



An Overview of John Schools in the United States

**Summary Based Upon
Research from the Study,
“A National Assessment
of Prostitution and Sex
Trafficking Demand
Reduction Efforts”**

**Supported by
National Institute of Justice
Grant # 2008-IJ-CX-0010**

January 7, 2013

Prepared for:
**The National Institute of
Justice**

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U.S. Department of Justice
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“John school” is a generic term that is used to describe a wide range of programs that involve an education or treatment component. A useful working definition for john school is: An education or treatment program for men arrested for soliciting illegal commercial sex. To that basic definition, one could add that in order for an education program to be considered a john school, it must cover a range of topics designed to persuade or deter men from buying sex. That criterion would separate john schools from other kinds of court-ordered or diversion program that focus only on health education. There are several education programs in the United States that involve education for arrested johns that we would not consider to be a john school. For example, at least 10 communities in the United States have a health education session (usually focused on HIV) for prostitution arrestees - including johns - but we would not consider that to be a john school program, since the model’s basic intention is to help men avoid infection and not necessarily to convince men to avoid commercial sex because of the harm it causes. The state of Virginia requires health education for anyone convicted of a prostitution offense, and we would not define those health education sessions john schools for the male sex buyers who must attend.

A wide variety of programs are often grouped together and labeled john schools. Among the key dimensions of variability are:

- **Number of sessions:** Most john schools are single sessions, but they can arrange up to 10 sessions spaced a week apart.
- **Diversion versus sentencing option:** About two-thirds of john schools in the United States are structured as criminal justice diversion programs, and the remainder are structured as conditions of a sentence. In the former, charges are usually dismissed upon completing the education program; in the latter, they must complete the john school to satisfy the conditions of their sentence, but doing so does not result in their charges being dismissed.
- **Fees or fines:** The average fee or fine for john schools in the U.S. is roughly \$400, and the range is from \$0 to \$1,500.
- **Curricula:** the common denominators of most john schools are that they discuss health and legal consequences for johns if they were to continue engaging in commercial sex, and the negative impact of prostitution on prostituted women and girls and communities. With a common foundation, there is a wide range of topics covered by at least one John school. For example, the Indianapolis “Red Zone” program features a community impact panel, and then has the men spend three hours doing community service by picking up trash on the streets with high levels of prostitution activity. Other curriculum components include discussions of healthy relationships, anger management, sexual addiction, pimping and pandering, human trafficking, and johns’ vulnerability to criminal victimization while engaged in commercial sex.

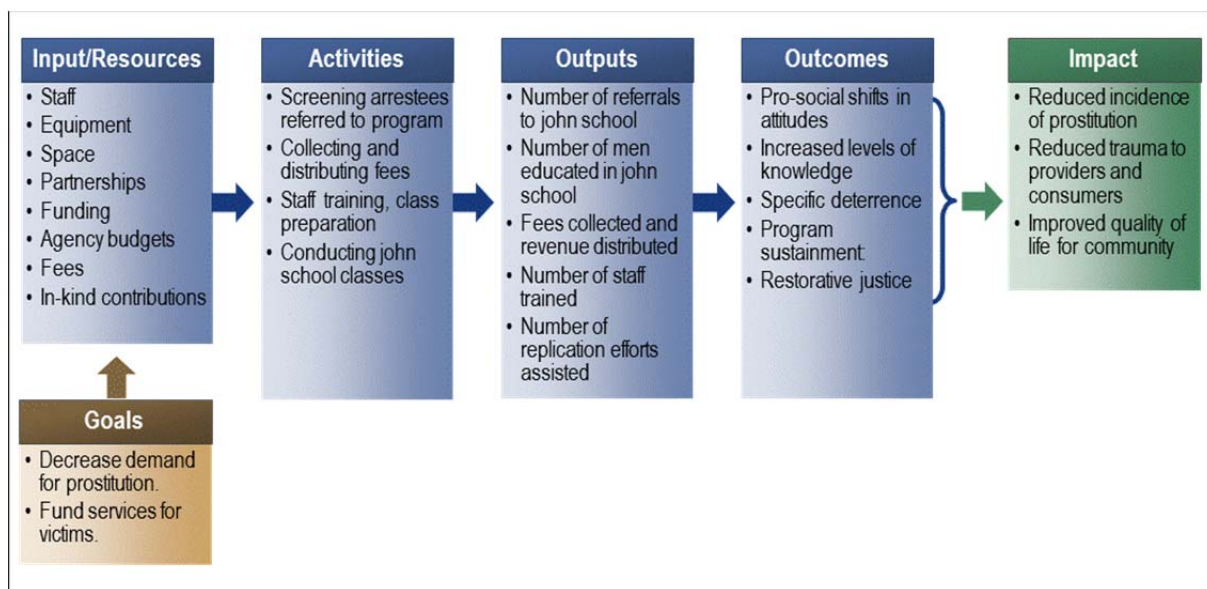
Generic John School Logic Model

Like any program, john schools are grounded in a set of goals. To pursue these goals, programs use resources that support activities intended to produce targeted results—from those results that are

immediate and specific, to those that are broader and longer-term outcomes. A logic model is a useful device for illustrating the linkages from program goals, to the resources committed to the program, to activities, to outputs (the direct representation of activities), to program outcomes (the manifestation of the change that activities are seeking to accomplish) and finally to impacts (the indications that the program’s broader goals have been realized). The logic model for the most common type of john school (modeled in part on the FOPP) is presented in Figure 1.

