



Juvenile Justice  
Advisory Group

# Annual Report 2020

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**New York State Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG)  
2020 Annual Report**

The U.S. Congress requires the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group to report to the Governor and Legislature annually. This report fulfills that requirement for 2020.

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## *I. Introduction and Background*

The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) created the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to support state and local delinquency prevention efforts and juvenile justice system improvement; establish grant programs; and outline federal standards, known as core protections, for the care and custody of justice-involved youth.

Reauthorization of the JJDP in 2018 updated the core protections, restructured the prevention components of the law, expanded OJJDP research and evaluation purposes, and increased reporting requirements and accountability. These changes took effect Oct. 1, 2019, the beginning of the federal fiscal year.

New York State Executive Order 80 established the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) as the required state advisory group for overseeing the development and implementation of the state plan, supervising the distribution of federal delinquency prevention funds and monitoring compliance with federal juvenile justice mandates. Board members are appointed by the Governor and represent a range of juvenile justice stakeholders: criminal justice, human services, court and research professionals, advocates, formerly justice-involved youth, community members and others.

The Executive Order also designates the state Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) as the agency that supervises the preparation of the state's juvenile justice plan; administers the plan and manages federal delinquency prevention funding allocated to New York. The DCJS Office of Youth Justice (OYJ) provides administrative support to the JJAG and oversees the implementation and monitoring of contracts on the advisory group's behalf.

The Division of Criminal Justice Services collaborates with the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) on certain juvenile justice initiatives and during 2017, 2018 and 2019, DCJS and OCFS worked with other state agencies to implement New York's Raise the Age law, which increased the age of criminal responsibility to 18 over a two-year period: 16-year-olds were no longer charged as adults (Oct. 1, 2018) and 17-year-olds, a year later (Oct. 1, 2019).

The JJAG annually oversees allocation of approximately \$2.1 million in federal grants, which fund delinquency prevention, effective interventions for justice-involved youth and improvements to youth justice systems. In addition, the JJAG monitors the state's compliance with the four core requirements of the federal law:

- sight and sound separation of juvenile delinquents from adult offenders;
- deinstitutionalization of status offenders;
- removal of juvenile delinquents from adult jails and lockups; and
- reducing disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system.

## ***II. Federal Mandates: Compliance and Monitoring***

States receiving federal Title II formula grant funding must comply with those four core protections. DCJS contracts with the state Commission of Correction (SCOC) to monitor and ensure compliance with the following requirements, which are related to permissible methods of confinement for youth.

- **Deinstitutionalization of status offenders** prohibits placing a youth who has been determined to be a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) in secure detention or correctional facilities;
- **Separation of juveniles from adult offenders** requires that juveniles who are alleged or found to have been delinquent and/or designated as a PINS must not have any contact with adult inmates awaiting trial or convicted of a crime; and
- **Removal of juveniles from adult jails and lockups** prohibits using adult jails and lockups to confine juveniles for any length of time.

The Commission has statutory authority to monitor police lockups, local county correctional facilities and state prisons. Existing New York State laws meet or exceed federally mandated requirements for the custody and detention of status offenders and non-offenders; separation of juveniles from adult offenders; and removal of juveniles from adult jails and lockups. As a result, facilities statewide either meet or exceed federal requirements by complying with state law.

SCOC maintains a monitoring schedule that ensures that all adult jails, lockups and secure facilities for juveniles are inspected at least every three years. These facilities must report certain incidents to the Commission, which reviews them and takes action as deemed appropriate. The state Office of Children and Family Services and New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) are responsible for operating juvenile facilities throughout the state. SCOC and DCJS have agreements in place permitting onsite inspections and reviews of records in all juvenile facilities throughout the state to ensure they are in compliance with federal standards.

New York's strategy for reducing racial and ethnic disparities (R.E.D.) in the youth justice system includes a state-level compliance management effort; support of local reforms; implementation of best practices that are designed to reduce disproportionate minority contact; and technical assistance to local government and nonprofit organizations. Title II funds partially support a full-time, statewide Race Equity Coordinator at DCJS to monitor and improve the reporting of race and ethnicity-related data; identify and provide guidance on implementing best practices; and provide technical assistance and training on racial and ethnic disparities for local and state-level stakeholders.

The Race Equity Coordinator is responsible for monitoring compliance with strategies to reduce disproportionate minority representation in the juvenile justice system across the state using a data-driven process to promote an overall equity initiative that supports training, programming and changing policy and practice. This includes working with state and local entities to enhance the quality and quantity of data measuring disproportionality, collaborating with localities to investigate root causes of disparity when disproportionality is found and implementing strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities and increase equity.

To accomplish this work, the Race Equity Coordinator provides training and technical assistance to local and statewide partners, helping to identify policies and practices that may contribute to disparate treatment of youth of color in the system. Training includes both the historical perspective of race equity and the impact implicit bias has on decision making and everyday practice. In 2020, the Coordinator:

- Partnered with the DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, which offers the Fundamentals of Probation Practice (FPP) training for new probation officers and trained those individuals about racial and ethnic disparities and the mind science of implicit bias, racial anxiety and stereotype threat.
- Provided technical assistance to the state's R.E.D. Advisory Committee to:
  - develop a bench card regarding issues of equity;
  - issue best practice guidance for data collection and assist with data collection issues related to race and ethnicity;
  - issue a best practice guidance document on the process of blinding decision-making points; and
  - create a cross-system, cross-agency glossary of equity-related terminology.
- Presented about racial and ethnic disparities at local and national conferences.
- Supported the state's Regional Youth Justice Teams and other cross-agency groups working to address R.E.D.

