

CREATING AND RESTORING HEALTHY FAMILIES

PARTNERS IN PREVENTION

Arkansas Department of Human Services

DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2009 - 2014

PREVENTING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

STRENGTH-BASED FAMILY SYSTEMS



POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Reform Plan 2009 - 2014

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The Division of Youth Services has developed a five-year comprehensive strategic plan that will revolutionize the juvenile justice system in Arkansas. The chart below summarizes the direction and scope of the system changes envisioned with the strategic plan.

Indicators	Our Past	Our Future
Concept of public safety	Incarcerating and committing offenders	Creating and restoring healthy families
Role of DYS	Responding to juvenile crime	Preventing juvenile delinquency
Response to system youth	Many in secure confinement	More in community-based services
Primary focus	Youth in trouble	Strength-based family systems
Budgets	Spiraling costs of incarceration	Money re-allocated to treatment
Method of operation	Independent bureaucracy	Responsive and agile network
Basis for decision making	Tradition and precedent	Practices proven effective and evidence-based
System employees	High stress and turnover	Highly trained and professional
Data system on youth	Fragmented and incomplete	Interactive, integrated and useful
Evaluation of providers	Compliance with contract	Positive outcomes for youth
Relationship with schools and courts	Independent efforts	Partners in prevention
Relationship with corrections	Feeder for adult prisons	Reverses path toward crime
National reputation	Behind national progress	Leader in reform

The strategic planning process began with the creation of a 50-member task force of stakeholders who identified issues and worked in small groups on action plans. Shortly after the creation of the task force, the department commissioned a comprehensive review of Arkansas's juvenile justice system by outside consultants Pat Arthur and Tim Roche. The consultant review was funded by the JEHT Foundation and was released in 2008. Director Ron Angel initiated a strategic planning process to respond to the conclusions and recommendations of the consultant report. The first step of the planning process was a three-day retreat of key stakeholders to develop a vision for the juvenile justice system in the state, and to develop long-term goals.



for review and comment. It was also presented at meetings of a variety of stakeholder groups during the spring of 2009. The initial planning steering committee met in April to review feedback to the plan and to finalize a draft, review and reporting procedures, and a timeline. The plan was ratified at a meeting of the Juvenile Justice Task Force in May. The plan will be a "living document" with periodic review and revision. Goal 1 of the plan outlines a process to create a strategic plan subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Task Force which will be responsible for overseeing plan implementation.

Throughout the process the hundreds of people who have given time, expertise, and funding have been motivated by one common goal expressed by Director Angel when he described why he accepted the job as Director of DYS after his federal retirement, "We're doing it for the kids." All of the participants have realized that the youth of Arkansas are our future. We cannot afford to fail them. A brighter future for all the children of Arkansas will contribute to a stronger state.

Even before the strategic planning process is completed, DYS is putting into motion a number of progressive initiatives including:

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- Contracting with UAMS to provide a mobile assessment team to assess the mental, physical, and emotional status of youth who have entered the court system. The team has provided helpful information to judges, has reduced the time youth spend in detention facilities awaiting placement with a community service provider, and has promoted more effective treatment for assessed needs;
 - Working with judges to modify the risk assessment instrument and procedures for judges to use in deliberating whether a youth should be committed to DYS;
 - Planning a regional pilot in the Northwest Arkansas quadrant to encourage more community resources so youth can stay close to home in receiving services to meet their needs and assure that they become more functional and contributing members of their communities;
 - Hiring a consultant to further develop Rite Track, a comprehensive data system which will ultimately help the department in tracking youth in all their interactions with state agencies, determine most effective methods of intervening with youth and families, and assure accountability to citizens and policy makers; and
 - Reducing in dependence on juvenile detention centers (JDCs) based on efforts to speed up the intake process to move youth more quickly from commitment to placement.

This draft plan has three parts: 1) DYS mission and vision statements; 2) values which guide the planning process; and 3) prioritized goals, objectives and strategies.

MISSION

The mission of the Division of Youth Services is to provide effective prevention, intervention and treatment programs to give opportunities for success to families and children in Arkansas and to ensure public safety.

VISION

Children and families in Arkansas are safe and have the resources they need in their communities to help them succeed.

