

OJJDP Response to the 2013 FACJJ Report

Introduction

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) would like to thank the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice (FACJJ) for its *2013 Annual Recommendations Report to the President, Congress, and OJJDP Administrator*. OJJDP benefits from the insightful FACJJ recommendations and the subsequent conversations and deliberations that they continue to generate.

The report includes 16 recommendations on ways OJJDP can further federal collaboration; support and expand the use of evidence-based practices; enhance youth engagement at the federal, state, and local levels; highlight school engagement as an area of focus in juvenile justice reform efforts; and address disproportionate minority contact and racial and ethnic disparities throughout the juvenile justice system.

OJJDP's hope is that our responses to the FACJJ's careful and considered recommendations will spark lively and informed discussions that will open the doors to new opportunities for action and a better future for our children.

Recommendations and OJJDP's Responses

- 1. The FACJJ strongly recommends that the President and the Congress reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, substantially increase OJJDP's funding levels, and restore the Office's budget flexibility to enable OJJDP to fulfill its critical national mission of working to prevent and control juvenile delinquency, improve the juvenile justice system, and protect children.**
- 2. The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP support efforts to identify common outcomes that can be used to assess the effectiveness of programs and practices—in particular, those outcomes that include positive youth development and prosocial skill development—in reducing “negative” behaviors.**
 - a. OJJDP should host a summit with experts and selected practitioners to develop a limited number of positive youth outcomes that can be integrated into further evidence-based practices research, initiatives, and implementation strategies.
 - b. OJJDP should consider additional ways that both positive youth outcome measures and EBPs (not solely programs) can be incorporated into grant solicitations, monitoring, and reporting. This presumes that there will be an ever-increasing partnership between OJJDP and grantees in “give and take” that helps inform OJJDP and the juvenile justice field as to what works best to both prevent offending and to intervene successfully with youthful offenders.
 - c. OJJDP should consider the use of a limited number of national outcome measures in all of its solicitations, contracts, and training related to OJJDP's vision of “Rare, Fair, and Beneficial” to create meaningful measures of positive outcomes in the Office's activities, rather than a

simplistic approach to recidivism reduction. (OJJDP envisions a nation where children are healthy, educated, and free from violence. If they come into contact with the juvenile justice system, that contact should be rare, fair, and beneficial.)

OJJDP's response: Concur

OJJDP continues to advance effective practice in juvenile justice reform and recognizes there is an ongoing challenge to identify reliable data for national measurement of programs.

OJJDP requires every grantee to report standardized data that measure the results of the work done under their grant, cooperative agreement, or contract. This performance measurement data helps the Department of Justice fulfill its responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-352. OJJDP encourages award recipients to use information from existing program records to fulfill the performance measures reporting requirements rather than initiating new data collection activities. The Office of Management and Budget certifies all performance measures. Currently, OJJDP is identifying action steps to establish clear office goals and objectives that will lead to the development of national indicators related to delinquency prevention, intervention, and system reform, which will include a focus on prosocial behaviors and offending and positive youth outcomes.

To achieve these goals, OJJDP will continue to work with its established interagency workgroups and advisory committees (Science Advisory Board and Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice) and solicit ad hoc input from experts regarding its priorities. For example:

- In 2011, OJJDP commissioned the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review recent advances in behavioral and neuroscience research, draw out the implications of this knowledge for juvenile justice reform, assess the new generation of reform activities occurring in the United States, and assess OJJDP's role in carrying out its statutory mission and its role in supporting scientifically based reform efforts. In June 2013, the NAS released its final report *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach*. In our response to that report, we asked the Academy to address whether there are any gaps in the research; based on implementation science, what steps and challenges would OJJDP face in adopting a developmental approach to juvenile justice reform; and based on the cost benefit analysis, what are the potential cost savings to states and tribal governments if they adopt a developmental approach to juvenile justice reform? Subsequently, in 2014 the NAS issued *Implementing Juvenile Justice Reform: The Federal Role*, and OJJDP is formulating a response.

One of the recommendations in the report is that "OJJDP should take a leadership role in local, state, and tribal jurisdictions with respect to the development and implementation of administrative data systems by providing model formats for system structure, standards, and common definitions of data elements. OJJDP should also provide consultation on data systems as well as opportunities for sharing information across jurisdictions."

A number of OJJDP's planned research projects for fiscal year 2015 will focus on data improvement and establishing juvenile justice statistical indicators/measures that operationalize the agency's vision statement and that are informed by the research and experts from the field.