### ***III. Juvenile Justice Advisory Group Activities***

The JJAG began 2020 with the goal of building upon its progress from the previous year but the COVID-19 pandemic changed nearly every aspect of life and work in New York State, the nation and the world.

All facets of the different systems that interact with youth – probation departments, courts, schools, and nonprofit organizations – changed the way they operated. They shifted to virtual platforms and many youth remained in their communities to reduce capacity in congregate, residential facilities. This resulted in the JJAG shifting its priorities and putting on hold or revamping projects that were started prior to the pandemic to accommodate the new virtual environment. This report reflects the JJAG's work under those circumstances.

The JJAG met quarterly in 2020: in-person for the first meeting and virtually for the three others. These meetings covered a range of topics, including summary presentations of select projects; reviews of federal funding commitments and balances; briefings on state and federal juvenile justice initiatives; and discussions of policy and funding priorities. The JJAG also embarked on a strategic planning process in 2020, with interviews of its members and other key stakeholders conducted by OYJ and the New York State Youth Justice Institute (YJI) during the summer, followed by a two-day retreat in September. The JJAG has adopted the new three-year plan and it is available on the DCJS website: [criminaljustice.ny.gov](https://criminaljustice.ny.gov) > Reference > Reports and Publications.

The Office of Youth Justice also provides support to the JJAG by managing meeting logistics, providing programmatic oversight for projects, and developing funding solicitations based on the group's identified priorities, in addition to other administrative functions. The DCJS Office of Program Development and Funding (OPDF) oversees contracts and budgets to ensure compliance with federal funding

requirements. New York State juvenile justice data are collected by several state and local agencies, including OCFS, the Office of Court Administration (OCA), the Office of the New York City Criminal Justice Coordinator, the New York City Administration for Children’s Services and the New York City Police Department (NYPD). Partnering with these agencies and others, the DCJS Office of Justice Research and Performance (OJRP) compiles and analyzes juvenile justice data to produce statewide juvenile justice trends.

The JJAG continued to monitor ongoing projects and implemented several new initiatives in alignment with the three-year plan for juvenile justice.

### **A. Three-Year Plan for Juvenile Justice (2018 – 2020)**

Federal law requires states to develop three-year plans outlining long-range strategies for use of Title II Formula funds. During interim years, states submit annual applications that update accomplishments, provide juvenile justice data and demonstrate compliance with the federal law’s core protections.

In 2020, the JJAG continued its progress on initiatives started under the 2015 – 2017 three-year plan; authorized awards to build upon that work and focused on four additional priorities identified in the 2018 – 2020 three-year plan; and supported the following activities in 2020:

**Priority Area 1:** Improve capacity of decision-makers to match response to the risks and needs of youth that become involved in the state’s juvenile justice system.

#### ***Raise the Age Implementation***

As noted, New York State raised the age of criminal responsibility to 18 in two phases. The law also prohibits 16- and 17-year-olds from being detained in adult jails and prisons; makes substantive changes to the procedures and mechanisms used to process these youth in the criminal and youth justice systems; allows for additional services for youth; and alters the types of detention and/or placement to which they may be subjected. The law extends Juvenile Delinquency (JD) classification to include 16- and 17-year-olds in most cases where the alleged crime is a misdemeanor and creates the new category of Adolescent Offender and a Youth Part of Criminal Court to handle 16- and 17-year-olds who are charged with serious offenses. In 2020, juvenile justice professionals statewide, working with officials from DCJS and other state agencies, continued to adjust their practices to accommodate 16- and 17-year-olds in the system for the first full year of Raise the Age.

**Priority Area 2:** All justice-involved youth will be treated fairly and equitably and will have access to appropriate services, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation class and/or culture.

#### ***Race Equity Work***

DCJS continued to implement the state’s three-year plan to advance equity and reduce disparities. The plan includes the following goals and objectives:

- Enhance data capacity, collection and analysis;
- Provide leadership development opportunities and technical assistance to both state and local stakeholders;

- Target interventions in counties with high disparity rates; and
- Implement program and policy changes as necessary.

In 2020, the JJAG approved additional funding for the Office of Youth Justice's partnership with the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) to create a new training and technical assistance program designed to support local officials in their efforts to implement policies and reforms that address areas of significant racial and ethnic disparity in the youth justice system. This new Policy Equity Academy, a partnership between DCJS and the Youth Justice Institute at the University of Albany, is designed to provide local professionals with the knowledge and leadership skills to promote effective efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the youth justice system. The 12-month-long academy will allow local officials to develop and implement concrete policy, practice and program changes to address racial and ethnic disparities at a decision point chosen by the locality (e.g., diversion at intake, admissions to detention, etc.). Participants must complete pre-work prior to each session and will receive technical assistance following each session to support workplan development and implementation of reforms in their communities. After being delayed last year due to COVID and federal funding issues, the Academy is slated to begin this summer.