VALUES

This plan is based on a number of shared values and beliefs among stakeholders for juvenile justice reform:

1. State resources and programs to support children and families in Arkansas should be coordinated in a system of care for maximum effectiveness. This imperative must infuse every goal and strategy in this plan.
2. Redirecting resources from incarceration and punishment to prevention and treatment will be more effective, less costly, and lead to greater public safety for citizens of the state.
3. Youth and families should receive services in community centers close to their homes whenever possible. This will allow more community buy-in, family involvement, and ease of transition after treatment.
4. Response to children in trouble should involve multi-system interventions with their families, and families should be involved in needs assessment and planning.
5. Programs and services should be strength-based and empower youth and families to succeed.
6. Programs and services should be evidence-based or have data showing effective outcomes. To achieve this accountability will require better baseline data and on-going data sharing as well as a commitment to data-based decision making.
7. All children and youth in the state should have equal opportunities for fairness, help and success without regard to gender, race or ethnicity, disability, geographic location, income level, or any other factor.
8. An effective juvenile justice system will require creative partnerships among state agencies, public and private schools, churches and faith-based organizations, local communities, the judicial system, and foundations.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

(Note: A separate timeline (indexed by goals) and a report card are included in appendices to provide tools for the Planning Implementation Advisory Committee to track progress toward plan goals rather than including dates on each strategy. Even though outcome measures are indicated within the plan for strategies, we anticipate that more holistic measures included in the report card will be the most significant measures of progress in juvenile justice reform).

Goal One: Create sustainable system changes in juvenile justice in Arkansas through broad consensus and shared responsibility among stakeholders.

Objective one: Complete a comprehensive five-year plan with input and buy-in from broad stakeholder groups across the state.

Strategies:

1. Create a plan in consultation with the 50-member Juvenile Justice Reform Task force.
2. Discuss the plan with juvenile judges in regional meetings.
3. Gain buy-in on system reform from community service providers.
4. Host a youth summit to hear the voices of young people involved with the system or who have been involved in the past.
5. Hold public hearings in each region of the state to gain input.
6. Review successful juvenile justice programs and initiatives from other states.
7. Create an interactive Web page to disseminate drafts of the plan and solicit input from stakeholders.

Outcome:

1. Comprehensive five-year plan

Objective two: Increase training capacity within the Division of Youth Services (DYS) and throughout the juvenile justice system on effective treatment methods for children, youth, and families.

Strategies:

1. Designate staff within DHS to coordinate training efforts and resources around the state.
2. Seek technical assistance from federal agencies and private foundations to provide training on effective interventions and best treatment practices.
3. Determine effective training currently available in state agencies, community service providers, or other state sources and make it available to others within the juvenile justice system.
4. Continuously monitor the results of the training (including evaluation by trainees) to determine training modifications and re-training needs.
5. Develop minimum training standards for staff in all youth programs administered or contracted by DHS to take effect.

Outcomes:

1. Minimum training standards for all DHS staff and contract providers
2. Technical assistance obtained from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and other federal agencies and private foundations
3. At least six training sessions completed for community service providers
4. Inventory of state training resources identified

Objective three: Conduct a public information campaign on the need for juvenile justice reform.

Strategies:

1. Develop and refine messages about the human and financial costs of secure confinement for youth who pose no risk to themselves and others.
2. Develop information about the effectiveness of community-based treatment strategies for children, youth, and families.
3. Distribute messages to the public through all available means.
4. Focus information efforts on state legislators and the governor's office to gain support for reform.

Outcomes:

1. Press conference to release the plan and promote the need for reform
2. Annual report card to promote progress in the juvenile justice reform effort
3. Enhanced support for reform efforts among state elected leaders

Objective four: Create and support cooperative partnerships to support juvenile justice reform.

Strategies:

1. Bring together community service providers, DYS administrators and juvenile judges in a series of regional meetings to enhance communication and relationships and to develop collaborative plans for achieving the goal of juvenile justice reform in the state.
2. Develop a strategic plan advisory committee as a subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Reform Task Force. The advisory committee's role will be to oversee implementation of the strategic plan and to receive frequent reports on goal achievement. They will report results and make recommendations to the larger Juvenile Justice Task Force.
3. Improve communication and collaboration between DYS and the Department of Human Services – interagency services .
4. Form a network of community organizations including churches and faith-based organizations, schools, universities, non-profit organizations, businesses, community service providers and other groups, to provide and support culturally appropriate community-based services for families and youth.



Outcomes:

1. DYS strategic plan advisory committee created
2. Series of regional meetings with community-based providers, DYS leadership and juvenile justice conducted
3. Network of partnership resources created across the state to support reform efforts
4. Greater inter-agency collaboration to meet the needs of youth and families

Goal Two: Support children, youth, and families by providing appropriate services close to home with the result of less secure confinement of youth and greater safety of Arkansas communities.