The ultimate program *goal* is to decrease the demand for prostitution, and hence, reduce the amount of human trafficking and sexual exploitation that occurs. Program goals are pursued by committing *resources* (inputs) that support program *activities* (in john schools, the primary program activity is the educational intervention for arrestees). The measurable indicators of these activities are the program “*outputs*.” The activities are designed to lead to the aforementioned *outcomes* of knowledge and attitude change: increased awareness of the legal and health risks of engaging in prostitution, and awareness of the negative impact of the behavior on prostitutes, communities, and others. These outcomes are intended to reduce the likelihood that men will continue to solicit prostitution (i.e., the program *impact*).

Figure 1: Generic John School Logic Model



Targeting the Educational Intervention

John school directors typically assume that there are several key attitudes and beliefs that cause or allow men to solicit sex, and that the programs reach at least some of the men by countering erroneous beliefs and filling gaps in knowledge. The programs target some or all of the following:

1. The belief that the risk of arrest and legal sanction are low.
2. Denial or ignorance of the risk of contracting STDs or HIV through purchased sex.
3. Ignorance of the risk of being robbed or assaulted by prostitutes or pimps.

4. Denial or ignorance of the negative impact prostitution has on the neighborhoods in which it occurs.
5. Ignorance of the links between street prostitution and larger, organized systems of sex trafficking.
6. Denial or ignorance of what motivates them to solicit prostituted women or girls (e.g., addictions, compulsions, unmet social or sexual needs).
7. Denial or ignorance of the negative impact of prostitution on “providers.”
8. Denial or ignorance of the fact that money is the only reason prostituted persons have sex with them.
9. The mistaken belief that the women they hire care about them, and that they are in some kind of relationship with them.
10. Denial or ignorance of the anger, revulsion, or indifference that many prostituted women have while they are having sex with johns.
11. Ignorance about how to have the healthy relationships that could replace their reliance upon commercial sex.

Men who solicit sex would be correct in assuming that there is a low risk of arrest and legal sanction. On this point, john schools do not seek to confirm this perception, but instead try to elevate the perceived risk from whatever level exists prior to taking the class. Since many of the men in john schools are first-time arrestees, they may be ignorant of the sanctions they may face if arrested a second time, and the program was designed to provide them with this information. On most of the other points, the program managers usually assume that the men are ignorant or in denial about the risks and negative impact of prostitution, and the program curriculum was designed to provide them with factual information and “break down their denial systems” (Hotaling, 2006).

A precondition for a sustainable john school program is a sufficient flow of eligible participants. This requires a proactive approach on the part of law enforcement to conduct operations designed to arrest men for soliciting. Several john school programs have been suspended or discontinued due to an insufficient flow of participants (e.g., Buffalo, Tampa). This flow is determined primarily by whether police have and will commit the resources needed to conduct reverse sting operations. Programs whose fees are used only to support john school classes can survive with very small numbers (as few as 10 to 20 per year, enough for one class per year), but programs that rely upon the fee revenue to sustain programs for women and girls involved in commercial sex must have a reliable and substantial volume of program participants. A serious, current challenge for all john schools is cutbacks in police budgets that have resulted in reducing the frequency of reverse stings.

Prevalence of John School Programs

We have identified at least 58 U.S. cities and counties that have implemented john schools in lieu of, or in addition to, criminal penalties. Approximately fifty communities have programs that are still operating (Table 2), and 11 sites have had john schools that were discontinued (Chicago, IL, Dallas, TX, Dover, DE, Hillsborough County, FL, King County, WA, Madison, WI, Pinellas County, FL, Portland, OR, Santa Clara, CA, Snohomish County, WA, Tucson, AZ). An additional 11 sites have education programs for johns that are restricted to health topics were identified (Chicago, IL,

Covington, KY, Fitchburg, MA, Forsyth County, NC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Guilford County, NC, Hollywood, CA, New York, NY, Pasadena, CA, Ventura, CA, Virginia¹). New john school programs have come online at a remarkably steady rate. On average, about four new programs have begun each year from 1997 to 2010.

Year	City or County	State
1981	Grand Rapids	MI
1988	Minneapolis/St. Paul	MN
1988	Rochester	NY
1991	West Palm Beach	FL
1992	Kansas City	KS
1995	San Francisco	CA
1995	Portland	OR
1996	Nashville	TN
1997	Las Vegas	NV
1997	Pittsburgh	PA
1997	Santa Clara	CA
1997	Buffalo/Erie County	NY
1997	Phoenix	AZ
1997	Oklahoma City	OK
1998	Fresno	CA

While there are about 50 cities and counties that are served by john schools, there are approximately 40 separate programs, since some serve multiple communities. For example, the *Cincinnati* john school serves the city of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. *Kansas City's* program receives men from Kansas City, KS, Kansas City, MO, Lenexa, Prairie Village, Johnson County, and Wyandotte County. *Salt Lake City* serves both the city and county of Salt Lake, and the john school in *Tacoma* serves that city plus Lakewood, Fife, and Pierce County. The john school in *Toledo*, Ohio serves Lucas County as well as the core city of Toledo. The “Breaking Free” program in *Minneapolis* also serves the city of Rochester, MN and Olmsted County as well as the twin cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Over time, some cities have had more than one program. For example, Portland, Oregon is currently operating its third john school program.

- *#1: Sexual Exploitation Education Project*. The city's first sex buyer education program was the Sexual Exploitation Education Project (SEEP). It was active in 1995-1997, and was run by the Council for Prostitution Alternatives through an informal agreement with Multnomah County District Attorney and the District Court. SEEP was a three-day classroom program, established as a condition of a sentence rather than as a diversion option resulting in dismissed charges. The program was cancelled due to a lack of support by local law enforcement agencies, including the courts that stopped referring men to the

¹ Virginia state law requires HIV counseling when arrested for soliciting prostitution.

program. Published reports state that the program was considered by local agencies to be too polemic and political, rather than educational and practical. Having never seen the program, we cannot comment on the validity of the claims of SEEP's detractors or supporters, although references and links to their reports are provided below. The reports also provide more detail about the program's structure, curriculum, and operation. For a summary of SEEP's basic features, as well as those of the other two Portland/Multnomah County john schools, click here: [Three Portland John Schools: Summary Table](#).

