

# THE STATEWIDE JUVENILE JUSTICE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE:

## Maximizing the Value of Investments in Supervision and Services

---

Over the past decade, nearly every state has experienced a sharp drop in its youth incarceration rate, in many cases declines of more than 50 percent. As the number of incarcerated youth has decreased, juvenile arrest rates have also fallen to historic lows. These are extraordinary developments that policymakers and advocates should celebrate. And as new research confirms that youth fare better closer to home, states are minimizing the use of expensive state-run correctional facilities, resulting in substantial savings at no cost to public safety.

For the first time, many states are now allocating the majority of their juvenile justice resources to community-based supervision and services. Rearrest rates for youth being supervised in the community are unacceptably high, however, and education and other outcomes for these youth continue to be poor.

**New research confirms that youth fare better closer to home, and states are minimizing the use of expensive state-run correctional facilities.**

And what about the smaller, higher-risk group of youth who remain incarcerated? These young people have especially high rates of reoffense, and often resources are not applied effectively to help them succeed when they return to their communities.

### Funding for the Statewide Juvenile Justice Improvement Initiative

The Council of State Governments Justice Center's Statewide Juvenile Justice Improvement Initiative is a project of the National Reentry Resource Center, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, and conducted in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Technical assistance provided through this initiative typically lasts 9 to 12 months.

Policymakers in every state who want to improve supervision and services for youth in the juvenile justice system should be asking:

- How well do our resources, policies, and practices align with what the research says works to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes?
  - What recidivism and other outcome data does our state track for youth under the supervision of the juvenile justice system?
  - To what extent are key leaders from the three branches of state government working together and in partnership with local governments to improve outcomes for youth under juvenile justice supervision?
-

The Statewide Juvenile Justice Improvement Initiative helps state policymakers work through these questions. Through the National Reentry Resource Center, The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center provides intensive technical assistance that includes these components:

### 1. Analyzing quantitative data

The CSG Justice Center conducts an in-depth analysis of juvenile justice system data, as well as relevant data from other service systems, to help policymakers better understand what supervision and services youth receive and what happens to youth once they return to their communities.

### 2. Reviewing policy and practice

Through focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders, as well as a review of state laws and regulations, the CSG Justice Center examines the extent to which the state's juvenile justice policies, practices, and resource allocation align with what the research shows is effective in reducing recidivism.

### 3. Presenting state-specific policy and practice recommendations

The CSG Justice Center draws on this data analysis and stakeholder feedback to make customized recommendations to reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system, and helps states develop plans to translate these recommendations into policy and practice.

## STATE SELECTION PROCESS

In April 2016, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will select two or three states to receive intensive technical assistance through the initiative. To be considered, states must submit a letter stating their interest and commitment to the following:

#### ■ Establishing a bipartisan, interbranch task force to guide the effort

The task force must include representatives from the governor's office, state juvenile justice agency, state legislature, and judiciary, and work in partnership with local officials to advance juvenile justice policy and practice change.

#### ■ Sharing available data from the juvenile justice and other service systems

Available juvenile justice system data, as well as other relevant justice system data, including law enforcement, adult probation, and adult corrections data, must be provided to the CSG Justice Center in accordance with data-sharing and confidentiality protocol. Where appropriate, data from other youth-serving systems may be requested.

#### ■ Improving policy and practice across the juvenile justice continuum, from diversion to reentry

States should be prepared to advance comprehensive juvenile justice policy and practice changes to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes.

## The National Reentry Resource Center

Established by the Second Chance Act, the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) provides education, training, and technical assistance to states, tribes, territories, local governments, community-based service providers, nonprofit organizations, and corrections institutions involved with reentry. The NRRC's mission is to advance the reentry field by disseminating information to and from policymakers, practitioners, and researchers and by promoting evidence-based principles and best practices. The NRRC is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and is a project of The Council of State Governments Justice Center, in cooperation with the Urban Institute, the National Association of Counties, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the American Probation and Parole Association, and other key partner organizations.