

# Annual Report to the Governor & State Legislature

## December 2016

**By the Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
Council**

**&**

**Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance  
Colorado Department of Public Safety  
Division of Criminal Justice  
700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000  
Denver, CO 80215  
303-239-5717**



**COLORADO**

**Division of Criminal Justice**

Department of Public Safety

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the DCJ Director and Council Chair.....	1
Mission Statements .....	2
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.....	3
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Council .....	5
Federal and State Funding .....	7
JJDP Council Priority Areas and Accomplishments .....	10
Overrepresentation of Minority Youth in the Juvenile Justice System	
Appropriate Holding of Juveniles through Comprehensive Compliance Monitoring	
Native American Programming	
Juvenile Justice System Improvement Efforts	
Low Risk/High Needs Committee	
Professional Development Committee	
Evidence-Based Programs and Practices Committee	
Evaluation Committee	
Emerging Leaders Committee	
Children’s Code Review	
Juvenile Diversion & Marijuana Tax Funds .....	30
JJDP Council Membership.....	40
CDPS/DCJ/OAJA Staff.....	41
Appendix A- Truancy Case Studies	
Appendix B- LRHN Committee Learning Activity	
Appendix C- Logic Model for 16 <sup>th</sup> JD Truancy Problem Solving Court	
Appendix D- Truancy and Detention Use Outcomes Fact Sheet	
Appendix E- Professional Development Committee Memo	
Appendix F- Professional Development Core Competencies	
Appendix G- Children’s Code Review Committee Memo	

## ***Message from the Director and Chair***

As the Director of the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) and the Chair of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council (JJDP), we are pleased to present the joint DCJ and JJDP 2016 Juvenile Justice Annual Report. This Annual Report is a requirement of federal juvenile justice funding received by the DCJ from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and summarizes the juvenile justice-related activities of DCJ's Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance (OAJJA) and the JJDP from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

Questions regarding this report can be directed to Meg Williams, Manager of the Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance at the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety at [meg.williams@state.co.us](mailto:meg.williams@state.co.us) or 303-239-5717.



Jeanne M. Smith  
Director, Division of Criminal Justice  
Colorado Department of Public Safety



Will Hays  
Chair, Colorado Juvenile Justice and  
Delinquency Prevention Council

# Mission Statements

***Colorado's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council (JJRPC) provides statewide leadership and advocacy to improve the juvenile justice system, prevent delinquency, and ensure equal justice and accountability for all youth while maximizing community safety.***

***The mission of the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) is to improve the public safety of the community, the quality of services to crime victims, and the effectiveness of services to offenders. We accomplish this by analyzing policy, conducting criminal justice research, managing programs, and administering grants.***

## THE JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT

Established in 1974 and most recently reauthorized in 2002, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) embodies a partnership between the U.S. federal government and the states and territories to protect children and youth in the juvenile and criminal justice system, adequately address delinquent behaviors and improve community safety by preventing juvenile crime and delinquency.

### **In short, the JJDP provides for:**

- A U.S. National juvenile justice planning and advisory system in all states, territories and the District of Columbia;
- Federal funding for delinquency prevention and improvements in state and local juvenile justice programs; and
- Operation of a federal agency—the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) - dedicated to training, technical assistance, model programs, and research and evaluation to support state and local efforts.

Under the JJDP, each state must establish a State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice (SAG), submit a Three-Year State Plan for carrying out the purposes of the Act, and implement the Act's Core Requirements/Protections at the state and local level.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act's goals are to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system, by ensuring appropriate sanctions and services, due process, proper treatment and safe confinement for juveniles who are involved in the juvenile justice system. The core requirements of the Act are:

- **Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO)** Juveniles charged with or who have committed offenses that would not be criminal if committed by an adult, or such non-offenders as dependent and neglected children, shall not be placed in secure detention facilities or secure correctional facilities. These offenders include, but are not limited to truants, runaways, or minors in possession of alcohol. Violations occur when accused status offenders are held in secure juvenile detention centers for more than 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays; and, when adjudicated status offenders are held for any length of time either in these facilities or any adult jail or municipal lockup.
- **Sight and Sound Separation of Juvenile and Adult Offenders (Separation)** During the temporary period that a juvenile may be held in an adult jail or lockup, no sight or sound contact between the juvenile and adult inmates or trustees is permitted.
- **Removal of Juveniles from Adult Jails and Lockups (Jail Removal)** Juveniles accused of committing a delinquent act may be held in temporary custody, not to exceed 6 hours, at an adult jail or lockup for the purpose of processing. Reports from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention show that juveniles held with adults for any period of time can easily be victimized, may be easily overwhelmed by a lock-up and may become suicidal;

adult facilities have neither the staff, programs nor training to best manage juveniles; and, jail or secure lockup do not provide a deterrent.

- **Addressing the Over Representation of Minorities in the Juvenile Justice System** States are required to put forth efforts to reduce the disproportionate number of youth of color and other minorities who are detained or confined in secure facilities, or who have contact with any decision point of the juvenile justice system.

## **THE COLORADO JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION COUNCIL**

The Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Council serves as the state advisory group (SAG) as defined in Title II of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP Act) of 2002. The Governor appoints the JJDP Council. Its members represent the broad scope of the juvenile justice system including government, community-based organizations, schools, and youth.

Colorado has actively participated in the JJDP Act since 1984. Through early comprehensive efforts, the JJDP Council and DCJ have brought the state into compliance with the core requirements of the Act: the removal of status offenders and non-offenders from secure juvenile detention and correctional facilities, separation of juveniles from incarcerated adults, removal of juveniles from adult jails and lock-ups, continued monitoring for compliance with these requirements, and development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to address the disproportionate representation of minority youth at all decision points of the juvenile justice system, including those confined in secure facilities.

Through 1994, the JJDP Council allocated grant funds primarily to meet the first three requirements related to the appropriate holding of juveniles. The JJDP Council remains dedicated to a continued comprehensive compliance monitoring system and provides support to local law enforcement to maintain the safe and appropriate holding of juveniles. The JJDP Council and DCJ also owe the continued success in compliance to support and assistance from law enforcement, the Division of Youth Corrections, judges, probation officers, community-based youth-serving agencies, the legislature, the Governor, and many others.

The disproportionate contact of minority youth at all decision points of the juvenile justice system became a concern of the JJDP Council prior to its formal addition as a core requirement of the JJDP Act in 1992, and it continues to be a priority program area for formula grant funds. It is a core system improvement effort because it works toward fair and equitable treatment of all youth.

One of the responsibilities of the JJDP Council in conjunction with the DCJ is to regularly undertake an analysis of the “state of the state” of delinquency prevention and intervention programs and policies. This analysis serves as the basis for the development of a three-year comprehensive state plan for the improvement of the juvenile justice system and prevention of juvenile delinquency as required by the JJDP Act. The purpose of this plan is to coordinate, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate state and local efforts to improve outcomes for troubled youth through addressing pressing issues, gaps in services, and funding reductions that threaten the progress that has been made in the areas of delinquency prevention and intervention. Collaboration and coordination with other state and local juvenile justice and delinquency prevention efforts are keys to this plan. The flexibility of the funds allocated under the plan and the technical assistance available to the state through the plan, enable the JJDP Council and DCJ to address the gaps identified through input from the many players in the system including rural communities and the Native American tribal communities.

The 2015-17 juvenile justice and delinquency prevention three-year plan is based upon an in-depth analysis of the juvenile justice system including a systematic review of the various initiatives in place to address youth with problem behaviors and their families. It includes an analysis of Colorado’s youth

serving systems from prevention through aftercare including an analysis of juvenile crime problems, juvenile needs and resource availability and gaps. This review also includes documentation of the impacts and potential outcomes of the budget cuts and related changes in policy and practice. This strategic plan document begins with statewide prevention efforts that are integral to the prevention of juvenile delinquency. From there, it will provide information regarding the “state of the state” in all facets of the juvenile justice system, describing the path a juvenile takes as they penetrate further into the system. Finally it includes Colorado’s plans for addressing the prioritized areas as outlined below. ([https://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/oajja/OAJJA\\_Board\\_Council/CO2016TitleIIProgramNarrative.pdf](https://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/oajja/OAJJA_Board_Council/CO2016TitleIIProgramNarrative.pdf))

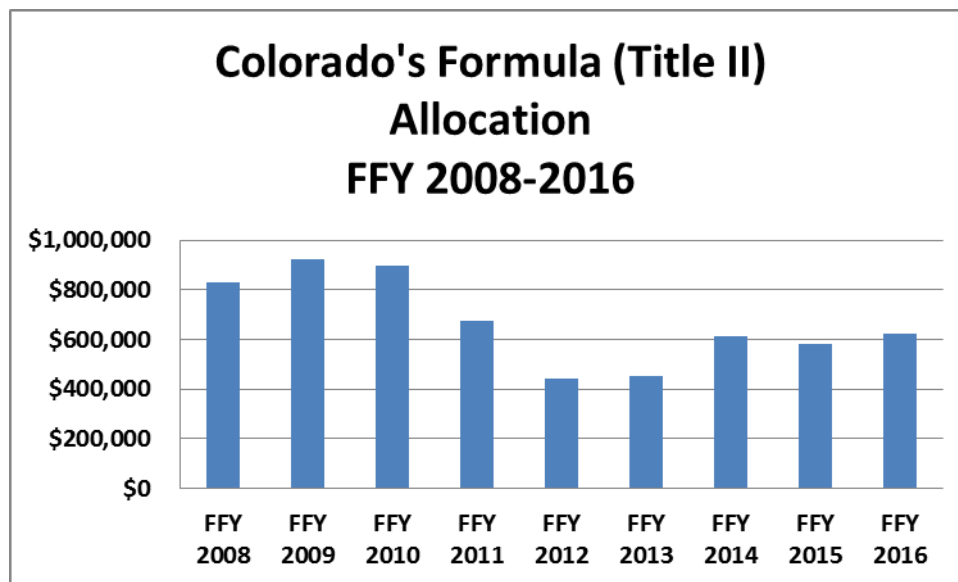
Disproportionate Minority Contact/Minority Overrepresentation  
Appropriate Holding of Juveniles through Comprehensive Compliance Monitoring  
Native American Programming  
Juvenile Justice System Improvement



## FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING

Historically, there have been two major sources of federal funding for the juvenile justice work. The **Formula Grants Program (Title II)** was the original source of funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to states. The Formula Grant Program supports state and local delinquency prevention and intervention efforts and juvenile justice system improvements. This program provides funds directly to states, territories and the District of Columbia to help them implement comprehensive state juvenile justice plans based on detailed studies of jurisdictional needs. Formula Grant funds can be used to fund programs to help states remain in compliance with the core requirements (Sight and Sound Separation, Jail Removal, Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders and Disproportionate Minority Contact), Native American issues, a variety of prevention programs, planning and administration, and the State Advisory Group allocation. These funds have been precipitously reduced (reduced 25% since 2008).

Colorado's Formula (Title II) Allocation								
FFY 2008-2016								
FFY 2008	FFY 2009	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015	FFY 2016
\$831,000	\$924,000	\$898,000	\$676,688	\$442,589	\$450,867	\$612,250	\$582,443	\$621,069



The purpose of the **Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG)**, also from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) was to provide States and units of local government with funds to develop programs to promote greater accountability in the juvenile justice system.

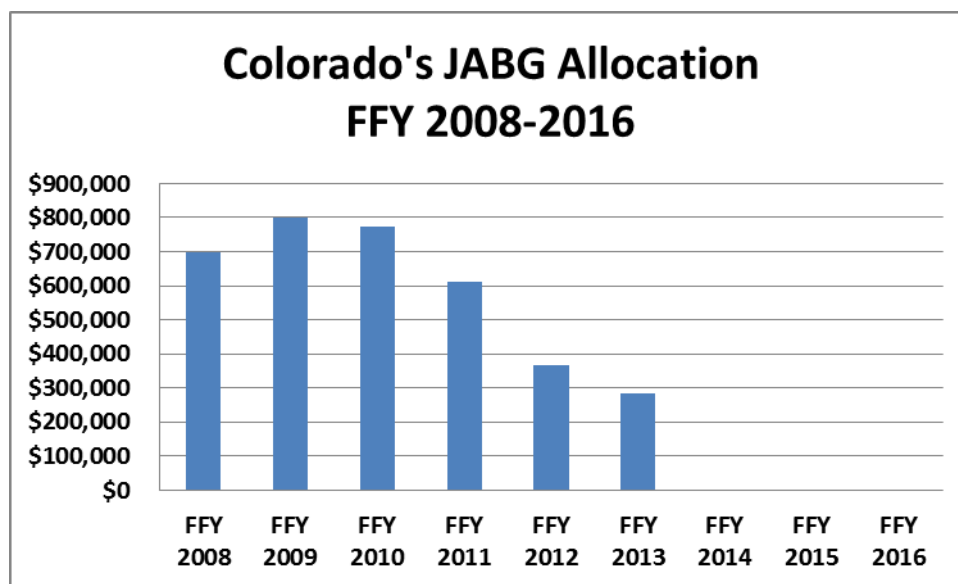
The underlying premise of juvenile accountability programming is that young people who violate the law should be held accountable for their offenses through the swift, consistent application of sanctions that are proportionate to the offenses—both as a matter of basic justice and as a way to combat delinquency and improve the quality of life in the nation's communities. The program's goal is to reduce juvenile

offending through accountability-based initiatives focused on both the offender and the juvenile justice system.

For the juvenile offender, accountability means an assurance of facing individualized consequences through which he or she will be made aware of and held responsible for offenses committed. Such accountability is best achieved through a system of graduated sanctions that are imposed according to the nature and severity of the offense, moving from limited interventions to more restrictive actions if the juvenile offender continues delinquent activities. The juvenile justice system must increase its capacity to develop youth competence, to efficiently track juveniles through the system, and to provide enhanced options such as restitution, community service, and victim-offender mediation.

As can be seen, funding was zeroed out at the federal level in 2014.

Colorado's JABG Allocations FFY 2007-2015								
FFY 2008	FFY 2009	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015	FFY 2016
\$697,000	\$799,600	\$774,000	\$611,126	\$368,530	\$284,401	\$0	\$0	\$0



State support for **Juvenile Diversion**, a front-end component of the juvenile justice system, had been in place for over twenty years (\$2.4 million) prior to the line item vetoes in the FY 2002-03 appropriations bill, and partial reinstatement (\$1.2 million) in FY 2006-07. Pursuant to the Colorado Children's Code [(19-1-103(44) C.R.S.], the goal of Diversion is to prevent further involvement of the youth in the formal legal system. Diversion of a juvenile or child may take place either at the pre-filing level as an alternative to filing of a petition; at the post adjudication level as an adjunct to probation services following an adjudicatory hearing; or a disposition as a part of sentencing. Juvenile diversion programs concentrate on holding the youth accountable for their behavior while involving them in programs and activities to prevent future criminal and delinquent behavior. Programs of this type provide local communities alternatives for holding youth accountable for their behavior, can help change the way youth think about their behavior, ensure that youth take responsibility for their actions, and ensure that victims and communities feel safe and restored.

In SFY 2015-16, the Colorado General Assembly positively responded to a DCJ request for Marijuana Tax funding for DCJ-funded juvenile diversion programs to use for screening, assessment and treatment for marijuana and/or general substance abuse needs of diversion clients. The funding, totaling \$400,000, also supports DCJ in developing protocols for screening, assessment and treatment and includes an in-depth look at the efficacy of Diversion through an evaluation process.

## JJDP COUNCIL PRIORITY AREAS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### OVER REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

**GOAL: Prevention of delinquency by addressing contributing factors that may lead minority youth to enter the juvenile justice system.**

Colorado has been addressing minority over-representation (also called disproportionate minority contact or DMC) for the last two decades. Nevertheless, minority over representation still exists in many of the juvenile justice decision-points (arrest, detention, commitment). The JJDP Council continues to advocate for minority youth and families by monitoring legislation that may affect them and championing equal access to services by all youth. They also continue funding assessment studies in local jurisdictions to determine the multiple contributing factors of over representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system.

The JJDP Council supports a DMC coordinator who takes a three-prong approach in helping Colorado remain in compliance with the DMC Core Requirement. First, as a requirement for receipt of federal Formula (Title II) funding, the state is required to “address juvenile delinquency prevention efforts and system improvement efforts designed to reduce, without establishing or requiring numerical standards or quotas, the disproportionate number of juvenile members of minority groups, who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.” Colorado’s DMC Coordinator serves as the liaison for DMC to OJJDP which includes participating in all DMC Coordinator calls and required webinars coordinated by OJJDP. Duties as the technical expert and liaison include writing and updating the state’s DMC Plan and Program Description annually to remain in compliance as well as updating and entering the state’s Relative rate Index or RRI data into the OJJDP website also a compliance requirement. In addition to the required data collection the coordinator looks at the data to identify changes in DMC from year to year and compare multiple years of data to identify trends early on and bring them to the attention of the JJDP Council, the Coalition for Minority Youth Equality (CMYE) and the systems involved to address issues as early as possible.

Second, to support state level activities, the DMC Coordinator provides staffing to the Colorado Coalition for Minority Youth Equality (CMYE). Training for new and potential CMYE members is conducted annually. Funding also supports the logistical costs of four CMYE Meetings and supports communities outside of Denver to travel and participate in CMYE meetings. The other primary focus is on improving the DMC data collection and use of DMC data in Colorado by looking at data usability and accessibility by local jurisdictions. This is accomplished by developing a user friendly document for each Judicial District to represent their RRI matrix data.

Third, heavy emphasis in the state DMC Plan is on supporting community level activities, the DMC coordinator, as the state’s DMC technical expert, provides training and technical assistance to agencies and communities to assist them in understanding the problem and assist them in developing a plan to address their local DMC issues. The plan is to implement the five phases of addressing DMC as developed by OJJDP by addressing the identification, assessment, intervention, evaluation and

monitoring phases. There is a heavy emphasis on the collection, reporting and usability of DMC data. There are also several policy areas including those to address the disproportionate contact of Black youth at the arrest decision point and to work in concert with initiatives to address the large number of arrests made at schools. In addition there are objectives focused on assisting communities in defining and addressing their issues through training, technical assistance and an assessment study. In order to implement the plan the Council supports a 75% DMC Coordinator position.

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

Colorado's DMC efforts have been primarily focused on providing training and technical assistance to local communities to begin or continue addressing DMC in their communities, with a focus on addressing DMC at the detention decision point and improving data collection in systems across the state. Training has been provided to several judicial districts over the last year including the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>. In addition technical assistance has been provided to many of the same communities. Technical Assistance is seen as the next step after training and involves working with the community to develop a plan for addressing DMC in their community.

More intensive technical assistance is being provided to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Districts. The 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District (Jefferson County) has formulated a committee to specifically look at the over representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system. They have been working with the DMC Coordinator and a contractor, OMNI Institute to look more closely at the DMC issue at the arrest decision point, specifically looking at the City of Lakewood. The police chief in Lakewood agreed to provide more detailed juvenile arrest data that would indicate the types of offenses most likely to be committed by youth of color, the localities where the greatest amount of arrests of youth of color occur and the outcome of law enforcement involvement, i.e. custodial arrest or ticketing. To date the findings have found that there is little statistical difference in the type of crime committed by youth of color versus white youth and that there are areas of the city where youth of color are more likely to be arrested. All this information will be used by the committee to develop an intervention plan to help mitigate future arrests of youth of color in the City of Lakewood.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (Boulder/Longmont) is looking closely at their arrest and detention decision points. The state was able to access technical assistance from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention which consists of having a national research expert come in and build the capacity of the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District to pull relevant data for analysis that will lead them to identifying areas contributing to their DMC issues and where youth of color would benefit from targeted intervention strategies. The planning has occurred over the last three months of 2016 and the on-site Technical Assistance will begin in 2017.

The DMC Coordinator continues to work with the State Analysis Center to gather state level DMC identification data and to post it on the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice's website (DMC website links to this data source). The DMC website specific to the JJDP Council's efforts is also updated annually: <http://dcj.oajja.state.co.us/disproportionate-minority-contact>. The benefit of this analysis is that we now have about 15 years of data to review, compare and then use to assist communities in looking at trends and identify on-going areas that need support. This also provides the information needed to identify which systems within the juvenile justice spectrum need to continue to work on improving their data collection. For instance, as we look at the arrest data for youth of color,

many judicial districts are showing an underrepresentation of Hispanic youth at the arrest decision point. This finding caused us to delve deeper into the issue and we have discovered that ethnicity is not collected on youth who are ticketed. Since the majority of youth who are contacted by law enforcement are not custodial arrested but rather ticketed, this leads to a lot of missing data for the picture of arrest in our state's juvenile justice system. Efforts to work with local law enforcement districts across the state will be one of the focuses in the coming year.

Lastly, an emphasis on addressing DMC at the detention decision point continues from previous years. Detention is an area where we have seen DMC for years but more importantly it is an area where we have seen that a dedicated focus can improve DMC. This is likely due to the fact that detention is one of the few areas where one can identify a manageable number of people who have influence over that decision point. In Colorado, the detention decision point is overseen by Alternatives to Detention (SB94) Coordinators in each judicial district. That limits the number of people to immediately engage to 22 across the state. For comparison, when looking at intervening at the arrest decision point you are looking at over 250 law enforcement agencies.

As a starting point, we looked at detention data and identified eight judicial districts that have DMC at the detention decision point. The Division of Youth Corrections and the SB 94 State Board shared that information with each coordinator. There were eight districts with DMC at detention and more targeted discussions were held with those Coordinators about DMC and how they should be using data to inform their practices within their community to better serve youth of color successfully. We then followed-up with a letter from the Division of Criminal Justice to each of those eight coordinators again highlighting their identification numbers indicating DMC and offering the assistance of the DMC Reduction Coordinator in assisting them in addressing the issue. Of the eight judicial districts, seven of them have contacted the DMC Coordinator and have set a date to have her train their local Juvenile Services Planning Boards about what DMC is, what their data looks like, what some of the causes of DMC may be, and what other judicial districts have done to address DMC. These efforts have been met with enthusiasm in the judicial districts who have been trained to date and the evaluation of the training indicates that they are highly satisfied with the information they received, are very interested in the data and like the focus on solutions/intervention strategies the most. Efforts to work with these judicial districts will continue.

## **APPROPRIATE HOLDING OF JUVENILES THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE COMPLIANCE MONITORING**

**GOAL: Maintain compliance with Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders, Separation of Juveniles from Adult Inmates and the Removal of Juveniles from Adult Jails and Lockups.**

Colorado has emphasized and supported compliance monitoring since 1987. In 1988, a system improvement component was added to the compliance monitoring job responsibilities to enhance the effort of reaching and maintaining compliance by providing education, training, technical assistance and on-site support to law enforcement and juvenile justice system personnel. Legislation regarding the holding of juveniles in compliance with the core requirements of the JJDP Act was passed during Colorado's 2006 legislative session. This has been of great assistance in maintaining compliance and continues to be supported through the system improvement efforts of the compliance monitor.