- **#2: Portland Prostitution Offender Program.** The city's second john school was the Portland Prostitution Offender Program (PPOP). It operated from 2003 to 2006, and was led by the Lola Greene Baldwin Foundation, in partnership with the Multnomah County Community and Circuit Courts. The program was designed as a condition of a sentence, rather than a diversion, as was its predecessor - SEEP. In the PPOP, successful completion of the john school would result a reduction in the number of hours offenders were required to perform community service (another standard condition of their sentence). One of the reasons the program was discontinued after two years was that an unusually small program fee was charged to offenders, which resulted in the PPOP not being financially self-sustaining, as are most john schools. The PPOP charged \$83, while the national average john school fee or fine is approximately \$400 and can range as high as \$1,500 (Norfolk, VA).
- **#3: Sex Buyer Accountability Diversion program.** Five years after the PPOP ended, the city of Portland and the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office initiated a third john school program, the Sex Buyer Accountability Diversion program (SBAD). Launched in January 2011, the program was modeled explicitly after San Francisco's FOPP, unlike its two predecessors. It is a diversion program, where meeting all of the requirements results in a case dismissal. The fee is \$1,000, with provisions for a sliding scale based on ability to pay. The program is financially supported entirely by fees from the offenders, and excess revenue is used to support programs for survivors of commercial sex and sex trafficking. As of July 2012, this program, administered by Lifeworks Northwest and the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, is still operating and has had over 70 participants.

Other cities that have had more than one john school program include the following examples:

- **Chicago, Illinois** has had two john schools. The first was operated by Genesis House and Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, and was disbanded in 2005. The second is still functioning, and has been operated by Amend and the Chicago Police Department since 2005.
- **Omaha, Nebraska's** Adult Probation Community Resources Directory and the website of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services list a Wellspring john school program that provides therapy "for men who solicit sex." The "Men's Own Responsibility, Recovery, and Education" (MORRE) program operated by Wellsprings in Omaha is described by Hughes (2004). We could not confirm whether either program still operates.
- **Portland, Oregon** is currently operating its third john school. The city has had two programs that were each discontinued after two years of operation: (1) The Sexual Exploitation Education Project (SEEP), was implemented in 1995-1997 by the Council for Prostitution Alternatives through an informal agreement with Multnomah County District Attorney and

the District Court, and (2) the Portland Prostitution Offender Program (PPOP), was operated in 2003-2005 by the Lola Greene Baldwin Foundation in conjunction with the Multnomah County Community and Circuit Courts. In January, 2011, the city of Portland and the Multnomah County's District Attorney's Office initiated a third john school program, modeled more closely after San Francisco's FOPP than were its predecessors. As of January 2013, this program was still operating.

Table 2: U.S. Sites Served by John School Programs

1. Appleton, WI	28. Nashville, TN
2. Aurora, IL	29. New Hanover County, NC
3. Brooklyn, NY	30. Norfolk, VA
4. Buffalo, NY	31. Olmsted County, MN
5. Charlotte, NC	32. Orange County, NY
6. Chicago, IL	33. Phoenix, AZ
7. Cincinnati, OH	34. Pierce County, WA
8. Columbus, OH	35. Pittsburgh, PA
9. Dallas, TX	36. Prairie Village, KS
10. Dayton, OH	37. Rochester, MN
11. Denver, CO	38. St. Paul, MN
12. Erie County, NY	39. Salt Lake City, UT
13. Fife, WA	40. Salt Lake County, UT
14. Fresno, CA	41. San Diego, CA
15. Grand Rapids, MI	42. San Francisco, CA
16. Hamilton County, OH	43. Santa Monica, CA
17. Hartford, CT	44. Seattle, WA
18. Indianapolis, IN	45. Tacoma, WA
19. Johnson County, MO	46. Tampa, FL
20. Kansas City, KS	47. Waco, TX
21. Kansas City, MO	48. Washington, DC
22. King County, WA	49. West Palm Beach, FL
23. Lakewood, WA	50. Winston-Salem, NC
24. Las Vegas, NV	51. Worcester, MA
25. Lenexa, KS	52. Wyandotte County, KS
26. Los Angeles, CA	53. Ypsilanti, MI
27. Minneapolis, MN	

- ***Kansas City, Kansas*** had a program starting in 1992. The program appears to have been discontinued sometime between 1997 and 2000. Then a new program was established by Veronica's Voice in Kansas City, MO, that serves Kansas City, KS as well as several other communities and counties.
- ***Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota*** has two programs: The Restorative Justice Program Prostitution Patrons, operated since 1988 by Project Pathfinder Inc., and the Offenders Prostitution Program, operated by Breaking Free since 1999. The latter program was modeled after the FOPP, while the former program pre-dates the FOPP.

- **Tucson, Arizona** has had two programs: (1) the STD Program (Safety Through Deterrence), operated in 2004 by the Tucson Police Department, and (2) Odyssey, operated since January 2007 by the Tucson’s District Attorneys and Police Department, Southwest Intervention Services, and Cactus Counseling.

