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**LOCAL AGENCY PERSONNEL AS BROKERS
OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH:
A SAC EXPERIMENT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
NUMBER 16**

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ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**URBAN STUDIES CENTER
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KENTUCKY CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER

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The Kentucky Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) was established in 1984 as a centralized clearinghouse for criminal justice statistics. A major objective of SAC is to gather concrete data about the criminal justice system in Kentucky and to disseminate that data statewide. With this information, policymakers will be better able to make criminal justice decisions.

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SAC is available to assist you in meeting your data and information needs. For more information, contact:

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**LOCAL AGENCY PERSONNEL AS BROKERS OF CRIMINAL
JUSTICE RESEARCH: A SAC EXPERIMENT**

Research Report Series: Number 16

Conducted by
Urban Studies Center
College of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville

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and
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for
Kentucky Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center

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December 1987

AUTHORS' NOTE

Dr. Knowlton Johnson, project director, was responsible for overseeing the project. He designed the SAC affiliate model, directed the implementation of the model, constructed the survey instruments, coordinated the data analyses, and prepared this report. Ms. Patricia Hardyman oversaw the data collection, conducted the data analyses, and assisted in writing this report.

The authors would like to express a special thanks to Jack Ellis and Vernon Smith for their ongoing and diligent work with the affiliate brokers. A special thanks also belongs to Linda Burgess, who worked with Dr. Johnson on the designing of the model and survey instruments. We appreciate, as well, the efforts and patience of Anne Fream and the telephone interviewers who so meticulously contacted the policymakers. This project was also dependent upon the varying contributions of Ivan Weir, Lynne Wilson, Nancy Roseberry, Lisa Johnson, Suzanne Dickerson, Charles Mencer, and Elizabeth Jones.

The author would also like to thank the persons who participated in the study for their time, information, and cooperation.

This report is a product of the Kentucky Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center.

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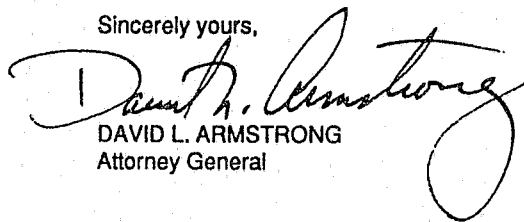
December 21, 1987

Dear Friend:

Kentucky's Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center had made tremendous strides in its three years of existence. Significant work has been accomplished in the areas of victim and persistent felony offender research. I am very proud of our annual CREST (crime estimation) study that will give Kentucky a means of comparing our victimization rates and problems to similar national studies. The work we have done on child abuse and cataloging current data systems has been useful to many professionals.

This report is the last in a series that I will have the opportunity to oversee as Director of the SAC and Attorney General. I want to thank Kentucky's criminal justice community and the Kentucky General Assembly for their acceptance of the SAC and support for our goal of providing policy relevant research.

Sincerely yours,


DAVID L. ARMSTRONG
Attorney General

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from an evaluation of an experimental SAC program designed to accent the policymaking connections of the Office of the Attorney General and the research expertise of the University by establishing a close affiliation between the SAC and one agency within selected judicial districts. The role of these local agencies was to function as an extension of the SAC by disseminating criminal justice research and statistics in the judicial district in which each agency was located. It was assumed that a local agency would add a "personal factor" to the dissemination process which would, in turn, enhance the use of research. Another reason for experimenting with a SAC affiliate program was to increase local agency participation in SAC activities.

Using literature and prior research experience, a pilot dissemination program was designed around multiple modalities that highlighted interpersonal communication and proximity of local agencies. The program was made up of one local agency per judicial district that was willing to assign a staff person to the role of "SAC broker." The broker would serve as an extension of the SAC in its efforts to provide information services to local agencies. Each SAC broker was to establish and maintain a local affiliate network of agencies within its judicial district; disseminate SAC executive summaries and research bulletins to agencies in the network; and respond to data requests, assist local agencies with data-related problems, and make informational referrals.

The SAC assisted each affiliate agency in the following ways: provided special training to the SAC broker; provided SAC products and mailing labels; conducted follow-up telephone consultation; and convened a special workshop for each local area network hosted by the affiliate agency.

A summary of the program implementation and process, evaluation results, and their implications for new dissemination programming in Kentucky are presented below.

Program Implementation and Process Analysis

Program Implementation

- The SAC affiliate program was implemented in April 1986 in 15 randomly selected judicial districts of Kentucky.
- The SAC affiliate program remained in operation for approximately nine months (from April 1986 to December 1986).

