



## Arkansas Department of Correction

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Governor Mike Beebe  
Arkansas State Capitol  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Senator Mary Anne Salmon  
Arkansas State Capitol  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Representative Tommy Lee Baker  
Arkansas State Capitol  
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Sex Offender Assessment Committee

Dear Governor and Chairpersons:

Pursuant to state law, the Sex Offender Assessment Committee is to report to the Governor and Legislative Council each year a summary of the proceedings of the committee, a statement of revenue, expenditures and any additional requested information. I am enclosing a report on Sex Offender Screening and Risk Assessments for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2012. The Committee has no revenue and their expenses are covered by the Arkansas Department of Correction.

If you have any questions concerning the report and / or the guidelines, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Wendy Kelley,  
Deputy Director for Health  
& Correctional Programs

cc: Legislative Council  
File

Encl.

# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION



## Sex Offender Screening & Risk Assessment

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### Legislative Update FY 2012

**Wendy L. Kelley, Deputy Director & Sheri J Flynn, MS, LSW, SOSRA Administrator**  
**7/17/2012**

The Sex Offender Screening & Risk Assessment Program (SOSRA), under the auspices of the Arkansas Department of Correction has been conducting individualized community notification assessments since September 1999. SOSRA came into existence, in part because of the need for consistency in the assessment process and because local law enforcement agencies did not have the time, resources or expertise to conduct individualized assessments. SOSRA continues to monitor and make changes in the process to reduce the length of time for assessments, and refine the individualized assessment process.

## **SOSRA & SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT**

SOSRA began conducting assessments in the fall of 1999. As of July 3, 2012, the program has conducted 10,693 assessments. Arkansas is committed to conducting an individualized community notification assessment which provides local law enforcement agencies with accurate information to help community members protect themselves from future victimization. Ongoing research indicates individualized assessment is the appropriate mechanism for community notification. Individualized assessment also assists others working in the field of sex offender management.

Arkansas continues to build a network of professionals who believe in the containment approach to sex offender management. This approach involves a system in which the offender is at the center of a system of professionals providing assessment, supervision and treatment of sex offenders. The idea is to *contain* the sex offender inside the network of professional and closely monitor the offender's behavior. SOSRA works tirelessly to train and share information with local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, judges, probation/parole officers, the Arkansas Parole Board, the Department of Human Services, treatment providers and other entities responsible for the management of sex offenders. SOSRA works daily to build positive working relationships with all entities working in the sex offender management field.

Assessment information is intended to help local law enforcement agencies determine the appropriate level of community notification; however, a number of other agencies use the information in making decisions regarding these offenders. The Department of Community Correction assigns Level 3 and 4 sex offenders to an intensive after care program, and restricts where these offenders can live and work. The Arkansas Parole Board uses the information when making parole decisions and treatment

recommendations. The Reduction of Sexual Victimization Program (RSVP) and Sex Offender Female Treatment (SOFT), which are treatment programs within the Arkansas Department of Correction, as well as independent treatment providers, use assessment information in the treatment process. Local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors may use the information to help identify suspects in new sex crimes and in making sentencing recommendations. Judges use the information to assign community notification in certain cases. Federal probation officers use the information to manage sex offenders. The Department of Human Services and Arkansas State Police can use the information in child maltreatment investigations and child custody decisions.

Successful sex offender management requires that each entity involved have access to the same information and maintain open communication with one another. Since 1999, SOSRA has maintained a commitment to a team approach to sex offender management. SOSRA was involved in the development an electronic sex offender management system (eSOMA) that provides immediate access to a wealth of information on sex offenders. Law enforcement agencies using eSOMA can access other criminal history information on any sex offender ever incarcerated in the Arkansas Department of Correction or supervised by the Department of Community Correction. SOSRA continues to encourage sex offender management partners to use this system to instantly be aware of the status of all sex offenders having been assessed by SOSRA. The flow of information between SOSRA, DCC, local law enforcement, federal probation, US Marshall's service and other sex offender management entities continues to grow.

The Arkansas Crime Information Center (ACIC) developed an electronic registration system, CENSOR. CENSOR and eSOMA continue efforts to electronically share information in an effort to ensure that ACIC and SOSRA receive registration and assessment information, as quickly as possible.

Individualized sex offender assessment allows law enforcement to concentrate resources on sex offenders presenting the highest risk. Research has shown that providing high intensity services to low risk offenders may do more harm than good. Often, public perception is that all sex offenders are child molesters; however, offenders may be required to register for offenses that do not involve children or may not be sexually motivated. Examples include: Prostitution, Stalking, Failure to Protect, Kidnapping of a Child (Not your own), Exposing another to HIV, etc.

## **TIME FRAMES FOR ASSESSMENT**

SOSRA made a number of changes to expedite the assessment process without sacrificing the integrity of the information provided to local law enforcement in 2006 and took another review in 2010. Those additional changes resulted in a decrease in the amount of time it takes to complete each assessment. The average amount of time per assessment in 2010 was 8.8 months. The average amount of time per assessment in 2012, thus far is 4.7 months and SOSRA continues to explore the most efficient manner in which to conduct assessments, while maintaining the integrity of the assessment process.