Objective one: Develop a regional pilot program to provide comprehensive services for youth in the region.

Strategies:

1. Work with community service providers to promote a broader continuum of community-based services for youth in the region.
2. Implement principles from Systems of Care to provide comprehensive services for families, children, and youth.
3. Develop at least one school district partnership from the region to strengthen initiatives to reduce school-based referrals to juvenile court and youth commitments in the region.
4. Use a standardized intake risk assessment in all judicial districts in the region.
5. Ensure that as many youth as possible committed to DYS by judges in the region have treatment plans that can be executed in the region.

6. Commission an outside program evaluation, and report the results of the pilot to support funding for regionally tailored programs in other parts of the state. **Outcomes:**

Outcomes:

1. 25% more youth kept within their own region for treatment
2. Decrease secure confinement by 5% a year for two years within the region
3. Reduction in school-based referrals of youth to the juvenile justice system from the pilot school district in the region
4. Enhanced continuum of community-based service in the region

Objective two: Fund up to three competitively-selected pilot projects in high-need areas of the state to demonstrate the effectiveness of community treatment or prevention programs for children, family and youth.

Strategies:

1. Issue a Request for Proposals for community-based treatment or prevention programs.
 - a. Applicants must document community needs and existing service gaps.
 - b. Youth and families must be involved in project planning.
 - c. Applicants must use treatment or prevention methods proven effective to serve children, youth, and families in their communities.
 - d. Applicants must commit to outcome measures for the effectiveness of their programs.
2. Award up to three grants for two-year demonstration projects with a funding mechanism to encourage communities to keep youth in the community and to discourage DYS commitments.
3. Assess the pilots with an outside program evaluation and publicize results of the programs.

Outcomes:

1. Reduction in the use of secure confinement
2. Results from the pilot programs can provide the rationale and documentation for other successful community programs across the state
3. Cost savings from reduced use of secure confinement invested in successful community-based programming

Objective three: Roll out assessment procedures and tools statewide.

Strategies:

1. Develop a standardized risk assessment tool for statewide pre-adjudication use by juvenile judges.
2. In some cases when indicated, use the YLSI (a standardized professional risk assessment tool) in addition to inform judges prior to final judgment in the case.
3. Expand the UAMS mobile assessment team statewide to complete assessments of youth committed to DYS.
4. Validate all assessment tools.

Outcomes:

1. Better predictive data on risk and treatment needs, resulting in fewer commitments and more diversion to community programs
2. Enhanced public safety

Objective four: Develop or use community advisory councils as two-way communication vehicles to identify community youth needs and resources, and to disseminate information about effective programs and practices.

Strategies:

1. Identify current community or county advisory councils with a similar mission that might also serve in an advisory capacity for DYS.
2. Develop community advisory councils in communities/counties/regions without an existing council to represent the voices of youth, families, elected officials, community service providers, judicial officers, schools, churches and faith-based organizations, and other stakeholders.
3. Encourage the involvement of community advisory councils in proposals for DYS program funding.

Outcome:

1. Community advisory councils established in each part of the state to identify needs, resources, and opportunities for youth and families

Objective five: Map community and regional resources available to assist families, children, and youth in the state of Arkansas.

Strategies:

1. In cooperation with other state agencies, identify all state-funded programs offering services to juvenile justice involved youth.
2. Coordinate with System of Care, Prevention Resource Centers, Family and Youth Assistance Network (FYAN) and a variety of community organizations to map community resources and programs.
3. Work with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Family and Youth Assistance Network (FYAN) to develop a geographic resource mapping of all services for children and families by county to include: provider ID information, services provided, eligibility requirements such as services (length), and capacity (length of stay).
4. Coordinate with other divisions in DHS, FYAN and the Division of County Operations in creating a searchable on-line database of resources.

Outcome:

1. On-line map of community resources and identification of regional gaps

Objective six: Work with courts, schools, and community-based providers in developing a system of graduated sanctions for youth.

Strategies:

1. Develop a continuum of graduated interventions and services as alternatives to confinement.
2. Provide graduated sanctions training to judges, school officials, juvenile officers and others.
3. Provide data on results of successful graduated sanctions programs to judicial officers and to the general public.
4. Provide commitment reports to judges directly.

Outcomes:

1. Fewer youth in DYS secure confinement
2. Technical assistance on graduated sanctions obtained
3. Training on graduated sanctions provided to judges, school officials, juvenile officers, and others

Goal Three: Provide empowering and effective services for youth and families that focus on strengths and skill-building.