One of the difficulties in counting the number of currently active john schools is determining what it means to be “active.” Some programs meet infrequently, such as the Waco, TX program that meets about once per year. Most programs go through periods of greater and less activity, so may schedule classes monthly or bi-monthly, but postpone them if police activity has been low and the numbers are insufficient. Some programs that had been robust and met frequently have gone through fallow periods of one or two years where no classes have been held (e.g., Buffalo, NY; Waco, TX; Tampa, FL). If the program is still hardwired into the system and the capacity to hold classes remains, but classes have not occurred due to an absence of participants delivered by police, we would regard it as active. We define as “discontinued” only those programs that have been explicitly cancelled, or that have not been held for many years and there is no remaining infrastructure or intent for the program to hold another class (e.g., Rochester, NY). Another challenge in keeping current on john school programs that are active “now” is that would require an ongoing surveillance or reporting system, which would need resources that have not been made available for that task.

Staff at most of the john school programs we have identified said that they used the FOPP as a model, but when we examined these programs’ major features, no other program was found to be structured like the FOPP along all dimensions. For example, most of the other programs collect just enough fee revenue to support the john school classes, and are not designed to generate revenue for survivor programs. The FOPP staff (particularly from SAGE) regards the “*restorative justice*” component as one of the most crucial elements of their program, and believes that it is a serious shortcoming to omit that feature. Other programs are explicitly not modeled on the FOPP, such as the three-day SEEP program that ran in Portland, OR from 1995 to 1997.

“When the Red Zone Program was created it was because we wanted to change these defendants’ behavior. That’s what you really want to instill in a traditional prosecutor; you want them to start thinking about impacting this person’s behavior in low-level cases so that they’re not back in front of us again.”

Deputy Prosecutor Michelle Waymire, chief of the
Marion County Community Prosecution Unit, 2007²

² http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/Breaking_With_Tradition1.pdf

Table 3: Select Characteristics of John School Programs

Site	Date Began	Diversion or Sentence	Fee/Fine	Format	\$ Supports Survivor Programs
Aurora, IL	2009	Diversion	DK	DK	
Brooklyn, NY	2002	Diversion	\$250	1 class, 5 hrs.	◆
Buffalo, NY	1997	Diversion	100	1 class, 8 hrs.	
Charlotte, NC	2006	Diversion	220	5 group sessions, 10 hrs.	
Chicago, IL	2006	Diversion	500**	1 class, 8 hrs.	
Cincinnati, OH	2006	Either	500	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Columbus, OH	2007	Sentence	156	1 class, 8 hrs.	
Dayton, OH					
Denver, CO	1999	Diversion	200	2 sessions, 4 hrs. 20-40 hrs. comm. service	
Fife, WA	2005	Diversion	600	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Fresno, CA	1998	Diversion	500	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Grand Rapids, MI	1981	Sentence	500	5 sessions, 10 hours	
Hartford, CT	2000	Either	0	1 class, 2 hrs.; 10 days community service	
Indianapolis, IN	1999	Diversion	150	1 class, 3 hrs.; 5 hrs. community service	
Kansas City, MO	2000	Diversion	DK	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Lakewood, WA	2005	Diversion	700	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Las Vegas, NV	1997	Sentence	450	1 class, 8 hrs.	
Los Angeles, CA	2008	Diversion	600	1 class, 8 hrs.	
Madison, WI	2005	Diversion	676	1 class, 2.5 hrs.	
Minneapolis, MN	1997	Diversion	650	4 sessions, 6 hrs.; 40 hrs. community service	
Nashville, TN	1996	Diversion	250	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Norfolk, VA	2001	Sentence	1,500 ^a	1 class, 1 hr.; plus 1 day community service	
Orange County, NY	2003	Either	125	1 class, 5 hrs.	◆
Phoenix	1997	Diversion	788	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Pierce County	2005	Diversion	600	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Pittsburgh	1997	Diversion	348 ^b	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
St. Paul (John School)	1999	Diversion	325	1 class, 8 hrs.	
St. Paul (Project Pathfinder)	1988	Diversion	650	4 sessions, plus 6 hrs. restorative justice	
Salt Lake City	1999	Diversion	350	10 weekly sessions, 15 hrs.	◆
San Diego	2000	Sentence	200	1 class, 2.5 hrs.	
San Francisco	1995	Diversion	1,000**	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Seattle	2009	Either	150	1 class, 7 hrs.	◆
Tacoma	2005	Diversion	600	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
Tampa	2001	Diversion	350	6 sessions, 6 hrs.	
Waco	2002	Sentence	225	1 class, 8 hrs.	
Washington	2001	Diversion	300	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆
West Palm Beach	1999	Diversion	50	1 class, 4 hrs.	
Worcester	2007	Either	200	1 class, 8 hrs.	
Ypsilanti	2003	Sentence	500	1 class, 8 hrs.	◆

** Fees are on a sliding scale.

a Added to that fine are auto impound fee of \$400 and a community supervision fee of \$30/day.

b Added to that john school fee is \$117.50 for court costs and a \$230 fine.

We have gathered descriptive information on every john school known to us as having been implemented in the United States. About some programs we know little. For example, regarding the john schools in Rochester, NY in 1988 and South Bend, IN, we have information obtained only through single stories in news archives that provided little detail, which we have been unable to verify or expand upon through interviews. We spent over two years evaluating one of the programs, San Francisco's FOPP, and have a great deal of detailed information. Most of the information falls between these extremes. For example, we have information acquired through interviews, site visits and observations of programs in Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Norfolk, Phoenix, San Diego, and Worcester MA. A summary of several key traits of john schools is provided in Table 3.