### ***Race Equity Trainings***

In February and March, OYJ completed training for OPCA Fundamentals of Probation Practice Certification. This training included a train-the-trainer for state anchor trainers to provide the curriculum to departments around the state, as well as training newly hired probation officers. Additionally, the Office of Youth Justice conducted live, virtual trainings, which also were recorded, on race equity in the youth justice system for national conference attendees. In August, staff recorded a session for the American Probation and Parole Association's annual conference titled, "Systemic Inequity: The role that historical, structural and individual biases play, which was viewed by 77 conference participants. Additionally, the Race Equity Coordinator presented a virtual live session at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice Annual Conference on building capacity at the state and local level to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

### ***My Brother's Keeper Symposium***

The state Board of Regents administers a Regents Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color that was created in 2015 in response to the national My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative. The workgroup examines the educational challenges and opportunities faced by boys and young men of color, and makes policy, budget and legislative recommendations that address these challenges and expand opportunities to increase their success. The JJAG approved funding to assist with the MBK Annual Symposium in May 2019 and again in the spring of 2020, but the latter event was postponed due to COVID.

### ***Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity / Expression (SOGIE)***

In 2020, the JJAG supported teams that virtually attend the Supporting the Wellbeing of LGBTQ Youth Certificate Program at Georgetown University. Two teams – one from Oneida County and another from New York City – participated in a week-long class that covered the following topics: understanding Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) terminology and concepts, treating LGBTQ youth as whole people, youth and community engagement, multi-systems engagement, family support strategies and interventions, and achieving comprehensive, agency-wide policy and practice change.



Final capstone project plans from both teams were due in May 2021 with implementation scheduled to occur in late 2021 and through 2022.

**Priority Area 3: Build community capacity for providing youth with prosocial, developmentally appropriate supports.**

***Youth Summit Attendance***

The JJAG approved funding for five of its youth members to attend the 2020 Coalition for Juvenile Justice National Youth Summit, which occurred virtually instead of in person in Tacoma, Wash., and brought together young people who are interested in juvenile justice reform. The goal is to cultivate and empower this next generation of leaders by teaching the tools they need to leverage their personal experiences and lived expertise.

***Connecting Youth in Transition***

DCJS and SED were awarded a federal Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) grant specifically targeted to improving outcomes for disconnected youth in the cities of Albany and Rochester. The grant funded transition coordinators at each site to work with the school district and a designated community partner to identify youth ranging in age from 14 to 24 who had excessive, unexcused absences, dropped out and/or recent youth justice system involvement. Youth who enter the program at each site work with the transition coordinator through a series of three phases designed to foster and sustain positive outcomes. At the end of the program, participants will have either resumed or completed school and/or are gainfully employed and they will have identified positive adult role models to guide them as they move forward.

The pilot program began in October 2018 and aimed to serve 60 youth at each location with the goal of measuring the impact that consistent guidance or “touch” plays a participant’s ability to become reconnected. While all youth engaged with the transition coordinator through check-ins, some were closely guided through each step of the process and others were given a case plan and tasked with navigating to success on their own.

In 2019, the program served 80 youth: 39 in Albany and 41 in Rochester. Of those youth:

- 68 percent were male,
- 88 percent at each location were youth of color,
- 74 percent had contact with the justice system within the six months prior to program enrollment,
- 23 percent had dropped out of school or were absent at least 20 consecutive days, and
- 10 percent of youth reported both dropping out of school and having justice system contact within the previous six months.

As of December 2020, both programs served 107 youth. The youth participants that received intensive case management reported progress in reaching educational and employment goals during the short term. At the year mark of this program, there was not a reported difference in results for participants receiving intensive case management and those not receiving intensive case management.

Scheduled programmatic activities ended in June 2020, and activities in the preceding months were greatly impacted by COVID. The workplace transitions affected the established processes, which needed to be redesigned. These new processes, in addition to limited access to workplaces and schools for

participants, resulted in lost opportunities. The evaluation of the program by SUNY Plattsburgh was impacted by pandemic-related restrictions, which limited access to program participants for the last five months of the study. The final evaluation report is forthcoming.

### ***State Education Department (SED) Liaison***

A SED liaison position was piloted to provide professional school representation in juvenile justice activities and initiatives, increase communication throughout the education system to enhance the chances of success for youth, and promote a collaborative effort since the education system is a vital component of the vast network in which youth are involved. The liaison served on the Partnership for Youth Justice and committees and workgroups such as the Trauma Champion Collaborative, and helped SED undertake Restorative Practices Trainings, which was the focus of the Western New York Regional Youth Justice Team (RYJT), across the state. The liaison has fostered:

- A better understanding of the various offices in SED, such as the Office of Student Supports, and how they interact at various system points and areas of the juvenile justice system, such as re-entry from placement / detention setting and mentoring (as in the case of MBK);
- A better understanding of how to navigate effective collaboration with SED; and
- The importance of education professionals being at the table in order to effect systems change.

While SED no longer has the liaison position, the agency continues to be active in this work as a member of the Partnership for Youth Justice.

