

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Rehabilitation Administration
Office of Juvenile Justice
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/office-juvenile-justice>

Transforming
Lives

Washington State Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project

A Statewide Strategic Plan

September 21, 2018

This project was supported by Grant # 2016-ZB-BX-0013 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

Special thank you to the stakeholders who provided their time, expertise, and support for the process of developing the Juvenile Justice System Improvement Strategic Plan.

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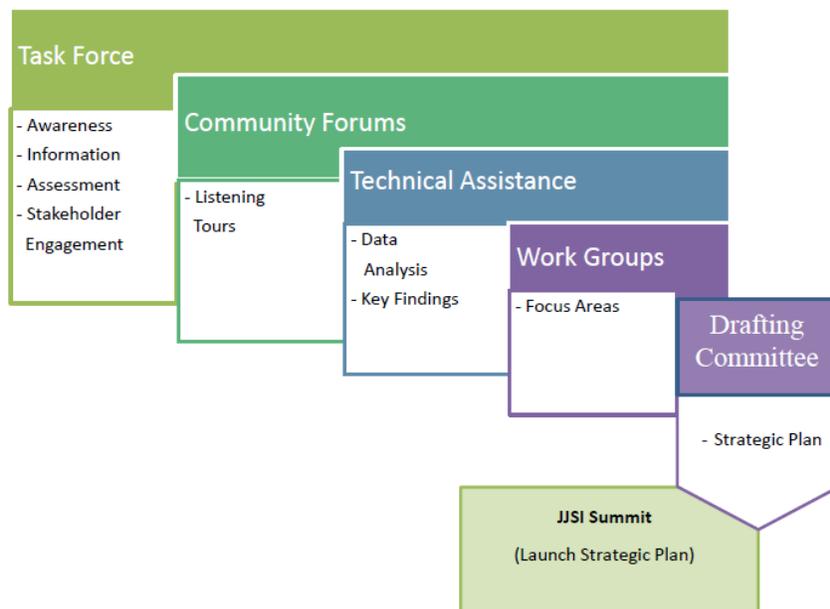
Background Information:

The Rehabilitation Administration’s Office of Juvenile Justice received a two-year (October 2016 – September 2018) planning grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to support a statewide Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project. The project aims to develop statewide strategies to reduce the out-of-home placement of youth who commit status and low-level offenses, explore ways to reduce racial and ethnic disparity in juvenile referral, diversion, and detention, and improve both public safety and outcomes for youth.

The Project was successfully launched in March of 2017. A Juvenile Justice System Improvement (JJSI) Task Force inclusive of more than 40 stakeholders met every 2-3 months to increase understanding and awareness of the issues, and the impact and opportunities for system improvements. Community engagement has been an integral part of information gathering and uplifting the voices of communities-most-impacted. OJJDP also contracted with the Council of State Governments (CSG) to provide technical assistance for this project. CSG worked closely with Washington State’s Administrative Office of the Courts and King County to collect and analyze data. CSG presented key findings and recommendations to support the Project.

Strategic Plan Development Process:

The development of the statewide strategic plan has been a collaborative process built on existing efforts and best practices, inclusive of stakeholder and community engagement, and informed by quantitative and qualitative analysis.



Development Process and Activities:

- Convened a statewide **Task Force** of critical stakeholders, including state-level decision makers, juvenile court judges, juvenile justice agency leaders, policymakers, mental health professionals, community advocates, schools, prosecutors, law enforcement, youth- and family-serving organizations, justice-involved youth and their families. Along with Task Force meetings were **Community Forums** where communities-most-impacted and those concerned with the fair administration of juvenile justice shared their experiences and opinions. The Task Force meetings and community forums took place every 2-3 months to gain knowledge of the juvenile justice system, review key finding and recommendation, as well as best practices for juvenile justice system improvements.
- Examined **data** and decisions related to juvenile arrest, detention, referral to court, diversion, adjudication, out-of-home-placement, other sanctions or services, and identified data gaps and strategies to improve the quality of data collection and measurement practices with the support of the Council of State Government **Technical Assistance** and Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts.
- Convened key **stakeholders work groups** to review policy options and develop recommendations for strategic plan, specifically addressing the focus of the Project, and to ensure that the strategic plan is transparent and vetted across essential stakeholder groups.
- Produced the **final strategic plan** that prioritizes public safety, accountability, and improved outcomes for youth and their families through the adoption of structured decision making tools, enhanced community-based alternatives to out-of-home placement, data collection, performance management, and increased capacity to sustain system improvement efforts.
- Gained **stakeholder endorsements** of the development and implementation of the final strategic plan through a participatory process

Preliminary Statewide Strategic Plan:

The two-year OJJDP Planning Grant Project concludes in September 2018. The development of a statewide strategic plan takes into account an immediate response towards meeting the grant requirements as well as short-term and long-term goals for continuous system improvement.

