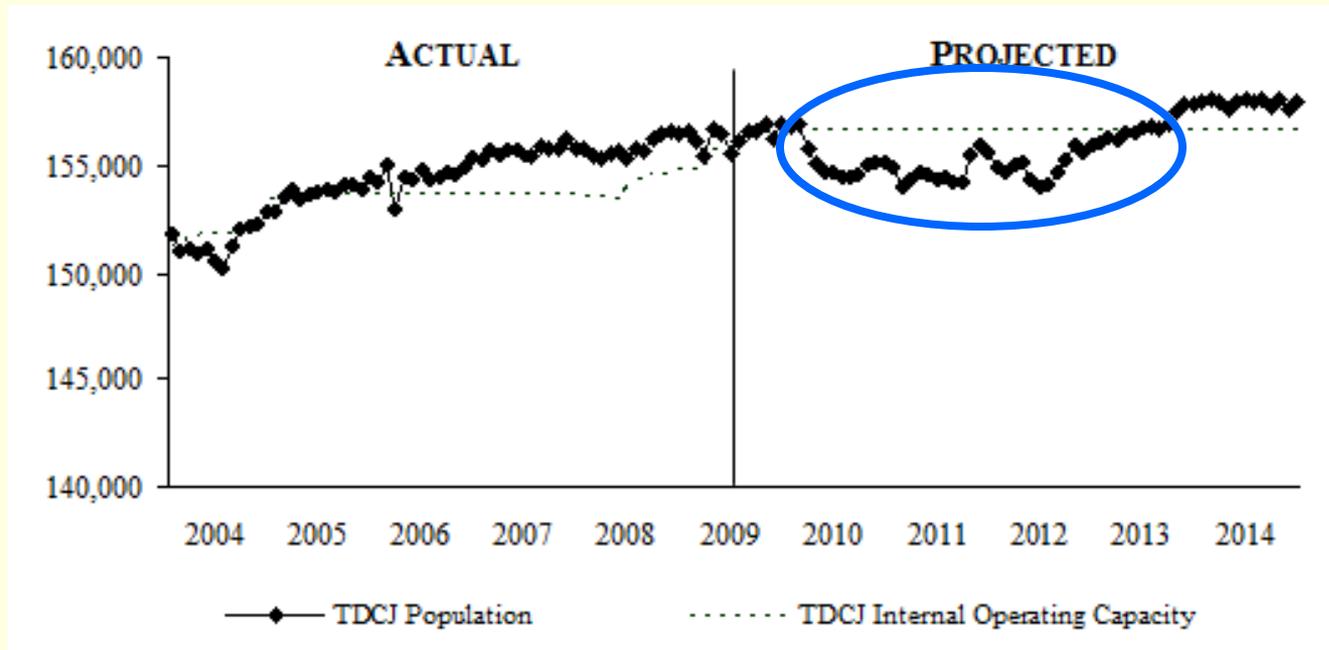
Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

- 81st Legislature, 2007:
 - Appropriated \$217.7 million to TDCJ for the expansion of treatment and diversion initiatives
 - Substance abuse treatment – community supervision and incarcerated offenders
 - Community supervision and parole Intermediate Sanction Facility and SAFPF beds
 - Parole halfway house beds
 - In-Prison Therapeutic Community beds

Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

January 2009 – Adult Prison Population Projections



Applied Research in Action: Example 2

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Adult Prison Issues

- January 2009 Adult Prison Population Projections
 - Stabilized
 - First projection in over 5 years predicting incarcerated populations to remain under capacity in coming years

Applied Research in Action: Example 3

Qualitative Component of Correctional
Population Projections – Juvenile Issues

Applied Research in Action: Example 3

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Juvenile Issues

- 81st Legislature, 2007
 - Major juvenile justice reforms implemented via Senate Bill 103
 - Changed landscape of juvenile justice system in Texas
 - Many fewer juveniles eligible for commitment to the Texas Youth Commission (TYC)
 - Focus shifted to assisting county Juvenile Probation Departments (JPDs) provide resources to juveniles in the community

Applied Research in Action: Example 3

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Juvenile Issues

- June 2008 Correctional Population Projections
 - LBB and most juvenile justice system observers expected JPD populations to grow, due to:
 - Reduced eligibility for TYC
 - Emphasis on community resources
 - General apprehension to commit juveniles to TYC among local communities
 - Didn't happen
 - Juvenile probation populations remained relatively flat

Applied Research in Action: Example 3

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Juvenile Issues

- Led to the question...
- Where are the kids?
 - Overall statewide youth population growing
 - Juvenile crime rates relatively stable
- **Qualitative component of January 2009 projections report would have to focus solely on juvenile issues**

Applied Research in Action: Example 3

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Juvenile Issues

- Research question focused on exploring reasons for lack of expected growth in juvenile probation populations following recent juvenile justice system reform
 - Specific issue
 - Specific point in time
 - Specific policy-related goals for upcoming legislative session

Applied Research in Action: Example 3

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Juvenile Issues

- Methodology highlights:
 - Semi-structured focus groups
 - 46 focus groups held in various regions of Texas
 - 226 total participants
 - Participants included:
 - Juvenile board members
 - Juvenile probation practitioners
 - Prosecutors
 - Defense attorneys
 - Law enforcement
 - Education professionals

Applied Research in Action: Example 3

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Juvenile Issues

■ Major Findings

- Juvenile probation departments (JPDs) faced limited resource capacity
 - Recent reforms forced JPDs to focus limited resources on juveniles with serious needs
 - Re-focus of resources limited JPDs ability to address lower-level juvenile offenders they might have served in the past
 - Fewer resources for lower-level offenders resulted in fewer juveniles receiving services – therefore, keeping juvenile probation populations relatively flat
- Participants indicated early prevention and intervention services were the most effective way to prevent juveniles from entering or further penetrating the juvenile justice system

Applied Research in Action: Example 3

Qualitative Component of Correctional Population Projections – Juvenile Issues

- New research question emerges!!!
 - Juvenile probation practitioners had less ability to address lower-level and younger offenders
 - Yet, most participants in January 2009 focus groups agreed early prevention and intervention services were the most effective tool in preventing juvenile crime
 - Significant contradiction between actual policy and desired policy
 - Hence, creation of the *Texas At-Risk Youth Services Project*



Next Steps

Next Steps

- Currently conducting the next phase of the *Texas At-Risk Youth Services Project*
 - Methodology primarily consists of focus groups with various stakeholders
 - Field work is complete – currently transcribing and analyzing data
- Developing the qualitative component of the January 2013 Correctional Populations Projections report
 - Will include juvenile and adult information
 - June 2012 projections will guide our methodology to explore the most current population trends available



Questions?