Objective one: Provide programs and services to families to prevent youth problems and to equip families to help youth.

Strategies:

1. Seek family input on their needs before developing intervention plans.
2. Employ a family needs assessment tool (conducted by community-based providers) which identifies family strengths to build on, such as the Youth Outcome Questionnaire developed by System of Care.
3. Provide families with a full range of non-traditional and traditional supports – such as family therapy, after school and summer programs, parenting education, support groups, respite services, self-advocacy training and other culturally appropriate programs which have been proven to be effective.
4. Provide “wraparound” services to youth and families through coordination among the Division of Youth Services, the Division of Developmental Disability Services, the Division of Child and Family Services, and the Division of Behavioral Health Services at local and state levels to identify services that meet the individual needs of youth.



Outcome:

1. An increase in community-based services available to youth and families, providing more options for judges and schools in intervention strategies

Objective two: Empower youth with life skills education and training.

Strategies:

1. Develop services that meet the needs of youth in the community such as mentoring programs, early interventions, day treatment, transitional living, life skills, parenting, career planning, job seeking and interviewing, and other training and services.
2. Increased intermediate levels of service.
3. Expand re-entry services, including mentoring.

Outcome:

1. An increase in community services available to youth with a corresponding decrease in recidivism rates, youth commitments and confinements, and school suspensions and expulsions

Objective three: Expand and strengthen alcohol and substance abuse programs.

Strategies:

1. Work with state and local judiciary and legislators to implement and evaluate juvenile drug courts.
2. Provide substance abuse services statewide that are evidence-based or have demonstrated promising outcomes for youth and families.

Outcomes:

1. An increase in court alternatives for youth with substance abuse problems
2. An increase in community substance abuse treatment programs statewide
3. Decrease in the confinement of youth with substance abuse problems

Goal Four: Strengthen programs for early identification and intervention to prevent juvenile delinquency, including school programs.

Objective one: Strengthen dialogue and relationships with school boards, superintendents, principals, and leaders in the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) to develop strategies to keep more kids in school.

Strategies:

1. Bring together ADE, school superintendents, law enforcement, prosecutors, juvenile defenders, DYS officials, parents, youth, community service providers and judges to improve partnerships and explore changes in practices that will keep youth in school and out of the juvenile justice system.
2. Increase school representation on existing community boards and task forces.
3. Increase communication with school officials and administrators and with the Arkansas Department of Education to update them on juvenile justice reform efforts and why they are a necessary part of it.

Outcome:

1. Increased partnerships with schools and educators to address youth needs and problems

Objective two: Work with schools to identify and support pilot programs.

Strategies:

1. Develop partnerships to offer technical assistance to programs that are evidence-based or proven effective to reduce court referrals.
2. Work with school districts on successful re-entry for youth committed to DYS when they return to their local communities.
3. Identify and promote effective early intervention programs to reduce and prevent truancy.

Outcomes:

1. Successful joint pilot programs in schools
2. Reduced school referrals of youth to juvenile courts

Goal Five: Collect and analyze more data to determine needs of children, youth, families and communities, and use the results to improve the system.

Objective one: Complete a data flow analysis report summarizing gaps in the collection and use of information about youth in the juvenile justice system, and make recommendations for improvements in these systems in order to provide better information to judges, community service providers, researchers, educators, and DYS staff.

Strategies:

1. Hire an outside specialist to complete the work.
2. Seek grant funding to support the project.

Outcome:

1. Consultant report completed with recommendations on improving the data and information-collecting systems for juvenile justice involved youth

Objective two: Develop agreements with the Division of Developmental Disability Services (DDS), the Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS), and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and implement memoranda of agreement with the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to share data and work cooperatively in early identification of problems in children and families .

Strategies:

1. Share data between DCFS, DYS and System of Care to determine the number of children involved in DCFS in abuse and neglect cases or foster care who go on to juvenile delinquency and/or DYS commitments.
2. Collect better data on juveniles placed on probation or pre-adjudication diversion.
3. Find ways to provide data by individuals rather than in aggregate statistical formats to be able to track individual youth as they move through the system.
4. Develop ways to protect confidentiality while sharing data.
5. Develop ways to share data among the Rite Track (the DYS database), CHRIS (the DCFS data base) and DNET (the AOC database).