The Strategic Plan's overarching objectives embrace both prevention and intervention. Keeping youth engaged in school and providing appropriate responses to youth and families in need of services are essential steps toward improving public safety and youth outcomes. The Coalition for Juvenile Justice's Safety, Opportunity & Success Project stated that locking up youth who commit status offenses or low-level offenses worsens outcomes for individual children and for their communities. These youth are often better served by community and family programs and services that do not involve the juvenile justice system.

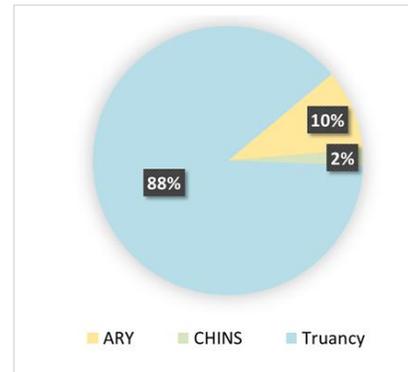
Furthermore, program implementation and management require reliable, accessible information about operations and outcomes. Program management that relies on data to identify opportunities for improvement can lead to better system decisions and greater justice for system-involved youth over the long term. Accountability and mission-focus are both served through routine performance reporting and engagement with managers, administrators, community groups, and policy makers.

Spotlighting key findings and identifying strategies objectives

(1) Key Findings – The vast majority of status petitions are for truancy.

2016 data showed that 11,076 of the 12,607 (88%) of status petition types were truancy.

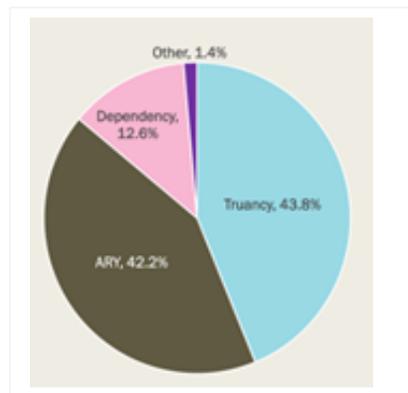
Source: Information Presented by Council for State Government Justice Center, TA Provider Presentation, January 26, 2018. Visit <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/office-juvenile-justice/juvenile-justice-system-improvement-planning-project> to view the entire presentation.



(2) Key Findings – Detention admissions where the most serious admission reason was a non-offender matter.

Among admissions for non-offender matters, truancy (43.8%) and ARY (42.2%) petitions were the most common reasons.

Source: Washington State Juvenile Detention 2016 Annual Report Published by Washington State Center for Court Research. Visit <https://ccvj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Becca-Petitions-Slides.pdf> to view the entire report.



(3) Key Findings – Youth of color are disproportionately represented in juvenile justice system.

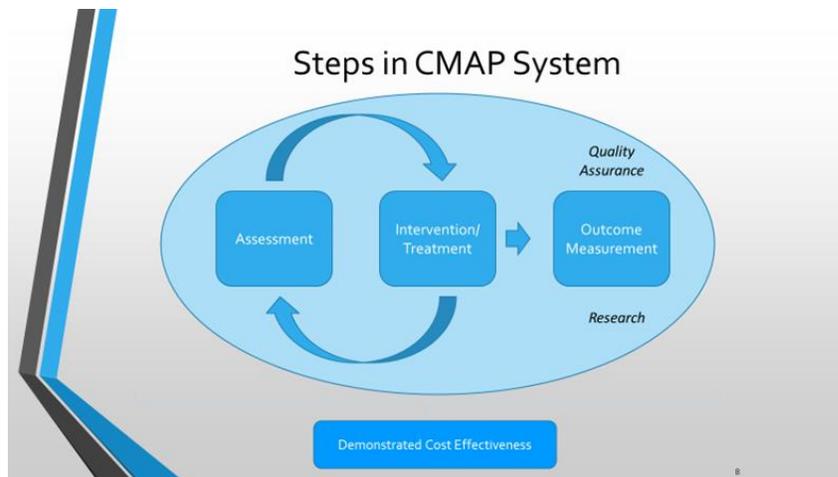
2016 DMC (Disproportionate Minority Contact) data showed that arrest rate was higher for youth of color (nearly 3 times higher for Black youth and 2 times higher for American Indian youth); overall youth of color were referred to juvenile court at a higher rate than white youth and diverted less often than white youth.