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

Colorado has seen tremendous progress since passage of the JJDP Act and Colorado's commitment to the appropriate holding of juveniles. In the most recent years, the JJDP Council has focused its efforts on addressing the use of detention for status offenders, specifically truants, who fail to abide by a court order. After an all-time high use of detention to address truancy in FY 2012-13 (n=356), the Council worked with the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice resulting in passage of HB 13-1021 which urged school districts to implement proven strategies to reduce truancy and keep students from facing court sanctions for skipping school. The Council then followed up with funding to 3 judicial districts which had a high use of detention for truancy cases and assisted them in developing problem-solving court models for their jurisdictions. The grants allowed each district to devise, implement and evaluate a problem-solving truancy court whose goals are to improve school attendance, behavior and academic performance.

In each project, individual students receive personalized help and support. The programs are based on problem-solving court models in which participants receive integrated and collaborative support while being supervised by the courts and held accountable for their actions. The programs began in May of 2014 and most recent data shows that in those three Judicial Districts, the use of detention for truants was reduced from 54 in 2014 (Jan-Dec 2014, 12 months) to 2 in 2015 (a 9 month period, Jan-Sept 2015). Statewide, the use of detention also fell from 205 in 2014 (12 months) to 97 in the 2015 reporting period (again, a 9 month period, Jan-Sept 2015), a significant reduction. The JJDP Council also funded one truancy prevention program in LaPlata County.

## **NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMMING**

**GOAL: To support juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programming with the American Indian Tribes and expand our support to the non- reservation based Native American population in Colorado.**

The Division of Criminal Justice and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council have enjoyed great relationships with both the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes located in the Four Corners area of the state (SW). The Council has historically offered federal Title II/Formula Grant funds in excess of the required pass-through amount to both Tribes. Most recently, the Southern Ute Tribe has been using these funds to support trauma treatments and non-violent life skills training to youth who are court-ordered or high risk and referred by a school counselor. For several years, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe elected to not receive Title II/Formula grant funds because of the requirement to be in compliance with the JJDP Act requirements for the appropriate holding of juveniles in secure settings, most critically in the area of deinstitutionalization of status offenders, notably truants.

As with the State of Colorado, both Tribes struggle to address the needs of their youth and families, especially when children and youth are struggling with education issues. Colorado's Native American juvenile population that is non-reservation based also continues to need culturally appropriate services. Although the Native American juvenile population that is non-reservation based is estimated at 1.1% of the State's total juvenile population and 0.7% of the Colorado school population, they represent 4.7% of the school dropouts, 3.0% of the youth who received in-school suspension, 3.9% receiving out-of school-suspension and 4.4% who were expelled in 2014-2015, a dramatic rise from prior years.

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

In 2015, several members of the JJDP Council visited the Four Corners area to meet with representatives from the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe to re-establish and rekindle their working relationship. Former JJDP Council member Ernest House Jr. is a member of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and is the Executive Secretary for the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs and was instrumental in this endeavor. Discussions were held about compliance with the federal JJDP Act and the Tribe has made great strides toward compliance. Title II funds are accessed by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe for juvenile justice issues but funds have yet to be accessed by the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe despite the Council's and DCJ's offer to work with them to craft an application.



## JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Colorado has a plethora of initiatives to address the needs of children, youth and families. What has been identified in virtually all of these groups is the fact that youth with low risk of criminal offending but high needs (LRHN) for behavioral services, along with their families, are entering the juvenile justice system in order to receive services. Prior to entry into the juvenile justice system they are frequently subjected to a maze of disconnected and conflicting services that often require higher than necessary levels of care, stigmatizing labels, and ultimate criminalization that weaken the permanent supportive connections that are the foundations for pro-social adult development. As these youth become system-involved, they may or may not be provided services that are evidenced-based (supported by meta-analysis, cost benefit analysis, clinical trials, and applied practice) or provided services that are given by professionals who have had benefit of training that meets certain core requirements or even address basic understanding of adolescent development, family involvement or other keys areas critical when working with youth. Finally, the JJDP Council is committed to authentic youth involvement in all its work and is supportive of its youth members (Emerging Leaders) by providing the support it needs as a committee to determine its priorities and provide a funding base to meet its identified priorities.

In the past and coming year, Colorado's JJDP Council will continue to focus on system improvement in six main areas with committees established to address each: **Low Risk High Need (LRHN)**; **Professional Development (PD)**; **Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (EBPP)**; **Research and Evaluation**; and **Emerging Leaders**. Most recently, the Council established a **Juvenile Justice Code Review** Committee to look at Title 19-2 of the Colorado Revised Statute through the lens of current science and knowledge for better addressing juvenile justice and delinquency issues.

## **LOW RISK/HIGH NEEDS COMMITTEE**

**GOAL: Improve outcomes for all families involved in juvenile justice by preventing low risk-high needs (LRHN) children and youth from unnecessarily entering the juvenile justice system or penetrating deeper into the system through partnerships with schools or school districts and implementation of Restorative Justice (RJ) principles and practices into school districts' discipline policies and practices.**

This committee addresses the needs of juveniles who may not have high criminogenic tendencies except for their high needs in the areas such as trauma, mental health or substance abuse. It is believed that these undiagnosed, unmet or underserved needs in these areas significantly contribute to their eventual progression into and through the juvenile justice system. Beginning with the educational system, children and youth have significant repercussions for behavior possibly connected to these unmet needs. For example, truant behavior which research suggests is strongly associated with child abuse, neglect, poverty, family disorganization and trauma, leads to juvenile court filings (1,944) and for some leads to detention for violating a court order to attend school (204 or 10.4% of those filed on). We also see a connection between children and youth served by the child welfare system and subsequent juvenile justice involvement. For example, of the youth committed to the Division of Youth Corrections in FY 2013-14, sixty four percent had one or more previous out-of-home placements; 55.4% of the girls committed had two or more prior out-of-home placements. As to substance abuse and mental health, the percent of newly committed youth in need of treatment level substance abuse services increased in FY 2013-14 to 75% (versus 72.7% in FY 2012-13). A few years prior, this percent remained closer to 60%. The male population in need of treatment has increased from 73% to 75.6%, while the female treatment population has increased from 71% to 76.8% in the past two years. In regard to mental health needs during FY 2013-14, the percent of newly committed youth assessed as "Requiring Formal Mental Health Intervention" was 45% (CCAR data). A larger percentage of females show a need for mental health intervention (64.2%) in comparison to males (42.5%).

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

A key feature of the LRHN Committee over the past two and a half years is the truancy demonstration pilots. The truancy demonstration pilots started in 2014 are in their third and final year of funding and oversight by the JJDP Council. The intent of the pilots is to learn and document the causal factors of truancy, effective prevention approaches, and increased school and student engagement, as well as to identify systems changes needed to successfully address truancy. The four truancy demonstration pilots include:

- The Truancy Prevention Pilot started in February 2014, funded through the Title II Formula Grant – La Plata County. This pilot program, Radical Possibilities Community in Schools Partnership, is focused on youth who meet the definition of being truant, but have not yet been filed on in court. Radical Possibilities has been nominated for an OMNI Research Award, received a United Way Community Leadership Award, and was a semi-finalist (top 4) for the Colorado Nonprofit Association's Collaboration Award. The pilot also received unsolicited grants from Ballantine Foundation, Mercury Payment System, and an anonymous New Mexico family foundation with a total of \$75,000 altogether.

- Three Truancy Problem Solving Court Pilots (1st, 16th and 18th Judicial Districts), funded through the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG). These pilots are focused on youth who are truant and have been filed on in court. These pilots began in May 2014.

In the past year, the Committee's focus has been pilot sustainability. This has focused the work into two main areas: marketing and outreach activities and enhanced evaluation and learning efforts.

#### Marketing and Outreach:

- In early 2016, the Committee released case studies on the Prevention Pilot and the Truancy Problem Solving Court pilots. These case studies are located on the [Division of Criminal Justice's website](#) and [Spark Policy Institute's website](#). Additionally, they were distributed electronically to state officials across all three branches of government with a fact sheet on the truancy research conducted by the Center for Research Strategies. See Appendix A for copies of both case studies.
- Representatives from the pilots participated in two panels. One panel took place at the 2016 Safe Schools Summit and another at the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual National Symposium on Juvenile Services, where it was standing room only. The pilots have also been selected to present at the 2017 Colorado Convening on Children, Youth, and Families.

#### Evaluation and Learning:

An integral element of the pilots was documentation of the factors of truancy, the impact of effective prevention approaches, and untangling the systems changes needed to successfully address truancy. The pilots have tracked data on the youth in their programs to better understand who truant are and they have adopted an emergent learning practice to collectively reflect on their successes and challenges. The pointed focus on reflection and adaptation led to strategic adaptation across the pilots to ensure the intended purpose of making a meaningful difference for youth is realized. To ensure the principles of problem solving courts are sustainable, some pilots have begun to merge some of the truancy problem solving court principles with their traditional truancy court, while others have maintained a wholly separate truancy problem solving court. This adaptation is based on the specific needs of their district and their learning around what works and what does not. For an example of an emergent learning activity in which the pilots took part, see Appendix B.

To ensure adaptations across pilots are strategic, each site collects pre-and post-surveys and recently reported these to Metro State, which is interpreting the data for the pilots. To provide a framework for programmatic level data collection, a draft logic model was prepared for the 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. This logic model illustrates how pilots can track inputs and outcomes at the program level. See Appendix C for the 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District's logic model. In addition to programmatic learning, Spark Policy Institute will conduct a systemic level evaluation of the pilots through extant document review and key informant interviews in 2017. This evaluation will help stakeholders further understand the systemic changes needed to holistically serve LRHN youth, as well as what exemplary examples of cross-systems collaboration look like. The purpose of the evaluation, set to be complete by September 2017, is to infuse the learnings from the pilots into the larger juvenile justice system.

All of the pilots were interviewed to identify gaps and next steps. Gaps included creation of an actual Implementation Manual, which would be especially helpful due to passage of SB 15-184 which

encourages the growth in the number of problem-solving truancy courts. A best practices document for data collection and analysis was also identified as well as software for collecting the data. They also identified the need to develop the capability and capacity to market the program directly to schools (teachers, counselors) instead of to school executives (superintendents) in the beginning of the school year.

In addition to addressing some of the gaps identified by the problem-solving truancy court pilots, the LRHN Committee received approval from the full Council to pilot restorative justice (RJ) in schools training. Although a select few school districts have already implemented RJ practices in schools, Colorado continues to see a connection between school discipline and juvenile justice involvement. With the assistance of Colorado's Restorative Justice Coordinating Council (the JJ Specialist and a JJDP Council member serve as members of the RJ Council), they hope to explore how RJ can be further implemented across the state in school settings. To inform the proposal, LRHN members have talked with several school districts to gain insight into what types of support schools need in order to implement RJ.

The JJDP Council also assisted in funding a study looking at the impact of secure detention for truancy on educational and juvenile justice outcomes (<http://dcj.oajja.state.co.us/publications-reports/truancy-and-use-of-detention>). See Appendix D for a Truancy and Detention Use Outcomes Fact Sheet. This study was conducted by the Center for Research Strategies (Phase 1) and now (Phase 2) Infinite Frontier Consulting. The first phase of this study is now complete and we have begun to better understand factors predicting secure detention, whether secure detention for truancy predicted subsequent criminal filings, and whether secure detention for truancy predicted graduation. Among other things, results of the study indicate that local practices impact the likelihood of truancy detention to a greater extent than individual youth factors. Furthermore, truancy detention is a significant contributor to the likelihood of committing subsequent criminal offenses and makes graduating from high school 14.5 times less likely to occur for detained youth than for youth found truant but not detained. The primary goals of the Phase 2 analyses currently underway is to a) examine academic outcomes over a four year time period, b) examine juvenile justice outcomes across a four year time period and c) examine the rate of mental health issues in the truancy cohort and their impact on academic and juvenile justice outcomes. The Phase 1 results have been shared with all state agencies which serve truants as well as the Supreme Court Justice who has been working with the Chief Judges across the state to address the use of detention for truants who fail to abide by a valid court order and who have been subjected to high levels of detention in the past as a consequence.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**GOAL: Improve outcomes for all families involved in juvenile justice by: promoting the efficient and consistent professional development of all relevant agencies, organizations and partners (“system actors”), including judges, attorneys and direct service workers, and addressing the training needs of system actors by establishing core practices and core competencies for juvenile justice professionals.**

The Professional Development committee, which was first established in 2011, worked successfully to engage the JJDP Council and the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) which approved the idea of creating a core set of statewide juvenile professional development practices. These practices will apply to agencies within the Executive and Judicial branches of government involving case processing and treatment of juvenile offenders.

There are numerous benefits to establishing and adopting statewide professional development standards for professionals working with at risk of and justice-involved juveniles and their families, including, but not limited to:

- Improved agency and cross-discipline coordination and consistency;
- Common knowledge and framework across professionals when addressing youth and family issues;
- Expanded staff capacity and a more integrated approach to care;
- A reduction in the likelihood that youth are pushed further into the juvenile justice system and other systems when they fail to meet the requirements of contradictory case plans;
- A reduction of overall system costs and the cost to train staff; and
- Improved outcomes for youth and families (e.g., lowering the recidivism rates of justice-involved youth).

There is a precedent in Colorado of statewide professional standards for those working with children and families involved in child welfare. The state has set minimum, statutorily-defined requirements for those working in this area. Subsequently, a comprehensive child welfare training academy was developed and is currently being expanded and strengthened to meet those standards. This affords the state an opportunity to expand this concept to other youth-serving systems.

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

The Professional Development Committee (PD) focused on including key “power” voices in its discussions over the past year. Committee members determined that to progress the work of the PD Committee they needed to ensure they had support from Judicial Branch (courts and probation), The Division of Child Welfare, and The Division of Youth Corrections. Therefore, meetings were scheduled with leads and training personnel from all three agencies. In preparation for these meetings, the PD Committee refreshed a memo outlining its purpose (see Appendix E) and further defined the components that comprise each of the core competencies (see Appendix F). Following these meetings, a subgroup composed of key training personnel was convened. The subgroup is made up of representative from the Division of Child Welfare, Probation, Judicial Branch, Division of Youth Corrections, SB 94, and the Office of the Child’s Representative.

Currently, the subgroup is working to secure private funding to push a cross training collaborative forward, with the intent that basic training is offered to all juvenile serving professionals from various sectors, enabling them to learn collectively. The focus of the collaborative will be on increasing cross-sector thinking through training and the curriculum will progress to across the competencies to increase its focus on specific areas of cross-sector collaboration. This work is in the incubation phase, but a request for funding has already been submitted to Casey Family Programs and the group’s goal is to offer a 101 course on Adolescent Brain Development by February 2018. The group is aware that training geared at promotion of cross-sector thought is moot without some focus on a cultural shift across the system. Therefore, in conjunction with the training, the subgroup will also focus on implementation and retention of training material across the juvenile justice system. The parallel focus of the subgroup is because the goal of training extends beyond what is accomplished in a classroom or over a web-portal; it necessitates support across all levels to implement lessons and see their value.

### Overarching Approach to All Trainings

#### Integrating Cultural Responsivity and a Positive Youth Development Approach

Increasing the ability of juvenile justice professionals to understand adolescent development, including the differences in languages, values, codes of behavior, customs, beliefs, knowledge, symbols, myths and stories; the influence that institutions have on shaping the development of youth; how to effectively integrate a positive youth development approach into programming and practice such as engaging diverse youth in decision-making and utilizing a dual strategy of risk reduction and the promotion of strengths; as well as creating and maintaining healthy interactions with youth and their families.

### Recommended Core Competency Areas for Juvenile Justice Professionals

Adolescent and Brain Development: Adolescent developmental tasks, youth brain development and behavior/decisions.

Effective Case Management: Screening, assessment, effective report writing, case planning and referral, and risk, need, and responsivity. This should include the use of strengths-based language and engaging youth as partners in creating and on-going maintenance.

Consent, Release of Information, HIPAA, FERPA, 42CFR and Confidentiality: Privacy and confidentiality rights of youth, what and how data information can be shared across agencies.

Effective Communication Strategies: Appropriate, respectful strategies to ensure effective communication between providers, justice-involved youth, and victims and victims’ families.

Family Engagement: Best practices for involving parents and families in the juvenile justice process.

Behavioral Health:

- *Trauma-informed response and/or care*: Best practices for providers in trauma-informed services; an understanding of the high prevalence of traumatic experiences in justice-involved youth and the neurological, biological, psychological and social effects of trauma and violence on youth.
- *Best practices in supporting youth with mental health challenges*
- *Strategies for addressing vicarious trauma in providers working with justice-involved youth*
- *Principles of substance abuse, prevention, treatment and recovery*

## **EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES (EBPP) COMMITTEE**

**GOAL: To develop a state system that supports well-implemented evidence-based programs and practices matched to need at the local/community level focused on at-risk and system-involved youth.**

According to research, implementing evidence-based programs with fidelity has the potential to impact reductions in recidivism (25-70%), reductions in out-of-home placement (47-64%); extensive improvements in family functioning and decreased mental health problems. These outcomes have also translated into large cost savings. For example, Florida's Redirection Program saved \$41.6 million over four years by reducing out-of-home placements for less serious offenders and reducing recidivism.

However, evidence-based programs and practices are not being used to their potential. For example:

- Nationally less than 10% of child welfare and juvenile justice agencies are implementing evidence-based programs and practices;
- Prevention and intervention work is rarely data driven and strategic (e.g., it isn't based on data demonstrating need at the local or state level); and
- Evidence-based programs and practices, when implemented, are rarely implemented with fidelity.

For this EBPP Committee project, the goal is to develop a state system that supports well-implemented evidence-based programs and practices matched to need at the state and local/community level focused on at-risk and system-involved youth. The long-term goal of this project is to improve outcomes for at-risk and system-involved youth and their families as evidenced by:

- Reductions in recidivism;
- Reductions in out-of-home placement;
- Improvements in family functioning;
- Decreased behavioral health problems; and
- Improved educational outcomes.

The EBPP Committee aims to build a system that supports EBPPs at both the local and state levels. Development of this work plan is based on recommendations from the EBPP Committee and the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Juvenile Justice Mapping Process.

This system will support a data-driven process that encourages:

- The selection of programs and practices with supported evidence of effectiveness based on need at the individual and community levels.
- Rigorous evaluation of promising, emerging and undetermined programs and practices.
- Commitment to cease any activity deemed to be harmful.
- Strong implementation supports to assure selected EBPPs are delivered with quality and fidelity.

Guiding priorities for the work plan include:

1. Support local and community processes to use data to match EBPPs to local needs.
2. Support effective implementation of EBPPs including measuring fidelity and outcomes.

3. Ensure high quality programming exists for low-, medium-, and high- risk/need youth and that youth are matched to services.
4. Use cost-benefit and cost-avoidance models to support approach.
5. Central repository to learn where programs are implemented and where the programs fall on the continuum of effectiveness (Colorado's PEW Results First Project within the Governor's Office will inform this process).

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

In 2015 the Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Council contracted with OMNI Institute (OMNI) to help operationalize their vision and achieve objectives in support of the long term goal of evidence-based program and practice implementation matched to need and focused on at risk and/or system-involved youth and their families. The first phase of this work from March of 2015 through May of 2016 included engaging in an initial Evidenced Based Programs and Practices (EBPP) planning pilot process with four local sites, and development of a step by step EBPP toolkit. An EBPP website has been developed that hosts the EBPP Toolkit as well as links to data sets (<http://coebpp.org/>). Based on feedback gathered from this initial process, the Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (EBPP) Workgroup identified that the state would benefit from implementation of several additional phases of work to further engage the original four pilot sites. In June 2016 additional funding was provided that is currently being implemented as a Phase II of work with one of the original pilot sites, Pueblo. In addition, at the beginning of September 2016, the EBPP workgroup received additional funding through SB94 funds to support a second original pilot site for Phase II work, Montezuma/Dolores.

In order to support the EBPP Workgroup in fulfilling their vision a Phase III and IV has been developed and approved by the JJDP Council to provide uninterrupted services for the current Pueblo and Montezuma/Dolores sites, as well as to expand and engage a new pilot site in the revised and refined EBPP process that includes expanding Phases II and adding a Phase III and IV. In response to the La Plata community's expressed interest in engaging in the developed EBPP process La Plata will be engaged as a new pilot site. OMNI will continue the staffing model of utilizing their locally based facilitators/community consultants, their Denver-based research/data consultants, along with a central project lead from their organization to support efficient and effective work with the state level EBPP Workgroup and coordination of all project staff and tasks. Methods for consultation will include in-person, on-site locally based services, as well as off-site services utilizing phone, email, and online resources. The following bullets encompass all the tasks associated with Phases II-IV.

### **Phase II- Comprehensive Local Data & Resource Profile Development**

- Engage La Plata in a multi-system focused, comprehensive community-wide collaboration and EBPP planning process with multiple local initiatives/programs focused on at-risk and/or system-involved youth and their families.
  - OMNI will engage key stakeholders in the planning process. We will begin by utilizing existing meetings such as SB94, HB1451 Collaborative Management Program (CMP), Core Services, and other community meetings in order to convene crucial stakeholders and determine from there the best times to meet specifically on the EBPP pilot effort as well as which additional stakeholders to engage in the EBPP pilot.
- Provide data gathering, organization and interpretation services to build local capacity.



- Data targeted through this effort include existing data sources such as Public Health Needs Assessments, Communities That Care data, and other local sources of data. In order to promote capacity building and sustainability of these efforts, OMNI will provide hands-on guidance to local coordinators on how to independently gather and organize local data as well as facilitate discussions about their data with key stakeholders.
- Produce a clear and comprehensive data profile for the La Plata pilot, developed in collaboration with local stakeholders
  - The goal of the data profile will be to illustrate the characteristics and needs of the at risk and/or system-involved youth and their families across the entire community, in order to promote: greater understanding of where to target evidenced-based practices and/or programs; leveraging of resources; avoidance of service duplication; and overall effective use of state funding to address the areas of highest needs with evidenced based practices and/or programs.
  - The data profile will include data relevant to each of the local systems addressing at-risk and/or systems-involved youth populations to inform required program-specific plans (i.e. SB94, CMP, Core Services).

**Phase III- Refined EBPP Toolkit Process: Module 3: Data Interpretation & Module 4: Evidence-Based Strategy Selection**

- Engage with all three pilot communities to support review and revision for their required plans (SB94, CMP, etc.).
  - Once Phase II is completed for a given pilot site, OMNI will begin Phase III. In Phase III, building upon the data profiles developed in Phase II, OMNI will employ the refined EBPP toolkit Module 3 (Interpreting Data) and Module 4 (Selecting your EBP), to support the pilot sites' in interpreting their data profiles and in selecting evidenced-based practices and/or programs that will effectively address the needs of their at-risk and/or system-involved youth.

**Phase IV- Development of Evaluation Plans**

- Engage with all three pilot communities to support review and revision for their required plans (SB94, CMP, etc.).
  - Develop initial evaluation plans for each pilot site.
  - Once Phase III is completed for a given pilot site, OMNI will begin Phase IV of working with the pilot sites to develop an evaluation plan. OMNI will collaborate with the sites, adapting the evaluation plan as needed given local context, and will help the sites identify potential outcomes, measures, and monitoring processes. Utilizing an evaluation plan as part of the EBPP process will help support ongoing tracking of the selected evidenced-based strategies to determine whether the strategies are being implemented effectively and whether or not they meet the intended outcomes.