Outcomes:

1. More comprehensive and integrated data and information collection systems for youth in the juvenile justice system
2. Better policy and treatment decisions

Objective three: Publish an annual assessment of the juvenile justice system. This report should include an analysis of the following:

- Characteristics/Profile of the Juvenile Population
- Juvenile Arrests
- Juvenile Court Filings
- Juvenile Commitments to DYS
- Risk Factors Associated with Juvenile Delinquency (including but not limited to teen pregnancy, alcohol and drug use, smoking, educational achievement, risky behaviors etc.)

Outcome:

1. An annual report to track progress and inform policy and decision making on juvenile justice reform

Goal Six: Develop the capacity of the system for cultural sensitivity and services to meet needs of special populations.

Objective one: Create accommodation for special populations in each judicial district to allow services to be provided close to home.

Strategies:

1. Develop and expand gender-responsible programming statewide, such as substance abuse treatment for girls.
2. Expand transitional living programs for juvenile sex offenders statewide.
3. Develop programs to meet the needs of system-involved youth with disabilities.

4. Assess unique needs of other special populations.

Outcomes:

1. More programs suitable for special populations in each part of the state
2. More community programs as an alternative to DYS commitment of youth
3. More local/regional youth treatment options

Objective two: Increase the capacity within the juvenile justice system to interact with youth and families in their own language and in culturally sensitive ways.

Strategies:

1. Build capacity to provide services to children, youth, and families in an appropriate language for them.
2. All paper work and forms should be translated into Spanish or other languages with a high incidence within system-involved youth.
3. Provide and require cultural sensitivity training for all DYS and contract staff, following a standard professional curriculum.

Outcomes:

1. Translated forms and documents
2. Cultural sensitivity training selected and promoted
3. Interpreters identified in each area of the state

Goal Seven: Ensure that secure facilities used to confine and treat youth are safe and humane and provide genuine opportunity for youth to succeed and to make educational progress.

Objective one: Enhance training and oversight of contract and DYS staff.

Strategies:

1. Support the hiring and funding of professional staff with minimum requirements for all contract and DYS staff.
2. Hire and train staff with a rehabilitation and therapeutic philosophy in working with youth.
3. Provide minimum training standards and on-going standardized training to DYS staff and contract providers working directly with youth on humane intervention techniques, trauma-informed care and positive behavior modification, and require evidence of completion.
4. Develop a multidisciplinary team to track, examine, and address serious incidents across programs.

Outcomes:

1. Lower staff turnover
2. Fewer incidents involving staff mistakes or misconduct
3. Better youth outcomes for youth in secure confinement



Objective two: Move toward the use of smaller therapeutic residential programs.

Strategies:

1. Support the transition to small therapeutic facilities that encourage group interaction and identification.
2. National “best practices” should be used in the design of any new facilities.

Outcomes:

1. Smaller, safer therapeutic facilities
2. Better outcomes for youth in secure confinement

Objective three: Improve education facilities and programs.

Strategies:

1. Make sure all secure facilities meet state educational adequacy standards for education and are in compliance with federal regulations on special education.
2. Create state-wide educational process/program for confined youth to assure progress.
3. Placements should facilitate the educational needs of each individual child.
4. Education should include independent living skills.
5. Partner with the Department of Workforce Education to provide vocational education options for system-involved youth.

Outcome:

1. More youth in secure confinement make educational progress as determined by pre-and post-educational assessments

Objective four: Build public trust and encourage accountability by insisting on system transparency.

Strategies:

1. Publicize data of rates of serious incidents (battery, sexual assault, and awols) at DYS-funded facilities.
2. Include materials on positive accomplishments as well such as occupational training completed, GEDs, enlistment in the armed services, recidivism rates, acceptance into secondary education institutions, etc.

Outcome:

1. More public trust in and stronger governmental support for the juvenile justice system

Goal Eight: Eliminate racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.

Objective one: Collect and analyze data on racial disparities in the juvenile justice system in Arkansas.

Strategies:

1. Develop data collection systems to capture data from schools, police, prosecutors, the courts, DYS, DHS, etc. to look at population demographics at every decision-making point in the juvenile justice system to help determine why racial disparity exists and at what point/stages such disparities occur.

2. Provide data on racial disparities to schools, staff, judges, police, prosecutors, probation officers, etc.

Outcome:

1. More understanding of existence of and reasons for racial disparities in juvenile justice

Objective two: Facilitate technical assistance and training for DYS and contract staff, judges, police, prosecutors, probation officers, etc.