Table 3. Washington State Relative Rate Index				
	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian
2. Juvenile Arrests	2.94	1.12		1.74
3. Refer to Juvenile Court		1.26	1.30	1.59
4. Cases Diverted	0.73	0.91		0.80

Source: Visit <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/RA/ojj/DMC-Plan-2018-Final.pdf> to view the entire 2016 DMC Report.

(4) Key Findings – Juvenile Court Case Management Process emerged as a best practice.

Juvenile Court Case Management Process (CMAP) emerged in response to the Community Juvenile Accountability Act initiated by the Washington State Legislature in 1997. The legislature was influenced by the "what work's" literature and the intent to fund empirically validated programs to reduce recidivism. The Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA), which represents all 33 juvenile court jurisdictions, led this effort.



WAJCA Presentation at the September 22, 2017 JJSI Task Force Meeting

Source: For more information about WAJCA and CMAP, visit <http://www.courts.wa.gov/index.cfm?fa=home.sub&org=wscsr&page=juvenileCourts&layout=2&parent=committee&tab=JuvenileCourts&sublink=cmap>

(5) Key Findings – Risk and needs assessments used at multiple decision points help informed the decision-making process.

Risk and needs assessments should be used at multiple decision points to direct the supervision intensity, case planning and management, programming requirements, and treatment referrals. While risk and needs assessment should not be the sole factor in making these decisions, it is currently the best available method for ensuring that research-based data helps inform the decision-making process.

Source: To view the *In Brief: Understanding Risk and Needs Assessment*, visit The Council of State Governments web page at <https://csgjusticecenter.org/jr/in-brief-understanding-risk-and-needs-assessment/>

Outlining strategic objectives based on stakeholder and community engagement, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and key findings

Objective A:

Reduce the out-of-home placement of youth who commit status and low-level offenses ¹and reduce racial and ethnic disparities

(A.1) Eliminate the use of detention² for truancy petitions ³and as a means of obtaining services for truant kids. Children and families should not have to go through the court system to access services.

Short-term Goals: (leverage on and/or expand on existing best practices)

- Institutionalize cultural competency and implicit bias reduction training for school, law enforcement, juvenile court personnel, etc.
- Link youth facing potential status offense or low-level delinquency charges and their families to services that can most directly address their needs.
- Support the efficacy of Community Truancy Boards ⁴and truancy process in small school districts
- Support and fund school-based and community-based intervention services that would eliminate the necessity of court-involvement.
- Support and fund court-based positive youth development programs and strategies aimed at diverting truancy petitions from formal court processing and the probability of contempt and detention.
- Support and fund data-driven management and quality assurance plan for diversion programs to ensure efficacy and accountability.
- Support and fund partnership models between community-based and court-based initiatives that aimed at improving outcomes for youth.

(A.2) Create a system to include intake, referral and case management process for status offenders.

Long-term goals:

- Create a coordination of services inclusive of schools, law enforcement, community-based organizations, child welfare professionals, and treatment providers, etc.

¹ JJSI Work Group described status offenses as Becca cases, dependency cases, non-criminal offenses/behavioral offenses; and low-level offenses as outlined in ESSB6550, i.e. a juvenile who is alleged to have committed a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor, excluding violent and sex offenses.

² RCW 13.40.020 (9) "Detention facility" means a county facility, paid for by the county, for the physical confinement of a juvenile alleged to have committed an offense or an adjudicated offender subject to a disposition or modification order. "Detention facility" includes county group homes, inpatient substance abuse program.