Community Impact Panels

Several communities have been found to rely upon residents and other representatives of communities to appeal directly to the buyers of commercial sex, in hopes of dissuading them from that behavior. Usually, this occurs in john school programs, since that is often the context in which known buyers of commercial sex are "captive audiences," accessible to community members and required to listen to their views. In john school classes we observed in Indianapolis, Norfolk, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, and Worcester, community representatives from local organizations discussed a range of negative effects that prostitution has on communities. Among the most common messages conveyed to johns is that where there is prostitution, residents and businesses experience the following:

- Public, illicit drug abuse and associated violence and neighborhood disorder.
- Condoms, syringes, and broken bottles on sidewalks and in parks that children and others can contact.
- Screaming, fighting, and loud cursing late at night.
- "Drunks" and "addicts" sleeping in doorways.
- People defecating and urinating in yards, sidewalks, and near doorways to apartment buildings.
- People engaged in sex in parked cars, on sidewalks, in yards, and near doorways to apartment buildings.
- Pimps "beating up prostitutes."
- Prostituted women, trafficking victims, and pimps assaulting johns.

In working class neighborhoods, people cannot afford to lose sleep, and community members argue that they should not have to be deprived of sleep just because people choose to commit crimes there. There can also be repercussions for women and girls who have been propositioned by johns. Anecdotally, it was asserted that women and girls of specific ethnic groups could face consequences from their husbands or fathers if it was learned that they had been propositioned by a john, even if they did nothing to encourage it and it was unavoidable. Residents argue that johns "can do their business there and leave," but residents have to stay in their neighborhood and deal with the aftermath. In one presentation, the community representative asked whether the men in the class were arrested in the neighborhood in which they lived. None of the 27 men present in the class that day said they had been arrested in their home neighborhood.

Members of the communities emphasize that johns contribute to the problem, or in fact are the chief cause of the problem, since without “customers” there would be no prostituted persons or pimps.

John School Curriculum Items

John school curricula vary, as one would expect. The FOPP curriculum has been represented elsewhere (e.g., Shively, 2008), and represents a “baseline” for john school topics covered since so many of the subsequent programs used the FOPP as a model. To address the informational needs of offenders, the FOPP established a curriculum that was designed to be delivered in one eight-hour day. The outline below captures most of what the program has addressed since its inception. The current curriculum is divided into six main sections, which are outlined briefly here:

1. ***Prostitution Law and Street Facts***, focusing on the legal consequences of subsequent offenses and addressing johns’ vulnerability to being robbed or assaulted while involved in prostitution.
2. ***Health Education***, describing the elevated risk of HIV and STD infection associated with prostitution, and stressing that many STDs are asymptomatic and/or difficult to detect and have long term negative impacts on health.
3. ***Effect of Prostitution on Prostitutes***, focusing on numerous negative consequences for women serving as prostitutes, such as vulnerability to rape and assault, health problems, drug addiction, and various forms of exploitation.
4. ***Dynamics of Pimping, Recruiting, and Trafficking***, featuring discussions of how pimps and traffickers recruit, control, and exploit women and girls for profit, and the links between local street prostitution and larger systems of human trafficking.
5. ***Effect of Prostitution on the Community***, describing the drug use, violence, health hazards, and other adverse consequences that co-occur with street prostitution.
6. ***Sexual Addiction***, focusing on how involvement in commercial sex may be driven by sexual addiction, and where help for this condition can be sought.

Although not listed as a core component of the FOPP curriculum, many of the classes contain a section on *policing prostitution*. The discussions focus on police surveillance of all types of commercial sex (street, brothels, escort services, massage parlors, storefronts, and web-based), and are intended to provide participants with the impression that they will stand a great chance of rearrest if they continue involvement in any type of commercial sex.

Other john schools have been found to have longer programs with more items covered in their curricula, and while some are far shorter and cover fewer topics. For example, Norfolk’s john school is only one hour and covers just three topics (health, community impact, survivor impact), while the Sexual Exploitation Education Program (SEEP) that operated in Portland, Oregon from 1995-1997 was a three-day, 15-hour intervention. Other programs in addition to the defunct SEEP are delivered in a multiple-session counseling format. The most involved of these is the 10-week program in Salt Lake City operated by Umoja Training; an outline of their curriculum is provided below.³

³ <http://umojatraining.com/services.html>

Week 1: Male Socialization

Purpose: to gain understanding of male socialization process and its impact on male-female relationships.

Week 2: Female Socialization

Purpose: to identify differences between male and female socialization; understand how female socialization affects female relationship behavior; and gain insight into personal treatment of women.

Week 3: Sexual Messages

Purpose: to gain perspective about how familial relations, upbringing, religion, peers, and the media impact our sexual relationships and behavior.

Week 4: Prostitute Panel

Purpose 1: to dispel myths about why women prostitute and educate about prostitution's impact on women.

Purpose 2: to encourage class participants to evaluate their sexual treatment of women and to recognize and respect their sexual partners limits.

Weeks 5 and 6: Communication

Purpose: to make class participants aware of the relational impacts of different communication styles and to introduce new interpersonal skills.

Week 7: Anger

Purpose: to help class participants identify the way they express anger and the relational impact of their anger style; and increase awareness of alternative anger management choices.

Week 8: Healthy Intimate Relationships

Purpose: to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy interpersonal and sexual relationships.

Week 9: HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infection Prevention

Purpose: to decrease the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections between prostitutes, johns and their partners.

Week 10: Personal Power

Purpose: to encourage class participants to make healthier decisions about their lives.

Other programs are shorter and simpler. For example, the john school portion of the Indianapolis "Red Zone" program covers community impact and health consequences, although other topics will arise in the mediated discussion format. The Norfolk john school program is delivered in one to two hours, and the new video john school produce by the Cook County Sheriff's Office covers the basic elements of the FOPP but in just 14 minutes. An expanded set of information on john school curricula will be provided on the website. The relative impact of the various program models is not known, as most program models have not been evaluated for their impact on reoffending.