### **Priority Area 4: Enhance the state and local capacity for utilizing data-driven decision making and evidence-based practices.**

#### ***New York State Youth Justice Institute***

In 2020, the JJAG continued funding the Youth Justice Institute, which hired its Executive Director, Dr. Giza Lopes, the previous year and began expanding its operations. Despite the emergence of the COVID pandemic, Dr. Lopes has established a vision for the Institute to become the premier resource for evidence-based policy and practice nationally and beyond by implementing the following strategies:

#### **Strategy #1: Serve as an information hub for stakeholders**

- Issue briefs, brochures, dashboards, and chartbooks
- Increase digital presence with websites, apps and podcasts
- Engage through earned media (e.g., press releases) and social media
- Engage in active outreach, including listservs and one-on-one meetings

#### **Strategy #2: Cultivate and continually support practitioners' commitment to evidence-based and evidence-informed practices**

- Excellence in training for different goals / audiences through webinars, train-the-trainer workshops, and other efforts
- Effective technical assistance that is responsive to identified or communicated needs
- Relevant continued education opportunities (e.g., professional certificates)

### Strategy #3: Develop a prolific and ever-growing network of research

- Investing in future generations of juvenile justice researchers through internship and independent study opportunities and fellowship programs
- Leverage current academic expertise by establishing affiliated faculty and collaborating with other centers
- Conduct original research

### Strategy #4: Foster and sustain synergy among stakeholders

- Bring together government agencies, practitioners, and academics to advance and share knowledge, brainstorm innovations, and engage in agenda-setting (e.g., through summits, symposia, seminars, and workshops)

### Strategy #5: Leverage current public investment to attract external funding that will enable the YJI to grow

- Identify and pursue external sources of funding, including private foundations
- Identify possible areas of affinity with other departments and apply collectively for grants

The following activities have been undertaken or are in the planning stages by the Institute as of December 2020:

#### Activity #1 – Opportunities for experiential education for undergraduate and graduate students

Students working at the Institute – referred to as YJI Scholars – are undergraduate and graduate students from several departments at the University at Albany and one student from outside of New York.<sup>1</sup> From Fall 2019 through Fall 2020, the YJI team had 25 students, many of whom took advantage of the opportunity for more than one academic term ([complete list of YJI Scholars](#)).

YJI Scholars participate in high-level meetings with stakeholders and are actively involved in research projects, from planning to diverse output and dissemination. They also offer ideas for the future of youth justice and current issues of interest. To date, Scholars have:

- Assisted in designing and publishing the Institute’s new website and two microsites;
- Produced a podcast on cyberbullying and planned another episode to be launched in Spring 2021;
- Organized monthly and *ad hoc* events that attract hundreds of registrants each and receive thousands of asynchronous views on YouTube and Facebook;
- Created and published several interactive dashboards;
- Assisted in grant writing; and
- Engaged in promoting the Institute’s work through social media.

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<sup>1</sup> In Summer 2020, the YJI attracted an undergraduate student from Brown University’s Urban Studies program.

YJI Scholars continued their commitment to excellence when all operations moved to a virtual environment in mid-March 2020, with each of them receiving a YJI-issued laptop to sustain their activities and facilitate engagement. Since the pivot to online activities, Scholars must participate in daily, virtual check-ins and have built community among themselves. Four Scholars also chose to return to the YJI on a “volunteer” status, partly because of the network they have been able to draw on during the pandemic.

### **Activity #2 – New York State Juvenile Justice Advisory Group’s Strategic Plan (JJAG)**

In collaboration with staff at DCJS, the Institute assisted the JJAG in developing its next Strategic Action Plan, which delineates the course of action for the Group during the next three years. The Institute planned and facilitated a two-day, virtual retreat with JJAG members in September 2020. The Strategic Action Plan was written with considerations drawn from interviews with JJAG members and other key state and national stakeholders, a survey of juvenile justice specialists nationwide, insights from a range of supporting documents, and information gathered from the retreat. The Plan was released in mid-2021.

### **Activity #3 – COVID-19 and Youth Forum and post-forum work**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute hosted a four-day virtual forum titled “*Are the Kids Alright? COVID-19 + Youth,*” in June 2020. The forum discussed the pandemic’s current and foreseeable impacts on children, teens and young adults, as well as innovative approaches to the crisis, with a focus on historically marginalized populations. Forty renowned panelists and moderators participated in the event, which culminated with a keynote presentation by John Powell,<sup>2</sup> a professor and director of the Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley, and a plenary session by Michael Umpierre, director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University. The last panel was devoted to Research and Funding, and the YJI secured the participation of senior staff at the Ford Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and William T. Grant Foundation.

The Forum yielded more than 4,300 registrations across all panels and hundreds of others subsequently watched the panels on Facebook. Participants were from across the United States and the globe: Latin America, Asia, the United Kingdom, and Africa were all represented. The [COVID-19 & Youth](#) microsite contains the forum’s full content, a video of highlights and an issue brief published in September 2020. Staff also continuously update the site with new and relevant resources.

The Forum was part of an ongoing effort at the YJI to respond to the pandemic and to reimagine a more equitable, compassionate, and empirically driven youth justice system in the context of COVID-19, as well as the ongoing efforts to achieve racial justice. That work continued with [another virtual forum](#) that occurred in June 2021.

