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2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

F-08

The Current State of Sex Offender Registration, Registries and Implementation

Symposium Chair: Marnie Dollinger, MS

U.S. Department of Justice Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending,
Registering and Tracking

The presentations in this session will discuss current topics in the registration of sex offenders. Criminal registration has evolved significantly since the implementation of early state registries. The passage of state and federal laws governing or guiding the creation of registries by states, tribes and territories has resulted in a variety of approaches to registration and community notification. Initially designed for law enforcement to track and monitor those convicted of sex offenses within local communities, the nation's SORN systems have become tools designed for sharing information between criminal justice agencies, across jurisdictional boundaries, and with members of the public. This session will discuss what sex offender registries are and the difference between jurisdictional or federal laws and requirements. It will address some of the more common myths and misconceptions of registries and how those misconceptions can affect registrants, research, policy and practice. The implementation of sex offender registration will be discussed with a focus on how American Indian tribes are approaching sex offender registration in their communities.

Structural Characteristics of Sex Offender Registration and Notification Systems in the United States: A Systematic Analysis

Qurat Ann, MA

Andrew J. Harris, PhD

University of Massachusetts Lowell

Sex offender registration and notification (SORN) systems in the United States have evolved considerably over recent decades. Initially designed as tools for law enforcement authorities to track and monitor those convicted of sex offenses within local communities, the nation's SORN systems have become ubiquitous tools designed for sharing information between criminal justice agencies, across jurisdictional boundaries, and with members of the public. Despite the growth of federal standards to instill greater uniformity across the nation's SORN systems, state-based registries continue to exhibit considerable variation

BETTER TOGETHER

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across many structural dimensions. To date, however, there has been no recent systematic assessment of SORN policies and procedures in the United States, and limited information on how state registry systems compare to one another. This presentation will feature presentation of results from a comprehensive nationwide inventory of state-based registry systems and characteristics, gathered from statutes and corroborated by state officials. The presentation will explore several key factors of variation across state SORN systems, including those related to juvenile registration, use of risk assessment, provisions for relief from registration, verification guidelines, and other factors. This project is intended to provide a complete inventory of registration policies across the country and inform potential policy changes by identifying best practices for SORN.

Learning Goals:

- Describe SORN systems in use in the U.S.
- Compare and contrast state registration laws and policies
- Identify best practices for SORN

Sex Offender Registries and Registrants: Myths and Realities

Marnie Dollinger, MS

U.S. Department of Justice Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking

Sex offender registries were created initially as law enforcement tools used to locate or rule-out previously convicted offenders who had committed a crime similar to a current investigation. As the public became aware of these tools, and in response to notable sexual crimes, the public demanded access to these registries and a series of laws were passed that enabled states, tribes and territories to create sex offender registries and to make that information available to the public. Registries and registration have changed significantly since originally enacted. Attempts have been made to research the population of registrants but this is made difficult due to the variety of public notification technologies, the disconnect between public websites and law enforcement only records, and variations in registration laws between jurisdictions. Lack of understanding of some of these issues and the inability to test theories about registered offenders has resulted in a number of myths that have entered into the public discourse on sex offender registration. The presentation will explore common misunderstandings about sex offender registration and registries, myths and realities about registrants and the current state of registration in the United States.

BETTER TOGETHER

2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Learning Goals:

- Identify the factors leading to the development of sex offender registries
- Compare and contrast federal registration databases and public sex offender registry websites
- Describe common myths about sex offenders and sex offender registration

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Approach to Registering Sex Offenders

Paul Fuentes
Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Probation/SORNA Office's Sex Offender Registry Program (SORP) is responsible for registering and monitoring sex offenders on tribal lands. The SORP is composed of civilians who carry out all of the non-law-enforcement functions and work collaboratively with law enforcement to carry out registration and notification. The SORP ensures that all the information has been collected and uploaded into the tribe's public registry and into the federal databases. All sex offenders who reside, are employed, or are a student within the lands subject to tribal jurisdiction must register with the SORP. In these types of cases, sex offenders must register and keep the registration current. Additionally, all sex offenders convicted by the Tribes of a covered sex offense must register regardless of their actual or intended residency. The Tribes partner with US Marshals, BIA Law Enforcement, and surrounding counties to enforce the Tribal Sex Offender Registration Act. The presenter will describe his work with offenders on tribal lands and his work mentoring other sex offender registration personnel from tribes throughout the U.S.

Learning Goals:

By the end of the session the participants will be able to:

- Describe tribal jurisdictions and how sex offender laws are enacted on tribal land
- Strengthen their understanding of sex offender registration and the activities of registration personnel
- Understand the types of training and technical assistance available to registry personnel regarding the application of tribal law

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Marnie Dollinger is a Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART) at the United States Department of Justice. She is responsible for advising state and tribal jurisdictions on their implementation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA). Prior to joining the SMART Office, Marnie was a Behavioral Analyst with the United States Marshals Service Behavioral Analysis Unit located at the National Sex Offender Targeting Center where she specialized in crime scene reconstruction and its application to the behavioral motivations of violent offenders. Ms. Dollinger has previously worked in civil commitment at the MN Sex Offender Program, in forensic crime labs and medical examiner offices and in forensic psychiatric facilities. She has a Master of Science in forensic science and is certified in several scientific disciplines. Marnie has served as a consultant to law enforcement, wrongful conviction advocates, NCMEC and to other justice agencies working towards an end to sexual violence.

Qurat Ann, MA, is a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts Lowell in the School of Criminology and Justice Studies. She received her B.A. in Criminal Justice from UMass Lowell in 2015 and an M.A. in Criminal Justice in 2017. Her research interests focus on sex offender management policies, implementation, police perspectives and qualitative methods. Currently, Qurat is a Research Assistant working on an NIJ funded project examining state information sharing practices as they relate to sex offender registration and notification.

Andrew J. Harris, PhD, is Associate Professor in the School of Criminology and Justice Studies at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. An expert in public policy, he teaches and conducts applied policy research on a variety of policy topics, including institutional and community corrections, substance abuse, sexual offending, crime and mental illness, and social policy. He has served as Principal Investigator for several major studies funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, including a current nationwide project focused on implementation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA). Dr. Harris has served as a consultant to state policy boards, public behavioral health agencies, community-based service providers, and state and municipal correctional systems, and currently serves as Associate Editor of the ATSA journal *Sexual Abuse*.

Mr. Paul Fuentes has been employed with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma as a Probation Officer since September of 2009. He has contributed to the overall growth of justice services offered by the Tribes by way of successful grant writing and program development. Mr. Fuentes oversees the probation program, sex offender registration, healing to wellness court, judicial budget, and the construction of Phase I of the Tribal Justice Center. Mr. Fuentes also serves as a private consultant with Fox Valley Technical College and a peer reviewer of grant solicitations. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Master's Degree in Education from Southwestern Oklahoma State University.