Our understanding of this recommendation is that it involves two key components. First, we need to use common definitions and data elements standards to identify quality measures. And second, we need to identify and support quality data administrative systems at the federal, state, and local levels. By identifying and supporting the system, we can effectively manage and report necessary data elements.

While the NAS recommendation appears to focus on the latter of these two key components, we believe that to fully respond to this recommendation, we must address each component sequentially, and that the first step is to identify national indicators, as the FACJJ has recommended. To address this, we plan to develop a process and timeframe to establish a core set of prevention, intervention, and system reform juvenile justice statistical indicators and measures that incorporate the agency's vision statement and that are informed by the research, experts from the field, and historical funding streams of OJJDP.

OJJDP also strongly emphasizes the use of data and evidence in policymaking and program development in juvenile justice. The Office encourages many approaches to using evidence that span programs, policies, practices, and principles (some of which are highlighted in our responses below). The Office also supports the generation of research, the translation of research, and its integration in its programs and policies. OJJDP will continue to work with experts, practitioners, and researchers to identify effective and emerging uses of evidence. OJJDP places a high priority on effectively preventing delinquency and promoting evidence-based alternatives to incarceration when reducing excessive detention and confinement for youth who have gotten off track. Our priorities are to reinforce a prosocial identity, keep youth in touch with their families and other caring adults, provide as little disruption as possible in their schooling, help them develop vocational skills, and provide, where necessary, substance abuse and mental health treatment and trauma-informed care. Our goal is to build on their strengths, the strengths of their families, and the strengths of their cultures of origin, while maintaining public safety.

3. **The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP assess current best-practice strategies for implementing EBPs system wide and promote the development of new strategies.**
 - a. OJJDP should provide resources (publications, training, technical assistance, and funding) that can assist jurisdictions in aligning resources and practices at all levels of contact with youth to be consistent with research about what works with youth and families.
 - b. OJJDP should provide guidance to practitioners to minimize the loss of efficacy inherent in inadequate investment in factors such as high-quality and highly trained staff, attention to responsivity factors inherent in a relationship between adults and youth, and development and implementation of ongoing quality assurance measures to evaluate success.
 - c. OJJDP should continue to support research into evidence-based programs and meta-analytical research that identifies the characteristics of what works well with youthful offenders. Both specific program models and more comprehensive research into core principles and components will continue to move the juvenile justice field forward.

OJJDP's response: Concur

OJJDP relies on research, evaluations, and data collections to help us understand how we can best work with state and local practitioners to accomplish our mission to prevent and reduce delinquency and victimization of at-risk youth and improve the lives of those youth who come in contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems. As we continue to build our knowledge about what works in implementation science, OJJDP will continue to apply that knowledge to support effective, evidence-based programs and practices. We continue to partner across the federal government and with the field to advance our work in this area. A few areas where we have started down this path, include:

- OJJDP participates in the Forum on Promoting Children’s Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Health, which was established as an outgrowth of the 2009 Institute of Medicine-National Research Council report, *Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities*. This report called on the nation to make the prevention of such disorders and the promotion of mental health of young people a high priority. The forum is discussing ways to connect the prevention, treatment, and implementation sciences with settings where children are seen and cared for, including health care settings, schools, social service and child welfare agencies, and the juvenile justice system, and to create systems that are effective and affordable in addressing children’s needs. Members of the forum include representatives from the sponsors and additional experts in the implementation and evaluation of mental and behavioral health interventions for youth.
- OJJDP’s Model Programs Guide (MPG) contains information about evidence-based juvenile justice and youth prevention, intervention, and reentry programs. It is a resource for practitioners and communities about what works, what is promising, and what does not work in juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, and child protection and safety. However, just having the information available, does not necessarily mean that communities will use it. Consequently, OJJDP conducted a series of focus groups to understand how local governments and service agencies use the evidence-based program information contained in the site. OJJDP published [a report](#) regarding the information gathered during these focus groups.
- Launched in fiscal year 2012 with support from the Office of Management and Budget’s Partnership Fund, OJJDP’s Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (JJRRI) is implementing a research-based and data-driven platform in three sites to improve service delivery to youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Currently being piloted in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin; Iowa; and Delaware, JJRRI aims to improve outcomes for youth, reduce recidivism, and increase the cost-effectiveness of juvenile justice programs and services. A key component of the JJRRI is the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP), a tool that measures effective practices based on a meta-analysis of approximately 600 evaluation studies of juvenile justice interventions. The tool takes into account the type of program, the quality of service delivery, the amount of treatment, and the risk level of participating youth. SPEP is used to evaluate, and then improve, juvenile justice programs. If a program is found to have lower than optimal SPEP scores in a given area, JJRRI will work with jurisdictions to improve service delivery in that area. Once improvements have been made, the program is evaluated again, and program administrators can assess the degree to which the program has been improved. At this juncture, a cost-benefit analysis is performed. The Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center is evaluating the initiative and conducting the cost-benefit analysis. The results of this

demonstration program will inform national juvenile justice reform efforts and identify best practices in the use of limited federal, state, and local dollars for juvenile justice.