Strategies:

1. Facilitate technical assistance and training to reduce racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.
2. Encourage the use of standardized assessment tools to foster more structured decision making at all critical decision-making points in the system.
3. Identify and promote successful programs on decreasing minority disparities in juvenile justice.

Outcome:

1. Decrease racial disparities in arrests, prosecutions, and commitments

Objective three: Coordinate with local communities to form Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) councils in regions in which racial disparities are the highest.

Strategies:

1. Expand the focus of disproportionate minority contact initiative to DYS pilot areas such as Hispanic populations in Northwest Arkansas.
2. Work with local communities to develop and support DMC councils in most affected areas to assess risk/needs.
3. Provide technical assistance and training to assist DMC councils to develop tailored, successful, and sustainable local solutions.
4. Connect community-based providers with local DMC councils to coordinate efforts.

Outcomes:

1. More community involvement in reducing racial disparities
2. Decreased racial disparities in arrests, prosecutions, and commitments

Goal Nine: Develop a stronger system of quality assurance and accountability to ensure that resources are producing measurable performance outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Objective one: Revise reporting measures in provider contracts.

Strategies:

1. Develop quality assurance standards to create a reporting and accountability system.
2. Revise current reporting requirements to encompass increased performance outcome measurement (standardized when possible to permit comparisons among providers).
3. Ensure that outcomes identified through System of Care's Youth Outcome Questionnaire are among tracked outcomes.
4. Review other states for development of a standardized performance outcome assessment tool/instrument for DYS programs by area of service.

5. Train on continuous quality improvement systems for community based and residential programs, using the results of outcome evaluation.
6. Pre/post assessment results will be kept in Rite Track.

Outcomes:

1. Performance outcome measures integrated into all provider contracts
2. Data systematically provided, analyzed, and used to permit continuous quality improvement

Goal Ten: Seek new sources of federal, state, and private funding for programs and services as well as reinvesting funds within DYS as the focus shifts from secure confinement to community treatment.

Strategies:

1. Maximize the potential for federal, state, and private funding through policies and placements.
2. Optimize the use of Medicaid funding for juvenile justice involved youth.
3. Utilize Title IV-E funding for foster youth committed to DYS.
4. Offer incentives to communities and judicial districts to contribute funding for services and programs.
5. Seek funding and assistance from foundations for system reform.
6. Work with the Department of Human Services to suspend rather than terminate Medicaid eligibility of youth committed to DYS in order to ease transition to community after-care services upon leaving DYS.
7. Also work on greater utilization of Medicaid funding for juveniles remanded to detention to facilitate mental health services for juveniles awaiting placements or placed on probation in the community.
8. Develop more funding for community-based services, including state, federal, and foundation funding.

Outcome:

1. Increased funding for community programs and juvenile justice reform efforts

BEYOND DYS – OTHER ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

This plan has focused on reform efforts that DYS can lead or contribute toward. But DYS alone cannot achieve juvenile justice reform in the state of Arkansas. Other institutions and leaders are

instituting their own reform efforts, and will be key players in juvenile justice reform goals. Examples include:

- Schools are attempting to meet the needs of all children in our state with more effective discipline policies and programs to meet the needs of students with various learning abilities and styles. They also are trying to support student success with programs such as mentoring, tutoring, parental involvement and education programs, after-school programs, and summer programs.
- Law enforcement officers seek ways to prevent and respond to juvenile crime and delinquency.
- Juvenile courts are seeking better ways to assess the risk juveniles pose to themselves and to others and to seek appropriate support and treatment alternatives.
- Other state agencies and divisions such as the Department of Human Services, the Division of Behavioral Health Services, System of Care, the Division of Children and Family Services, and the Administrative Office of the Courts are working to support healthy families and to address overlapping issues such as the high proportion of children who are victims of child abuse and neglect who go on to be juvenile offenders, or the high proportion of youth with mental health issues or development disabilities who become involved with the court system.
- The 13 community-based providers are doing work in the community to keep local delinquent and at-risk youth from further movement into the juvenile justice system with programs such as casework, aftercare, electronic monitoring, emergency shelter, parenting classes, day treatment, community mental health services, and residential treatment.
- Grassroots community organizations are increasingly forming to address needs they see in their communities to support family and youth.

All of these efforts need to be coordinated and integrated to work toward a positive outcome for families and youth in our state.

JUVENILE JUSTICE REPORT CARD

The true measure of success of this plan is its impact on the well-being of children and families in the state of Arkansas. This report card will be published on-line each year in conjunction with the annual assessment report on the juvenile justice system mentioned in Goal 5. Over time trends in the report card measures will indicate progress in reducing youth crime and serving system-involved youth.