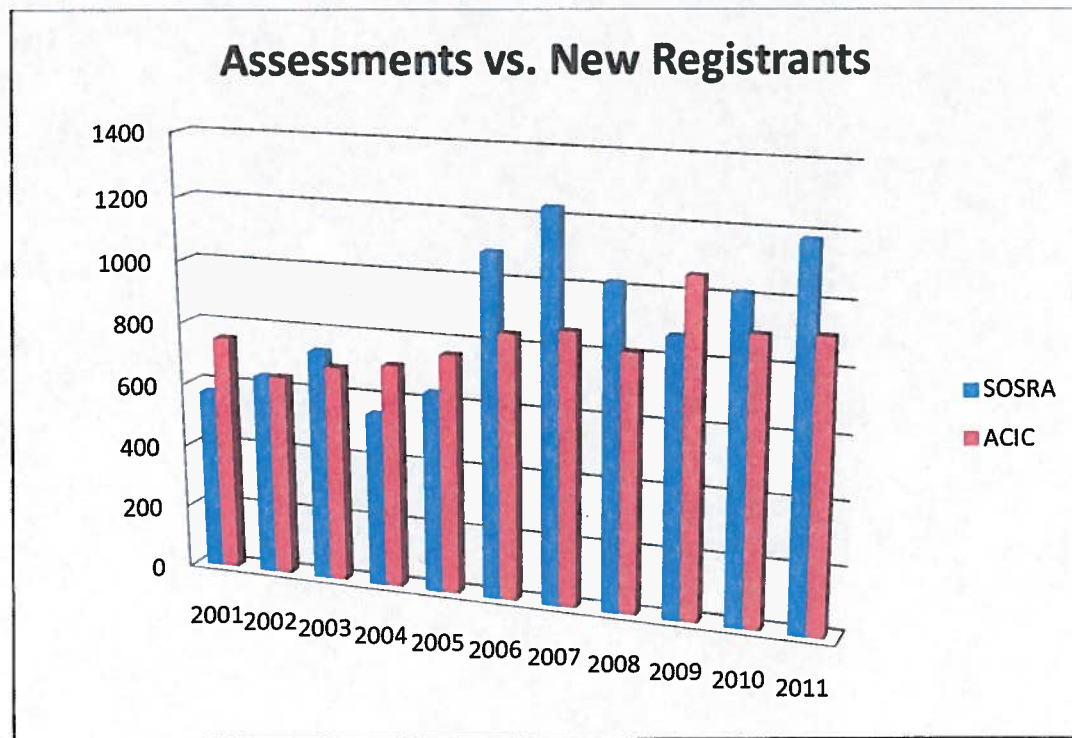
There is currently no backlog of offenders living in communities requiring assessment. This has allowed SOSRA to focus more on inmates being released from prison. Forty-four percent of the assessments completed in FY 2012 were inmate assessments, compared to 37% in FY 2011.



## Numbers Per Calendar Year

The following is the number of assessments completed by SOSRA per *calendar year* versus the number of newly registered sex offenders documented by the Arkansas Crime Information Center (ACIC).

CY	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SOSRA	572	637	734	551	633	1087	1231	1020	873	1016	1184
ACIC	751	639	687	709	758	839	862	814	1058	897	907



## **eSOMA, Electronic Sex Offender Management System**

SOSRA began completing assessments electronically in September 2008 in the existing electronic offender management system (eOMIS) utilized by the Department of Community Correction (DCC), the Arkansas Department of Correction (ADC) and the Arkansas Parole Board (APB). Electronic Offender Fact Sheets, Risk Assessment, and Profile Reports are available to local law enforcement agencies, DCC, ACIC, and APB for every assessment completed after that date. This system is being utilized free of charge by numerous law enforcement agencies across Arkansas and has made the assessment process more efficient as information is immediately available to local law enforcement. It was an automated registration process for those local jurisdictions utilizing the system prior to ACIC's development of CENSOR. Feedback from those using eSOMA continues to be positive.

### **RESEARCH**

SOSRA conducted research and presented poster presentations at international conferences in 2007 and 2009. J. Michael Wood, Jr., Ph.D., & Sheri J. Flynn, MS, LSW of SOSRA in collaboration with Michael Seto, Ph.D., C.Psych. Director of Forensic Rehabilitation Research, Integrated Forensic Program, Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada & Kelly Babchishin, MS, Department of Psychology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada have continued the 2009 research. The research was documented in an article published in the prestigious academic journal, *Law and Human Behavior* in the fall of 2012.

Research conducted by J. Michael Wood, Jr., Ph.D., Sheri J. Flynn, LSW, and Dean Whiteside, Ed.D in 2007 asked sex offenders how they felt about registration and individualized assessment. Among other information, that research found the following:

- While less than half of offenders believe that community notification “works” (e.g., prevents future sex offenses, makes people safer, etc.) in general, almost three-quarters of them reported they feel they have personally benefited from registration/community notification. These personal benefits align with previous findings (Elbogen et al., 2003; Levenson & Cotter, 2005). Examples of personal benefits included registration/community notification helping the offender become more honest with others, improving his relationships, preventing future sexual offending, or encouraging him to obtain/maintain treatment involvement.
- Sixty-two percent of offenders believed that registration “works” (e.g., helps prevent future sexual offending, helps law enforcement solve sex crimes, makes people safer, etc.). Only 13% of the offenders viewed registration negatively with the remaining group undecided. (Wood, Flynn & Whiteside, 2007)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Further information is available from:

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