- In fiscal year 2014, OJJDP is funding the Initiative to Develop and Test Guidelines for Juvenile Drug Courts to establish evidence-based guidelines to improve the performance of juvenile drug courts across the nation and then test the effectiveness of the guidelines and implementation. Through the two phases (develop the guidelines and then test their implementation), this initiative will identify research-informed juvenile drug court and treatment practices, develop and disseminate guidelines for juvenile drug courts, test the implementation and impact of the guidelines to inform the improvement and advancement of juvenile drug courts, and modify the guidelines, as appropriate.
 - The Supportive School Discipline Initiative (SSDI) is an unprecedented cross-sector effort to promote use of school discipline practices that foster safe, supportive, and productive learning environments. Attorney General Holder and Education Secretary Duncan announced this interagency collaboration in July 2011. Through SSDI, the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, other federal partners, philanthropic organizations, and experts from the field, are promoting awareness, and supporting development of policies and practices that keep students engaged in school while holding them appropriately accountable for their actions. The SSDI partners are:
 - collaborating on research and data collection,
 - building awareness of evidence-based practices,
 - integrating SSDI work into federal grant-making,
 - developing guidance for the field, and
 - building consensus among education and justice stakeholders.
4. **The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP continue to emphasize juvenile justice practices that are based on solid scientific research and evidence, including programs that are listed on registries, such as the *OJJDP Model Programs Guide*, *Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development*, and other programs that effectively and comprehensively incorporate evidence-based practices. Furthermore, OJJDP should continue to fund studies of juvenile justice practices and programs that have not yet been conclusively evaluated.**
- a. Special consideration should be given to researching practices and interactions between service providers and youth/families that are not easily captured and researched in a program model.
 - b. Significant interaction—often greater interaction—with youth occurs outside the confines of specific program models, yet evidence-based programs often fail to incorporate these important interactions as part of a comprehensive supervision/intervention plan.

OJJDP's response: Concur

When it comes to evidence-based programming, OJJDP remains at the forefront of advancing the body of knowledge. OJJDP has led data collections that have identified trends in incarceration and established risk and protective factors for juvenile delinquency. OJJDP's Model Programs Guide was one of the first evidence-based libraries that the federal government developed to highlight the importance of research and encourage grantees to identify programs that have been demonstrated to be effective. We continue to support demonstration programs and research in delinquency prevention, intervention, and system reform. OJJDP places a high value on evidence-based programs and practices and strives to ensure that we do not stifle innovation or promising approaches.

- As part of its restructuring in 2013, OJJDP created a Research Unit comprised of staff solely dedicated to research activities, which the Office has not had for about a decade. Currently, the research team is comprised of a Research Coordinator and three social science analysts; and additional hiring is occurring. Having dedicated research staff allows OJJDP to systematically develop a research agenda and research solicitations. The goals of our research agenda are to:
 - Support research that is scientifically rigorous, timely, and promises maximum impact to the field.
 - Ensure that our research is aligned with agency priorities.
 - Integrate knowledge and information about research and evaluation across OJJDP.
 - Partner with other research offices and organizations within DOJ, across the federal government, and with private partners.
 - Disseminate our research findings widely using the latest tools and resources to increase accessibility.
- OJJDP's research activity is overseen by the Office of Justice Programs' Science Advisory Board, which the Attorney General convened in fall 2010. The board is comprised of 18 experts—scholars and practitioners in criminology, statistics, sociology, and practitioners in the criminal and juvenile justice fields—to bridge the divide between research and practice in the criminal and juvenile justice fields. The OJJDP Administrator and OJJDP research staff also participate in the new Office of Justice Programs Research Coordination Council—a DOJ-wide body of bureau and office heads who coordinate research and statistics across the Department. OJJDP staff participate in a number of federal research working groups, including the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics and the Federal Interagency Workgroup on Youth Programs. OJJDP staff also participated in the evidence-based working group of the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice. We also co-chair (with the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Institute of Justice) OJP's Juvenile Justice Research Workgroup.
- In 2013, the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council issued a report titled, *Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States*. The committee challenged readers to catalyze a national paradigm shift in the