For maximum usefulness, it would be desirable, if possible, for all measures to be reported in a state summary, but also reported for each county. State leaders should also be able to have a context for interpreting their results by seeing overall population figures and demographic breakdowns for their counties. Report card measures include:

1. Number of youth and families served by DYS-contracted community service providers in community settings (excluding aftercare), broken down by type of service and by residential and non-residential.
2. Number of youth committed to DYS custody, broken down by youth served in secure confinement and those served in community programs.
3. Average length of stay for DYS-committed youth in juvenile detention centers and average length of stay in residential programs.

4. Recidivism rate (reported both as re-commitment or adjudication) broken down by youth served in secure confinement and community programs. The rate should be reported as to whether the new offense was a technical violation or probation violation. The report card will also report the numbers of re-arrests of system-involved youth.
5. Percentage of youth eligible for high school completion during their commitment to DYS receiving high school diplomas or GEDs, broken down by age.
6. Educational progress of youth served by DYS, as measured by pre- and post-educational assessments. Data will be reported separately for special education students.
7. Number of negative incident reports involving youth in DYS custody reported in categories of staff/youth incidents , youth/youth incidents, and self-injuries.
8. The proportion of minority youth committed to DYS compared to population percentage reported by judicial district and county.
9. The amount of DYS budget devoted to secure confinement compared to budgeted funds used to support community service programs.
10. Positive accomplishments of system-involved youth.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF TIMELINE

2009



Complete plan and set up Plan Implementation Advisory Committee

Regional meetings with judges, community-based providers and DYS leadership to enhance communication and working relationships

Launch pilot programs

Update data systems

Identify staff to coordinate training and set minimum standards

2010



Educate legislators and identify champions for juvenile justice reform

Pre-adjudication risk assessment statewide as a tool for juvenile judges

Training needs assessment for all DYS and contract employees

Data sharing among state agencies and data flow analysis

On-line directory of community services for youth and families

Work with existing community councils

First annual report on state of juvenile justice

Expand juvenile drug and alcohol programs

2011



DYS mobile assessment teams statewide

Dialogue with education leaders on mutual interests of keeping kids in school and increasing graduation rates

Outcome assessment measures on all provider contracts

Seek new state and private funding for juvenile justice reform efforts

Meet all federal and state education requirements for youth in confinement

Collect and analyze data on racial disparities in all parts of the juvenile justice system

On-going standardized training for all DYS and contract employees

2012



Assessment of pilot programs

Technical assistance for schools, judges, law enforcement, probation officers and others on graduated sanctions, disproportionate minority contact, and other topics.

Programs for special populations

Network of training resources fully developed

2013



Validate risk assessment tool used by juvenile judges

Assess training effectiveness

Promote best practices in educational programs for system-involved youth

2014



Full array of community resources to serve family and youth

50% reduction in youth in secure confinement

TIMELINE FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

2009



June

Complete plan and release with a press conference on juvenile justice reform (Goal 1, Obj. 1).

July

Complete instrument development for risk assessment for judges (Goal 2, Obj. 3).

Release an RFP for pilot programs and continue to select new pilots each year thereafter (Goal 1, Obj. 2).

Implement regional pilot in Northwest Arkansas (Goal 2, Obj. 2).

Create a strategic plan advisory committee to oversee implementation (Goal 1, Obj. 4).

December

Obtain technical assistance from OJJDP and other sources to train the trainer (ongoing) (Goal 1, Obj. 2).

Establish minimum training standards for DYS & contracted employees (Goal 1, Obj. 2 and Goal 7, Obj. 1).

Identify DYS staff to coordinate training resources (Goal 1, Obj. 2).

Conduct a series of regional meetings with judges, community-based providers and DYS leaders (repeated annually to facilitate relationships, communication and cooperation) (Goal 1, Obj. 4).

Discuss plan with stakeholder groups and gain input (Goal 1, Obj. 1).

Update Rite Track with federal stimulus funding (Goal 5, Obj. 2).

Create a data work group (Goal 5, Obj. 2).

Award funding for pilot programs (Goal 2, Obj. 2).

2010



March

Focus on legislative education on juvenile justice reform and identify champions (Goal 1, Obj. 3).

Strengthen and expand drug and alcohol programs and support drug courts (Goal 3, Obj. 3).

June

Develop outcome assessment measures for current community-based provider contracts (Goal 9, Obj. 2).