### **Activity #4 – Lunch & Learn Webinar Series**

In March 2020, the YJI launched a “Lunch & Learn,” webinar series featuring cutting-edge research experts whose work can benefit youth justice practitioners. The first webinar featured Harvard Professor Lynette Tannis, Ed.D., who is known for her work on educating incarcerated youth. As of December 2020,

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<sup>2</sup> He chooses not to capitalize his name.

the YJI had hosted nine webinars, totaling nearly 2,000 registrations across all sessions and garnering many more asynchronous viewings in Facebook and other social media channels ([webinars and a complete list of presenters](#)). Audience for this series includes a mixture of academics, youth justice practitioners and educators from across the globe, as well as local, state, and federal employees. Surveys on participants' experience are overwhelmingly positive. CLE credits and other continued education accreditation are being pursued for future webinars.

#### **Activity #5 – Healing Centered Engagement Training**

Nearly 400 individuals attended a presentation by Dr. Shawn Ginwright of the Flourish Agenda to learn about Healing Centered Engagement. The presentation, hosted by the Institute and DCJS Office of Youth Justice, introduced the concept to Regional Youth Justice Teams and other practitioners with the goal of engaging them in this work. Two invitation-only events with approximately 130 team members and state partners followed, with the goal of supporting their efforts to incorporate Healing Centered Engagement in their work and communities.

#### **Activity #6 – New Website and Microsites**

The YJI launched its new website, with implementation and maintenance performed by student assistants from Data Sciences. Google analytics show that the new website is visited primarily by New Yorkers, but has substantive national and international traffic as well. The Institute also launched a [COVID-19 and Youth](#) microsite in 2020, and planned for a [Racial Equity & Youth Justice](#) microsite. Each of these microsites includes resources relevant to the areas and function as an important reference for those in the youth justice field.

#### **Activity #7 – Policy Equity Academy**

In partnership with DCJS and the Center for Children's Law & Policy, the Institute developed the Policy Equity Academy, which offers a curriculum designed specifically to eliminate racial disparities at probation adjustment. Future curricula will be developed and focus on other juvenile justice system points. Participants who complete the curriculum will receive a Youth Justice Institute Certificate and the Institute and DCJS will provide ongoing technical assistance to allow localities to implement and sustain these efforts. A grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation awarded to DCJS is supporting the early stages of this initiative.

#### **Activity #8 – Empowering Youth Voices Contest**

As part of the Institute's commitment to inclusion and equity, especially in the context of the pandemic and renewed focus on racial justice, the *Empowering Youth Voices Contest: Messages from Today for Tomorrow* was organized. The contest gave youth the opportunity to share their thoughts about the pandemic's impact on children and young individuals and about the events of 2020. Youth (up to 21 years old) were invited to submit a creative piece in any non-video format of their choice (for example a letter, poem, essay, or drawing) that responded to any one of the following prompts:

- What would you like tell your future self?
- What would you like to tell the youth of the future?

What would you like to tell a specific person in power (ex. health official, teacher, community leader, politician)?

YJI Scholars identified 106 organizations (primarily targeting educators and youth serving organizations) across the 50 states and Washington, D.C. for outreach and dissemination. As part of this process, the Scholars developed all contest advertisement materials and correspondence, the website modifications, social media outreach, and the review and selection process. Monroe Community College student Rene Peters, 20, who wrote about the impact of depression and anxiety, won the contest.

#### **Activity #9 – Repository of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices**

The YJI's website contains more than 50 evidence-based programs and practices, ranked, and categorized in terms of setting goals and challenge areas. This repository is an important resource for those in the field of youth justice seeking to implement research-informed practices in their localities. Newly identified and ranked evidence-based programs and practices are added to the website routinely and staff are actively engaged in making that information more interactive with the goal of launching a fully interactive dashboard in 2021.

#### **Activity #10 – Technical Assistance and Convenings that are Responsive to Partners' Needs**

One of the chief objectives of the YJI is to provide technical assistance to its partner agencies and localities in New York State. Since the hiring of its Associate for Technical Assistance earlier this year, the YJI has been able to increase those activities, including supporting Berkshire Farm Center as it developed a logic model for its Stepping Stones program, which is partly supported through OCFS funding. The YJI plans to engage in a pilot evaluation of the program in the future.

The Associate of Technical Assistance also has begun developing a process for receiving technical assistance requests from the state's Regional Youth Justice Teams and other local organizations. This process will include gathering ideas from potential stakeholders about the types of technical assistance that would be helpful to them, identifying the method by which requests would be made, and establishing protocols for reviewing, prioritizing, and accepting requests.

At the request of DCJS and OCFS, Institute staff produced a meta-analytic literature review of more than 400 publications on the topic of Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems (YSBP), as well as literature reviews on the topics of electronic monitoring and the long-term detrimental consequences of contact with the justice system during adolescence.

At the request of OCFS, the YJI assisted in the planning and facilitation of a virtual "Dialogue about Improving Youth + Law Enforcement Interactions," which brought together youth and adult members from the Governor's [Youth Council](#), representatives from public safety and law enforcement agencies and staff from OCFS in November 2020.