identification and treatment of minors involved in commercial sexual exploitation as victims rather than juvenile delinquents. The report also provided extensive recommendations, including the charge to strengthen existing research to advance understanding and support the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies. In fiscal year 2014, OJJDP issued a solicitation inviting investigator-initiated proposals to inform policy, program, and legislative responses to the urgent and extensive needs of minors who are sexually exploited for commercial purposes. OJJDP encouraged applicants to propose research questions and evaluation studies that evaluate innovative programs and practices that provide services to address the short- and long-term intervention needs of children and youth who are sexually exploited for commercial purposes. In addition, OJJDP encouraged applicants to analyze commercial sexual exploitation of children-related laws and policies to determine results and to advance promising approaches.

- In fiscal year 2014, OJJDP issued a solicitation to support a practitioner-researcher partnership to develop and evaluate new mentoring practices to serve the needs of youth whose parents are incarcerated. Applicants applied under two categories: Category 1—Program Development and Implementation—for a practitioner to support the enhancement of existing mentoring services to better serve children with incarcerated parents by applying current research and knowledge about mentoring and risk and protective factors to develop new and/or improve mentoring practices for this population. Category 2—Evaluation—for a researcher to support a rigorous evaluation of the implementation and impact of this enhanced approach. In October 2014, OJJDP selected MANY under Category 1 and its research partner at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Center for Evidence-based Mentoring and its subcontractor, Innovation, Research, and Training, Inc. under Category 2.
 - In fiscal year 2014, OJJDP funded research to investigate comprehensive approaches to risk assessment (i.e., use by multiple agencies involved in juvenile justice decisions) and that is likely to inform juvenile justice reform and improvement efforts. This research should provide clear and compelling answers about the most effective risk assessment tools and their implementation and how risk assessments are used for decisions to ensure optimal adjudication, disposition, and placement and service provision to reduce recidivism. The research will focus on assessment implementation and use across the entire continuum of agencies within a juvenile justice system and may include local, regional/county, or state systems. OJJDP is also interested in how needs assessments may be used in conjunction with risk assessments to inform service decisions and promote positive youth outcomes and how use of risk assessments can promote diversion and community-based alternatives, when appropriate.
5. **The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP continue to collaborate with other federal agencies, national organizations, and others that are focused on the needs of youth (e.g., mental health, education, behavioral health, and alcohol and other drug abuse) and that are also working to identify and develop evidence-based policies and practices that respond to those areas of need. Youth in the juvenile justice system most often demonstrate cross-system needs, yet practitioners in various systems too often operate under different frameworks and use different vocabularies.**

OJJDP's response: Concur

As noted in the recommendation, there is broad overlap in federal agency research and evaluation interests for youth at-risk of problem behavior and victimization. The Departments of

Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Agriculture, Defense and others undertake research in areas such as mental health; behavioral health; substance abuse; education; abuse, neglect, and victimization; and violence prevention. OJJDP seeks out opportunities to influence the research efforts of other federal and private partners, encourage the inclusion of a juvenile justice system perspective, and partner on research projects that focus both on at-risk and system-involved youth.

The challenge facing OJJDP, other federal agencies, state and local governments, private and philanthropic organizations, and others working to reform the juvenile justice system is that we have to develop a common understanding of the problems we face and our commonly shared goals and definitions. This means enhanced internal coordination and collaboration. We need a common conceptual framework and a common language to guide our work. As the challenges we face become more complex and far reaching, we have come to understand that no single agency can fully address these problems alone. It requires the full participation of every stakeholder.

- OJJDP has developed a framework to tie together efforts to reduce children’s exposure to violence, prevent youth violence, and promote child and youth well-being. OJJDP developed the framework to help align the efforts of its signature programs—Defending Childhood, the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, and the Community-based Violence Prevention Program. OJJDP envisions the framework as a roadmap that stakeholders will use to examine their particular perspectives and roles and align their work with others who are engaged in similar work. The framework offers a common terminology and shared understanding of the vision and values that drive the work, articulates shared goals, and describes how they can be achieved and progress measured. The shared framework is comprised of:
 - a vision that drives partners who are engaged in this work,
 - values we share and view as the means to achieve the goals of reducing youth violence and promoting child and youth well-being,
 - principles for action, and
 - a theory of change (or logic model).
- OJJDP participates in a number of federal-level and Department of Justice committees, working groups, and task forces that address the spectrum of issues related to child and youth safety and offending. These committees, working groups, and task forces include, but are not limited to:
 - **The Attorney General's Task Force on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence** was a national scope, multi-disciplinary advisory committee that provided policy recommendations to the Attorney General and other national, tribal, state, and local decision makers on issues related to American Indian/Alaska Native children’s exposure to violence.
 - **The Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention** coordinates federal delinquency prevention programs, federal programs and activities

that detain or care for unaccompanied juveniles, and federal programs relating to missing and exploited children.