**EBPP Evaluation and Replication Fidelity; Continued Project Management, Coordination efforts, and Dissemination of EBPP Resources on Behalf of the JJDP Council and its Vision for the State.**

- OMNI will utilize formative evaluation methods to determine the effectiveness of the Phase II-IV processes in developing a replicable model that supports well-implemented evidence-based

programs and practices matched to need at the local level focused on at-risk and/or system-involved youth.

- OMNI will facilitate communication and sharing of learnings between the pilot communities, the EBPP work group, and collaborating workgroups and agencies (DCJ, Probation, CMP, SB94, Core Services, EPIC, etc.).

## **EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

**GOAL: To continue to support quality improvement in the juvenile justice system through key research and/or evaluation projects.**

The Evaluation Committee:

- Supports Council member participation in the planning, implementation, and review of evaluation components in proposed, funded, and endorsed activities;
- When requested, the Committee provides review, comment, and recommendations on the evaluation components of Council activities; and
- Sustains a focus on the value added by evaluation components of Council activities, assuring that they lead to meaningful action in support of youth, their families, communities, and Council agendas and sponsored programs.

As part of its System Improvement efforts, the JJDP Council has supported research and evaluation as a key component of any programming process it funds. An example of this is the evaluation of the state-funded Juvenile Diversion program. Since 2009, the JJDP Council has supported this evaluation which has yielded useful information leading to improvements in the operations of the diversion programs. This commitment to quality improvement through research and evaluation will continue in the next three year cycle.

The Evaluation Committee and the JJDP Council support the continued data collection and data analysis by OMNI Institute using the Evidence to Outcomes (ETO) database for Intake/Exit data and the data entry of pre/post survey Juvenile Diversion data. This is done by continuing ongoing evaluation activities and to delve deeper into the findings that appear to be supportive of positive outcomes for youth to determine what activities are correlated to the positive outcomes. Working with DCJ and the Committee, components that are found to be non-responsive to the recidivism rate will be removed from the data collection instruments. The Evaluation committee also continues to look at recommendations based on evaluation findings to improve services leading to better outcomes for youth, to assure outcomes and services are culturally equivalent for all youth and to continue to know if we are making a difference and in an equal way.

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

The Evaluation Committee has become more active in reviewing with applicants and funded projects their proposals and reports and has reviewed closely consultant's reports and has met with consultants to ask questions and make recommendations on their work and reports. Specifically, the Evaluation Committee Chair has been integrally involved in the OMNI Diversion Study and also directed funds to further support the planned evaluation for the Marijuana Tax funds to see if those funds are having the intended results. In addition, the Chair assisted in reviewing the Marijuana Tax Funds application to eventually help us and OMNI measure capacity building to provide substance abuse services.

## EMERGING LEADERS (EL) COMMITTEE

**GOAL: The purpose of the EL committee is to allow the voices of young individuals who have in one way or another been part of systems involved in juvenile corrections; guide and give important opinions on the improvement of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention.**

The JJDP Council truly supports the voice of youth and young adults in all its work. In support of this, the Council developed an Emerging Leaders Committee comprised of members of the Council who were appointed as “youth members”, those who were appointed before age 24. A portion of the federal funds has been given to the EL Committee to designate for special projects of interest and concern of the EL Committee.

Over the past three years, Emerging Leaders focused on several different issues which they had prioritized which included the need for more training for law enforcement and other front line professionals in how to work with juveniles who are having a mental health crisis. Many of these members were not Council members when the CIT for SROs and School Personnel curriculum was developed and when informed, felt this would meet the identified need. This training was held in the past three year cycle with the Denver Police Department.

As noted last year, this committee had chosen to focus on the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) youth involved in the juvenile justice system. One of the Emerging Leaders of the JJDP Council was selected to participate in a national forum sponsored by OJJDP regarding the needs of LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice system. Based on his involvement and what he learned, he informed the other members of the Emerging Leaders who agreed to make this a priority for their Colorado-based work. Their goal is to improve services provided to LGBTQ minority youth within the Colorado juvenile justice system and increase LGBTQ engagement within agencies. This will be accomplished by helping providers understand what it means to provide respectful and equal services to LGBTQ youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system through an educational training for providers to increase their knowledge and understanding of LGBTQ language and the specific needs of the community. This training will also assist in improving provider’s comfort levels in working with the LGBTQ community and help agencies develop an engagement model to implement their work with LGBTQ minority youth.

### What Has Been Accomplished?

- LGBTQ trainings - collaboration with DYC.
  - Connected the Division of Youth Corrections’ (DYC) Staff Development Director and the contractors to assist John with creating a LGBTQ overview for new employees.
  - Had meetings with the contractor that is developing a Colorado specific LGBTQ Youth Toolkit. The elements of the Toolkit have been finalized.
  - The contractor hosted a workshop at the upcoming 2016 National Partnership for Juvenile Services 22<sup>nd</sup> National Symposium on Juvenile Services to present on the LGBTQ Youth Toolkit.
- Increased EL member attendance and participation to include planning and developing meeting topics and strategies.
- Developed a syllabus for Professional Development Workshop for youth.
  - How to look and apply for jobs

- Resume writing
- Business dress/ interview skills
- Planning for the future
- Financial responsibility
- Funded Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) in January 2016 for the Denver Public Schools Security Office.
- Provided funding and assistance for the youth day at the Prison Arts Festival that took place May 27-29, 2016.
- Two members attended the National Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) Conference in April 2016.
- Reviewed and funded application from the Denver Office of the Independent Monitor to evaluate their Youth Outreach Project, Bridging the Gap: Kids and Cops Project.
- Three members attended the 2016 CJJ Youth Summit in Washington, D.C., August 2016.

## CHILDREN’S CODE (CC) REVIEW COMMITTEE

**GOAL: Improve outcomes for all youth and families involved in juvenile justice by revising Article 2 of the Colorado Children’s Code to give meaning to, and allow for the faithful implementation of, the legislative declaration through applying current research and best practices.**

The Children’s Code Committee began meeting in 2015 to review Article 2 and determine how to ensure the Code was consistent with current practices and science. The Committee began with a reorganization of Article 2 to help determine what changes must be made and what next steps must be taken in regards to aligning Article 2 with a developmental approach. Currently, Colorado laws relating to juveniles in the justice system are scattered throughout the nine Parts of Article 2 and contain provisions that are duplicative, inconsistent, conflicting, and at times unclear. The Committee’s meticulous review of Article 2 revealed the current order is illogical. As Article 2 is procedural in nature, it must be presented in a way that allows for tactical application, which the current order does not support. Specifically, the current order makes it difficult to train professionals on the law, subsequently making it difficult for them to argue the law.

The Committee believes a comprehensive, easy-to-use code is not only good practice, it better ensures due process. Importantly, the proposed reorder of Article 2 would improve ease of use and comprehension for juvenile justice-involved professionals and pro se families. A reorganization of Article 2 was a starting point for the Committee and now it has moved onto a developmentally-driven review using an evidence-based lens. The Committee has established two primary reasons why this revision is necessary:

**(1) To improve clarity for those who implement the Code, as well as those who are affected by its implementation.** The current structure of Article 2 of the Code is illogical, and portions are out of date with obsolete statutes. This lack of clarity has resulted in juvenile justice-involved professionals raising concerns regarding the ability to train professionals who engage with youth inside and outside the courtroom, as well as pro se families’ ability to comprehend the Code.

**(2) To ensure any future changes or modifications are in line with established best practices and current research.** Article 2 of the Code is ripe for a contextual review given the research around working with juveniles that has come about since the Code was last revised. The past thirty years have seen an increased understanding of adolescent brain development, youth development, public safety measures, and the need for family engagement, and this understanding should be reflected in Colorado’s laws. A developmental and evidence-based approach to reforming juvenile justice, which promotes public safety and accountability, starts with a reorganization of the Code and requires goals, design, and operation of the juvenile justice system to be research-informed. If a contextual review of Article 2 were done in a developmentally-informed way, “procedures for holding adolescents accountable for their offending, and the services provided to them, can promote legal socialization, reinforce a prosocial identity, and reduce reoffending<sup>1</sup>.”

---

<sup>1</sup> National Research Council. (2013). *Reforming juvenile justice: A developmental approach*. Committee on Assessing Juvenile Justice Reform. (vii). Bonnie, R., Johnson, B., Chemers, B., Schuck, J., Eds. Committee of Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Proposed revisions are studied through multiple perspectives including: equal treatment; developmental appropriateness; restorative justice; victim empowerment; addressing criminogenic and other needs to reduce reoffending and allow juveniles the opportunity to become productive members of society; and honoring the role of families and natural supports.

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

The Committee finished reordering the Code at the end of 2015 and turned their attention to next steps and strategic planning. See Appendix G for a memo outlining the Committee's perspective in May 2016. Through the development of a "strategic roadmap," the Committee identified key strategies to advance the revision process. A legal subgroup was convened to review each section through a developmental lens, identify possible revisions, and determine who would potentially be affected by the revisions. The subgroup then generated a master spreadsheet that was revised by the full Committee to ensure inclusion of nontraditional voices. This process took roughly four months and the Committee emerged with a conditionally formatted table to guide the revision process. Additionally, the Committee generated an interactive network map of Article 2 to ensure all entities who could be impacted by a proposed revision, or lack thereof, are either consulted or informed as appropriate. The Committee will move into the revision phase of its work in February 2017, with the intent of introducing its first piece of legislation related to a revised Article 2 in the 2019 session.

## JUVENILE DIVERSION & MARIJUANA TAX FUND PROGRAMS

Pursuant to the Colorado Children's Code [(19-1-103(44) C.R.S.], the goal of Diversion is to prevent further involvement of the youth in the formal legal system. Diversion of a juvenile or child may take place either at the pre-filing level as an alternative to filing of a petition; at the post adjudication level as an adjunct to probation services following an adjudicatory hearing; or a disposition as a part of sentencing. Juvenile diversion programs concentrate on holding the youth accountable for their behavior while involving them in programs and activities to prevent future criminal and delinquent behavior. Programs of this type provide local communities alternatives for holding youth accountable for their behavior, can help change the way youth think about their behavior, ensure that youth take responsibility for their actions, and ensure that victims and communities feel safe and restored.

In this past year, the General Assembly also approved \$400,000 in Marijuana Tax funding for Diversion. The purpose of this funding is to increase access to substance use screening, assessment and treatment services for youth receiving juvenile diversion programming.

Funds can be used for:

- Screening, assessment, and treatment for marijuana and general substance abuse needs;
- Addressing the practical barriers to treatment;
- Providing incentives to encourage abstinence from substances;
- Obtaining training for program staff; and
- Providing services to caregivers as it relates to substance use and abuse.
- Travel for training and technical assistance, and to bring programs together on specific topics relevant to this program.

In SFY 15-16, from July 2015 through June 2016, a total of 2,565 youth were served through the 18 state-funded juvenile diversion programs. Eight programs were located within District Attorneys' Offices, 2 were county based programs, 1 was a municipal program and 7 were community-based programs. Of the youth served, 65% were male, 51% White/Caucasian, 35% Hispanic/Latino, 5% Black/African American, 2% Native American, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4% multi-racial. The most prevalent level of charge for which youth were referred was misdemeanors (56%), felonies (22%), and petty offenses (20%) and the type of most serious charge includes person (27%), theft (26%), property (22%), and drug (20%). The stage at which juveniles were being accepted into Diversion included: 40% as an alternative to filing a petition, 9% as an alternative to a summons or arrest, 12% as a deferred adjudication, 10% at filing but with option to dismiss without prejudice, 14% as a DA diversion contract, 1% as a deferred sentence, 10% at post-adjudication (on probation) and 4% at pre-adjudication/informal adjustment. A total of 1,203 youth exited a diversion program during the reporting period, with 86% being successful, 14% unsuccessfully terminating due to an arrest on a new offense, and 7.22% unsuccessfully terminating due to non-compliance with their diversion contract. A total of 14,190 community service hours were completed by diversion program participants and \$77,478 in restitution was collected.



### **Recidivism**

This past year was the first year that OMNI was able to complete a more comprehensive recidivism data set included individuals who were accepted into the Diversion program, had successfully or unsuccessfully completed a Diversion program during the 2014-2015 fiscal year, and had been exited from the program for at least 1 year as of June 30th, 2016. Individuals with missing or 'neutral' outcomes (n=14) such as having chosen court, moved to a different area, or been transferred, are not included. The total sample size for this subset of youth was 1,222 individuals.

Of all youth who had exited from a Diversion program for at least one year (N=1,222), 15.6 percent of youth had recidivated during their participation in Diversion and/or within the one year after their participation. Of those who had exited Diversion successfully (n=1,051), 1.6 percent of youth had recidivated during their participation in Diversion and an additional 11.7% within the one year after their participation. Of those who exited Diversion unsuccessfully (n=171), 7.6% of youth had recidivated during their participation in Diversion and an additional 22.2% within the one year after their participation.

**SFY 2017 STATE JUVENILE DIVERSION AWARDS**

**Project Period: July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017**

**1<sup>st</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>District Attorney's Office, 1st Judicial District</u></b> Juvenile Diversion Program Funds
Award:	\$17,880
Description:	The 1st Judicial District has operated a Juvenile Diversion program since 1976. This program offers essentially the same level of supervision as Probation, but allows the juvenile to avoid a conviction. Funds will be used to provide a wide range of treatment services for juveniles, including substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, cognitive-behavioral treatment, domestic violence treatment, anger management treatment, tutoring, and transportation assistance.

**2<sup>nd</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>Denver District Attorney, Juvenile Diversion</u></b> Denver DA Juvenile Diversion
Award:	\$100,00
Description:	The Denver District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program will provide culturally competent services that repair the harm caused by crime to victims and the community, increase social and other age appropriate competency skills of offenders, their families, and to reduce the likelihood of further involvement by the juvenile in the court system. Denver DA's Diversion population includes juveniles ages 10-17 with 170 youth being served throughout the grant period at a cost per client of approximately \$1,400. Denver DA Diversion focuses on the "whole child" as opposed to solely addressing the crime itself. Various programs provide a unique opportunity to implement responses to delinquency that are more cost-effective than incarceration and that provide better outcomes for youth, their families and the community.

**5<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>District Attorney's Office, 5th Jud. Dist.</u></b> Juvenile Diversion Program
Award:	\$48,735
Description:	On average two-hundred juveniles are set for court prosecution in the Fifth Judicial District each year. The District Attorney's Office Juvenile Diversion program has the ability to provide services for first-time offenders without formal court involvement. Each year this program serves around seventy-five youth, and of those juveniles, around seventy percent are Hispanic, which has led to more culturally sensitive programming that can address the disproportionate representation of these youth. With targeted programming and a wide variety of services that involves the family, schools, the community, and other stakeholders, the Juvenile Diversion program in the Fifth Judicial District is committed to upholding the goal of Juvenile Diversion by diverting youth away from the formal court system and instead replacing that response with positive interaction and interventions designed to reduce the likelihood of recidivism among these juveniles.

6 <sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT	
AGENCY:	<b><u>La Plata Youth Services</u></b> 6th Judicial District Diversion Program
Award:	\$68,031
Description:	Since 2001, the LPYS Diversion Program has worked to divert youth from the court system by providing evidence-based alternatives directed toward positive youth development. LPYS is the only intervention program in La Plata County that works with youth involved in delinquent behavior prior to adjudication. Youth are referred to LPYS in lieu of having charges filed against them, avoiding court processes and a permanent criminal record. In FY16, the LPYS Diversion Program will serve 40 youth ages 12-17 in La Plata County implicated in a misdemeanor or felony type of offense, with services prior to adjudication at an average cost per client of \$2,273. Contracts will last an average of 4.5 months and will include assessment, RJ, service learning, and substance abuse treatment. The program will save thousands of taxpayer dollars while encouraging youth to become accountable for their actions, complete their education, learn healthy behaviors, and give back to the community.
7 <sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT	
AGENCY:	<b><u>Gunnison County, Juvenile Services</u></b> Gunnison County Juvenile Diversion
Award:	\$35,000
Description:	The Gunnison County Juvenile Diversion project is a pre-file program for eligible youth referred by the District Attorney to prevent them from entering the Juvenile Justice system. The target population is for first time non-violent petty, misdemeanor and felony offenders who would otherwise be filed on in District Court if not diverted. The estimated number to be served annually is 22 and the cost per person is approximately \$1,590.
AGENCY:	<b><u>Hilltop Community Resources, Inc.</u></b> Montrose County Juvenile Diversion Program
Award:	\$32,070
Description:	Montrose County Juvenile Diversion Program's goal is to prevent further involvement of juveniles in the formal justice system. Juvenile Diversion concentrates on holding youth accountable for their behavior while involving them in programs and activities to prevent future criminal and delinquent behavior. Juvenile Diversion offers a wide range of services: case management, drug tests, mentoring, useful public service, tutoring, and provider fees for individual and family therapy. Target population is first time or low-level juvenile offenders with acceptable charges from Montrose County's district court.

<p>AGENCY:</p> <p>Award:</p> <p>Description:</p>	<p><b><u>Delta County Alternative Sentencing Department</u></b> Delta County Juvenile Diversion</p> <p>\$55,500</p> <p>The Delta County Juvenile Diversion Program diverts youth from the formal court system by providing evidence-based programming directed toward positive youth development. The program operates in concert with all law enforcement agencies, County and District Courts, and the District Attorney’s Office to enhance accountability, ensure public safety, and reduce recidivism among delinquent youth by preventing future delinquent activity, moving in a continuum from limited interventions to more restrictive penalties (graduated sanctions) to provide community-based alternatives to the formal court system. The Juvenile Diversion Program serves juveniles between 10-17 years old, irrespective of gender and or ethnicity, which have been charged with petty (if a District Court filing is being averted), misdemeanor, or felony offenses, or a combination thereof. Based upon an average of the last 3 years, the program will receive approximately 42 referrals with a cost of \$1,321.00 per juvenile.</p>
<p><b>8<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b></p>	
<p>AGENCY:</p> <p>Award:</p> <p>Description:</p>	<p><b><u>Center for Family Outreach</u></b> Larimer County Diversion Program</p> <p>\$63,251</p> <p>The Center for Family Outreach provides resources, referrals, and a coordinated planned system for teenagers aged 10-17 who are struggling with substance abuse, mental health, crime, poverty, and adolescence. Their approach to these issues will address three levels of programming: 1) Prevention, which targets youth prior to entering the juvenile justice system and includes proactive efforts that empower individuals to choose and maintain healthy life choices; fostering an environment that encourages law-abiding, pro-social behavior. 2) Early intervention, which provides preventative efforts to intervene at early signs of issues. These efforts reduce risks and change behaviors with family-centered interventions. 3) Integrated intervention that is designed to operate with other agencies to enhance accountability, ensure public safety, and reduce recidivism by preventing delinquent behavior and avoiding formal court processing. Approximately 120 youth will be served in Loveland.</p>
<p>AGENCY:</p> <p>Award:</p> <p>Description:</p>	<p><b><u>City of Fort Collins</u></b> Restorative Justice Services</p> <p>\$56,192</p> <p>Fort Collins Restorative Justice Services will provide restorative justice practices as a diversion option for 105 youth who have committed offenses in the community and are referred by the DAs Office. Based on the philosophy of restorative justice, the program will include victims and/or victim representatives, families and community members in the process. The conferences will focus on the harm caused and how to repair it while holding the young offender accountable. As part of program participation, youth will be screened for mental health and substance abuse issues and referred to appropriate community resources. Estimated cost per client is \$1,000.</p>

<b>9<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>YouthZone</u></b> Juvenile Diversion Program
Award:	\$100,000
Description:	The YouthZone Juvenile Diversion Program is designed to prevent first time and low-level juvenile offenders from entering the Juvenile Justice System. The target population is youth age 10 to 17 that commit crimes in Garfield and Pitkin Counties in the 3rd Congressional District and 9th Judicial District. More than 80 percent of all cases are referred to YouthZone, and of those, approximately 100 youth from Pitkin and Garfield County and District Courts are under the YouthZone Juvenile Diversion program. The district attorney's office in the 9th Judicial District is the referral source for this program. A recent three-year evaluation shows that the YouthZone Juvenile Diversion Program has proven to reduce recidivism. Ninety percent of youth that participate in the YouthZone Juvenile Diversion Program do not repeat another offense. The cost per youth in the Juvenile Diversion Program with six to twelve months services is approximately \$1300.
<b>10<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>District Attorney's Office, 10th Judicial District</u></b> Specialized Juvenile Diversion Counselor - Year 3
Award:	\$44,771
Description:	Funds from this grant will be used to support a Juvenile Diversion Counselor. This counselor will supplement the existing Diversion program by focusing special programs on sub-groups of diversion candidates; those whose offense is related to bullying, either as a bully or a victim; very young offenders (10-14 years old), for whom typical teenage programming may not be appropriate; and minors found in possession of drugs or alcohol. The Diversion program uses a risk assessment tool at intake that is very similar to the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment, covering all the same domains. Areas covered include general family information, education, any employment for the youth, mental health, physical health, involvement with Social Services, criminal history, gang information and drug and alcohol history. When needs or concerns are identified through completion of the assessment, referrals are made to the appropriate treatment agencies to address the issues.
<b>11<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>District Attorney's Office, 11th Judicial District</u></b> Juvenile Diversion Services, 11th Judicial District
Award:	\$76,375
Description:	The Juvenile Diversion program serves first-time offenders ages 10-17 years old. The Diversion program is in place to divert youth from the traditional court process while holding them accountable for their behaviors and providing them with avenues to repair harm to the victim and/or community. Youth accepted into the Juvenile Diversion program are held accountable through a Diversion contract. The sanctions imposed may be recommended by victim(s) or by a contract developed one-on-one with the Juvenile Diversion Coordinator and/or the Juvenile Diversion Project Director, or by the recommendation of a supervised, Teen Court panel. The Diversion staff members provide appropriate referrals, case management, restitution and recreational and/or community service activities.

<b>12<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>Center for Restorative Programs</u></b> Juvenile Diversion Restorative Services
Award:	\$41,555
Description:	Restorative options will be offered to youth 10-17 years of age referred by the DA's office, SB 94, Probation, and any other post-filing referral sources. The services include an array of intervention models, all grounded in restorative justice best practices: 1) victim-offender dialogue; 2) ReThinking Drinking conferences for youth with Minor in Possession/Consumption tickets; 3) restorative discipline conferences and bullying intervention at area schools and youth-serving sites when referred by the SRO or other law enforcement; 4) teen-to-teen conflict mediation and Girls Circle dialogue for peer-based harassment and fighting; and 5) family conferences to address parent-teen issues related to at-risk and delinquent behaviors; and 6) Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) Facilitated Meetings. A contract will be developed for each youth, and monitored through successful completion.
<b>17<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>District Attorney's Office, 17th Judicial District</u></b> 17th Judicial District Diversion Program
Award:	\$63,103
Description:	Juvenile Diversion funds will increase academic support through an Education Client Manager. The Juvenile Education Counselor serves as an advocate and additional support for the highest educationally at-risk students in the 17th Judicial District Diversion Program. The Education Counselor will identify education risk factors and quickly emplace interventions based on the Response to Intervention (RTI), Attendance Works models, and additional evidence-based practices. Interventions include behavioral health evaluations/assessments, substance use disorder assessments, and individual and family treatment. The Diversion program is pre-file and serves adolescents 10 to 17 years old.
<b>18<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>18th Judicial District, District Attorney's Office</u></b> Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program
Award:	\$83,025
Description:	The goal of the Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program is to bridge identified gaps in the juvenile justice system by providing a comprehensive, evidenced based multi-modal juvenile diversion program. This is accomplished by providing evidenced-based therapy services including wilderness, community service, art therapy, and restorative justice components. To improve consistency in the availability of services to all clients, opportunities will be made available to the Aurora population, historically underserved and underrepresented in the components due to logistical challenges. The target population is first time offenders between the ages of 10-17.