³ RCW 28A.225.030 If a child under the age of seventeen is required to attend school under RCW 28A.225.010 and if the actions taken by a school district under RCW 28A.225.020 are not successful in substantially reducing an enrolled student's absences from public school, not later than the seventh unexcused absence by a child within any month during the current school year or not later than the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year the school district shall file a petition and supporting affidavit for a civil action with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010:

⁴ RCW 28A.225.025 "Community Truancy Board" means a board established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between a juvenile court and a school district and composed of members of the local community in which the child attends school.

- Ensure youth are assessed quickly and fairly, warned and released by law enforcement appropriately, and referred to services in a timely and appropriate fashion.
- Support and fund implementation, effectiveness, and accountability with data-driven management.

(A.3) Eliminate the impact of racial and ethnic disparities.

Long-term goals:

- Racial and ethnic disparities reduction commitment must be reflected in the organizational mission and practices across the juvenile court system, i.e. schools, law enforcement, community-based organizations, social services, treatment providers, etc.
- Continually measure and report on disparity levels across the entire juvenile justice system.
- Develop strategies and take action to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

Aspirational Goal: Eliminate court as an option for status offense cases

Objective B:

Strengthen reliance on empirically supported screening and assessment tools to inform diversion⁵ and detention⁶ decisions and integrate racial and ethnic disparities reduction strategies and practices.

(B.1) Identify and develop screening instrument for status offenders.

Short-term goals:

- Institutionalize cultural competency and bias-reduction training for screening and assessment professionals.
- Provide a culturally responsive screening for status offenders at the earliest point of contact/referral in school and arrest.
- Provide culturally responsive and appropriate action to match the youth and families identified needs to services.

(B.2) Promote and fund implementation of screening and assessment to inform police diversion decisions

Short-term Goals (Pilot):

- Provide and sustain adequate resources to acquire, implement, and validate tools; continually track results of screening and assessment tools to assess impact on racial and ethnic disparities measures.

⁵ RCW 13.40.080 establishes diversions as an informal handling of a minor juvenile offense without formal prosecution in juvenile court and without involvement of a juvenile court judge.

⁶ RCW 13.40.020 (9) "Detention facility" means a county facility, paid for by the county, for the physical confinement of a juvenile alleged to have committed an offense or an adjudicated offender subject to a disposition or modification order. "Detention facility" includes county group homes, inpatient substance abuse program.

- Provide and sustain adequate resources to meet identified needs. Assessment must lead to matching services.
- Implement data-driven management and accountability, especially for tracking school-based diversion, arrest rate, court-referrals.

(B.3) Promote and fund implementation of screening and assessment to inform detention decisions.

Short-term goals:

- Offer research-informed training to jurisdictions on the use and management of admission screening tools with an emphasis on racial and ethnic disparities analysis
- Provide and sustain adequate resources to acquire, implement, and validate tools; continually track results of screening and assessment tools to assess impact on racial and ethnic disparities measures.
- Provide and sustain adequate resources to meet identified needs. Assessment must lead to matching services.
- Implement data-driven management and accountability.
- Leverage existing models and best practices for replication.

(B.4) Increase the availability of trauma-informed, culturally relevant, community-based, and health-based interventions.

Short-term goals:

- Fund and provide empirically-based effective treatment for justice-involved youth.
- Ensure treatment services are available, accessible, and affordable.
- Identify needs of and provide wraparound services for youth and family.
- Implement data-driven management and accountability.

Long-term goals:

- Adopt validated screening and assessment tools for detention, diversion, and status offender youth.
- Support the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators' ongoing efforts for continual development of juvenile courts' research-informed detention and diversion program areas.
- Fund and support detention and diversion programs with data driven local management, statewide quality assurance, and action-oriented racial and ethnic disparities reduction plans.
- Identify additional opportunities for system reform by developing data capabilities to track youths' pathways through the juvenile justice system from civil to criminal cases, particularly looking at referral rate (law enforcement, school-based or other referral sources) across groups defined by race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation across jurisdictions.

Strategic Plan – Implementation

The two-year OJJDP Planning Grant Project concludes in September 2018 with a statewide strategic plan and proposed steps to meet each of the objectives. On September 21, 2018 the Juvenile Justice System Improvement (JJSI) Task Force will host a statewide summit to present the Strategic Plan and to identify key stakeholder engagement and collaboration in advancing key components of the strategic plan. The JJSI Summit will spotlight action plans, shared leadership and implementation timeline.

