Iowa Department of Corrections

Data Download

LSI-R Scores: Change Matters – Part III

In the last two issues of the *Data Download*, we discussed that reducing LSI-R offender risk assessment scores lowers recidivism – particularly for higher risk offenders – for probationers, parolees, and women and African-American offenders. These findings are from research on Iowa offenders conducted by Brenda Vose at the University of Cincinnati.

In this issue, we take a closer look at the individual risk factors measured by the LSI-R. There are several risk factors that the LSI-R assessment tool measures: Criminal History; Education/Employment; Financial; Family/Marital; Accommodations (Living Situation); Leisure/Recreation; Companions; Alcohol/Drug Problem; Emotional/Personal; and Attitudes/Orientation.

The research found that no single risk factor is a significantly better predictor of recidivism than the others. Rather, it is the cumulative effect of the risk factors that predicts recidivism.

The research also found that change in a particular risk factor does not appear to be more important than change in the others. Again, it appears that the cumulative change across risk factors is more important than change in a single risk factor.

What this means for corrections is that we should address multiple priority needs of offenders while they are under our custody or supervision. Doing so will lower scores in more than one LSI-R risk factor, and contribute to offender reentry and their likelihood of success.