- **Defending Childhood Initiative** is the Attorney General's interagency initiative to address children's exposure to violence.
- **DOJ Right To Counsel Work Group** coordinates DOJ efforts to enhance access to justice, including improving youth access to qualified legal counsel and facilitating national delinquency court improvement.
- **The FBI/Internet Crimes Against Children Working Group** shares information between ICAC task forces and FBI child exploitation task forces in the field and at the department level.
- **The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics** gathers and assesses all federal statistics on children and families to determine gaps, needs, and overall wellbeing of children and families.
- **The Federal Interagency Reentry Council and its Subgroup on Juvenile Reentry** supports the Administration's efforts to advance public safety and well-being through enhanced communication, coordination, and collaboration across federal agency initiatives that (1) reduce recidivism and victimization to make communities safer, (2) assist those returning from prison, jails, and juvenile facilities; and (3) lower the direct and collateral costs of incarceration, thus saving taxpayer dollars.
- **The Federal Network on Violence Against Women** shares information on federal efforts regarding violence against women and girls.
- **The Federal Partners for Suicide Prevention** collaborate on programs and federal efforts to address suicide prevention.
- **The Federal Working Group on the National Strategy on the Prevention of Child Exploitation** coordinates federal strategies to protect children from sexual exploitation.
- **The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking** shares information on federal efforts regarding underage drinking.
- **Interagency Coordinating Council on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders** coordinates federal efforts with the goal of changing health and legal policy and practice as it applies to the treatment of juveniles and adults with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders who come in contact with the justice system.
- **The Interagency Forum on Disconnected Youth** develops strategies on how to implement Section 737, Performance Pilots of the President's fiscal year 2013 budget.
- **The Interagency Task Force on Missing and Exploited Children** shares information on federal policy relating to missing and exploited children.
- **Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning and Intersex (LGBTQI) Working Group** coordinates and shares information on LGBTQI issues.

- **The Office of Justice Programs Juvenile Justice Research Group** shares information on OJP research projects relevant to juvenile justice.
- **The Senior Policy Operating Group** coordinates federal anti-human trafficking efforts.
- **The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Strategic Planning Effort** is an independent agency within the federal executive branch and is composed of the heads of 19 departments and agencies.
- **The Victim Services Committee of the Senior Policy Operating Group on Human Trafficking** supports the work of member agencies to the Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services to Victims of Human Trafficking.
- **The White House Initiative for Youth Violence Prevention - Faith & Community-Based Engagement Subgroup** works with national and local faith-based and community organizations to strengthen their participation in the planning and implementation of comprehensive plans to prevent youth violence in communities throughout the country.
- **The National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention** is a network of communities and federal agencies that work together, share information, and build local capacity to prevent and reduce youth violence. Established at the direction of President Obama in 2010, the Forum brings together people from diverse professions and perspectives to learn from each other about the crisis of youth and gang violence in the United States and to build comprehensive solutions on the local and national levels. Participating federal agencies include the Departments of Justice (OJJDP), Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and the Office on National Drug Control Policy. The communities participating in the Forum include Boston, Camden, Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Salinas, and San Jose. Other participants include faith and community-based organizations, youth and family groups, and business and philanthropic leaders.