#### **Activity #11 – Committees**

YJI staff participates in a variety of state committees and initiatives, including the Partnership for Youth Justice and a few of its subcommittees (Gender Responsiveness, Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems, and the Transition-Age Youth), the New York State Racial and Ethnic Disparities Advisory Committee,

Youth and Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities Committee, and the Trauma Champions Collaborative, among others.

#### **Activity #12 – Dashboards & Tableau Training**

The new YJI website supports the creation and publication of dashboards to translate data findings and other relevant information for the public in a way that is accessible, easy to understand and interactive. Staff and students were trained on the development of these dashboards using Tableau software, and the first dashboards were made available in Summer 2020. Two of the published dashboards – [Youth Justice News](#) and [COVID-19 & Youth Justice](#) – have more than 1,700 combined views to date. The YJI continues to invest in this expertise by engaging in an additional training.

#### **Activity #13 – Social Media and Newsletters**

The YJI has a robust presence on social media: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Each week, the YJI publishes “Did you know?” posts on all social media platforms, as well as other relevant information. The number of followers in each of these platforms continues to grow and amplifies the presence and brand of the YJI in the state and beyond.

In addition, the Institute routinely publishes a newsletter, “[On the Same Page](#).” In less than a year, the number of subscribers increased from 150 to 1,500. The YJI newsletters feature relevant research, news and evidence-based information to this growing audience. Several of its issues include research briefs prepared by YJI Scholars on diverse youth justice topics.

#### **Activity #14 – “Let’s Talk About Youth Justice” Podcast Series**

In line with the YJI’s commitment to making research findings available to a wider audience, YJI scholars have produced a podcast that was launched in Spring 2020. The [first episode](#), which featured an interview with Dr. Timothy McCuddy, assistant professor at the University of Memphis and project director of the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, focused on cyberbullying and has been listened to more than 50 times. Production of a future episode, on the school-to-prison pipeline, is underway.

#### **Activity #15 – National and Local Networking**

The Executive Director and staff at the YJI shared the work of the YJI at diverse national conferences and local events, including the remote presentation by two YJI Scholars at the Western Association of Criminal Justice national conference, titled “Judicial Reform During Crisis,” which used some of the research they have conducted during their tenure at the Institute.

#### **Activity #16 – Certificate Programs**

Work by the YJI enabled several New York teams to attend the School Justice Partnerships and Diversion Pathways Certificate Program offered by the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. In addition to the Policy Equity Academy, the Institute has plans to offer certificates in other topics such as Trauma and Healing, Implementation Science, and Youth Justice Leadership, for New York State practitioners.

## Activity #17 – External Funding

The YJI is committed to seeking funding that will help it grow and move toward self-sustainability over the next couple of years. The Research Associate position, which was expected to be filled in Summer 2021, will help better position the YJI to be competitive

### **B. Special Projects**

#### ***Youth with Sexual Behaviors Problems***

DCJS continued its work in developing a strategy for statewide implementation, scalability and sustainability on this topic. To assist, the YJI began conducting a literature review to assess best practices in the field, and a work group of state agency professionals continued its work to develop a statewide needs assessment to review existing processes and protocols in each county and determine gaps and needs. In 2020, the Western New York and Finger Lakes Regional Youth Justice Teams began planning a project to train teams of clinicians in the Oklahoma University model; this work will help to inform the statewide strategy being developed by the work group.

#### ***Community Resolve Program***

The Community Resolve Program (CRP) is a collaboration among the New York City Department of Probation, the state Unified Court System and four nonprofit Community Dispute Resolution Centers in the New York City area. This program uses a restorative justice approach to repair harm caused by youth engaged in criminal activity and strives to meet the needs of victims and the community, prevent further involvement in the justice system, and assist participating youth in gaining a greater understanding of the harm they have caused. The target population for the program are youth facing assault or robbery charges whose cases are suitable for adjustment. The program engages those youth and the individuals affected by their behavior, including those they harmed, as well as the youth's family and circle of support.

Probation and the Community Dispute Resolution Centers collaboratively offer the following services that

- help youth improve their behavior and repair harm;
- assist complainants and others affected by the incident; and
- provide an opportunity for direct interaction between the youth and complainants.

This approach is designed to meet the needs of victims of crime and the community, prevent further involvement with the criminal justice system, and assist participating youth in gaining a greater understanding of the harm they have caused. Staff have been trained and this program will serve youth in 2021 and 2022.

#### ***Trauma Champions Collaborative***

The Trauma Champions Collaborative, which aims to build statewide capacity and structures that help state and local government and professional agencies integrate a trauma-informed approach into all aspects of their work, continued. This collaborative of representatives from multiple state agencies stems from a multi-month learning process facilitated by the University at Buffalo (UB) Institute of Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care (ITTIC).



### ***Rural Communities of Practice Initiative***

The Rural Communities of Practice Initiative continues to be funded. Multidisciplinary planning teams from rural counties have worked together since 2016 to identify and prioritize juvenile justice-related issues deemed locally or regionally significant and develop strategies to address them. This work is focused on preventing delinquency and/or improving the response to delinquent behavior, training and/or staff development and/or capacity building, technical assistance and support, efforts to improve communication and access, data improvements, as well as direct services to youth (mentoring, restorative practices, mobile case management, etc.).

