

# KANSAS JUVENILE JUSTICE WORKGROUP

## October 21, 2015 Meeting Summary

On October 21, 2015, the Kansas Juvenile Justice Workgroup met for the fifth time. On this occasion, the Workgroup engaged in policy development discussions by reviewing initial policy recommendations developed by three subgroups. The Workgroup also reviewed the estimated impact of the subgroups' initial recommendations.

### Review of Initial Subgroup Recommendations

The Workgroup reviewed and discussed the initial policy recommendations from each of the three subgroups:

- 1) Pre-Adjudication Decision-Making;
- 2) Evidence-Based Practices and Programming: Investment and Oversight; and
- 3) Dispositions: Supervision and Placement.

The subgroups had each convened multiple times before this Workgroup meeting to review Kansas findings, examine research and state examples, explore options to address Kansas' issues, and prepare those options for the larger Workgroup to consider for inclusion in the Workgroup's final report.

A representative from each subgroup provided a summary to the Workgroup of the research and Kansas-specific findings for each of the topics the subgroup addressed. The representative then reviewed the initial policy recommendations.

The initial recommendations presented and discussed were categorized as follows:

- **Prevent deeper juvenile justice system involvement** by reducing school referrals, providing more options for law enforcement at initial contact, reducing the use of pre-adjudication detention and eliminating temporary custody for certain offenders, and enhancing and standardizing pre-court and post-file diversion to provide early interventions.
- **Protect public safety by focusing system resources**, by tailoring eligibility for removal from the home, targeting resources toward serious offenders by limiting length of time spent out of home and overall case time,

using a uniform risk and needs assessment to better inform decision-making throughout the juvenile justice system, strengthening the quality of supervision and treatment by reducing system inefficiencies and targeting sanctions and services according to youth's risk and needs, and transferring only the most serious juvenile offenders to the criminal justice system.

- **Sustain effective practices** by reinvesting in evidence-based practices in the community, requiring training for juvenile justice professionals, improving the quality of juvenile defense representation, enhancing oversight, and increasing data collection and information sharing.

### Review of Preliminary Impact Projections

The Workgroup also reviewed projections of the impact of the Subgroups' initial policy recommendations. This review included projected reinvestment dollars resulting from estimated reductions in out-of-home placements that could instead be utilized for evidence-based practices in the community that have been shown to reduce recidivism and improve public safety. The Workgroup discussed the importance of ensuring that local communities receive these reinvestment dollars in order to increase evidence-based options available to the courts. The Workgroup also discussed revising the projections to maintain accuracy in the event that the recommendations change as a result of Workgroup members' feedback or during the legislative process.

### Detailed Discussion of Policy Recommendations

The Workgroup engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the subgroups' proposed policies and came to a consensus on a number of areas. The Workgroup also discussed questions, concerns, and recommendations that will be revised over the next month. The Workgroup asked that the policy recommendations and any changes from the discussion—along with information about the Workgroup process, data and system analysis, and research findings—be incorporated into a draft Workgroup report for review and finalization at the next Workgroup meeting.

### **Next Steps**

A Joint Committee hearing in the state legislature is scheduled for November 2, 2015, and will include discussion of the Workgroup's efforts.

The next Workgroup meeting will be held on November 17, 2015, in Topeka. At that time, the Workgroup will continue the discussion of policy recommendations and review the draft report for approval.

The Workgroup is acting on the charge of state leadership to develop proposals for comprehensive juvenile justice reform. In doing so, its focus is to:

- 1) Promote public safety and hold juvenile offenders accountable;
- 2) Control taxpayer costs; and
- 3) Improve outcomes for youth, families, and communities in Kansas.

Any recommendations made by the Workgroup will be used as the foundation for statutory, budgetary, and administrative changes during the 2016 legislative session.