"Like some of our other diversion programs, this [Prostitution Offender Program of Lucas County, or john school] is a great way for some of the first-time offenders to really learn the consequences of their actions and to give them an opportunity to examine what may have led to that behavior."

Municipal Court Presiding Judge Michael Goulding,
Toledo, Ohio, 2011⁴

Common Misconceptions about John Schools

The john school paradigm has become controversial, with adamant advocates and detractors. In our review of the literature on prostitution and human trafficking, it is clear that some of the john school discussions are based upon misconceptions about the range of variation in program structure and content, the types of offenders served, and the inability to distinguish weaker from stronger forms of evidence of effectiveness. While information about the actual range of programs and the people they served is presented in the National Assessment report and the DemandForum website, we thought it would be useful to address several errors or misunderstandings about these programs directly. This discussion is not intended to advocate for or against johns schools, but instead to place debates about them on firmer empirical ground.

Misconception #1: *All john schools are, and must be, diversion programs, allowing arrested sex buyers to avoid a criminal record or punishment.*

The most common criticism of john schools is that they are diversion programs that allow men arrested for attempting to purchase sex to avoid an arrest record and/or criminal sanctions. While it is true that the model program that most people refer to when they are speaking about john schools (San Francisco's FOPP) is a diversion program that results in dismissal of charges upon completion, the structure of these programs as diversion versus sentencing options is independent of the educational component that is the core element of the john school model. In other words, it is mistaken to believe that john schools are all – and must be – structured as diversion programs.

Attendance in john schools is not voluntary in many U.S. john schools: courts sentence men to participate in the program if they feel it is inappropriate treatment or punishment, and in such systems participation is mandatory, and charges are not dismissed for successfully completing the program. Men are sentenced to participate in nearly one-third (29%) of U.S. john schools, and another 19% are structured as both diversion and sentencing options (some men attend as a condition of a sentence, others other in the same program may attend pursuant to a diversion program). Just 52% of the john schools in the United States are structured exclusively as diversion programs.

Table 4: John Schools Structured as Diversion Versus Sentencing Options

John School Program Structure	Number of John Schools	Percent of John Schools
Diversion	25	52
Sentence	14	29
Either Diversion or Sentence	9	19

⁴ <http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2011/04/04/John-School-offers-new-perspective-2.html>

For those debating the merits of john schools, it is important to consider whether it is fair or just for men arrested for soliciting to have access to a program that allows their charges to be dismissed and avoid a conviction appearing on their records. In jurisdictions where men arrested for soliciting have the option of diversion, but women arrested for prostitution do not have equivalent options, the inequity is manifest. However, it is not logical to oppose all john schools because one disapproves of diversion programs. The educational component of john schools is independent of being structured as a diversion or sentencing option. Those believing that diversion programs such as the FOPP let men escape with “a slap on the wrist” should argue against having john school participation be voluntary and allowing participants to avoid criminal charges and conviction. However, those features do not provide a legitimate basis for opposing the john school concept, which is built around educating men who have been arrested for buying sex about the harm of such behavior.

Misconception #2: *John schools accept men arrested for soliciting sex with children.*

Some critics of john school programs argue that it is inappropriate for men who prey upon children to have the option of attending a john school and then have their charges dismissed and escape serious punishment. No rational person would disagree that this would be inappropriate - but the premise has no basis in fact. John schools do not accept men arrested for soliciting sex with children.

None of the publicly available information about john schools suggests that any of these programs are designed for men arrested for soliciting sex from minors. All of the eligibility criteria we have seen exclude men with sex offenses in their criminal history, and stipulate the range of offenses for those who are targeted. In California, for example, the john school programs admit men arrested for penal codes 647.b (soliciting sex) and 653.22 (loitering with intent to solicit sex), both misdemeanors.

The FOPP in San Francisco is the largest john school in the country and has served as the model for nearly all of the 50 john schools that have been launched in the U.S. since 1995. The eligibility criteria for the FOPP exclude anyone with a prior violent offense, sex offense, or domestic violence offenses, and all of the 6,500+ program participants were arrested during police operations using adults as decoys. One can safely say that none of the participants was attempting to buy sex from a child when they were arrested, nor would they be allowed to participate in the program if they had such offenses in their criminal history. None of the other john school programs in the United States is known to operate differently.

The pathway into john schools begins with arrest. Virtually all of the men who attend john schools in the United States are arrested for soliciting sex from a police decoy during reverse sting operations. All of the police decoys are adults, and none of them present themselves as minors. On occasions when reverse stings are web based, the bogus ads lead to men appearing at prearranged locations where an adult police officer serves as the decoy. It is true that police will conduct reverse stings specifically to find men who sexually exploit children, such as the large-scale operations coordinated by the federal Operation Lost Innocence. However, none of the men arrested for attempting to buy sex from children are eligible for any of the john schools in the United States.

We have no knowledge of a single case of a john school attendee who was arrested for soliciting sex from a child, but it is possible that there a rare exception exists – although that is highly unlikely for john schools where participation is routed through courts, as either diversion or sentencing options. The only exceptions may occur through self-referrals to john schools. A few of the john schools in the United States (e.g., Veronica’s Voice in Kansas City, and Michael Holtby’s program operating in

Denver from 1999-2011) accept self-referrals, and it is possible that some of the men who self-refer have serious offenses in their histories. Even in such cases, the serious sex offenses against children would not be the crimes addressed by the john school.