### **C. Support for Regional Youth Justice Teams**

Nine Regional Youth Justice Teams (RYJT) continued their work fostering cross-county, multi-disciplinary approaches to juvenile justice program and policy work. Office of Youth Justice staff serve as liaisons between the teams and the state, advising the teams of state-level trends and initiatives and communicating local concerns and accomplishment to state agencies and other state-level policymakers.

In 2020, DCJS continued assisting the teams in developing and implementing plans for funding the following projects, as well as funding for an outside entity to assist with the grant requirements:

#### ***Capital Region***

The Capital Region team identified the ongoing challenge of preventing youth from entering the juvenile justice system; supporting their well-being after that involvement occurs; reducing racial and ethnic disparities; and family engagement as areas of focus. The team will work to train youth justice professionals and develop tools, such as “check your bias” assistance cards. The team also is supporting:

- A program to improve school attendance in Ballston Spa, Taconic Hills and Rensselaer through a partnership with mediation centers. The program builds communication between families and schools through mediation and seeks to identify and address the complex factors that cause truancy. It is an early intervention initiative based on the increased evidence that repeated chronic truancy begins during a child’s elementary years and that truancy during one academic year is highly predictive of future attendance problems. The program also addresses chronic tardiness: another indicator of future truancy not addressed by other initiatives. A collaborative of “champions” from different entities, such as school districts, courts, probation departments and police agencies, will attend the University of Buffalo’s Trauma Champions training to serve youth ranging in age from 7 to 17.
- Development of a training curriculum and implementation guide designed to incorporate an evidence-based reintegration continuum framework into practice in Rensselaer County. Youth justice professionals from across several disciplines will come together to receive the training and provide practical feedback on its implementation to refine the curriculum. Once the training is completed in Rensselaer and the curriculum is finalized, the team will begin working with other counties in the region to implement it.

#### ***Central New York***

The Central New York team established the goal that all youth involved in the juvenile justice system in the region can learn from their mistakes and stay in their communities safely to get culturally appropriate

community-based services and support to thrive in their homes, schools and communities and successfully transition to adulthood. To facilitate this, the team used its grant funding to build on its body of work around data-driven initiatives and provided Results-Based Leadership Training to 17 people during five sessions in 2020.

Trainees worked through the following skills and practices: Overall Desired Population Result: Focusing on actions that will result in better outcomes for our youth; You as a Leader: Understanding preference type in leading change; Building Your Team: Results in the center and high action / high alignment; Choosing Indicators and Setting Targets; and Getting the Story Behind the Data: Review and factor analysis to get to root causes that need addressing.

In 2021, the training will focus more on strategy development and implementation and participants leadership skills. Teams will have a complete implementation plan and an individual leadership plan upon completion of the training, which is scheduled to end in August of 2021.

### ***Finger Lakes***

In 2020, the Finger Lakes team continued its planned rollout of two initiatives funded with its grant: building and enhancing trauma-informed services throughout the local youth justice system and responding to the needs of youth with sexual behavior problems.

To achieve implementation and expansion of trauma-informed practices in the region, Coordinated Care Services, Inc. is working with stakeholders to develop a common understanding and language centered around the work, foster growth and collaboration and support implementation practices. This work will occur in phases: assessment and identification of resources, followed by recommendations and implementation of the action items identified.

Planning for the Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems initiative, in partnership with the Western New York Regional Youth Justice Team, continued in 2020. In December, stakeholders from both teams participated in a kickoff conversation with Oklahoma University to discuss the parameters and expectations of selected participants. Nine individuals from each region will be trained in the university's Problematic Sexual Behavior Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, an evidence-based model to treat youth with sexual behavior problems and their families in a community-based setting. The program has demonstrated a 3 percent reoffending rate among successful program graduates. Selected clinicians and senior leaders from each region will be trained during an 18-month period beginning in 2021.

### ***Long Island***

The Long Island team changed direction due to COVID and other factors and plans to use grant funding for Interactive Journaling Train-the-Trainer in Nassau County and Virtual Suffolk Theatre Arts Program in conjunction with Suffolk County Community College.

The Long Island Team is still actively planning for the remainder of their available funding and is exploring how to meet the gap in services available for youth with sexual behavioral problems in both counties.

### ***Mid-Hudson***

The Mid-Hudson team chose to focus its efforts on improving the trauma responsiveness in the region by:

- Assessing organization and employee attitudes toward trauma-informed care to determine readiness and training needs. Two assessment tools – ARTIC (Attitudes Related to Trauma Informed Care): and TRUST (Trauma Responsive Understanding Self-Assessment Tool) – are being considered for this work.
- Certifying 60 individuals to train staff at their agencies and in the community in Youth Mental Health First Aid, an evidence-based program to help adults who regularly interact with youth to be able to assist youth who are experiencing a challenge related to their mental health or who are in crisis.
- Continuing the work of Resilience Coalitions, which help communities educate themselves about the impact of trauma, brainstorm solutions to build resiliency and advocate for the needs of their community. These coalitions are modeled after a successful initiative in Westchester County that engaged individuals on the topic through the screening of the movie Resilience, conducting Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) surveys and discussing the complexities of trauma. These coalitions operate in all but two counties; their focus will now shift to the assessment of the region to identify gaps and address them.

