



## Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration

### *Addressing Employee Concerns*



**Thank you for your input. We are interested. We are committed.**

JRA employees are resourceful, hard working, optimistic, and a key resource for the agency. This is especially true as we reshape JRA in response to the current economic environment. The work each of you do every day helps youth reach their potential. You work in partnership with youth, their families, and community resources to improve the lives of Washington citizens.

You can more effectively perform your work when you have the support of the JRA leadership team. The survey pointed to a number of areas we could improve. A few items are crucial to a strong foundation for our work. Those items are communication, opportunities for staff input, and recognition of employees. These areas will receive primary focus and action from JRA leadership in the coming year.

– John Clayton, Assistant Secretary

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information, please contact **Dana Phelps** at **360.902.8285**.



## Focus Issue: Communication between employees and managers

### Summary of the Issue

In the staff survey, many employees reported concerns about the amount of communication between managers and employees especially:

- limited communication between staff in the field and managers in Olympia
- not enough opportunity to give input on key decisions that are being made
- a sense that some managers did not have a complete understanding of the work being done in the JRA institutions and regions

### Since the survey:

A number of retirements and changes in key leadership positions have occurred since the survey. This change presents an ideal opportunity to forge new and stronger relationships between employees and the new leadership team.

### Our plan for the coming year :

- The JRA Assistant Secretary will visit each of the JRA institutions and regions in the coming year to talk about the One Department Framework and to hear from JRA staff about the work of JRA
- Both the Division Director of Institutions and the Division Director of Community Programs will visit each institution or region at least twice in the next year. During these visits the Directors will:
  - share information with staff on key initiatives in JRA, including the change in the JRA residential continuum
  - listen to employee ideas about the work that is being done
  - give an opportunity for staff to provide input and feedback
- JRA management team members will meet with groups of staff by specialty area or job type (program managers, coordinators) to gather input
- Whenever employee suggestions and input help shape the work of the agency, this will be noted as part of communication about the initiative or effort



## Focus Issue: Recognition of employees

### Summary of the Issue

In the staff survey, many employees indicated that it often seemed as if there managers did not know about the good work that they are doing and that staff recognition was infrequent. Given the structure of the JRA treatment model, it is very important that JRA address this concern. All JRA staff are expected to reinforce positive youth behavior. It is equally important to give positive feedback to staff.

### Our plan for the coming year

- JRA will implement a program to recognize staff on the spot. This will allow all levels of staff to call out the good work being done by their co-workers
- Members of the JRA leadership team during visits in the field throughout the year will take time to acknowledge the specific accomplishments of staff at the location



## Other important issues

### These are also important issues

There are two other areas that were identified as areas needing improvement:

- Defining how JRA measures success
- Using customer feedback to shape our work

### Our plan

- Measuring and communicating with others about JRA success are an important part of telling our story. Over the next year, JRA will implement a business plan to address key areas of impact for DSHS. Progress measurement is part of this plan. Key measures and our progress will be shared with staff.
- As part of the JRA treatment model, JRA will utilize several tools to get feedback from our clients. These include the quality assurance process being implemented in each facility to support the practice of DBT and the client outcome measures for youth on parole. Summaries of the input from clients on these tools will be made available to staff.

We can't separately address all concerns brought forward on the survey. We are glad to hear what issues concern you. As a group, you are committed to improving the lives of children, youth, and families. Please keep bringing forward those items that get in the way of accomplishing the work we are all tasked to do.

Thank you.