<b>19<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>District Attorney's Office, 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (Weld County)</u></b> 19th Judicial District, Weld County Juvenile Diversion Program
Award:	\$90,084
Description:	The Weld County District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program is a pre-file program that diverts first-time, non-violent juvenile offenders from the traditional court system into restorative programming to address the juvenile's needs and community safety. Services provided by the Diversion program include reviewing cases for acceptance, administration of mental health and substance abuse screens, creation of a Diversion contract, records maintenance in CDAC and ETO databases, case management, screening and submitting referrals for treatment needs or referral to Restorative Justice conferencing, supervision and monitoring for compliance, and collecting and reporting data.
<b>21<sup>st</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>Mesa Youth Services dba Mesa County Partners</u></b> Juvenile Diversion Restitution/Community Service
Award:	\$111,413
Description:	In cooperation with DA's Office and 21st Judicial District Court/Probation, the Partners Work Program will provide community-based restorative justice and accountability focused sanctions and intervention for pre-file and post-file juvenile offenders involved in misdemeanor and felony cases to reduce further involvement in the justice system. Primary focus of services include completion of community service hours, restitution, victim empathy/restorative justice, Offense Specific assessment and Boundary groups, as well as the mental health (MAYSI-2) screen.
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
AGENCY:	<b><u>The Recovery Center: A Behavioral Health Organization</u></b> Juvenile Diversion Program
Award:	\$49,158
Description:	In an effort to enhance community safety by holding first and/or second time juvenile offenders accountable for their actions, The Recovery Center (TRC) will provide supervised, well-structured Juvenile Diversion services youth between the ages of 10 and 17. Referrals will be made by the 22nd Judicial District Attorney's office or local law enforcement agencies. Diversion services will consist of case management, behavioral contracts, community service, drug and alcohol testing, drug and alcohol treatment as appropriate, and referrals to other programs in the community for counseling, mediation, reparation, parenting classes, life skills classes, and/or mentoring.

**SFY 2017 STATE MARIJUANA TAX FUND FOR JUVENILE DIVERSION AWARDS**  
**Project Period: September 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017**

**SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>District Attorney's Office, 2nd Judicial District</u></b>
Award:	\$77,174
Description:	The Denver D.A. Diversion program serves first time juvenile offenders, ages 10-17 at the time of the offense. To address past barriers that prevented clients from being fully served, Denver D.A. Diversion will contract with the Division of Substance Dependence at the University of Colorado School of Medicine to provide intensive outpatient treatment services. The Encompass program, an evidence-based intervention for adolescents and young adults with co-occurring substance and non-substance psychiatric disorders will be implemented. Funds will also be used for five staff members to complete coursework and testing requirements to attain their CAC II certification.

**6<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>La Plata Youth Services</u></b>
Award:	\$32,235
Description:	La Plata Youth Services (LPYS) was designated by the 6th Judicial District Attorney in 2001 as the juvenile diversion program of La Plata County. LPYS will use these funds to focus primarily on building capacity and training of staff to provide more targeted supportive services and interventions for youth struggling with substance abuse. Direct services to be provided as a result of grant funds: individual counseling and therapy, equine therapy, and therapeutic mentorship.

**7<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>Delta County Alternative Sentencing Department</u></b>
Award:	\$15,776
Description:	The Delta County Juvenile Diversion program provides community-based alternatives to the formal court system for youth between the ages of 10-17 arrested for misdemeanor or felony offenses. Grant funds will be used to maintain and expand services for those youth with marijuana and other drug use/abuse issues in Delta County to include screening, assessment, education/treatment intervention, evidenced based education and/or treatment modalities, increased education within the family, and increased monitoring and intensified case management for the family/offender.

<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>Hilltop Community Resources</u></b>
Award:	\$18,858
Description:	Montrose County Juvenile Diversion is preventative in nature, and the goal is to prevent further involvement of juveniles in the formal justice system. The funds will affect existing Diversion participants by increasing the amount of resources needed to support those that are using marijuana. Examples of resources that will be increased include initial assessments, therapeutic services and incentives for reaching goals around sobriety. Diversion staff will also receive training in Strengthening Families Protective and Factors Framework and will begin to utilize the Protective Factors with Diversion participants and their families.



<b>8<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>Center for Family Outreach</u></b>
Award:	\$60,000
Description:	The Center for Family Outreach will contract with a substance abuse therapist/CACIII counselor for 30 hours a week. This therapist/counselor will be responsible for serving Larimer County students and their families with substance use and behavioral health issues. Services to be provided include conducting individual and group sessions, helping families access substance abuse services, navigating families through assessments, providing referral for families who are in need of intensive services, and determining developmentally appropriate programs. Funds will also be used to provide incentives to students for positive achievements and milestones, such as behavioral incentives, improved attendance or academic performance, and successful program completion. Incentives include: movie tickets, restaurant and bowling gift cards, gas vouchers, clothing, backpacks, etc.
<b>9<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>YouthZone</u></b>
Award:	\$14,000
Description:	Marijuana Tax Cash funds will cover the cost of two YouthZone staff to be trained as Certified Addiction Counselors Level I (CAC I). The process to attain certification will take approximately 1 year to complete and the funds will cover costs for CAC I training and supervision. The long-term plan is that the staff will be trained as Certified Addiction Counselors Level II (CAC II).
<b>18<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>District Attorney's Office, 18th Judicial District</u></b>
Award:	\$96,902
Description:	The Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program (JDCP) will use grant funds to increase capacity to serve clients with marijuana use and abuse issues. JDCP staff are now able to provide supervised substance abuse treatment and have a goal to increase the number of diversion referrals on marijuana related charges by a minimum of 60. Services to be provided include substance abuse evaluations, therapy, education, and referrals to higher levels of care with external partners when required by best practice.
<b>21<sup>ST</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT</b>	
<b>AGENCY:</b>	<b><u>Mesa County Partners</u></b>
Award:	\$25,055
Description:	Mesa County Partners, Inc. provides several programs to serve at-risk youth in Mesa County. This project will lie within the Restitution/Community Service Work Program. Funds will pay for a part time staff person to provide mental health (MAYSI-II) and substance abuse (GAIN SS) screens, substance abuse education group, and case management for pre-adjudicated Diversion youth and post-adjudicated youth. The staff person will work closely with the both the Mesa County District Attorney Diversion and District Court Probation offices in order to provide consistent case management information and reports.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION COUNCIL

Will Hays 06/12  
JJDP Council Chair  
Hilltop Community Resources, Inc.  
Grand Junction

Linda Nordin 06/12  
JJDP Council Vice-Chair  
Jefferson Center for Mental Health  
Lakewood

Judge Michelle Brinegar 08/14  
8<sup>th</sup> JD  
Ft. Collins

Jennifer Capps 05/10  
Metro State University of Denver  
Denver

Stacie Colling 08/15  
CO Alternative Defense Council  
Denver

Stacy Davis 07/16  
St, Vrain School District  
Longmont

Jenny Ellison 02/14  
Chief Deputy District Attorney, 8<sup>th</sup> JD  
Ft Collins

Jerry Evans, Ph.D. 08/14  
Community Health Initiatives  
Carbondale

Jane Flournoy 12/13  
Office of Behavioral Health/CDHS  
Denver

Elizabeth Anne Ford, Esq. 06/13  
Defense Attorney  
Denver

\*Antonio Huerta 07/16  
Emerging Leader  
Granada

Bill Kilpatrick 01/15  
Golden Police Department  
Golden

Tracy Kraft-Tharp 08/13  
House of Representatives, State of Colorado  
Denver

Dorothy Macias 08/15  
Office of the Child's Representative  
Denver

\*Crystal Murillo 07/16  
Emerging Leader  
Aurora

\*Ricardo Rocha-Rangel 08/14  
Emerging Leader  
Commerce City

Dedrick Sims 12/13  
Sims-Fayola Foundation  
Brighton

\*Ciera Springer 08/15  
Emerging Leader  
Denver

\*Jack Storti 12/13  
Emerging Leader  
Parker

Al Estrada 01/17  
Division of Youth Corrections/CDHS  
Denver

\*Nicholas Turco 05/16  
Emerging Leader  
Durango

Susan Walton 05/15  
Park County Department of Human Services  
Bailey

Kevin West 05/15  
School District 27J  
Brighton

Karen Wilde 07/16  
Expert, Native American Issues  
Lamar

Dana Wilks 06/13  
State Court Administrator's Office  
Denver

\*Emerging Leaders are youth appointed prior their 24<sup>th</sup> birthday,  
dates denote original dates of appointment to Council

**Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS)  
Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ)  
Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance (OAJJA)**

Stan Hilkey- Executive Director, Colorado Department of Public Safety  
Rebecca Spiess- Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Public Safety  
Jeanne M. Smith- Director, Division of Criminal Justice  
Meg Williams- Manager, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance

OAJJA Staff

Mona Barnes  
Kate Ferebee  
Gary Fugo  
Cindy Johnson

Anna Lopez  
Michele Lovejoy  
Kyle McDonald  
Kristy Wilson

Appendix A

March 2016

# Truancy Problem Solving Courts in Colorado: A Case Study



Prepared by Spark Policy Institute on behalf of the  
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council



**COLORADO**  
Division of Criminal Justice  
Department of Public Safety

**Contents**

- Introduction..... 1**
- Defining Truancy Problem Solving Courts ..... 2
- What does a Truancy Problem Solving Court program look like? ..... 3
- Truancy Problem Solving Court program phases ..... 4
- Pilot Site Overview ..... 6
- Jefferson County (1<sup>st</sup> judicial district) ..... 6
- Aurora Public Schools (18<sup>th</sup> judicial district) ..... 7
- 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district ..... 7
- Program Design ..... 8**
- Creating teams..... 8
- Training and ongoing learning..... 9
- Setting a direction ..... 9
- Building buy-in and recruiting participants ..... 10
- Designing the program..... 11
- Designing case management ..... 12
- Case management models..... 13
- Collaboration ..... 13
- Developing incentives and sanctions ..... 14
- Incentives..... 14
- Sanctions..... 15
- Evaluating and sustaining ..... 15
- Baseline and on-going data collection ..... 15
- Long-term data collection ..... 16
- Shared metrics ..... 16
- Sustaining the program..... 17
- Lessons Learned ..... 18**
- What is working?..... 18
- What has been challenging? ..... 19
- Conclusion ..... 21**

# INTRODUCTION

All 50 states have compulsory attendance laws – that is, laws that require students within a set age range to attend school. In Colorado, students are required to attend school between the ages of 6 and 17. Broadly, truancy is defined by a set number of unexcused absences from school (four per month or ten in a year in Colorado). Truancy is a serious issue, and truants are often found to be living in “multiple disadvantaged” circumstances,<sup>i</sup> to have parents suffering from alcoholism,<sup>ii</sup> and to have a family history of abuse,<sup>iii</sup> maltreatment, or neglect.<sup>iv</sup> Moreover, studies have shown that once young people are detained, even when controlling for their prior offenses, they are more likely than non-detained youth to end up deeper in the system.<sup>v</sup>

The Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Council’s Low Risk/High Need (LRHN) Committee was established in 2013. The Committee strives to address the needs of juveniles who may not have criminogenic tendencies, but may have undiagnosed, unmet, or underserved needs in areas such as trauma, mental health, or substance abuse; factors which may contribute to their eventual entrance into the juvenile justice system. Specifically, the JJDP Council has focused on truancy and the use of detention for truants in Colorado who violate a court order (204 youths in fiscal year (FY) 2014).

For these reasons, the JJDP Council, through the LRHN Committee, funded four truancy demonstration pilots (one focused on prevention and three Truancy Problem Solving Courts (TPSCs) based on HB 13-1021 and the Coalition for Juvenile Justice’s *Safety, Opportunity & Success: Standards of Care for Non-Delinquent Youth*.<sup>vi</sup> The State Court Administrator’s Office provided the TPSCs with training on and expertise related to Problem Solving Court Models. The JJDP Council’s LRHN committee serves as an advisory group and learning collaborative for the pilot sites. As of December 2015, the TPSC pilot sites are:

- Jefferson County, located in the 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district;
- Otero, Crowley and Bent Counties, comprising the 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district; and
- Aurora Public Schools, part of Arapahoe County in the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district.

Implementation in all three sites began in May 2014, supported by Colorado’s Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG). All three pilots focus on youth who meet the definition of being truant and are court-involved.

The purpose of the pilots is to learn and document:

Colorado has long been a pioneer in the area of truancy reform, creating early intervention programs since the late 90s. In 2006, Denver Public Schools collaborated closely with the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) to create a framework for intervention. Statewide, the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Program (EARSS) was created in 1997, which provided support to at-risk students and, in 2009, appropriations were increased with the mandate that at least 50% of the increased appropriation be dedicated to reducing “the number of truancy cases requiring court involvement.” Further, the Colorado Legislature has continually revised Colorado’s current compulsory attendance law (the School Attendance Law of 1963) to move away from punitive measures to reduce truancy. The most recent revisions are House Bill (HB) 13-1021<sup>1</sup>, which requires school districts to explore interventions to reduce court involvement, and Senate Bill (SB) 15-184, requiring the creation of a community stakeholder group to design a policy to address truancy.



- The causal factors of truancy;
- Effective prevention strategies to keep youth in school and on track, academically and socially, while increasing school and student engagement; and
- Systems changes needed to successfully address truancy.

The following case study documents the process and experiences of the three TPSCs, presenting similarities and differences across the three sites, highlighting lessons learned, and offering guidance to judicial districts interested in the use or exploration of a TPSC.<sup>vii</sup>



### 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district

*The STEP Court multi-disciplinary team discusses on a regular basis the possibility of revisions that might need to be made to treatment to ensure that the student and family are able to meet the program goals. The STEP Court initially struggled to connect students with appropriate and reasonably priced substance abuse treatment providers. However, collaboration with the 1<sup>st</sup> JD SB94 program resulted in the availability of funding and reliable substance abuse treatment providers. Every STEP Court participant is now able to access substance abuse treatment at no cost. 82% of STEP Court students are engaged in therapeutic services once they are entered into the STEP Court program and one student met all of his treatment goals and successfully completed treatment.*

### 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district

*We are excited to graduate and celebrate our first graduating class this winter. This shows that not only is it possible to complete the program, but that the efforts of the ACE Court team paid off. Hopefully, this will empower these participants with greater confidence to tackle greater challenges and greater obstacles later in life. The greatest win we are taking away from ACE Court is the confidence we are starting to see in these young people. The more time we spend with them and the more we encourage attendance, participation and pro-active actions, the greater their confidence becomes. They know they can do it, and we want to continue to encourage them, as their successes are the catalyst that keeps ACE Court going.*

## DEFINING TRUANCY PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

Problem-solving courts (PSCs) follow a wrap-around model, providing resources within the courtroom and in the community, to students and their parents/guardians. Although PSCs require significant upfront time and effort, they can be more effective in a shorter amount of time, reduce recidivism, and decrease the use of sanctions including detention. Several hallmarks of PSCs directly compliment the three main principles of truancy reduction: (1) problem-solving orientation, (2) collaboration, and (3) accountability, making PSCs natural models for truancy courts. Common elements include:

- **Focus on outcomes** – Providing positive outcomes for youth, schools, and the community.
- **Systems change** – Promoting reform in how government systems respond to the problem.
- **Collaboration** – Working with external parties to achieve goals.
- **Non-traditional roles** – Allowing the court to take on roles or processes not common in traditional courts, such as facilitating outcomes rather than overseeing an adversarial process.
- **Screening and Assessment** – Incorporating screening and assessment tools, which are important to determine the appropriateness of treatment plans.

## WHAT DOES A TRUANCY PROBLEM SOLVING COURT PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

There are a number of key elements to the structure of TPSCs, which are based on drug courts. In contrast to traditional models, TPSCs:

- Offer clearly defined phase schedules, with well-defined expectations, with the beginning phases structured to allow participants early successes, helping them see their potential;
- Are clearly focused on family engagement and participation, and work to ensure all voices are heard, respected, and empowered;
- Take a strengths-based approach, beginning with what is working in a youth's life and building from there; and
- Focus on integrative and collaborative support, with the court playing a more supervisory role in partnership with a set team that is working toward the common goal of improved attendance, academic performance, and behavior.

Allowing for greater success in these early phases decreases the chances participants will feel overwhelmed at the outset, leading to a higher probability of a participant successfully completing the program.

~ 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

The sanctions that seemed to most impact behavior were: increased court appearances, subtraction of points, and restarting a phase. Participants seemed to place a high value on not wanting to disappoint the judge and tended to perform better when they were required to appear in court more often.

~16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

The foundation of a TPSC is the dual purpose it serves. A TPSC offers immediate consequences and rewards, which is critical to addressing a truant student's behavior. Specifically, PSC's provide consequences for failing to attend school or complying with orders, while providing natural rewards when a student demonstrates progress.



## Truancy Problem Solving Court Program Phases

In Colorado, youth at-risk of truancy receive a series of interventions, including the creation of an intervention plan, consultation with a district attendance officer who consults with parents and youth to investigate the causes of non-attendance, and encouragement to work with local service providers. In addition, schools must document truancy along with other procedural requirements that demonstrate interventions, including having provided written notice to students and parents that court proceedings will be initiated for failure to comply. According to § 22-33-108 of the Colorado School Attendance Law, if court proceedings are initiated, and after the first finding of contempt, sanctions may include community service, participation in services for at-risk students, supervised activities, and other activities designed to ensure the student has an opportunity to obtain quality education. Additionally, if the court finds a student has refused to comply with the truancy reduction plan, the court may impose a sentence of up to five days of detention for contempt of court.<sup>viii</sup> A student is eligible (or required) to participate in a TPSC if he or she has been found to be habitually truant and has been provided documentation of that fact.

### 1. Orientation & Stabilization

After a referral is made or program eligibility is determined, either the judge or magistrate at the initial hearing compelling attendance or a TPSC staff member introduces the student and his or her parents/guardians to the program. Orientation comprises an overview of the program, including policies, expectations, and goals, which are all documented in a handbook. The student must also go through an intake process where assessments (e.g. the MAYSI-2, School Refusal Assessment Scale, and Truancy/Attendance Assessment) are conducted.

### 2. Engagement

During this phase, the student is encouraged to create new habits, including pro-social behavior and active participation in school, and is provided treatment services as needed. The student is also encouraged to explore the reasons for non-attendance, and positive behavior reinforcements are used. A student in one of Colorado's TPSC pilot sites has regular communication with program staff through school visits (typically weekly), phone calls (typically weekly), and court dates (typically monthly). A student may also regularly meet with his or her Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or Guardian Ad Litem (GAL). Program staff strives to address the needs of a student's family that might impede engagement, such as transportation or linguistic barriers.

### 3. Achievement

During the third phase, "achievement," the program encourages the student to turn his or her new habits into typical behavior, and maintains higher expectations for this new behavior pattern. The student focuses on maintaining progress while celebrating his or her successes. Judicial districts are mindful to celebrate student successes by honoring incentives, holding social events when school is not in session, and hosting parties for program graduates.

**Preliminary data from the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district indicates that over half of participants attend school more than 70% of the time, a sharp increase from when they entered the program, when many attended school less than 50% of the time, and none of the students have experienced any major behavioral issues at school or contact with law enforcement. As of 12/31/16, 91% of participants achieved a 90% or higher attendance rate during their second 90 days of program participation in the 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district.**


#### 4. Aftercare

During the Aftercare phase, the program supports the student from afar, focusing on self-directed, internal behavior. The pilot site encourages the student to continue services that may impact his or her future success. Providing aftercare is challenging, because once participants have completed the program it is difficult to track student outcomes in large part because the students will have shifted from court to school supervision. To address this challenge, the 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district plans to connect with students through Infinite Campus to review grades and attendance at pre-determined intervals. Similarly, the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district plans to connect with students beyond program graduation, tracking attendance, school behavior, and/or grades (though this may require a waiver).

**Table 1. Description of program phases**

Phase	Program Perspective	Participant Perspective
1: Orientation & Stabilization	Complete assessments; build rapport; formulate treatment and action plans	Explore importance of school and the why of attending; decrease fear of court and the judicial system; work with parents on their role in truancy
2: Engagement	Active participation in school attendance, treatment, pro-social activities; creation of new habits	Help student see how to realize his or her potential; understand and honestly explore likes/dislikes of school; positive reinforcement for desired behavior
3: Achievement	New habits become typical behavior, expectations of attendance, no behavioral issues, and better academic performance; reinforce positive habits	Maintain progress and celebrate success
4: Aftercare	Staff assist/support from afar, focus is on self-directed positive behavior with lower levels of staff assistance	Realize the ability to stay in school and do the best he or she can – he or she is ready!

### 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district



*The program recently recognized a 6th grader in the courtroom for achieving the Student of the Week in his class. He entered the program with a high absence rate for 2014-2015 school year. At the end of his first 90 days in the program, he had no tardies or absences. The teacher reported choosing him as the Student of the Week due to his growth academically, which was connected to attending school. The parent provided a picture of her son being recognized at school, which was given to the judge. This student also received a gift card and applause for his achievement.*

## PILOT SITE OVERVIEW

### Jefferson County (1<sup>st</sup> judicial district)

**Name of program** – STEP (Specialized Truancy Engagement Program) Court

**Mission Statement** – The 1st judicial district STEP Court is a specialized, collaborative court that seeks to improve attendance by identifying barriers to education and providing assistance to empower students and families to overcome those challenges.

**Population Served** – STEP serves students between 12 and 16 years of age in Jefferson County (JEFFCO) Public Schools; the average age served is 14 years.

**Participants** – Total number of participants: 17; number of youth successfully completing the program: 3; number of terminations from the program: 5; left program for other reasons: 5.

**Pilot Site Description** – Jefferson County Public Schools (JeffCo) is the largest public school district in Colorado with 154 schools and academic programs on 168 campuses.

**Project Description** – The STEP Court is a voluntary program that takes, at a minimum, approximately 6-9 months to complete. Youth are expected to comply with the following requirements:

- All STEP Team directives. The STEP Team is a multidisciplinary group that oversees every participant's performance. The STEP Team meets just prior to every docket to staff cases and determine appropriate Court orders.
- All STEP'ing Up Plan requirements. At the beginning of each STEP, every student in conjunction with school staff, the STEP Court Coordinator, parents, and other involved professionals meet and create a STEP'ing Up Plan. The STEP'ing UP Plan is an individualized plan that sets forth the requirements that a student must satisfy in order to STEP Up to the next STEP. The STEP'ing Up Plan addresses mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, sobriety monitoring, and attendance goals.
- All STEP Court rules as set forth in the STEP Court handbook.