Misconception #3: *There is no evidence that john schools reduce recidivism.*

Some researchers and other critics have argued that evidence of an impact of john schools on reoffending is either absent or inconclusive. There have been few formal evaluations, but the one methodologically rigorous evaluation found a model john school program to substantially reduce reoffending (the other evaluation was inconclusive, but the data were insufficient to make a determination about the program's impact on recidivism). These studies are briefly discussed below.

At this time, there have been only two formal evaluations estimating the impact of john schools on reoffending, measured via recidivism rates. The first was a study by Monto and Garcia (2001), who examined a sample of 91 participants in the Sexual Exploitation Education Project (SEEP), a john school program that operated in Portland, Oregon from 1995 to 1997 and was then discontinued. The recidivism rates of the SEEP participants were compared to a group of 100 men arrested locally for soliciting sex who did not attend the program. Monto and Garcia found no significant difference in the recidivism rates of the two groups, but the data were insufficient to support any conclusion about the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of SEEP. The chief limitation of the study is that ***there were only three recidivists in the treatment and comparison group combined.*** There was simply insufficient statistical power to detect any program effect: three offenders could not be distributed in a way that would attest to a treatment effect, or to support a conclusion of no effect. Aside from the sample limitations, the SEEP program did not provide a sound basis on which to assess the efficacy of the john school model. The Portland program studied by Monto and Garcia was atypical of john schools in the U.S. (or anywhere else), being a 15-hour, three-day program that was discontinued in 1997 due to disagreements between the program staff and the government sponsors (e.g., Hughes, 2004; Farley et al., 2011), and amid complaints that it was an ideological presentation rather than an educational program (Franzen, 2003).

Whether john school programs ought to be structured as diversion or sentencing options in issue separate from whether educating arrested sex buyers is worthwhile or effective. A model for being both punitive and rehabilitative is the Norfolk, VA john school, which levies a fine of \$1,500, and mandates community service, and charges a supervision fee of \$40 per day while doing community service, and requires attendance at a john school program. Attendance at the john school does not result in dismissed charges. The program provides an educational intervention and applies relatively severe criminal sanctions – particularly for an offense classified as a misdemeanor, and beyond what we have seen in most other cities applied to those soliciting prostituted persons.

Brewer and colleagues (2007) and others (e.g., Farley et al, 2011) have used the Monto and Garcia (2003) study's results to argue that john school programs do not add anything beyond the deterrent effect of arrest. At the time Brewer and colleagues' research was underway, the prior study of the SEEP program was the only evaluation of a john school's impact on recidivism, and it is true that Monto and Garcia did not find a program effect. But *failing to find an effect is not the same as finding no effect.* Given the acknowledged limitations of a comparison group study of one atypical, quickly defunct john school program (Monto and Garcia, 2003), when the study had a sample of three recidivists to study across both treatment and comparison groups, it was premature for anyone to use those findings to conclude that the john school approach has been demonstrated to be ineffective in

lowering recidivism. It is also a misrepresentation of the Monto and Garcia results to say they found the program to be ineffective; instead, the data were insufficient to support any findings regarding a program effect, either positive or negative.

Misconception #4: *The deterrent effect of arrest is the real cause of the reduction in recidivism attributed to the San Francisco john school.*

One could argue that the arrest process alone – and not the john school program – could teach men how to avoid recapture. It is virtually impossible for arrest to have produced the decline in recidivism observed in the FOPP evaluation. *First*, arrest was a constant across all of the cases in the database used to evaluate the program (Shively et al., 2008). Since all of the 84,000+ men in the samples had the experience of arrest from 1985 to 2005, something besides arrest must have produced the sustained post-1995 drop in recidivism rates in San Francisco that were not observed elsewhere in the state.

Second, the decline in recidivism rates could be the result of FOPP graduates taking their commercial sex activity elsewhere (displacement). This is unlikely to explain more than a small portion (if any) of the observed effect. The data supplied by the California Criminal Justice Statistics Center (the state’s central repository for criminal offender data) allowed us to capture rearrest anywhere within the state of California, and can therefore measure recidivism that may have been displaced by the FOPP to areas outside of San Francisco (except that pushed out of state). In addition, one must ask whether the FOPP would produce greater crime displacement than would occur without the program. The FOPP is a voluntary program that allows offenders to have the charges against them dismissed. The participants must see the program as less punitive than tradition adjudication, or they would not choose that option. If so, it is reasonable to ask why the less punitive FOPP would be more likely to displace crime than the more punitive traditional sanctions. A possibility is that the class informs men of the increasingly harsh sanctions they will face for subsequent offenses, and that those men who are either ineligible for the FOPP or who decline the option are not provided with the same information about the more severe consequences of reoffending.

Third, the FOPP may motivate participants to stop pursuing commercial sex on the streets and to use escorts or solicit prostitutes in brothels or via the web. This displacement indoors or online is a plausible explanation and may account for some of the FOPP’s effect. Since the SFPD conducts reverse stings almost exclusively as street operations, men who solicit sex online have almost no chance of being arrested in San Francisco. But again, there is no reason to expect that the FOPP would cause crime to be displaced online, beyond whatever displacement may be produced by arrest alone. Since john school presenters tell participants that police monitor prostitution transacted over the web, and this message is not conveyed to men adjudicated normally, we would expect the opposite effect: if affected at all, the participants of the FOPP should be less likely than others to shift their activity online.

Misconception #5: John schools are costly.

One of the recurring criticisms of john schools is that they are costly, and divert scarce resources away from pursuing more serious crime. There is little empirical support for any part of such criticisms. First, john school programs are not costly, and the modest resources that are necessary to support them are normally fully supported by fees or fines that are paid by arrestees. A few of the

john school programs that charge smaller fees do not fully support themselves, but still cover most of their costs.