- ① The brokers disseminated SAC research bulletins and executive summaries and updated the SAC mailing list.
- ② The SAC manager maintained telephone contact with the SAC brokers, monitoring the progress of their dissemination assignments and answering questions.
- ③ The SAC manager collaborated with the brokers in organizing a local workshop which focused on research and statistical needs and interagency communication problems.
- ④ A special follow-up training session was scheduled for the brokers during the annual SAC conference.
- ⑤ The design was not fully implemented. Most, but not all SAC brokers received the orientation training. A majority, but not all brokers collaborated with the SAC in organizing the special workshops held in their respective districts. Finally, only one affiliate attended the SAC's annual conference, and as a consequence, the planned follow-up training session was not implemented.
- ⑥ The affiliate program was considered fully implemented in eight of the fifteen randomly assigned districts and partially implemented in the remaining seven districts.

Process Analysis

- ① Only five SAC brokers (33%) reported that their supervisors set aside time for them to perform their SAC affiliate program duties; therefore, in a majority of the cases the broker was expected to complete these duties after the regular job requirements were completed.
- ② Eighty percent of the SAC brokers reported that their agency had contributed funds to the program for telephone calls, envelopes, mileage, stamps, paper, and name tags. Further, 40 percent of the brokers (6 brokers) indicated that their agencies had allowed personnel to assist them in completing the SAC affiliate program activities. These persons included office workers, secretaries, delivery persons, and student workers.
- ③ The chief administrators of the affiliate agencies perceived their participation in the network as valuable: 50 percent saw it as slightly valuable; 42 percent, as moderately valuable; and 8 percent, as highly valuable.
- ④ About one third (34%) of the decisionmakers in the experimental districts reported that they received mail very often, or often, and 50 percent said they occasionally received mail. Nearly 50 percent (49%) of the experimental respondents reported no face-to-face contact with the SAC broker and 49 percent also said that they had no telephone contact. In

addition, 44 percent of these respondents said they did not know the SAC broker and 16 percent indicated knowing the broker only somewhat.

- The ability of the brokers to make themselves understandable was rated by decisionmakers as excellent or good (86%). The SAC brokers were also perceived as very professional by 95 percent of the respondents. Over three quarters (78%) felt the brokers were enthusiastic. The last quality of the brokers assessed through the survey was whether they were seen as positive representatives of Kentucky; 83 percent felt they were excellent or good representatives of Kentucky.

Impact Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation

- The 30 most populated of the 56 judicial districts in Kentucky (the two largest districts were excluded because of their uniqueness) were matched according to size and region, and then randomly assigned to two groups: experimental and control.
- The impact of the SAC experiment was measured by two types of diffusion and two types of uses: primary diffusion (the number of SAC studies (0-6) with which they were familiar) and secondary diffusion (the extent to which decisionmakers shared SAC research by discussing reports with others within or outside of their offices, referred others to research information in SAC reports, or referred others to SAC personnel for research information).
- Two types of research utilization were measured: use in making organizational changes and use in making administrative decisions.
- Sixty-five percent of the local agency decisionmakers in offices within the experimental and control districts reported some exposure to and familiarity with SAC research.

Evaluation of SAC and Its Research

- In both experimental and control districts, the SAC staff received a high rating: 90 to 98 percent of the respondents rated SAC personnel as good or excellent on qualities such as being "understandable," "professional," "enthusiastic," and "positive representatives for Kentucky."
- SAC research, overall, was considered of high quality by nearly three quarters of the decisionmakers who were familiar with the research. Differences between the experimental and control districts were minimal.

- A large majority of respondents in offices of both the experimental and control districts considered SAC research to have scientific merit---i.e., was unbiased, comprehensive, and valid---and to have practical value---i.e., was action oriented and applicable, and made explicit recommendations and directed action.
- An examination of the use of research to guide organizational change or to provide a basis for administrative decisionmaking showed that 37 percent of the respondents who reported exposure to SAC research were influenced by it to make some type of organizational change; 49 percent stated that they had used it in making administrative decisions.

Evaluation of the SAC Affiliate Program

- No significant differences were observed in organizational or background characteristics between the group of respondents that was exposed to SAC research and the group that was not.
- Detailed multivariate analyses indicated that the SAC affiliate program did not increase the diffusion and use of research beyond the level that was achieved by the SAC's central office disseminating research directly to local agencies.
- Further examinations indicated that the SAC affiliate program had no impact on decisionmakers' level of research use. The number of respondents that were influenced to make organizational changes was higher in offices of those districts where the program was fully implemented than in offices of other districts; however, these differences were not statistically significant.

Implications

- The evaluation findings provide guidance in continued experimentation to increase the number of local agencies that are exposed to and use SAC research.
- The SAC plans to implement a new strategy that entails establishing a statewide **Criminal Justice Data User Association** to stimulate research and statistical applications of Kentucky-relevant research.
- The SAC is also developing a **Criminal Justice Information Clearinghouse** to supply Kentucky criminal justice agencies with technical information from other local, state, and federal reports.

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