### 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district

*The 1st judicial district STEP Court has been successful in reducing the number of absences for 24% of the students. 35% of the students reduced their tardies by 50% or more. 24% of the students received passing grades at the end of the semester. 41% of the students saw a 50% reduction in behavior incidents and/or suspensions. 24% of the students saw reductions in court hearings, sobriety monitoring, and supervision. 0% of those students were sentenced to detention for non-compliance in the program.*



## 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district

**Name of program** – MAP (Motivation, Achievement and Power) Program

**Mission Statement** – The MAP Program is designed to MOTIVATE youth to ACHIEVE high attendance and academic performance in school and bring out the POWER to thrive not only in school but in everyday life.

**Population Served** – Elementary to high school students in Bent, Crowley, and Otero Counties for whom an Order to Compel Attendance has been entered.

**Participants** – Total number of participants: 43; number of youth successfully completing the program: 14; number of terminations from the program: 0; left program for other reasons: 6.

**Pilot Site Description** – The 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district comprises three rural southeast Colorado counties. There are 9 school districts and 23 schools (not counting online options). Enrollment across the 23 schools totals 3,266 students.

**Project Description** – The MAP Program is a mandatory program designed to last between 6-12 months. The program is divided into four phases called the Four C's: Choice, Challenge, Change, and Courage. Youth move through each phase via a point system, tracked through a points register. A points list shows participants how to earn or lose points. Points are monitored on a weekly basis by the youth, the case manager, and parent/guardian. Each phase is worth a certain amount of points, with a set number of points that must be accumulated to move on to the next phase.

## Aurora Public Schools (18<sup>th</sup> judicial district)

**Name of program** – ACE (Academic Centered Empowerment) Court Program

**Mission Statement** – The 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district Truancy Problem Solving Court honors and empowers families to reconnect truant students with school or other educational alternatives. It employs a holistic, problem solving, culturally sensitive approach in order to foster educational success and create self-sufficient families.

**Population Served** – Although Arapahoe County has five school districts, this pilot is limited to Aurora Public Schools (APS), which has the highest level of need in the county. ACE Court is open to youth that qualify in the 6<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> grades.

**Participants** – Total number of participants: 9; number of youth successfully completing the program: 0, with 3 expected to complete in 2016; number of terminations from the program: 1; left program for other reasons: 1

**Pilot Site Description** – Aurora Public Schools (APS) currently serves nearly 40,000 students with 61 total schools in the district.

**Project Description** – Participation in the ACE Court Program is a voluntary commitment of approximately 8-12 months. The ACE Court Program has four phases, each of which has progressively more rigorous standards. ACE Court provides youth with the following tools to set them up for success:

- Incentives and sanctions;
- Accountability through court reviews and assignments;
- Substance use monitoring; and
- Meetings or check-ins with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), Guardians ad Litem (GALs) and Student Engagement Advocates.

## PROGRAM DESIGN

As schools and judicial districts began to develop plans in response to HB 13-1021, there was a resounding feeling that a new approach to address truancy was needed. For the three pilot sites, and the schools they serve, TPSCs offered an inspiring alternative for judicial districts and schools to traditional truancy court, particularly with regard to the wrap-around aspect of the courts, which encourage “communities to assess the youth’s and family’s needs and to involve community-based partner agencies to prevent future truancy.”<sup>xix</sup>

While PSCs are not new to the State of Colorado, which currently has 78 including adult and juvenile drug courts, family courts, DUI courts and veteran trauma courts, these three pilot programs are the first TPSCs in the state.<sup>x</sup> The three judicial pilot sites (1<sup>st</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>) were awarded grant money from Colorado’s Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) in a graduated cycle, \$70,000 the first year, \$60,000 the second and \$55,000 the third year. These funds support the creation, implementation, and evaluation of the TPSCs. This section of the report provides an overview of the process of creating and implementing the TPSCs, as well as steps being taken to evaluate the programs.

**HB13-1021, signed into law in August 2013, requires school districts to explore best practices and research-based interventions to reduce court involvement and, specifically, the use of detention. To accomplish this, the law focuses on:**

- **Creating an intervention plan, jointly completed by students, parents, and the school, with explicit encouragement to work with local service providers and community groups;**
- **Establishing a district attendance officer to consult with parents and youth to investigate the causes of non-attendance;**
- **Requiring the school district to implement interventions before resorting to the court; and**
- **Providing written notice to parents and the student that court proceedings will be initiated for failure to comply (which may be combined with a summons to appear in court).**

## CREATING TEAMS

All three pilot sites created a steering committee to design, implement, and maintain the TPSC. Steering committees were composed of a combination of the following individuals:

- Chief justice
- District judge presiding over the existing truancy court
- Department of Human Services staff
- School principal
- School resource officer
- Local mental health/substance abuse staff
- District court administrator and/or coordinator
- Probation department representative
- SB 94 director or coordinator
- GAL
- CASA
- District Attorney’s office representative
- Juvenile services representative



Senate Bill 94 (SB 94) is a statewide program funded through the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC), but implemented locally. Participating districts have SB 94 committees and submit annual plans outlining goals to the DYC. Funds from the grant are used to support a continuum of community-based services, providing alternatives to detention for justice-involved youth ages 10-17.

The 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> judicial districts also created working groups to operationalize the day-to-day needs of running the TPSC, consisting of many of the same individuals listed above. Both the steering committees and work groups are essential components of the structure and operation of TPSCs, despite the different roles they play. For example, in the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district, all potential changes to ACE Court and ACE Court policies and procedures go through the Steering Committee. In addition, the Steering Committee provides ongoing recommendations and critiques to the ACE Court. The Work Team in the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district oversees the “day-to-day” operations of ACE Court, has the most interaction with the youth, and attends all ACE Court hearings and staffings.

## Training and ongoing learning

From the start, all three pilot sites understood the importance of rigorous training and continual learning for those involved in the TPSC. To meet this need, the sites leveraged the existing skills and knowledge of those working with low-risk/high-need youth and multi-cultural populations, and offered learning opportunities via trainings and conferences. Learning opportunities conducted or attended by judicial district staff and community partners include training on:

- Adolescent brain development;
- Effective communication styles for juveniles;
- Motivational interviewing;
- Cultural sensitivity/awareness;
- General education on program structure and desired outcomes;
- General education on program evaluation and how success will be measured;
- Data collection techniques;
- What drives student success;
- Disproportionate minority contact; and
- The creation and implementation of a problem solving court (via the Office of the State Court Administrator).

**Problem-solving Court models call for more interaction and dialogue between participants and the judicial officer compared to traditional models or adversarial courts. As such, training judicial officers in motivational interviewing highly recommended.**

**~18<sup>th</sup> judicial district**

Pilot sites also reported that some judicial district staff members and community partners attended various conferences, such as the National Dropout Prevention Conference and a PSC-specific conference. Pilot sites found conference attendance beneficial both for the “how to model” they provide for TPSC team members and the space they provide for learning about new approaches, as well as models used in other states.

## SETTING A DIRECTION

While the three judicial district pilot sites share a common goal and direction, they each developed unique mission statements (in the profiles above) and discrete goals, which reflect the nature of their programs and

the populations they serve. As the 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district noted, “the [Truancy PSC] goals were developed based on the needs of the students and the community to promote success.” Similarly, both the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> judicial districts developed goals based on grant outcomes, which were then modified and agreed on by working groups or steering committees, who were designed to bring a variety of perspectives to the table.

Program goals, and therefore program measures of success, center on the following:

- Increasing school and attendance;
- Improving academic performance;
- Reducing or eliminating the use of detention; and
- Improving overall functioning (including decreasing subsequent case filings and addressing behavior issues in school, at home, and in the community).

The 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district spent over three months bringing stakeholders together, soliciting input, conducting research, and developing their program. They spent approximately another three months hiring staff to ensure staff were ready to begin providing services to participants. They balanced careful planning and program implementation with the need to revisit areas for modifications. For example, after a year had passed, they noticed many students were spending more time than anticipated in the stabilization phase of the program, so in turn they modified this phase of the program to promote student progress in this area.

In order to achieve these goals, however, TPSCs must ultimately address the needs of schools, students, and their families. One key element to achieving this is establishing a feedback loop to solicit community input, which is an important part of both setting and revising a direction. All three pilot sites involve community stakeholders at various points of the process via surveys, meetings, and digital communication. For example, the 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district conducted a short survey with participants and parents of participants of the former program prior to implementing the new [PSC] format, and incorporated suggestions from the survey as they refined their model.

## BUILDING BUY-IN AND RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

An early consideration in program design is how to build district support and buy-in for a TPSC. Necessary buy-in across the sites came from various entities, such as chief judges, traditional truancy court magistrates, probation departments, key school district administrators, and key court-level administrators with the Department of Human Services. A wide and varied base of support significantly increases the likelihood of positive community change; simply put, without community backing a TPSC cannot be successful.

**“Initially, superintendents, principals, and school counselors were targeted since it was crucial for them to be part of the process – they must believe in the program for it to work.”**

**~16<sup>th</sup> judicial district**

To build buy-in and support for the TPSC, the sites regularly communicate with stakeholders (such as school administrators, community services providers, students, and parents) via face-to-face conversations, presentations, and Question & Answer sessions. While promoting their TPSC, sites were aware of the crucial role *all* stakeholders play in addressing truancy and decreasing the use of detention as a sanction. The 16<sup>th</sup>

judicial district's program takes a collaborative approach with a team (of which the student and parent(s) are a part) working toward the same goals. They emphasize:

- Using adequate assessments to define the problem(s) unique to the student;
- Promoting genuine parental involvement;
- Increasing the feeling of “connectedness”;
- Leveraging far more “carrots” than “sticks”;
- Providing accountability; and
- Turning to detention as a last resort.

In Jefferson County (1<sup>st</sup>) and Aurora Public Schools (18<sup>th</sup>), student participation in the TPSC is voluntary. These sites, therefore, actively recruit participants. Sites communicate regularly with various community partners to ensure active recruitment while also building program buy-in.

The 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district has found the best marketing tool to be conversations with key stakeholders, educating them about the ACE Court. Both the Magistrate and the Problem Solving Court Coordinator (PSCC) have personally reached out to APS stakeholders and have had numerous meetings with them about the ACE Court, namely how it differs from a traditional truancy court and the continued efforts made to ensure the ACE Court's success. Because the ACE Court only serves students from APS, it is vital for us to effectively communicate and collaborate with district schools; the PSCC drafted an ACE Court flyer to distribute to APS stakeholders, and directly to district schools (see appendix). Another successful referral mechanism organically emerged through the presence of the Truancy Reduction Coordinator for APS, as this person is well-equipped to identify the students in traditional truancy court who may see increased growth in ACE Court.



### 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district

*In late 2015, a student graduated from the program who had entered during the previous format. She had numerous issues which included marijuana abuse, self-harming behavior, low self-esteem, and a great deal of tension with her mother. She was attending an online school that did not lend itself to student-staff rapport. This student would attend court wearing long sleeves, hiding her face with her hair, and would barely interact with the judge. Through assessment and interaction, we began to understand that her mental health challenges correlated with her poor academic performance and social interactions. This student began working with an intensive in-home service program and she was switched to a blended-learning school environment. By her graduation day, this student no longer used marijuana, interacted well with the judge, would wear short sleeves, and her hair no longer covered her face. She also completed a vision board with which shared her future goals in life.*



## DESIGNING THE PROGRAM

Although judicial districts had a general sense of program design and implementation, each worked to ensure the program would meet the unique needs of their district, including responding to issues of poverty, providing services in a culturally-competent manner, and addressing physical and economic barriers to participation. Challenges pilot sites addressed as they developed their programs included:

- **Transportation:** The 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district (STEP Court) provides bus tickets to help students who are facing transportation issues. Similarly, in the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district, CASAs, GALs, and even the Truancy Reduction Coordinator from APS volunteer to transport youth to and from court, as well as to therapeutic sessions, school and any other activities the youth may be involved in, if necessary.

The 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district serves an ethnically- and culturally-diverse, low-income population. Students from APS account for 45% of all truancy filings in Arapahoe County; however, many do not live near the Arapahoe County Justice Center and have limited public transportation options. To address this barrier, the ACE Court secured a location in central Aurora one Tuesday a month so youth and their parents/guardians could report to a more accessible location.

- **Language barriers:** Some of the youth and families served by TPSCs primarily speak a language other than English. To accommodate them, and ensure the process is inclusive, the districts provide interpreters who appear in-person during the hearings. Similarly, when check-ins are held off-site, interpreters appear via phone.
- **Childcare:** The districts have made accommodations for childcare by, for example, allowing children in court hearings/sessions. The 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district noted, “we have one family who, by necessity, needs to bring a small infant [the daughter of an ACE Court participant] to court. Some members of the Work Team and even other ACE Court families...help that family when needed during court...and her case plan revolves around how she can juggle both the child and her school work. Her GAL and CASA have been amazing in finding creative ways to do this. As of this writing, she is one of their “rock stars” with her amazing turnaround and is on pace to graduate the program in early 2016.”
- **Emergent issues:** In the 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district, participants and family members are given the opportunity to rate the school week/month at each court review. This allows them, as well as their team, to identify what, if any, resources are needed to address challenges that may have arisen after a case manager meeting or since the last court hearing.

## DESIGNING CASE MANAGEMENT

Because the causes of truancy are varied, but often relate to individual, family, and community factors, case management is an important part of successful truancy programs. The involvement of a case manager, who provides a point of contact and an important resource for youth and their families, is one distinction between truancy PSCs and traditional means of addressing truancy. As the 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district notes, “[t]his program would not be seeing the success we are without an effective case manager. The causes of truancy are so varied by student that there must be someone who can work closely enough with the student and family to determine what those issues are and help adequately address them. The case manager also provide[s] an additional level of accountability we had been missing.”

## Case Management Models



### 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district

*In September 2015, STEP Court had a student graduate from the program with 90% improvement in attendance, successful completion in mental health treatment, over 4 months of sobriety, passing grades, and a job. At the start of the program, the student was not attending school at all and he was facing a third delinquency charge when he decided he needed to make a change or he was going to end up in detention. The student committed to the STEP Court program and successfully completed all Court requirements.*

There is no single “best” model for case management of truant youth. Program participants are each unique, requiring unique approaches. However, there is a trend towards counseling through strengths-based strategies, such as positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS), motivational interviewing, solution-focused therapy (SFT), and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). This is borne out in how the districts’ approach case management: although they noted that they do not use any one specific model, the models they employ include these forms of counseling. The 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district commented that “reinforcing desired behavior worked well, particularly when those behaviors were well-defined.”

Despite not relying on any one model, the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district said their model reflects adult drug court models. That is, evidence-based treatment, phase progression, required sobriety and attendance for a significant period of time, and the use of best practices. As the program was implemented, however, the original requirements of the program were seen as too strict, “and nearly impossible for participants to succeed”, so the district changed their graduation and phase progression requirements accordingly in the hope that “participants will not feel too overwhelmed when they begin the program and feel like they have a reasonable chance of success.” Similarly, the 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district noted that the amount of case management varies during different phases of their program, a change that was made as the program was implemented. One important consideration, however, is ensuring youth clearly understand the program and their movement through the phases. The 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district shifted to a point system after their first year, in which students are awarded points that allow them to advance through program phases.

## Collaboration

Communication and collaboration – the need for all involved parties to be apprised of the program and participant progress, thereby ensuring everyone is moving toward the same goal – are important aspects of effective case management. The 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district recognizes the importance of having schools on board and able to assist in providing support, but perhaps in a different manner than they had been. In order to facilitate communication, the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district has asked team members to submit summaries of participant interaction each week. This ensures team members are kept up to date on all program participants, allowing for the creation of better “game plans” for participants when they appear in court.

In addition to internal teams, the sites work with a number of external systems and agencies, including community organizations and associations (e.g., the Girl Scouts, libraries, and community centers) and state-based systems such as the Department of Human Services. SB 94, a statewide grant program designed to provide alternatives to detention, was mentioned in particular. The program provides a range of detention alternatives through subcontracts with community providers and independent contractors, including, but not limited to:

- Case management,
- Community supervision,
- Multi-systemic therapy,
- Wraparound facilitation,
- Client-family assistance, and
- Mental health assessments and treatment.

**The ACE Court Team is composed of the Magistrate, a part-time court coordinator, the court judicial assistant, the student engagement advocate from APS, an attorney from the school, a school liaison from the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), the CASA coordinator and volunteers, the school resource officer from the Aurora Police Department, the GAL attorney, and a representative from Aurora Mental Health.**

**~ 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district**

## DEVELOPING INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS

The primary goal of TPSCs is to improve educational outcomes and graduation rates, not punish youth, so, as the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district puts it “detention is no longer an option as a sanction and will not be considered.” The TPSCs move toward that goal by placing an emphasis on incentives and sanctions designed to encourage positive behavior. To formulate effective incentives and sanctions, pilot sites pulled from existing programs, models, and research, and solicited feedback from program participants, staff members, steering committees,

**“All students have talked about the support they have received in our program from all team members which has helped them in deciding to make a change in their lives.”**

**~1<sup>st</sup> judicial district**

work groups, and community partners. Responses are based on behavior modification models and decisions regarding incentives or sanctions are often made by the team as a whole. In the 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district, “the STEP Court Team determines if the response requires a punitive or therapeutic response to the behavior.”

### Incentives

All three sites noted an emphasis on incentives, rather than sanctions, and noted that “participants seem to understand that hard work and accomplishing their goal(s) is also a great reward.” The most effective incentives were recognition in the form of applause in the court and praise from their treatment team, as well as tangible rewards, such as gift cards, the ability to play a game, or something specific tailored to a student’s interests (e.g. a visit to a music studio). The 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district has implemented a “fishbowl” system where students draw tokens from a fishbowl. “Each colored token represents a certain incentive, either a gift card (usually 5-10 dollars in value), a standing ovation from the team, or the chance to draw from a gift basket (made up of candy, small toys, DVDs, journals, books, etc.)”

## Sanctions

Although the emphasis is on reinforcing positive behavior, not punishing negative behavior, the districts also impose a variety of sanctions, which range from essay writing, loss of electronics, early curfew, and required night reports, to losing points, restarting a phase, increased court appearances, and, as a last resort, in the 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district, detention. Each administered sanction is a team decision, and is tailored towards the individual participant. The sanctions that have the greatest behavioral impact are not those that relate to losing privileges (e.g., the loss of electronics), but rather those that are related to external perception and progression through the phases. For example, participants do not want to disappoint the judge when required to appear in court more often. Similarly, when points are subtracted for undesired behavior, participants exhibit interest and effort to regain the lost points.

January 2014 marked the beginning of the legalization of recreational marijuana use for people 21 and above in Colorado. Pilot sites were not significantly impacted by the new law, as participants of the Truancy PSCs are not yet 21 and are strictly prohibited from marijuana (and other substance) use. Instead, sites address substance use as part of case management and may turn to urine analysis if there is suspected drug use. In the 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district, the STEP Court began to address issues of marijuana by using SB215 money to help fund treatment, pro-social activities, and sobriety monitoring.

## EVALUATING AND SUSTAINING

Although a full-blown evaluation of Colorado's TPSC pilot sites would be premature at this time, integrating evaluation as part of design and implementation rather than treating it as an afterthought can lead to more actionable evaluation results. With this in mind, the pilot sites collect and track information on the programs and their participants. While they have had to adapt along the way, and still face barriers to data collection, particularly with long-term data, the sites have taken the first steps toward developing an evaluation of program effectiveness that will hopefully allow them to sustain these programs.

### Baseline and On-going Data Collection

Collecting data beyond truancy and academic performance information is a defining trait of TPSCs because it is one way to address contextual factors and engage youth in generating solutions that work for their circumstances by helping paint a more complete picture of the unique challenges faced by participants, as well as their individual strengths and resilience factors. In order to determine whether participants are making progress towards their goals, the pilot sites record baseline data and engage in ongoing data collection. Data collected includes:

- Truancy rates in the district for youth before admission and as they move through the program;
- Demographic and contact information;
- Behavioral incidents/discipline referrals;
- Academic performance (e.g. GPA);
- Treatment progress and engagement;
- Sanctions imposed;
- Out-of-school suspensions; and
- Family needs.

In addition, data is collected around a number of indicators of success for students participating in the program, including attendance, academic achievement, and behavioral issues in school. Data is also collected from various assessments (e.g. MAYSI-2, CRAFFT, NCTSN Trauma Screen, School Refusal Assessment Scale, and the Truancy/Attendance Assessment) youth undergo upon admission to the program.

One challenge for sites is how to track their data. TPSC pilot programs began by tracking their baseline data via excel spreadsheets. However, the pilots acknowledge the limitations of this data-tracking method, and some have purchased data sharing software due to the limits excel presents. Another issue is the lack of common definitions, for example, how “absence” is defined in traditional (brick and mortar) schools versus online schools.

### Long-term Data Collection

It is too early in the process for the pilots to have long-term data about participant achievement beyond program graduation. However, preliminary data is promising, and the pilot sites are hopeful the early successes they have seen will persist after participants graduate from the program. Successful long-term data collection requires both:

- A continued relationship between judicial districts and schools, necessitating buy-in from schools who will need to share the data, and
- The resolution of confidentiality/privacy concerns that restrict the release of information regarding a student’s educational record without written permission.

### Shared Metrics

While the three sites have come together to share their progress and lessons learned throughout the pilot phase, the sites have pointed to the challenge of a lack of shared metrics across the sites. At the same time, the sites acknowledge the fact that programs are organized differently across sites to fit participant needs, as well as differences between mandatory and voluntary programs, both of which make comparisons across sites difficult. The sites did acknowledge that the following information, if collected consistently across the districts and shared with the above caveats in mind, would be helpful:



## 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district

*[A] defensive and apprehensive teenage female clearly communicated to the case manager she did not want to be involved with the program. She had been expelled from the school district and was referred to a behavioral school. The behavioral school began working with the M.A.P Program and this young female. Her attitude began to change and she started showing academic improvement. She eventually graduated from the program. On graduation day, this student approached the case manager and apologized for her behavior and attitude. In addition, she asked to take a photograph with the case manager. This once defensive and apprehensive student is now taking a college course for nursing.*



- Baseline student attendance for 90 days before entering the program, during the first and second 90 calendar days while in the program, and after graduation from the program;
- The length of time participants spend in the program;
- The rate of successful program completion;
- Which sanctions/incentives work best;
- How districts communicate with team members,
- If any new truancy filings arise and whether higher involvement of community partners such as CASAs, GALs, and the Department of Human Services affects this; and
- How to best address students' behavioral issues.

**“The data that is probably most relevant to tracking success/progress would be a comparative chart of number of absences a student has prior to entering a specialty court and the number of absences he/she has while in the program. That data could then be compared against a control group of students that are in a traditional truancy program. This would be a good indicator of what successes we see in the specialty court and what changes would need to be made.”**

**~18<sup>th</sup> judicial district**

## **Sustaining the Program**

Program sustainability is, of course, part of what the pilot sites work towards. Jefferson County’s STEP program has created a sustainability committee to explore possible funding sources. The committee also meets monthly to discuss cost reduction to other programs in the county, create a business plan, explore communication avenues to get information out to stakeholders and the general public, and compile data on program success. Above all, however, program success is the key indicator of sustainability. As they have progressed through program design, implementation, and adaptation, the pilot sites have learned a lot along the way about what it takes to run a TPSC.