The Forum operates on three key principles:

- **Multidisciplinary partnerships are key** to tackling this complex issue – police, educators, public health and other service providers, faith and community leaders, parents, and youth, must all be at the table.
- **Communities must balance and coordinate** their prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry strategies.
- **Data and evidence-driven strategies must inform efforts** to reduce youth violence in our country. These three principles are critical to directing and leveraging limited resources to make a long standing impact.
- OJJDP regularly holds listening sessions on current trends and issues in the juvenile justice field. In these sessions, OJJDP hosts roundtable discussions with practitioners, policymakers, law enforcement, researchers, corporate and philanthropic partners, families of youth in the justice system, and community members involved in juvenile justice issues, to gain knowledge from their expertise and learn from their experiences. Through this lively

exchange of ideas, OJJDP sets an agenda reflecting the priorities of individuals on the front lines of criminal and juvenile justice. The following listening session reports are available:

- Enhancing the Infrastructure to Support, Sustain and Expand Mentoring Programs: An OJJDP Roundtable (November 11, 2014).
- Creating and Sustaining Fair and Beneficial Environments for LGBTQ Youth: An OJJDP Listening Session (November 6 – 7, 2014).
- Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents Listening Session (September 30, 2013).
- Family Engagement Listening Sessions (March 30, 2011; April 27, 2011; June 15, 2011).
- Law Enforcement Listening Session (April 18 – 19, 2011).
- National Girls Institute Listening Sessions (March 3, 2011).
- Building A Network: Girls Alliance Roundtable (October 14-16, 2014).

6. The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP take special note of racial disparities that exist throughout the juvenile justice system and place greater emphasis on supporting evidence-based practices that can reduce those disparities.

OJJDP's response: Concur

As underscored in the National Academies' *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach*, research has shown that youth of color are overrepresented at nearly all contact points within the juvenile justice system. Youth of color often have different experiences and are treated differently in the juvenile justice system when compared with white youth even when their offense and offense history are similar. Research has also shown that various contributing factors that can result in disparate treatment cause disproportionate minority contact (DMC). OJJDP is funding a number of initiatives to address DMC through programs and practice supported by research and evaluations. We, as a country, have made important strides in this arena, but OJJDP recognizes that more work remains to be done.

- In fiscal year 2014, OJJDP funded the Technical Assistance Center To End Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System. This technical assistance project will provide education, training and technical assistance, and resources for state, local, and tribal governments and private organizations on the most promising systemic and programmatic techniques to address disproportionate minority contact and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities within the juvenile justice system. The resource center will build upon the most recent research on effective systems change strategies and programmatic interventions that address minority youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

- In fiscal year 2014, OJJDP funded the Studies Program on Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice. This program will sponsor small studies and/or secondary analyses of existing data to provide objective, independent knowledge about the extent and impact of ethnic disparities effecting Hispanic/Latino youth's contact with the juvenile justice system that includes arrests, referrals to court, diversion, charges filed, placement in secure juvenile detention facilities and adult jails and lockups, findings of delinquency, placement in secure juvenile correctional facilities, probation, and transfers to the adult criminal justice system.
- In fiscal years 2009-2010, OJJDP awarded the Development Services Group, Inc. (DSG) nearly \$500,000 via the Field Initiated Research and Evaluation (FIRE) Program to conduct a national analysis of the Relative Rate Index (RRI) data to identify promising and best practices in reducing DMC and to update OJJDP's DMC literature review, last published in 2002. The analysis included identifying state and local jurisdictions that showed a consistent positive movement in their DMC RRI data over 3 consecutive years and then obtaining detailed information on the approaches that these successful jurisdictions used. A four member advisory committee of DMC experts guided this study, and it is the first to systematically and empirically examine all of the collected data at each juvenile justice system contact point to identify data-driven best practices to reduce DMC.
- In fiscal year 2014, OJJDP continued to provide technical assistance to states to develop assessment study implementation plans. Per federal regulation, OJJDP required states to conduct methodological studies to determine the mechanisms contributing to DMC. Largely, the studies are mixed method designs that include, but are not limited to, current DMC research and literature, overviews of the extent of DMC statewide and in targeted jurisdictions, current delinquency prevention and intervention and systems improvement strategies, the study's design, and findings and recommendations.
- OJJDP is providing the following support to states and localities implementing juvenile justice reform:
 - national leadership;
 - policy guidance;
 - training and technical assistance on a range of juvenile justice issues, including but not limited to eliminating racial and ethnic disparities;
 - implementation of evidence-based assessment tools;
 - enhancement of the adjudicatory hearing process to support prosecutors, probation officers, defense attorneys, and judges on the use of out-of-home placement, when deemed appropriate;
 - enhancing standards for out of home placement; and
 - comprehensive reentry/aftercare models.