Implement statewide risk assessment instrument for judges (Goal 2, Obj. 3).

Complete statewide inventory of community resources for family and youth and create an on-line directory with annual updates. (Goal 2, Obj. 5).

Complete a training needs assessment for DYS and contracted employee (annual thereafter) (Goal 2, Obj. 2).

Create a fiscal incentive pilot to encourage judges and local communities to provide resources for family and youth as alternatives to DYS commitment (Goal 2, Obj. 2).

Develop data sharing among CHRIS, AOC, ACIC, RiteTrack data bases and develop data access safeguards to protect confidentiality for individuals. (on-going) (Goal 5, Obj. 2).

Identify community councils that could coordinate with DYS on community needs and resources.

December

Complete at least six train-the-trainer sessions for DYS and contracted staff on Matrix, YAP, YSLMI, Multi-Systemic Family Therapy or other therapeutic approaches (Goal 1, Obj. 2).

Publish first annual report on the state of juvenile justice in Arkansas and release in a press conference to promote public education. Include reports of serious incidents and positive accomplishments at youth facilities in the report (Goal 5, Obj. 3, Goal 1, Obj. 3, Goal 7, Obj. 4).

Translate forms into Spanish and provide interpreters for families and youth across state (Goal 6, Obj. 2).

Complete a data flow analysis to identify gaps in current data available (Goal 5, Obj. 1).

2011

Make UAMS Mobile Assessment teams available statewide (Goal 2, Obj. 2).

Start dialogues with school leaders and the AR Department of Education on joint goals of keeping more students in school and achieving higher graduation rates (Goal 4, Obj. 1).

Build outcome assessment measures into all community-based provider contracts as they are renewed (Goal 9, Obj. 1).

Seek state funding in the legislative session and apply for major foundation funding to support reform efforts. (ongoing) (Goal 10).

Meet all current state and federal requirements for educational facilities and services for youth in secure confinement. (Goal 7, Obj. 3).

Create community councils and DMCs in areas without existing councils (Goal 1, Obj. 4, Goal 8, Obj. 3).

Collect and analyze data on racial disparities at each step of the juvenile justice process (Goal 8, Obj. 1).

Promote life skills training for youth in all parts of the state (Goal 3, Obj. 2).

Provide on-going standardized training for all DYS and contract employees (Goal 1, Obj. 2).

2012

Complete assessment of first round of pilot programs (Goal 2, Obj. 1 and 2).

Assess fiscal incentives pilot (Goal 2, Obj. 2).

Complete a network of training resources and services to meet training needs of DYS and contracted employees, community volunteers and others (Goal 1, Obj. 2).

Provide technical assistance for schools, judges, law enforcement, probation officers, and others on graduated sanctions, disproportionate minority contact, positive behavior modification, and other needed topics. (Goal 8, Obj. 2; Goal 1, Obj. 2; and Goal 2, Obj. 6).

Create and support programs to accommodate the needs of special populations in each region of the state. (Goal 6, Obj. 1).

2013

Validate risk assessment tool used by juvenile judges (Goal 2, Obj. 3).

Assess training effectiveness (Goal 1, Obj. 2).

Promote best practices in education programs for system-involved youth (Goal 4, Obj. 2).

2014

Achieve a full array of community resources to serve family and youth (Goal 2 and 3).

Decrease the number of youth in secure confinement by 50% (Goals 2 and 8).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADE	Arkansas Department of Education
AOC	Administrative Office of the Courts
CHRIS	The database administered by the Division of Child and Family Services
DBHS	Division of Behavioral Health Services
DCFS	Division of Child and Family Services
DDDS	Division of Developmental Disability Services
DHS	Department of Human Services, the state agency over all the divisions
DMC	Disproportionate Minority Contact, the term used when minorities are over-represented in the juvenile justice system
DNET	The database administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts
DYS	Division of Youth Services, the division charged with juvenile justice programs
FYAN	The Family Youth Assistance Network
OJJDP	The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a division of the U.S. Department of Justice
RFP	Request for proposals, an invitation to submit ideas for grant funding
Rite Track	The database administered by the Division of Youth Services
SOC	System of Care – a philosophy of social services that encourages coordination of services, parental/family involvement, and strength-based programs
UALR	University of Arkansas at Little Rock
UAMS	University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
YLSI	Youth Life Skills Inventory, an assessment tool to determine youth needs
YOQ	Youth Outcome Questionnaire, a holistic assessment tool used by System of Care