**The judicial districts view confidentiality as paramount and address it in a variety of ways. The 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district, for example, requires all members to sign an Oath of Confidentiality prior to participation on the team, and only necessary information required to make an informed decision is shared with team members. The 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district asks every student to sign a release of information to enable to courts and the Jefferson County Juvenile Assessment Center to communicate with all providers working with the student and their family. Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district’s ACE Court Work Group cannot share any information outside of ACE court. External partners are either covered by the release of information signed by participants, or in the case of the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district, information sharing is limited to criminal justice planners in Arapahoe County and all identifying information (name, race, gender, date of birth, case number) is scrubbed.**

## LESSONS LEARNED

In the first year of the pilot program, sites noted an increased focus on positive reinforcement of desired behaviors rather than a heavy use of sanctions, as well as an increased focus on case management with participants. For example, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district steering committees removed detention as a sanction for their TPSCs. The 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district, which admits all truant youth, decreased the use of detention from 15% to 7% (3 students), from the preceding year. Sites also identified challenges to be addressed either internally or, potentially, through statute.

### WHAT IS WORKING?

Overall, the judicial sites identified a number of aspects of the TPSCs that work well, such as the use of clearly defined expectations, a focus on building relationships with youth, parents/guardians, schools, and community partners, and improved communication and feedback between all parties involved.

The sites found the establishment of clearly defined, achievable expectations and behaviors for everyone involved helped with participation and follow-through in the program while allowing for flexibility. This is particularly important with regard to how participants are able to advance through the program. All sites noted the need for flexibility with program timelines and expectations to fit the reality of the process. For example, the 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district changed the amount of case management provided to each student on different STEP's of the program, while the 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district implemented a points program to ensure clarity

**“A crucial piece of the program that we did not have during previous years was a Case Manager to work closely with each student and family. This program would not be seeing the success we are without an effective case manager. The causes of truancy are so varied by student that there must be someone who can work closely enough with the student and family to determine what those issues are and help adequately address them. The case manager also provided an additional level of accountability we had been missing.”**

surrounding participant progress.

Building relationships

with schools and community partners was also credited as an important part of TPSC success. The 16<sup>th</sup> judicial district stated, “collaboration is one crucial piece of the puzzle that has to occur. Everyone needs to be actively involved and moving toward the same goal.” As previously discussed, to maintain the program sites had to garner buy-in and effectively communicate the benefits of the TPSC to school leadership and stakeholders. The relationships continue past the buy-in phase, in that many of these schools and community partners refer or provide additional services to youth as needed, forming a “warm hand off” between districts and partners. At the same time these relationships combine “connectedness” and rapport-building with accountability to help engage students in school.

Building relationships with youth and parents/guardians through case management and communication has been a critical part of making

**Since the original handbook was based off a drug court model, the original requirements of ACE Court were seen as too strict and nearly impossible for the participants to succeed. While keeping the basic tenets of the original model (i.e. evidence based, incentives/sanctions/motivational interviewing), we tweaked the requirements to allow for greater success. The hope is that the participants will not be overwhelmed when they begin the program and feel like they have a reasonable chance at success.**

**~ 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district**

TPSCs effective. Case management and communication engages parents and youth. For example, clear and easily-understandable participant handbooks provide program expectations to youth and parents. Incorporating case management and judicial review into the process helps the court and case managers assess what is happening in the lives of the students and their families in order to determine what issues are hindering progress. Personal relationship building with case managers and other participants also provides added accountability, modeling, and positive reinforcement.

Sites also identified improved communication and feedback between all parties involved as a crucial element for success. Continued communication allows all parties to be on the same page regarding the needs of participants, while a feedback loop allows for programmatic improvements. The 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district found that improved communication also provides for more buy-in from community collaborators, because they are given a voice and are shown their efforts are appreciated. They “have seen great success in these communication efforts and always feel energized when [they] leave these meetings.” Suggestions come in the form of site visits and face-to-face meetings with key collaborators. The sites also encourage participants and their families to advocate for themselves, particularly if they feel districts are creating barriers that may inhibit their success. Sites want to give students and parents/guardians the confidence to find tools to help them succeed not only while in a TPSC program, but after as well.

**“The best indicator of our success is the communication among the Work Team. Since July, we have amped up our communication and each team member is expected to submit a brief synopsis of any interaction(s) with our participants every Friday. This keeps everyone up to date re: all participants and it allows us to create better “game plans” for the participants when they appear in court. The team is more engaged and informed, and this appears to be paying dividends as our participants are doing well.”**

**~18<sup>th</sup> judicial district**

## WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

All TPSC sites identified structural challenges to be addressed as they move forward with this work, including developing common metrics and measuring outcomes, as well as defining meaningful incentives and reinforcements that tie in with the student’s action plan. Developing metrics and measuring outcomes has been a challenge for the sites because, for example, they have to address differences in school district definitions of truancy. This is especially challenging for online schools, where truancy can be difficult to define and is defined differently by different schools. Similarly, a number of schools define absence differently, making data comparisons difficult.

The sites found the need to tie reinforcements to the case plan in some way. For example, a provided reinforcement may be something to encourage a pro-social activity or family activity that may have not otherwise taken place. It will, however, have to be meaningful for the recipient to be of any benefit and should be tied to the goals the student needs to accomplish. Another related issue is moving away from punitive measures and toward incentives and creative accountability.

Other challenges the sites identified included:

- Working within the context of previous efforts that attempted to address attendance without consideration of root causes (e.g., mental health, lack of parental support, substance use, etc.);
- Competing with other school district priorities (e.g. student counts); and
- Recruiting youth into the program.



In addition, the sites suggested possible legislative changes to Titles 19 and 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) such as:

- Including incentives for students to participate in a truancy court pilot, such as deferred adjudication;
- Providing for protective orders allowing students and families to safely make statements (such as in therapy) without fear of incrimination;
- Providing clear authority for CASAs to participate in truancy cases<sup>xi</sup>;
- Defining and allowing information sharing;
- Addressing educational neglect; and
- Funding services for students and families involved in truancy court.



## 18<sup>th</sup> judicial district

We had one student whose attendance rate and GPA mirrored one another. Zero. This student had little if any motivation and incentive to attend school. Upon entry into ACE Court, this student improved for a while, but this improvement was temporary, despite all team efforts, especially those of this student's CASA. After some encouragement, this student informed the team that the traditional school model was not working. This student wanted to transition to an online school. This was met with some trepidation from the team, as other ideas intended to encourage the student had fallen flat, so why would this be any different? The team made a deal with this student: if the student could complete 10 days of evening reporting, the team would recommend a transfer to the online school. The student responded and he completed Evening Reporting, with positive marks. The student then enrolled in the online school, and is doing wonderful! There have been zero major attendance reports (as compared to when this student was in a traditional setting). The student is on track to phase up in early December and is on track to now graduate in the spring!

## CONCLUSION

The three TPSCs' case studies presented guidance to judicial districts interested in the use or exploration of a TPSC by highlighting lessons learned and both similarities and differences of the three pilot sites. Key findings for sites considering to implement a TPSC are as follows: understanding the importance of modifying a program to fit a specific population and judicial district, allowing flexibility for program changes and modifications, and being open to sharing information and methods with other TPSCs. Sites have reflected and drawn on data collected thus far in the process to modify their programs to best serve the needs of their particular populations. The sites continue to collaborate with each other through constant communication and bi-monthly meetings, where they report to the LRHN Committee. A three-year funding cycle has allowed TPSC pilot sites time to plan and implement programs to meet their specific needs. Overall, the sites noted that the first year was mostly spent on planning and initial implementation, while the second year has involved implementing changes and improvements to their program based on what they learned in the first year. All sites are beginning to take a retrospective look at their data to measure outcomes. While sites require more time to clearly define outcomes, they have shared many success stories that illustrate the difference TPSCs are making in the lives of students and families and how they are helping to decrease truancy.

**This project was supported by Award number 2013-MU-FX-0047 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs through the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety.**

**The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice nor the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety.**

---

<sup>i</sup> Galloway, D. (1982). A study of persistent absentees and their families. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 52, 317-330.

<sup>ii</sup> West, MO, Prinz, RJ. (1987). Parental alcoholism and childhood psychopathology. *Psychological Bulletin*, 102(2), 204-218.

<sup>iii</sup> Famular, O.R., Kinscherff, R., Fenton, T., & Boldur, S.M. (1990). Child maltreatment histories among runaway and delinquent children. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 29, 713-718.

<sup>iv</sup> Garry, Eileen (1996). Truancy: First Step to a Lifetime of Problems. *OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

<sup>v</sup> Holman, B. and Ziedenberg, J. (November 2006). *The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*, Justice Policy Institute.

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.juvjustice.org/sos>.

<sup>vii</sup> A separate case study highlighting the truancy prevention demonstration pilot site has also been prepared.

<sup>viii</sup> Colo. Rev. Stat § 22-33-108 (1/18/16).

<sup>ix</sup> Press release: "Three Colorado judicial districts to implement problem solving court model for truancy dockets", released April 1, 2014. [https://www.courts.state.co.us/Media/Press\\_Docs/Truancy%20Grants%20PR%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.courts.state.co.us/Media/Press_Docs/Truancy%20Grants%20PR%20FINAL.pdf)

<sup>x</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xi</sup> This was addressed in SB 15-004 which now allows CASA volunteers to advocate for the best interests of a child in a truancy proceeding pursuant to the "School Attendance Law of 1963", Part 1 of Article 33 of Title 22, C.R.S.

January 2016

# Preventing Truancy in Colorado: A Case Study



Prepared by Spark Policy Institute on behalf of the  
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council



**COLORADO**  
Division of Criminal Justice  
Department of Public Safety

**Contents**

- ..... 1
- Introduction..... 3**
- DEFINING COMMUNITY-IN-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS ..... 4
- WHAT DOES A TRUANCY FOCUSED CISP LOOK LIKE? ..... 4
- Community-in-Schools Program Phases ..... 5
- Program Design ..... 5**
- PILOT SITE OVERVIEW: RADICAL POSSIBILITIES CISP PROGRAM ..... 6
- CREATING TEAMS..... 7
- Training and ongoing learning..... 8
- SETTING A DIRECTION ..... 9
- BUILDING BUY-IN AND RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS ..... 11
- DESIGNING THE PROGRAM ..... 12
- DESIGNING CASE MANAGEMENT..... 13
- Case Management Models ..... 13
- Collaboration ..... 13
- DEVELOPING INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS ..... 15
- EVALUATING AND SUSTAINING ..... 15
- Baseline and On-going Data Collection ..... 15
- Confidentiality ..... 16
- Sustaining the Program ..... 16
- Lessons Learned..... 17**
- WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING? ..... 17
- WHAT IS WORKING? ..... 18
- Conclusion ..... 19**

## INTRODUCTION

All 50 states have compulsory attendance laws – that is, laws that require students within a set age range to attend school. In Colorado, students are required to attend school between the ages of 6 and 17. Broadly, truancy is defined by a set number of unexcused absences from school (four per month or ten in a year in Colorado). Truancy is a serious issue, and truants are often found to be living in “multiple disadvantaged” circumstances<sup>i</sup>, to have parents suffering from alcoholism<sup>ii</sup>, and to have a family history of abuse<sup>iii</sup>, maltreatment, or neglect.<sup>iv</sup> Moreover, studies have shown that once young people are detained, even when controlling for their prior offenses, they are more likely than non-detained youth to end up deeper in the system.<sup>v</sup>

The Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Council’s Low Risk/High Need (LRHN) Committee was established in 2013. The Committee strives to address the needs of juveniles who may not have criminogenic tendencies, but may have undiagnosed, unmet, or underserved needs in areas such as trauma, mental health, or substance use, factors which may contribute to their eventual entrance into the juvenile justice system. Specifically, the JJDP Council has focused on truancy and the use of detention for truants in Colorado who violate a court order (204 youths in fiscal year (FY) 2014).

For these reasons, the JJDP Council through the LRHN Committee funded four truancy demonstration pilots (one focused on prevention and three problem-solving courts (PSCs) based on HB 13-1021 and the Coalition for Juvenile Justice’s *Safety, Opportunity & Success: Standards of Care for Non-Delinquent Youth*<sup>vi</sup>). The LRHN committee serves as an advisory group and learning collaborative for all four pilot sites. The purpose of the truancy demonstration pilot sites is to learn and document:

- The causal factors of truancy;
- Effective prevention approaches to keep youth in school, on track academically and socially, while increasing school and student engagement; and
- Systems changes needed to successfully address truancy.

The Radical Possibilities Community-in-Schools-Partnership (CISP) Program, a community-based program of La Plata Youth Services (LPYS) and the La Plata County SMART (Student Multidisciplinary Assessment Review Team) collaborative, is the sole prevention pilot site and the focus of this case study. Implementation of the Radical Possibilities program began in May 2014, supported through Title II,

Colorado has long been a pioneer in the area of truancy reform, creating early intervention programs since the late 90s. In 2006, Denver Public Schools collaborated closely with the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) to create a framework for intervention. Statewide, the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Program (EARSS) was created in 1997, which provided support to at-risk students and, in 2009, appropriations were increased with the mandate that at least 50% of the increased appropriation be dedicated to reducing “the number of truancy cases requiring court involvement.” Further, the Colorado Legislature has continually revised Colorado’s current compulsory attendance law (the School Attendance Law of 1963) to move away from punitive measures to reduce truancy. The most recent revisions are House Bill (HB) 13-1021<sup>1</sup>, which requires school districts to explore interventions to reduce court involvement, and Senate Bill (SB) 15-184, requiring the creation of a community stakeholder group to design a policy to address truancy.



Formula Grant Funds. The prevention pilot serves youth who are referred to LPYS either through truancy or diversion, students identified by the schools as experiencing significant barriers to school attendance, and students and families who self-identify and request additional support.

**SMART is a multi-agency collaborative providing community-based, wrap-around care to La Plata County youth and families who experience significant barriers to school attendance.**

The following case study presents an overview of CISPs and the importance of the community in addressing truancy, documents the process and experiences of the Radical Possibilities prevention pilot, highlights lessons learned, and offers guidance to other sites interested in the use or exploration of a CISP.

## DEFINING COMMUNITY-IN-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS (CISP)



*Of the first 25 students served through Radical Possibilities at our first pilot school in its first year: 60% improved attendance; 40% improved their GPA; 67% reduced their number of "F" grades; and 70% improved their post-test score on the School Engagement Index.*

Often referred to as a collaboration, a CISP program formally blends resources from at least one school with resources in a given neighborhood or larger community.<sup>vii</sup> The intent is to sustain cultivated partnerships over time. Comprehensive partnerships represent a promising direction for generating essential interventions to address barriers to learning, enhance healthy development, and strengthen families and communities.<sup>viii</sup> These programs bring community resources inside public schools, where they are accessible, coordinated, and accountable, surrounding students with a community of support and empowering them to stay in school.<sup>ix</sup> In essence, a CISP program creates the environment for healthy relationships to form between the students, community, and school, giving students a sense of belonging to a caring community.<sup>x</sup>

## WHAT DOES A TRUANCY-FOCUSED CISP LOOK LIKE?

The Radical Possibilities CISP program was adopted to address truancy based on the principle that truancy is a symptom with a host of contributing factors occurring.<sup>xi</sup> The program was created as a community-based effort, engaging already-existing organizations to address gaps and inequalities in services. Radical Possibilities builds on the community's support for youth and brings human resources into schools, reducing barriers to services, delivering services and opportunities to students with the greatest need, pooling resources, and recognizing and reducing gaps through creative problem solving. CISP programs vary based on the need to adapt to the needs of a specific school and community; however, in general CISP truancy programs seek to mitigate barriers to school attendance by supporting positive change at three levels: student/family, school, and community.

Radical Possibilities has employed the following supports, based on the needs and conditions that exist in La Plata County:

- **Student/ Family:** Early identification of students/families in need of support by engaging students who are:
  - Identified throughout the year as experiencing significant barriers in home, community, or school that indicate the need for additional support and services ("at-risk students");
  - Referred either through truancy or diversion; and

- Who self-identify and request additional support.
- **School:** Improve and capitalize on positive school climates by:
  - Addressing barriers to school attendance in collaboration with community partners;
  - Identifying and committing to further development of positive school climate;
  - Implementing positive, strengths-based intervention models;
  - Integrating a philosophy of providing supports for students who are facing significant adverse barriers to school attendance; and
  - Engaging families in the process.
- **Community:** Coordinate delivery of community resources in a school setting through:
  - Mentorships and other positive relationships with caring adults;
  - Family outreach;
  - Mental health services;
  - Case management and advocacy;
  - Restorative justice (RJ); and
  - Other programs designed to meet the unique needs of each school community.

### Truancy CISP Program Phases

The below table reflects the phases of CISP program design. Although the program is divided into phases, students in Radical Possibilities do not move through a series of specified programmatic phases, participating, instead, in a variety of programming based on their need.

Phase	Description of Work	Time Frame
Phase One	Planning: Identify needs and assets, set goals, implement planning and student staffing meetings.	First school semester
Phase Two	Implementation: Deliver identified services to students, implement school-wide programming, and engage in process of feedback and improvement.	Second school semester and subsequent months
Phase Three	Evaluation: data analysis, qualitative evaluation, and future planning.	Summer breaks

## PROGRAM DESIGN

As schools and judicial districts began to develop plans in response to HB 13-1021, they resoundingly felt that a new approach to address truancy was needed. For the prevention pilot, the intention was not to reinvent the wheel, but rather to bolster an already-promising practice. Building on a strong foundation of collaborative intervention and case management, La Plata County SMART set out to design its intervention strategy to respond to the specific needs and contributing factors of chronically truant elementary and middle school-aged youth, their families, and their schools.

The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice awarded federal Title II funds to the prevention pilot site (LPYS) on a graduated basis; \$48,322 the first year, \$45,000 the second, and \$35,000 the third year. With the support

of these funds, SMART created the Radical Possibilities CISP Program. This section of the report provides an overview of the process to create and implement Radical Possibilities, as well as steps the prevention pilot site is taking to evaluate the program.

**HB13-1021, signed into law in August 2013, requires school districts to explore best practices and research-based interventions to reduce court involvement and, specifically, the use of detention. In furtherance of this requirement, the law focuses on four main strategies:**

- **Creating an intervention plan, jointly completed by students, parents, and the school, with explicit encouragement to work with local service providers/community groups;**
- **Establishing a district attendance officer who consults with parents and youth to investigate the causes of non-attendance; and**
- **Placing other procedural requirements on the school district to demonstrate interventions before resorting to the law; and**
- **Providing written notice to parents and the student that court proceedings will be initiated for failure to comply (which may be combined with a summons to appear in court).**

## **PILOT SITE OVERVIEW: RADICAL POSSIBILITIES CISP PROGRAM**

**Program Description** – The Radical Possibilities CISP Program provides a community-based, collaborative early intervention/prevention response to students facing significant, adverse barriers to school attendance.

**Population Served** – Radical Possibilities serves elementary and middle school students and their families in La Plata County, CO.

**Participants** - In the 2014-2015 school year, there were 61 students formally in the program and 44 additional served through auxiliary programs. The following year, 2015-2016, LPYS anticipated 102 students would formally take part in the CISP program, with 60 additional served through auxiliary programs. To date, three youth have ended participation in the program and 57 youth have graduated.

**Pilot Site Description** - - La Plata County is a tri-ethnic, rural community with a growing county seat (Durango), which has a concentration of people living in mid-to-high socio-economic households. The community faces many challenges common to rural communities, with a limited scope of social services resources, a wide range of socio-economic households, and noteworthy gaps in service, especially for youth. Both progressive and traditional rural values are prevalent in La Plata, with organizations often acting in silos, reflecting a value of “rugged individualism.” Latino and Native American families tend to be marginalized, with people of color typically working in lower income jobs, and students of color disproportionately representing youth considered at risk of not finishing school. For example, graduation rates for Latino and Native American students in La Plata County average between 60% and 70%, while White students in the same schools average a more than 90% graduation rate.



## The Face of Truancy in La Plata County

Since September 2013, more than 85 youth have been served by LPYS', SMART program for truancy issues once school efforts have proven unsuccessful. Initial data indicates 51% are youth of color, 24% are living with families experiencing homelessness, 40% have run away from home, 67% have significant mental health needs, 60% are struggling with substance use, 31% are youth with disabilities, 73% have experienced complex trauma, 47% are in families with past child welfare involvement, 20% are living with a non-parent guardian, and 69% are living in low-income households. Furthermore, upon referral, 84% percent of these youth are not receiving direct services from any community human services agency. Within the county, approximately 250 students annually meet the criteria for habitual truancy.

## CREATING TEAMS

Radical Possibilities is coordinated by the Program Director, but given the collaborative nature of the partnership, each organization involved retains decision-making authority including resource allocation for their organization. Key personnel within the schools are identified in partnership with school leadership and include, at minimum, a:

- School principal or assistant principal;
- Check and Connect mentor;
- School counselor; and
- School social worker.

Schools are asked to support the participation and contributions of those individuals throughout the school year. Participation from LPYS includes the Radical Possibilities Program Director, a school-designated case manager/youth advocate, the RJ coordinator, and the clinical supervisor. Participation of other agencies and their leadership is defined by the needs of individual schools.

Duties of team members and key personnel are multi-faceted and include many moving parts. Radical Possibilities team member duties include:

- **Project Coordination:** The Radical Possibilities Program Director provides leadership and project coordination throughout the school year. These duties include assuring program goals are met in partnership with the school principal and in accordance with the governing grant requirements; logistical coordination, including setting agendas and documenting meetings; supporting sustainability; fundraising and publicity efforts; facilitating collaboration between partners regarding contracts, cost-sharing, resource allocation, scheduling, etc.; facilitating compliance with district and state truancy policies; educating key stakeholders; facilitating identification and development of additional resources necessary to implement the partnership; coordinating and organizing data in order to measure outcomes; and other efforts as necessary to support the successful implementation of the partnership and delivery of services to students.

### School Check and Connect:

**Check & Connect is a comprehensive student engagement intervention developed at the University of Minnesota in partnership with the Minneapolis School District, starting back in 1990. This is an evidence-based dropout prevention program that uses trained mentors to engage marginalized students in grades K-12 and keep them on track to graduate.**

Check & Connect. (2016).  
attendanceworks.org

- **In-school case management:** LPYS provides a Youth Advocate specifically designated to the school who will work closely with the Check and Connect mentor, and other school and community service providers to: assist in early identification of youth in need of services; build rapport with students prior to referral to LPYS; provide in-school case management to students who are referred to LPYS (out-of-school case management is also available if it is more fitting); establish relationships with other service providers in order to facilitate successful collaboration; provide risk/strength assessments to identified students; support the efforts of the Program Director.
- **Clinical supervision:** All LPYS advocates are provided with clinical supervision by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, with a concentrated focus on youth with complex needs.
- **Restorative justice coordination:** LPYS provides a RJ coordinator to facilitate the implementation and coordination of an in-school restorative justice and peer mediation program.
- **In-school mentorship:** The Check and Connect program serves as the primary hub for service delivery, and support, and implements adaptations to the Check and Connect model as necessary to support the CISP in successfully meeting its goals and delivering services to students.