- OJJDP is funding the Smart on Juvenile Justice: A Comprehensive Strategy to Juvenile Justice Reform initiative. The training and technical assistance provider selected is working with Hawaii, Kentucky, and Georgia as they enact legislative reforms to strengthen diversion and community-based options that will reduce their out-of-home population, avert millions of dollars in otherwise anticipated correctional spending, reduce recidivism, and protect public safety. State leaders from the three states are working with OJJDP and the Pew Charitable Trusts' Public Safety Performance Project.
- In fiscal year 2013, OJJDP awarded \$500,000 to Illinois, Iowa, Montana, and Utah to implement the DMC Community and Strategic Planning (CASP) Project. The goal is to increase state and local capacity to reduce racial and ethnic disparities and other factors that contribute to DMC. CASP provides effective strategies that include implementing state and local governing committees and/or boards, hiring and/or designating staff as DMC coordinators, implementing and facilitating OJJDP's DMC Reduction Model, engaging community stakeholders, and providing training to local jurisdictions. A process evaluation will soon be underway to determine whether the four states have implemented the CASP curriculum to fidelity.

Youth Engagement

The Youth Engagement Subcommittee, composed of four young adults who are SAG and FACJJ youth members, recognizes that engaging young people—especially those with direct experience in the juvenile justice system—is a powerful and efficient way to improve the system. The subcommittee developed its recommendations after:

- Receiving input from youth, including those with direct experience in the juvenile justice system who attended the Coalition for Juvenile Justice's 2013 Youth Summit.
- Interviewing experts in the field who specialize in youth engagement, youth voice, and positive youth development.
- Reviewing reports and recommendations addressing youth and family voice in juvenile justice.
- The subcommittee referenced the Youth Engagement Continuum, used by several youth-serving organizations, as a framework for its discussions. The continuum covers the spectrum from manipulation to full youth-initiated, shared decisionmaking, and includes the following:
 - **Manipulation**, in which young people are used to support causes but are given no chance to provide inspiration.
 - **Decoration**, in which youth are paraded or used to bolster a cause without being directly involved in any part of the cause.
 - **Tokenism**, in which youth appear to have a voice but, in reality, have no say about their participation. For example, they may sit on a board or advisory committee but have no real input into the conversation—they are just there to fill a seat.

- **Assigned but informed**, in which youth are assigned to a specific task and told precisely how to do the task and what to say.
- **Consulted and informed**, in which youth are consulted about their views but their suggestions are not taken into account or implemented.
- **Adult-initiated and shared decisionmaking**, in which a youth project is initiated by a seasoned individual—often an adult or mature young person—with the decisionmaking shared between the youth/emerging leader and the seasoned individual.
- **Youth-initiated and directed**, in which youth initiate and direct a project or program with an adult in an advisory role.
- **Youth-initiated, shared decisionmaking**, in which projects or programs are initiated by empowered youth who share decisionmaking with seasoned or established professionals.

The subcommittee focused on youth voice and engagement in the juvenile justice system and the importance of having youth with current or prior juvenile justice system experience involved in shaping the policies and practices of this system at the federal, state, and local levels.

Subcommittee members cited powerful examples of fundamental impacts on the system as a result of youth being involved in decisionmaking at all levels. OJJDP has the opportunity to further elevate youth voice and engagement as a principle and practice across the country by modeling and supporting positive, effective, intentional, and systematic youth engagement. These recommendations are designed to transform the juvenile justice system into a comprehensive, systematic approach where youth are viewed as partners in their own path through the system and in improving the juvenile justice system.

OJJDP's response: Concur

OJJDP believes in the value of meaningful youth engagement and understands the need to both model and promote it positively, effectively, intentionally, and systematically within the Office, across the federal government, and among all of its partners, grantees, and stakeholders. We commend the FACJJ—in particular the 2013 Youth Subcommittee members—on the thoughtfulness and intent of the recommendations that are, in their words, “designed to transform the juvenile justice system into a comprehensive, systematic approach where youth are viewed as partners in their own path through the system and in improving the juvenile justice system.” Our office is grateful to the young adults, especially those with prior direct system involvement, who have shared their perspectives, experiences, and expertise to guide our agency in the development of both comprehensive youth engagement strategies and in executing our vision across the juvenile justice and delinquency prevention continuum. The voices heard and engagement of young people within OJJDP has brought renewed urgency and vigor to our work. Across the country, systems reform is often the direct result of young people finding their voices and taking action (on issues including shackling, status offender reform, and youth waiver into the adult criminal justice system)—and adults listening, supporting, and partnering. OJJDP is committed to facilitating the expansion of youth engagement initiatives both at the federal level and across the country.