Most of the john schools in the U.S. are one-day programs from 4 to 8 hours in length. Most of the one-day programs meet four to six times per year, and some a few as once per year. Most of the presenters who are not public servants are paid modest stipends of \$50-\$200 per day, and many come and present as volunteers. There are usually one or two people from the Police Department or prosecutors office who stay for the entire session, and sometimes other public servants (e.g., from a public health department) come for one hour or so to make brief presentations. We have not found any john school program to cost more than \$3,500 per class to conduct; and single classes have been found to yield over \$40,000 in revenue.

There is little substance to fiscal criticisms of programs with low annual costs that typically cover all of those costs through participant fees or fines, and can generate additional net revenue used to subsidize police enforcement operations and survivor support programs. The typical john school does not cost taxpayers anything, making them one of the most cost effective offender interventions.

“This program is useful and runs at little to no cost. If we did not have this program, the john would most likely pay a small fine and then get his case expunged. The point of this program is to educate them and let them know that this is not a victimless crime.”

Columbus Assistant City Attorney Michael C. Allbritain, speaking about the Columbus Ohio john school, December, 2012⁵

Misconception#6: *John schools are designed to shame.*

John schools have been portrayed as being shame-based, or built around the intent to humiliate or publicly berate men who buy sex. Whether this is true depends upon the john school program, the separate presentations within the program, and what is meant by “shaming.” If one defines shame as the personal feeling of shame about one’s own behavior, then the programs may promote shame. All of the john schools we have observed work hard to convey the message that buying sex is harmful, and that the men – knowingly or otherwise - contribute to a wide array of social ills with their behavior. We have observed individual presenters and community impact panels in john schools in Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, Indianapolis, and Worcester (MA) whose style could be regarded as confrontational, and their intent could be to embarrass the men or make them feel ashamed of themselves. However, the empirical record shows that buying sex results in harm, and it is difficult to avoid pointing out the harm in the behavior when pursuing an education agenda. Shame in response to learning that one's behavior harms others may be a prosocial response, and provide motivation to change.

If one defines shame as public censure, or social stigma, then most John schools work in the opposite direction. Since over half of john schools are either exclusively diversion programs, or can be either

⁵ <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/12/17/john-school-lesson-prostitution-has-victims.html>

diversion or sentencing options, diversion from normal prosecution helps arrestees to avoid being publicly shamed. Diverse programs allow arrestees to avoid a conviction by having charges dismissed, making it easier to escape having one's employer, family, or friends learn about the arrest. However, about one-third of the john schools in the United States are structured as conditions of sentences where participation is not optional, and does not result in avoiding conviction. When sentenced to a john school, the program has neither more nor less of an impact on public shame than most other sentencing options, and far less than efforts to purposely publicize identities.

Additional Observations about John Schools

The john school model is one of a handful of tactics that is a programmatic response designed to address the buyers of commercial sex. Most of the other tactics we discuss are standard criminal justice procedures applied to the crime of purchasing sex, such as seizing autos used in the commission of a crime, community service programs, and fines are not tactics developed particularly for combating demand for prostitution. John schools are an innovation specifically designed to intervene with known buyers of commercial sex, attempting to reduce the incidence of reoffending through education or treatment.

John schools have become controversial among those working to address the problems of sexual exploitation and sex slavery. While there are strengths and weaknesses for any sanction or response to crime, many of the objections about the programs appear to be based upon misconceptions or incomplete information. For example, some believe that john schools accept men arrested for soliciting sex from children, and believe that it is inappropriate for men to receive such a mild “punishment” from the criminal justice system for such serious offenses. They would be right the injustice of such a mild sanction, if it ever occurred, but it is not true that john schools accept men who have bought (or were trying to buy) sex with children. *None of the john schools in the United States accept men arrested for soliciting children*, and to the best of our knowledge, all of the U.S. john schools structured as diversion programs disqualify men with sex offenses in their criminal history.

Objections can stem from legitimate concerns about john schools, but people may reject the whole educational paradigm based on features of one john school program (usually, the FOPP in San Francisco, the model for most john schools) that are not inherent to the model. For example, some object to men being allowed to have their charges dismissed if they attend a john school (e.g., Farley et al., 2011). One third of the john schools in the United States are structured as sentencing options, in which participation is mandatory for men sentenced to attend, and attendance does not result in the dismissal of charges. In this report, we present evidence about the range of configurations of john schools, and discuss common misperceptions about them.

The john school model is one of the few interventions designed to combat commercial sex markets for which there is strong empirical evidence of effectiveness. If communities wish to pursue “what works” and promote evidence-based practices, its leaders and coalition members should be well-informed about such practices.

The john school programs vary substantially, and this variability points out a need to gather and provide information about why alternative models have been developed, and how they operate on a number of dimensions: diversion versus sentenced, partners leading and participating, presenters, content of presentations, structured as brief single classroom sessions versus counseling programs

meeting weekly for over up to 10 weeks. Reverse stings, auto seizures, and other standard criminal justice responses are fairly (or at least relatively) uniform over time and across communities, and so they can be described more briefly.

References

References for the materials cited in this summary can be found in the bibliography of the National Assessment final report, and in each site's webpage at DemandForum.net.

“Both the disease aspect and the safety aspect were huge to me. It wasn’t judgmental. It was about understanding the situation, and I appreciated that. I can’t say it’s going to work for everyone. You’re going to reach some, and that’s better than not doing it at all.”

Anonymous sex buyer, speaking about the Columbus, Ohio john school, December, 2012⁶

⁶ <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/12/17/john-school-lesson-prostitution-has-victims.html>