**Restorative Justice and Truancy: restorative justice offers students a way to become involved in their own re-integration. They have the possibility to explain what their concerns are regarding school attendance and what support they need to help them return to school. Students, along with their parents and school officials then agree on specific steps to improve future attendance.**

Jung, B. (2011). Reducing truancy and improving attendance using restorative justice conferencing, 2-4.

## **Training and ongoing learning**

From the start, the prevention pilot site understood the importance of rigorous training and continual learning for those involved in Radical Possibilities. To meet this need, the site leveraged the existing skills and knowledge of those working with low-risk/high-need youth and multi-cultural populations, and offered learning opportunities via trainings and conferences. Further, they harness the expertise of individuals who are current on best practices and evidence-based programs. Learning opportunities conducted or attended by Radical Possibilities staff and community partners include:

- Truancy research (including local qualitative study);
- Understanding of underlying factors to truancy and problem solving by addressing the three areas of individual/family, school, and community;
- Trauma-informed care;
- Cultural competence;
- School climate programming based on what each school decides to implement;
- Restorative practices/justice; and
- Community-based, collaborative skills and practices.



*More than 30 administrators, counselors, and other student services staff from Radical Possibilities schools and the district recently attended a two-day restorative practices training, illustrating the commitment of these schools and the district to creating a positive school climate.*

## **SETTING A DIRECTION**

While each school and neighborhood present unique needs, the Radical Possibilities model is based on providing wrap-around interventions in response to issues facing chronically absent, habitually truant, and at-risk students and their families. Program goals and measures of success were developed in partnership with SMART, LPYS, and schools, goals center on the following:

- Increasing students' personal resilience and protective factors;
- Increasing school engagement;
- Increasing academic success; and
- Reducing behavioral incidents.

Radical Possibilities programming concentrates on improving the school climate and coordinated community service delivery in the school setting, including mentorship, family outreach, mental health, case management, RJ, tutoring, and transportation. The program, which has a dual focus on both short-and long-term objectives, has developed four specific strategies, providing a framework for programmatic goals.

**Strategy #1: Identify and implement in-school, community resources designed to support students who have been identified as habitually truant or at-risk of habitual truancy.**

Mentorship ■ Case management and advocacy ■ Comprehensive risk/strength assessments  
Mental health ■ Restorative justice ■ Others specific to school

*Benefit: Effectively address significant, adverse barriers to individual student attendance so students are more likely to engage positively in their school community and learning opportunities.*

**Strategy #2: Develop an effective framework for community-school partnership specific to elementary and middle schools.**

Positive school climate ■ School culture that supports delivery of services and services designed to contribute to learning ■ Enhanced Check and Connect programming ■ Family engagement strategies  
Out-of-school problem solving ■ Additional pre- and post-surveys completed by students ■ Use of  
Check and Connect data to evaluate program's effectiveness ■ In-school case management  
Coordinated student services support team ■ In-school mental health services ■ Others specific to school

*Benefit: Establish a culture, climate, and delivery of services that remove barriers to community resource access, and make school both a desirable place to be and a source of support for youth.*

**Strategy #3: Identify and evaluate the systems changes needed in order to provide communities-in-schools individualized case management.**

Early identification and rapport-building ■ In-school case management ■ Coordinated delivery of  
service/reduction of duplication of services ■ Family engagement strategies ■ Use of a review process  
Continuity of care ■ Others specific to school

*Benefit: Ease service delivery, improve client engagement and program effectiveness for students, families, service providers, and schools.*

**Strategy #4: Develop an effective framework for elementary and middle schools to support their compliance with HB 13-1021.**

Review of HB 13-1021 and its requirements ■ Review of chronic absence and habitual truancy  
definitions ■ Review of school's internal attendance tracking ■ Review of district's requirements ■ Review  
of referral process for habitual truancy ■ Others specific to school

*Benefit: School and district compliance with HB 13-1021.*

## BUILDING BUY-IN AND RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

One of the early considerations when building a community-based program is how to build support and buy-in from all necessary parties. Buy-in for Radical Possibilities was built on the foundational support developed for the SMART collaborative. The founding partners of SMART spent significant time building relationships, gathering information about needs, and conducting assessments with key stakeholders to develop buy-in for the collaborative.

Once the SMART collaborative was formed, it became apparent that early intervention and prevention efforts would be the most effective at reducing and ultimately preventing truancy. While the collaborative maintained its focus on direct intervention with high school age youth, they expanded efforts to build in early intervention. As a result, the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) funded a proposal to pilot the Radical Possibilities program. The success of the prevention pilot is, in part, evidenced by the large number of partners involved, which include:

- **SMART collaborative** – vision, personnel, problem solving for community-wide barriers
- **La Plata Youth Services (LPYS)** – vision, planning, implementation, personnel, project coordination, fundraising, youth advocate/case management, restorative justice coordinator, clinical supervision
- **Durango School District 9R** – planning, funding
- **Participating schools** – planning, implementation, resource allocation, identification of and access to students
- **Axis Health System and private mental health providers** – in-school mental health services
- **Other agencies** – in-school services as identified through individual school’s planning process
- **Other grantors** – planning, funding
- **Clients** – feedback, client voice, qualitative and quantitative measures of effectiveness

Radical Possibilities has placed a significant focus on recruitment and outreach and is able to recruit students based on a well-established relationship with schools. Students are identified through school processes – some already in place and others developed as part of Radical Possibilities planning with the school.



*One middle school student in Radical Possibilities faced some big challenges at the beginning of this year, struggling with mental health and substance use issues, ultimately leading to engagement with law enforcement and escalating violence at her school and home. Partners on the Radical Possibilities team – LPYS, Axis Health System, Title VII Indian Education, Check and Connect, and the school principal – all came together to support this young woman and her family. The principal refused to expel her, understanding she would have access to these services if she remained in school. With a strong support system, this young woman has agreed to inpatient treatment and leaves to Denver tomorrow.*

## DESIGNING THE PROGRAM

Radical Possibilities was designed with the individual student in mind and its model illustrates this intention. The program is tailored to youth and designed to meet both their needs and those of the school's broader population. Programming is concentrated on improving school climate and providing coordinated delivery of community resources in schools, including mentoring, family outreach, mental health, case management, RJ, tutoring, and transportation.

An individualized approach was also taken in developing the initial CISP program, which implemented a qualitative data collection process. The purpose of data collection was twofold:

- To hone in on the unique needs of the particular community and its students and families; and
- To ensure the client voice was included in the planning process.

A qualitative research project ran concurrent with the planning team's process. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with individuals ranging ages 10-40 who had attended school in the Four Corners area and experienced significant barriers to school attendance. Some interviewees completed their K-12 education and some even went on to pursue college and post-graduate degrees, while others left school and did not return. The research project was designed to identify barriers and possible interventions that were mindful of the unique community context. Results were shared with the school planning committees, ensuring the community voice was present in the planning process. Ultimately, this process served as the groundwork for the development and implementation of Radical Possibilities.

The Radical Possibilities pilot began in two schools – one elementary and one middle school – each with a planning committee composed of school administration, school-based student support service providers, the SMART Coordinator, and an LPYS Youth Advocate. Participating schools were initially identified by school district personnel as potential partners due to a variety of considerations, and then schools were invited to participate. Each school team moved through a planning process, identifying needs, strengths, and barriers specific to their students and families, school, and community. Additional school staff, such as teachers and nurses, were interviewed in order to provide for a diversity of perspectives. After the needs assessment, a strategic plan was developed for each school, to determine needed direct services, implement improvements to school climate, and deter community-wide barriers to SMART. School committees met twice monthly during the planning process and then moved to monthly meetings during implementation.

Radical Possibilities combines the best practices of therapeutic mentorship and peer groups to support youth facing significant, adverse barriers to school engagement. Students (from the University of Denver, School of Social Work; Prescott College Masters of Counseling Program; Fort Lewis College Sociology Program) serve as mentors for youth in the program for a year-long, 20 hour per week field placement, gaining credit hours towards completion of their degree. Mentors, among other things:

- Provide robust one-on-one mentoring for two to four students;
- Create empowering relationships with mentees;
- Help youth generalize skills learned in ongoing skills groups;
- Engage youth in extracurricular activities, and promote positive future orientation; and
- Co-facilitate skills groups.



## DESIGNING CASE MANAGEMENT

Causes of truancy are varied, but often relate to individual, family, and community factors, therefore, case management is an important part of programs designed to address truancy. Indeed, the involvement of a case manager, who provides a point of contact for youth and their families, is an important component of a CISP model. Case managers are able to work closely enough with the student and family to determine the varied issues contributing to a student's truancy and help adequately address them. The case manager also provides an additional level of accountability, ensuring a student and their family receive needed services from other agencies.

### Case Management Models

There is no single “best” model for case management of truant youth. Approaches are tailored to meet the unique requirements of program participants. However, there is a trend towards counseling through strengths-based strategies, such as positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS), motivational interviewing, solution-focused therapy (SFT), and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT).

Overall, the Radical Possibilities model uses the LPYS standards of case management. Additionally:

- Mentorship is implemented according to the standards of practice of Check and Connect; and
- Mental health is implemented according to the standards of practice of each provider.

A unique goal as it relates to Radical Possibilities' case management structure is the utilization and coordination of previously existing systems of care, which allows for more effective resource management in a rural community.

#### LPYS's standards of case management include:

- **Conducting a strengths-based assessment of all potential program participants;**
- **Developing an Advocacy Plan/Contract with youth accepted into the program using the community;**
- **Working directly and collaboratively with a caseload of individual students and their parents/guardians, direct service units, school administrators and staff, etc. to support inclusive strategies that support student needs;**
- **Attending teacher meetings, Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, and any other relevant meetings such as suspension re-entry meetings;**
- **Referring students and families to appropriate community services as the case manager develops community-agency links; and**
- **Assisting all staff as necessary in developing, facilitating, and supervising programming related to youth development, leadership, and community connectedness.**

### Collaboration

Communication and collaboration – the need for all involved parties to be apprised of the program and participant progress, thereby ensuring everyone is moving toward the same goal – are important aspects of effective case management. Radical Possibilities staff engage with key school personnel and community

stakeholders in a process of planning, implementation, and continuous quality improvement over the course of the school year as follows:

Meeting	Frequency	Purpose	Participants
Planning Meetings	Twice monthly for two months	Meet with key school personnel, service providers, and student/family representatives to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate on truancy and effective interventions</li> <li>• Define needs, assets, and barriers unique to the school</li> <li>• Establish methods for implementing elements of the partnership</li> <li>• Identify and plan programming goals unique to the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radical Possibilities program director</li> <li>• LPYS case manager</li> <li>• Axis school-based mental health provider</li> <li>• School principal or assistant principal</li> <li>• Check and Connect mentor</li> <li>• School counselor</li> <li>• School social worker</li> <li>• SPED instructor</li> <li>• General education classroom instructor</li> <li>• Student(s)</li> <li>• Family member(s)</li> <li>• Others as identified</li> </ul>
Partnership Meetings	Once planning meetings are complete, ongoing partnership meetings continue twice and then once monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out the goals of the program</li> <li>• Direct, monitor, and evaluate implementation of the program</li> <li>• Delegate tasks</li> <li>• Make improvements and changes to processes as necessary</li> <li>• Participants: smaller group selected from above-identified group</li> </ul>	Smaller group selected from above group

In addition to the partners and meetings listed in the table above, case managers work with Department of Human Services, Probation, Senate Bill 94, law enforcement, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, the Southern Ute Tribe, Manna Soup Kitchen, Housing Solutions, School to Work Alliance Project, Alternative Horizons, San Juan Basin Health, and Celebrating Healthy Communities, among others. Case managers make personal connections to these agencies and follow the referral as a collateral contact.





*Alternative Horizons, an agency focused on providing alternatives and assistance to victims/survivors of domestic violence, sought and obtained a grant to offer in-school group mental health services as a Radical Possibilities partner agency. Their youth therapist is currently running one mental health group in each Radical Possibilities school through the end of the school year.*

## DEVELOPING INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS

**Strengths-based Program: a specific method of working with and resolving problems experienced by the presenting person. It does not attempt to ignore the problems and difficulties. Rather, it attempts to identify the positive basis of the person's resources (or what may need to be added) and strengths that will lay the basis to address the challenges resulting from the problems.**

Hammond, W, PhD. (2010). Principles of a strengths based practice, 3-5. Resiliency Initiatives.

Incentives vary according to the individual and school. Individual incentives may be as broad as providing food with tutoring or as specific as paying for an individual's participation in a martial arts class. It is important to note that incentives are an important part of the program, but that schools are limited in the incentives they can offer. Private nonprofit agencies, however, have more flexible use of funding and can provide a broader range of incentives. Sanctions are not associated with strengths-based programs like Radical Possibilities.

## EVALUATING AND SUSTAINING

Although a full evaluation of Colorado's four truancy demonstration pilot sites (one focused on prevention and three on problem-solving courts) would be premature at this time, integrating evaluation as part of design and implementation rather than treating it as an afterthought can lead to more actionable evaluation results. One comprehensive literature review speaks to the "need for more and better evaluation studies to provide a more definitive knowledge base to guide effective truancy interventions for practitioners."<sup>xii</sup> With this in mind, the pilot sites collect and track information on the programs and their participants. While they have had to adapt along the way and still face barriers to data collection, particularly with long-term data, the sites have taken the first steps toward developing an evaluation of program effectiveness that will hopefully allow them to sustain these programs.

### Baseline and On-going Data Collection

The initial CISP program model was designed and implemented, in part, based on data from interviews and focus groups. After implementation, a survey was administered to Radical Possibilities pilot sites. The initial quantitative data from the pilot middle school has allowed Radical Possibilities to track improvement in attendance, grades, and number of behavioral incidences. Radical Possibilities also collects qualitative data,

including feedback and individual stories from clients and schools, which also significantly helps with program evaluation. Individual and school participants continue to give positive feedback and encourage and praise the program regularly. Through strong relationships with collaborative partners Radical Possibilities has created an exciting opportunity for the establishment of a thorough evaluation process. New data collection and tracking mechanisms include:

- Administering pre/post-surveys, developed in partnership with the State of Colorado Division of Criminal Justice through its Truancy Formula Grant project, to all participating youth.
- Collecting data on number of students served and cost per student.
- Asking schools to provide attendance data and behavioral records for all participating youth throughout their school career.
- Obtaining qualitative data from students and teachers from schools.
- Collecting pre/post data according to the current program model and sharing this information with partners for comprehensive evaluation (School Check and Connect).
- Monitoring juvenile justice involvement by LPYS, who will track referrals to diversion and recidivism rates for all participating youth.
- Defining and tracking engagement in short-term support services, acknowledging that addressing underlying factors of truancy will precede consistent school engagement.

## **Confidentiality**

In addition to the quantitative and qualitative data collected by the program, Radical Possibilities is currently working with the schools to come up with a way to more efficiently gather school data. Currently, data on students in Radical Possibilities is tracked in Excel spreadsheets, as well as through Social Solutions and Efforts to Outcomes software, and school databases. The largest challenge in tracking student data is Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements. Presently, students and parents sign an information release and waiver to meet state and federal requirements regarding confidentiality and information exchange with partners.

## **Sustaining the Program**

Program sustainability is a long-term goal for the pilot sites. Conducting qualitative research at a local level enabled Radical Possibilities to implement client-informed programming and apply research to address resistance to the program. Creating a sustainable program requires connecting students with adults who care and are skilled at helping students successfully navigate multiple systems to address individual needs. As such, human resources are the key to the success of this project. Other key ingredients to program sustainability identified by the prevention site include:

- Designating a program coordinator outside of school personnel;
- Identifying a principal who is fully invested and supportive of the program;
- Working with schools that can – and will – allow community services to be delivered in the school environment;
- Ensuring there is adequate funding for an appropriate number of highly-skilled personnel to work with students as intervention begins and ends with people.



Halfway through the second year, Radical possibilities was in the middle school pilot, two students indicated they wanted to share their stories and the positive impact the program had on their lives. They joined a team from the middle school who made a series of presentations about the program to community organizations and potential grantors. At one presentation, one of the student's entire family joined him in telling their story and the impact of the program. Ultimately, through the efforts and courage of these two young people, the program was able to raise an additional \$40,000 to support their expansion into a total of five schools in the 2015-16 school year.

## LESSONS LEARNED

As Radical Possibilities has progressed through program design, implementation, and adaptation, those involved with the program have learned a lot about what it takes to implement a successful CISP. Overall, Radical Possibilities has been the most successful with schools that combine a commitment to their students with a positive school climate. The middle school that met these criteria saw their Radical Possibilities program up and running quickly. In contrast, Radical Possibilities staff struggled to find a good elementary partner, with a few false starts. One elementary partner was unwilling to consider improving school climate as part of the problem solving. Another elementary partner was open to the programmatic structure, but had very few students who fit the target population. However, this year, Radical Possibilities is working with two elementary schools that better fit the criteria.

## WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

As is often the case, securing funding proved challenging for the program. Specifically, more funding was needed for data collection, marketing, and program documentation at the inception of the program. The funding challenge remains as there is a lack of funds for personnel specifically assigned to these tasks. Looking ahead, the biggest funding challenge Radical Possibilities foresees is compensation. Currently, the Check and Connect positions in schools are funded through AmeriCorps. Given the structure of AmeriCorps program, these positions are difficult to fill, skills and professional competency are sometimes limited, and experience high turnover. In order for the Radical Possibilities program to be truly sustainable and reach maximum effectiveness, these in-school mentorship positions will need to be compensated through a similar pay and benefits scale as teachers.

In addition to funding challenges, data collection efforts have been positive for Radical Possibilities, but have also proven challenging, with schools providing only a small amount of baseline data in pilot years. Data collection efforts are being formalized in this school year and should prove fruitful, although it would have been ideal to have all collection mechanisms in place for the first set of students served.

## WHAT IS WORKING?

In simple terms, what works is highly-skilled, caring people, and it is these people that are the key to the success of Radical Possibilities. As such, ensuring sustainability of human capital is of utmost importance.

Radical Possibilities has helped realize a number of wins across the spectrum, although for different reasons:

- **Schools** win because community resources are making their way into the schools and allowing for effective service of students who have needs beyond the traditional capacity of schools.
- **Human services agencies** win because schools allow them access to, and early identification of, students who need support and otherwise may never receive it due to the barriers of accessing services in their family, school, and community?.
- **Students** win because their needs are identified early and the appropriate resources are brought to them through caring, connected adults with whom they already have established trusting relationships. Additionally, support is integrated into their day, rather than being extraneous to their daily life.
- **Program staff** win because conducting qualitative research at a local level has enabled Radical Possibilities to implement client-informed programming and use research to address resistance.



*In the second year of Radical Possibilities, one of our partner schools lost a beloved counselor to suicide. Community partners spent the following week providing emergency counseling support to youth and adults throughout the school. One student, who had a very close relationship with the counselor, found a strong support system in two Radical Possibilities team members and frequently credits them with getting him through the loss and his own life challenges.*

# CONCLUSION

If considering a CISP truancy program, it is important for a site to modify each of their programs to fit the community, neighborhood, school, and students they serve, allow for flexibility of program changes and modifications, and be open to sharing information and methods. A three-year funding cycle has provided the prevention pilot site (LPYS) with the time to plan and implement a program that meets the specific needs of each participating school. Overall, all four truancy demonstration pilot sites noted that the first year was mostly spent on planning and initial implementation, while the second year was spent implementing changes and improvements to their program through first year learnings. Both the learning culture created amongst the four truancy demonstration sites and measureable outcomes are integral to programmatic sustainability. Throughout the grant cycle, the Radical Possibilities program has collected more revealing data and connected it across sectors to tell a holistic story of the student. Currently, Radical Possibilities is taking inventory of additional data needs and working with schools to collect necessary data. While more time is needed to have clearly defined outcomes, all four sites have shared numerous success stories to illustrate the difference truancy demonstration pilot funds and support are making in the lives of students and families.

**This project was supported by Award number 2013-MU-FX-0047 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs through the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice nor the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety.**

---

<sup>i</sup> Galloway, D. (1982). A study of persistent absentees and their families. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 52, 317-330.

<sup>ii</sup> West, MO, Prinz, RJ. (1987). Parental alcoholism and childhood psychopathology. *Psychological Bulletin*, 102(2), 204-218.

<sup>iii</sup> Famular, O.R., Kinscherff, R., Fenton, T., & Boldur, S.M. (1990). Child maltreatment histories among runaway and delinquent children. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 29, 713-718.

<sup>iv</sup> Garry, Elicen (1996). Truancy: First Step to a Lifetime of Problems. OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin.

<sup>v</sup> Holman, B. and Ziedenberg, J. (November 2006). *The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*, Justice Policy Institute.

<sup>vi</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.juvjustice.org/sos>.

<sup>vii</sup> Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2012). *School-community partnerships: a guide*, 2-4.

<sup>viii</sup> (UCLA)

<sup>ix</sup> Communities in Schools. (1/9/16) Retrieved from <http://www.communitiesinschools.org/about/>.

<sup>x</sup> (Communities in Schools, 2016)

<sup>xi</sup> Turner. (January 2014). Preventing chronic absenteeism & truancy. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/attendance/preventing-chronic-absenteeism-truancy>.

<sup>xiii</sup> Stuphen R., Ford, J., & Flaherty, C. (2010). Truancy interventions: a review of the research literature. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 20 (2), 161-171.