### ***Mohawk Valley***

In 2020, the team increased diversion efforts and ensured that justice-involved and at-risk youth have access to evidence-based, individualized services to prevent further system involvement and ensure their success in school, at home and in the community. The team launched three model initiatives shown to improve outcomes for youth who are 7 through 17:

- Detention Diversion Coordination, an alternative that aims to prevent deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system by providing customized community-based support to youth and their families. With support from this grant, Kids Oneida will hire and co-locate a Detention Diversion Coordinator within the Oneida County Family Court to identify eligible cases, conduct risk and needs assessments, conduct intakes, and enroll youth and families into the program, which also operates in Herkimer County. The coordinator will ensure youth are present for all future court appointments, refer youth and families to needed services, and will enroll them in Kids Oneida services available through an extensive provider network, as needed.
- Knowledge Empowers You (KEY), is an evidence-based program that empowers youth to make decisions that work for them by engaging them in discussions on issues that are most relevant to their lives: relationships, self-esteem, goal setting, self-advocacy, preparing for work and college, internet safety, health and wellness, and personal finance, among others. With support from this grant, the KEY Program will expand from Oneida and Herkimer counties and be offered to youth on probation and to schools in all six target counties.
- Service Provision for Individualized Needs (SPIN) Program, which provides peer-to-peer support through the Credible Messenger Model by connecting young people with mentors who are grounded in the experiences of justice-involved youth with the goal of motivating them to successfully challenge and transform destructive thinking, attitudes and actions. With support from this grant, the team will launch these services for youth in Herkimer, Fulton, Montgomery, Otsego and Schoharie counties and will make them available to youth in Oneida County as needed.

## ***North County***

The team surveyed each of the seven counties within the region to identify current needs. As a result of the survey, grant funding is supporting the following:

- Franklin: Implementing the Cornell University Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) for Families Training of Trainers and community education and prevention programming to support foster care parents and caregivers.
- Clinton: Training staff to provide cognitive behavioral therapy and life-skills training to youth involved in the juvenile justice system through the Probation Department and Department of Social Services who may also be receiving services through the Clinton County Mental Health and Addiction Services.
- Essex: Providing the MindUp training program and curriculum to children in pre-K through eighth grade and their families to build resilience and provide positive school-wide culture and climate, in addition to providing trauma-informed care training to law enforcement personnel.
- Hamilton: Providing the MindUp Curriculum for the Long Lake and Indian Lake school districts in three different grades and school personnel.
- St. Lawrence: Continuing the Trauma Initiative collaborative, which includes partners from Youth Advocate Programs, Department of Social Services, and Probation. With assistance from the University of Buffalo, trauma training will be offered to staff, and the Trauma-Informed Organization Change Manual will be implemented.
- Jefferson and Lewis: Implementing a Youth Peer Mediation Training Program through The Resolution Center of Jefferson and Lewis Counties that engages youth who are 7 through 17, school staff and partner agencies. Students will learn how to approach conflict constructively, practice active listening skills and model this kind of behavior within the community.

## ***New York City***

The New York City team is working to achieve more gender-affirming systems that consistently promote and integrate the voice of young people into its policies and practice. The following initiatives will be used to support the team's goal:

- Storytelling Workshops: In partnership with Youth Communications, youth will be able to authentically tell their stories and help other youth navigate the system while also helping to reform policy and practice. Youth Communications cultivates youth-authored stories and helps adults who serve youth to engage in social and emotional learning to affect systems change.
- Leadership Training: Participating youth will be given the opportunity to take part in facility-based Resident Councils, an ACS Youth Leadership Council, and New York City Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC), among other opportunities. These youth will build on their leadership skills and serve as youth advocates for system reform and will attend the annual Coalition for Juvenile Justice Youth Summit.
- Co-Facilitated Training / Curriculum Building Opportunities: Youth will be given the opportunity to exercise their leadership skills through co-facilitation of trainings with ACS staff, curriculum building for future trainings (i.e., training facility staff), and developing materials for youth, staff and families detailing best practices for gender responsiveness.

### **Western New York**

In 2020, the Western New York team expanded and enhanced restorative practices to Chautauqua County by providing training to a multi-disciplinary team that included personnel from two urban middle schools, the Probation Department, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Highlights include the establishment of an ongoing community of restorative practices monthly forum and training on hosting virtual circles to meet the social-emotional needs of students during remote instruction. Plans have also been developed to replicate the Erie County Family Court Restorative Practices Program in Chautauqua County Family Court.

Planning for the Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems initiative in partnership with the Finger Lakes team continued in 2020. In December, stakeholders from both teams participated in a kickoff conversation with Oklahoma University to discuss the parameters and expectations of selected participants. Nine individuals from each region will be trained in the university's Problematic Sexual Behavior Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, an evidence-based model to treat youth with sexual behavior problems and their families in a community-based setting that has demonstrated a 3 percent reoffending rate among successful program graduates. Selected clinicians and senior leaders from each region will be trained during an 18-month period beginning in 2021.

The JJAG approved the following in 2020:

<b>PROJECTS</b>	<b>AWARD</b>
Youth Summit Attendance	\$6,500
Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) Project Extension	\$100,000
Rural Communities of Practice Initiative	\$25,000
Youth Justice Institute Project Extension	\$350,000