## BEFORE ACTION REVIEW NOTES:

<b>Project Name:</b>	LRHN JJDP	<b>Date:</b>	6-22-16
<b>Participants:</b>	Tobin Wright; Jamin Alabiso; Jennifer Turner; Colleen Clark; Anna Lopez; Spark Policy		

### What is our Framing Question?

*How can we ensure that we are communicating effectively across systems on an ongoing basis to ensure program effectiveness, sustainability, and growth?*

### What are the intended outcomes of the strategy? (at a high level and then the details)

- Collaboration across systems – shared work, while communication may be robust one organization may still take on the bulk of the work.
- Clear expectations are one element of effective communication to move towards collaboration
- Referrals across systems
- Bought-in and own their piece
- Financial contribution across systems
- Consistent email communication and set regular meetings (as is District appropriate)
- Common language and education – what is truancy about...?
- Transparency
- Institutionalizing the philosophy

### What are some of the challenges we might encounter?

- Stakeholder active participation (chicken and egg dilemma)
- Philosophical agreement
- Time and resources – capacity and sustainability
- Judicial officer involvement – deferential treatment removes collective brainstorming
- Resistance to change
- Program capacity
- Leadership – top down
- Institutionalizing the philosophy
- Identifying correct stakeholder to communicate with
- Territorial nature
- School climate

**What have we learned from the past that might be important to consider here?**

- There must be a champion to hold it all together and keep it moving
  - Not just the judicial officer/ courts
  - Co-chairs do not simply resolve the problem
- One champion who is doing the work and a network of champions who are supporting the ideas and building public will
  - Regular meetings to understand stakeholder needs and in turn continue to adapt to meet those needs
- Strategic in who you communicate with, when, and how
  - Meet them where they are and roll with the resistance
- Expand your sphere of influence to motivate change

**Given all that, what will our strategy look like?**

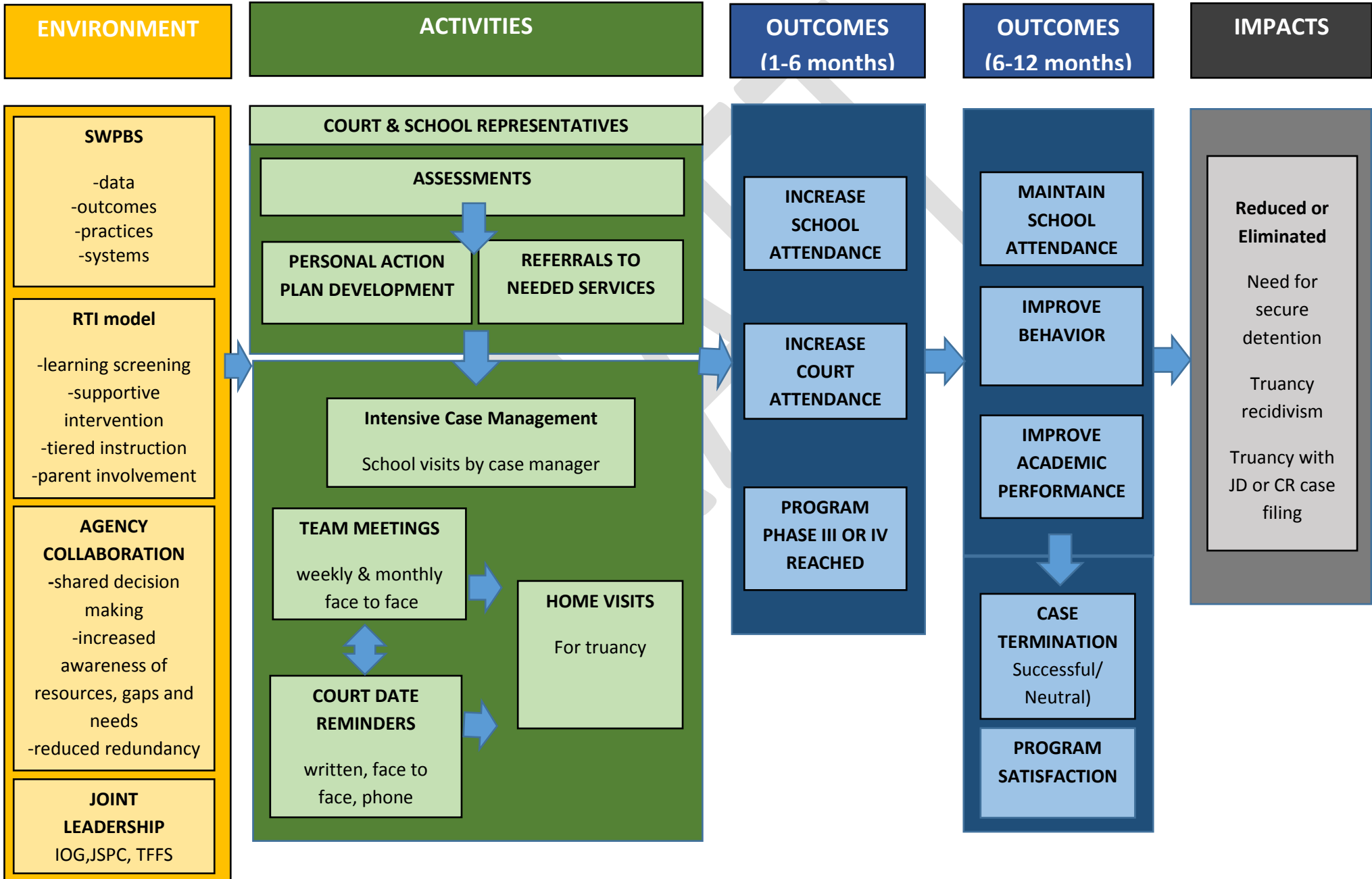
- Adopting a strategy to meet them where they are and demonstrate success to motivate change.
- Using data and research to combat philosophical differences; needs assessments of stakeholders and then framing the program in a way to meet their needs.
- Reframing your approach to meet the registers where they are and continuing to communicate and adapt.
- Clearly articulating the program purpose and outcomes with all stakeholders – not just in the implementation, necessary to check-in for sustainability.
- Identify what data and or third party information/ philosophy the stakeholders would like to see in order to understand the approach adopted.
- Identify ways you are able to support or help stakeholders.
- Work with those who are willing to participate in order to grow success.
- Identify program components other systems are drawn too, and that could benefit them.
- Reframe to help schools understand why the approach is different.
- Increased funding and/or capacity.

**Timing for After Action Review:**

January 2017

**DISTRICT 16**  
**M.A.P. PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL**

APPENDIX C



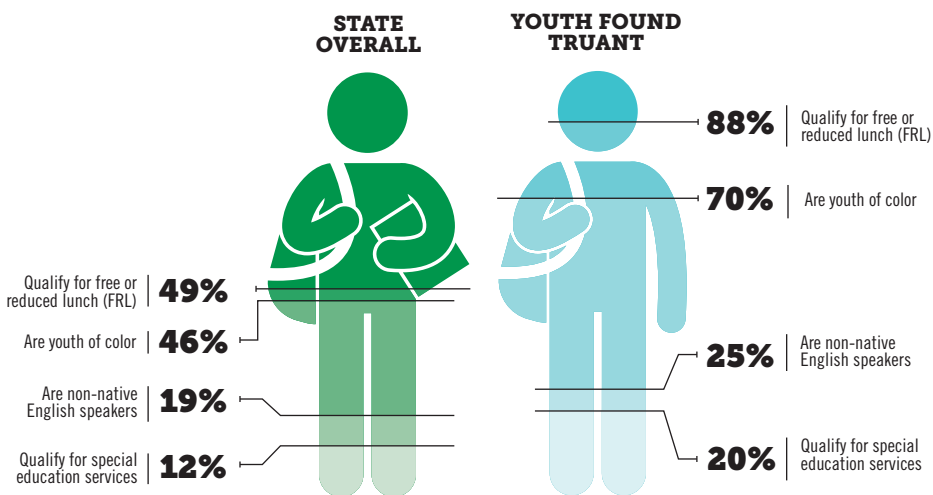


## SECURE DETENTION FOR TRUANCY IMPACTS ON COLORADO YOUTH ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS

The impact of using secure detention for status offenses is largely unknown. This Colorado study examined the impacts on youth of secure detention for youth with court oversight for truancy. While the literature shows there are negative impacts associated with using secure detention for youth with low level criminal offenses, this literature may not be directly applicable to youth with status offenses. This issue is timely as the use of secure detention for status offenses is currently under review at both the federal and state levels. Major findings and youth characteristics are summarized below. Data from this study can be used to support efforts to review and recommend alternative approaches to truancy that can improve youth success in school and later in adulthood.

### WHO ARE COLORADO'S YOUTH FOUND TRUANT?

For the first time, youth with truancy court oversight can be characterized. These youth disproportionately represent some of the most vulnerable groups in Colorado. This graphic shows how the overall Colorado student population compares to the population with truancy court oversight.



### METHOD

This study integrated five-year datasets from education, child welfare, judicial, and juvenile justice. A total of **2,070** youth were identified as receiving court oversight for truancy in the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Cross system analyses examined this cohort over a five-year period to investigate predictors of secure detention and outcomes for youth with or without a secure detention for truancy.

Models were created to determine:

- factors predicting secure detention.
- whether secure detention for truancy predicted subsequent criminal filings.
- whether secure detention for truancy predicted graduation.

This project was supported by Award number 2013-MU-FX-0047 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and Award number 2011-DJ-BX-2126 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, both in the Office of Justice Programs through the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice nor the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety.



### Truancy Terminology

**COURT OVERSIGHT** means that the youth was filed on, had one or more court hearings and the court record indicated a) the youth was found truant by the court or b) the court entered an order (i.e., attend school) compelling an action by the youth or family.

**SECURE JUVENILE DETENTION** is the temporary care of any child who requires secure custody in a physically restricting facility pending sentencing.

**STATUS OFFENSES** are non-criminal acts that are considered a law violation only because of a youth's status as a minor. Status offenses include truancy, running away from home, violating curfew, and general ungovernability.

**TRUANCY CASE LENGTH** is a variable used in analyses to differentiate youth with a single court hearing from those with multiple court hearings.



**COLORADO**  
Division of Criminal Justice  
Department of Public Safety

**Meg Williams, MPA**  
Manager, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance

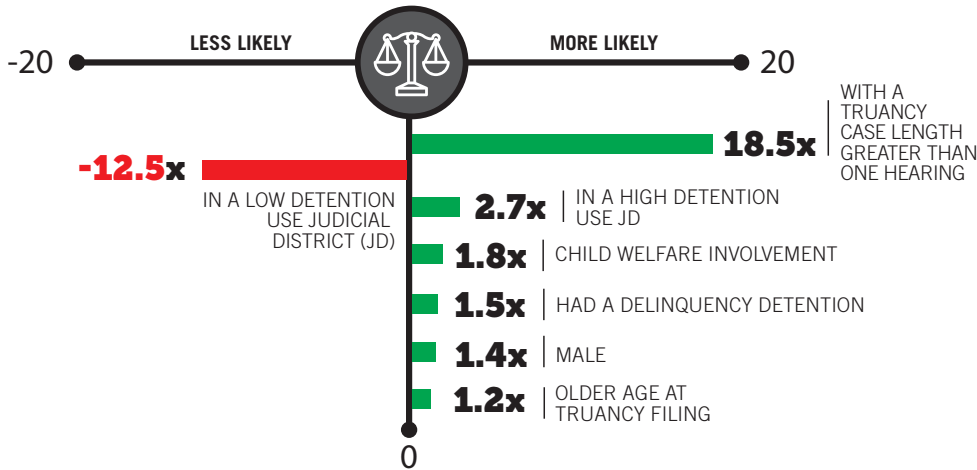
**Division of Criminal Justice**  
Colorado Department of Public Safety  
700 Kipling Street | Denver, CO 80215  
303-239-5717  
meg.williams@state.co.us

Research completed by Diane Fox and Tara Wass at the Center for Research Strategies [www.crsllc.org](http://www.crsllc.org)

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

BASED ON EACH VARIABLE, HOW MORE OR LESS LIKELY IS A YOUTH TO...

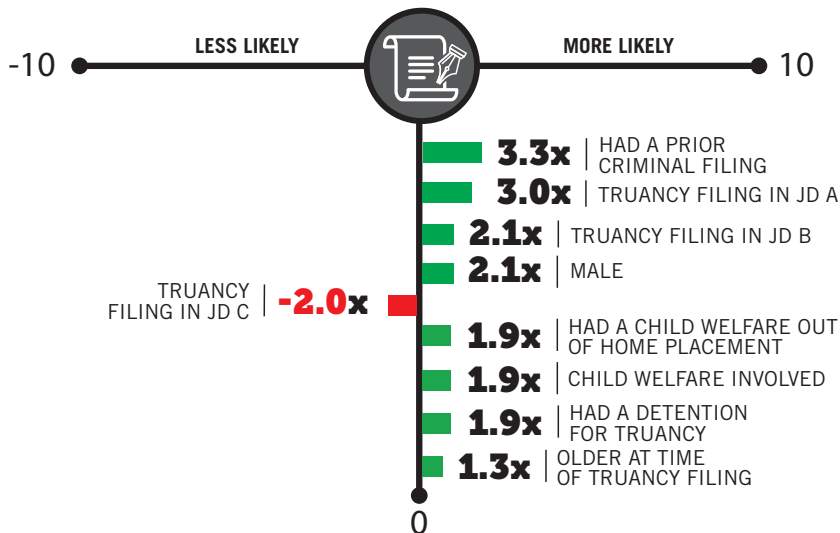
### ...be detained for truancy?



### DETENTION:

Detention for truancy is mainly determined by local policy. The Judicial District (JD) where the case is located, along with court hearing practices, are the strongest predictors of detention. Youth are 18.5 times more likely to be detained for truancy with a truancy case length greater than one hearing. Being in a high detention use JD, having child welfare involvement, going to detention for delinquency, being male and older age at truancy filing all increase the risk of a youth being securely detained for truancy. Youth are 12.5 times less likely to go to detention for truancy if they were filed on in a JD that infrequently utilized detention for truancy.

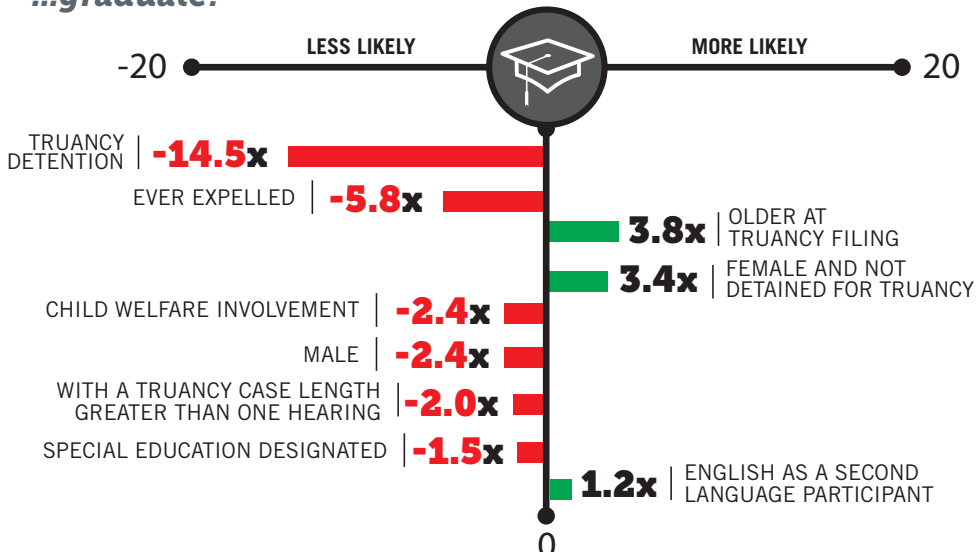
### ...have a subsequent criminal filing?



### CRIMINAL FILING:

Most youth found truant did not have a subsequent criminal filing. Criminal filings were mostly influenced by local practice and system involvement in the model. Eight factors increased the likelihood of the youth having a subsequent criminal filing: a prior criminal filing, a truancy filing in JD A, a truancy filing in JD B, being male, having child welfare involvement, having an out of home child welfare placement, going to secure detention for truancy and older age at filing. Only having your truancy filing in JD C decreased the likelihood of a subsequent criminal filing. We do not yet understand why truancy filings in these three JDs impacted the likelihood of subsequent criminal filings.

### ...graduate?



### GRADUATION:

Graduation was influenced by many factors, but detention was the strongest predictor. Youth who went to detention for truancy were 14.5 times less likely to graduate from high school than other Colorado youth found truant. In addition, five other variables significantly decreased the likelihood of graduation: ever being expelled, child welfare involvement, being male, truancy case length greater than one hearing and having a special education designation. In contrast, three factors increased the likelihood of graduation: older age at filing, being female and not detained for truancy and English as a second language program participation.

Appendix E  
**MEMO**



**DATE:** May 2016  
**TO:** Whom It May Concern  
**FROM:** JJDP Professional Development Committee  
**RE:** PD Next Steps

---

**Goal:** Ensure that all youth and family-serving professionals in the justice arena receive the training and support needed to serve youth and families in the best possible manner.

**Objective:** Establish and adopt statewide professional development practices for professionals working with at-risk and justice-involved youth and their families.

**Who:** The Professional Development Committee (PD Committee) was established in 2011 to implement work initiated by the Denver Crime Prevention and Control Commission to provide consistent cross-systems training to youth serving agencies. It falls under the purview of the Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Council, which serves as the state advisory group (SAG) as defined in Title II of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) of 2002. The Governor appoints JJDP Council members who are selected to represent multiple disciplines. The goals of the JJDP Act are to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system by ensuring appropriate sanctions and services, due process, and proper treatment and safe confinement for justice-involved juveniles.

**Next Steps:**

In moving towards achieving the stated goal and objective, the PD Committee determined it should start with three of the largest State Agencies. The Division of Youth Corrections, State Judicial, and Child Welfare were picked because of their existing training for a multitude of juvenile-justice serving professionals

The PD committee first must ensure all three agencies' leadership is on board with the above goal and objective. Second, the PD Committee plans to host facilitated dialogues with key with personnel from each of the three agencies intended to:

- Evaluate whether the agencies have training curriculums that comply with all six competencies and the respective component of each competency;
- Assess the outlined competencies and components to ensure all agencies feel comfortable with the training elements; and
- Explore opportunities to open leverage existing training on core competencies either by opening them to other agencies or sharing curriculums that can be adapted for particular agencies' needs.

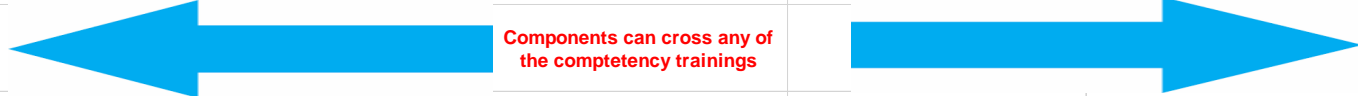
*The Professional Development Committee (PD Committee) is a subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Council (JJDP) created in response to the continued national discussion on reforms to juvenile justice.*

# Appendix F

## JJDP Core Competencies & Components

(last updated 5-27-16)

Core Competency	Core Competency 1: Integrating cultural responsiveness and a positive youth development approach.	Core Competency 2: Effective Case Management	Core Competency 3: Consent and Release of Information, HIPAA, FERPA, 42CFR and Confidentiality	Core Competency 4: Effective Communication Strategies	Core Competency 5: Family Engagement	Core Competency 6: Behavioral Health: Trauma informed response or care
Key Components	Adolescent development: brain development, developmentally appropriate behaviors and expectations	Stages of a delinquency or truancy proceeding from the initiation of an investigation through the completion of the case or sentence	Privacy and confidentiality rights of adolescents □	Communication strategies to deploy with adolescents and families, dependent on agency strategy (e.g. motivational interviewing, empathy)	Importance of parents and families in delinquency and criminal proceedings, and the treatment process of justice-involved youth; engage family in treatment of youth as well as program and system design	Impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACE)
	The importance of relationships and attachments in youth development	Expectations and tools that are involved in your organization's processing of a case from the initiation of a complaint to final resolution	What data information can be shared across agencies through the use of Release of Information	Collaboration and communication with other providers	Different systems approaches and obligations to families	Maximize physical and psychological safety for children and families
	Modification to and sensitive of educational and learning needs of adolescents	Systems case managements strategies - to effectively integrate services with other systems and collaboration		Countertransference, transference, parallel processes	Strengths based approach	Identify trauma-related needs of children and families past and present
	Awareness of personal perceptions and behaviors that influence interactions with adolescents and families				Commitment to reciprocity, honoring the expertise and contributions of all parties	Enhance child and family well-being and resilience
	Sensitivity to the needs of culturally different youth and families and awareness of the need to engage in culturally respectful and responsive practice				Empowerment of families, increasing their level of autonomy and self-determination - goal setting	Enhance the well-being and resilience of those working in the system
	Culture as it relates to cognitive behavior					
	Implicit and Explicit bias					
	Cultural Competence					


**Components can cross any of the competency trainings**

## MEMO



**DATE:** May 2016

**TO:** Whom It May Concern

**FROM:** JJDP Children's Code Committee

**RE:** The formation of the Committee and code review

**Goal:** Lay the foundation for a revision of Article 2 of the Colorado Children's Code (Code) based on the developmental approach to juvenile justice.

**Objective:** Promote improvements to Article 2 of the Code, increasing the ease of use and clarity of laws regarding juvenile justice, ensuring the Code complies, or is consistent, with current research and evidence-based policies and practices.

**Who:** The Children's Code Committee (Committee) falls under the purview of the Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Council, which serves as the state advisory group (SAG) as defined in Title II of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDNA) of 2002. The Governor appoints JJDP Council members who are selected to represent multiple disciplines. The goals of the JJDP Act are to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system by ensuring appropriate sanctions and services, due process, and proper treatment and safe confinement for justice-involved juveniles. The JJDP Council is charged with identifying priority areas to address in its comprehensive three-year plan, which led to the creation of the Committee.

The Committee began with a reorganization of Article 2 to help determine what changes must be made and what next steps must be taken in regards to Article 2 of the Code. As it stands now, Colorado laws relating to juveniles in the justice system are scattered throughout the 19 parts of Article 2 and contain provisions that are duplicative, inconsistent, conflicting, and at times unclear. The Committee's meticulous review of Article 2 revealed the current order is illogical. As Article 2 is procedural in nature it must be presented in a way that allows for tactical application, which the current order does not support. Specifically, the current order is non-sequential and makes it difficult to train professionals on the law, subsequently making it difficult for them to argue the law.

In contrast, the proposed reorder is based on how juveniles step through the system, creating a code that is organic in use and in-line with current best practices. A comprehensive, easy-to-use code is not only good practice, it better ensures due process. Importantly, the proposed reorder of Article 2 would improve ease of use and comprehension for juvenile justice-involved professionals and pro se families.

A reorganization of Article 2 is a starting point for the Committee, however, and the Committee believes a full, developmentally-driven review using an evidence-based lens is necessary to increase the ease of use and clarity of the laws regarding juvenile justice, ensuring due process, accountability, and equal treatment. The Committee has established two primary reasons why this revision is necessary:

**(1) To improve clarity for those who implement the Code, as well as those who are affected by this implementation.** The current structure of Article 2 of the Code is illogical, and portions are out of date with obsolete statutes. This lack of clarity has resulted in juvenile justice-involved professionals raising concerns regarding the ability to train professionals who engage with youth inside and outside the courtroom, as well as pro se families' ability to comprehend the Code.

**(2) To ensure any future changes or modifications are in line with established best practices and current research.** Article 2 of the Code is ripe for a contextual review given the research

around working with juveniles that have come about since the Code was last revised. The past thirty years have seen an increased understanding of adolescent brain development, youth development, public safety measures, and the need for family engagement, and this understanding should be reflected in Colorado’s laws. A developmental and evidence-based approach to reforming juvenile justice, which promotes public safety and accountability, starts with a reorganization of the Code and requires goals, design, and operation of the juvenile justice system to be research-informed. If a contextual review of Article 2 were done in a developmentally-informed way, “procedures for holding adolescents accountable for their offending, and the services provided to them, can promote legal socialization, reinforce a prosocial identity, and reduce reoffending<sup>1</sup>.”

Proposed revisions would be studied through multiple perspectives including: equal treatment; developmental appropriateness; restorative justice; victim empowerment; addressing criminogenic and other needs to reduce reoffending and allow juveniles the opportunity to become productive members of society; and honoring the role of families and natural supports.

*The Children’s Code Committee (Committee) is a subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Council (JJDP) created in response to the continued national discussion on reforms to juvenile justice.*

---

<sup>1</sup> National Research Council. (2013). *Reforming juvenile justice: A developmental approach. Committee on Assessing Juvenile Justice Reform.* (vii.). Bonnie, R., Johnson, B., Chemers, B., Schuck, J., Eds. Committee of Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