OJJDP continues to make progress and has already begun implementing many of the recommendations submitted here for consideration. We agree with the FACJJ, however, that work remains to ensure youth and their families, particularly those with current and/or prior system involvement, guide the policies and practices (and their individual outcomes) of the systems that affect them. It is critical that structures to sustain and grow youth leadership are created—complete with the knowledge to perpetuate the development of the next generation’s leaders. OJJDP acknowledges the urgency for development of a coordinated, purposeful response and its responsibility in leading the creation and institutionalization.

While OJJDP’s commitment to youth engagement is longstanding, these recommendations—coupled with recent research on positive youth development and developmental approaches—are reinvigorating our efforts to strengthen our work. Our role and responsibility is to not only listen to the voices of young people but to actively create opportunities to hear from them, especially those with direct experience in the juvenile justice system. It is only by including young people—especially youth and their families with direct contact with our systems—that we can ensure all youth grow up to be healthy, happy, and free from violence.

We thank the FACJJ for the recommendations. OJJDP is committed to creating partnerships with youth and families that our agency most directly impact.

7. The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP create consistent and well-supported structures for meaningful youth voice and engagement at the federal level on juvenile justice system issues to ensure that the voices of young people are heard on a regular, ongoing basis by government leaders and throughout the juvenile justice field.

- a. OJJDP should establish and support a committee composed entirely of young people both with and without juvenile justice system involvement—or identify and partner with an existing body that meets these requirements—to provide insight and recommendations to OJJDP on juvenile justice programs, policies, issues, and reforms. This entity should be composed of young people representing SAGs; youth in custody; and national, state, and local juvenile justice policy, advocacy, and direct service organizations. Young adults participating on this committee should be provided with dedicated support from OJJDP and/or external organizations—including travel assistance, financial stipends, and recognition of service as deemed appropriate— to ensure that barriers to their participation do not exist and that their participation enables them to advance both personally and professionally.
- b. OJJDP should develop an intra-agency Youth and Family Engagement Team— comprising OJJDP senior staff from each division and led by the OJJDP Administrator—that convenes at least quarterly and liaises meaningfully and coordinates with the youth committee. This team should:
 - Enlist the support of representatives from other federal agencies with experience in building effective youth voice and engagement structures, experts in the field, family members of system-involved youth, and young people to create a plan for agency- and system wide youth voice and engagement, so that OJJDP can serve as a model in this arena to states and jurisdictions.
 - Include at least two Youth Justice Fellows—young people with prior or current juvenile justice system involvement—who are funded to work at OJJDP on youth voice and engagement in the juvenile justice system.

- Identify and create opportunities for youth voice and engagement within OJJDP and in partnership with other federal agencies.
- c. The proposed OJJDP-supported youth committee, the proposed intra-agency Youth and Family Engagement Team, and the proposed OJJDP Youth Justice Fellows should collaborate and work in partnership with SAGs, juvenile justice nonprofits, and private foundations to build greater youth voice and engagement within OJJDP’s existing work and to launch new federal and state initiatives specifically focused on youth voice and engagement. The committee should create a National Youth Speakers Bureau to provide youth who have prior system involvement with the tools, support, and a platform for sharing their stories and advice with audiences across the country.
- d. The subcommittee recommended a number of other activities to OJJDP to encourage youth engagement:
- Create a national network of young people, especially young people with prior juvenile justice system involvement, to serve as training and technical assistance providers.
 - Host an annual national summit on juvenile justice youth voice and engagement similar to OJJDP’s annual Tribal Youth Summit, organized and led by youth.
 - Ensure that OJJDP’s requests for proposals require applicants to describe how their agencies or entities incorporate youth leadership and youth engagement in their activities.
 - Create a national resource for youth and parents that provides advice and guidance on preventing involvement in the juvenile justice system and navigating through it.
 - Incorporate youth perspectives in existing OJJDP publications and other dissemination activities.

OJJDP’s response: Concur

OJJDP recognizes the importance of ensuring young people—with proper supports and assurances—have a voice *and* mechanisms to provide input on our policies and practices. Progress has been made, and OJJDP and its partners continue to implement structures for meaningful engagement. The systems-involved young adult representation on the FACJJ itself and the strength of this representation on this Youth Engagement Subcommittee and the recommendations they have made exemplify these advancements. We recognize an overarching strategy and coordinated effort is needed to build systems and structures that ensure effective, longstanding youth engagement.

- **Interagency coordination.** The FACJJ recommendations and accompanying narratives and responses form the basis of OJJDP’s forthcoming youth engagement policy and associated implementation plan¹. This policy will serve as the guide for all Office-related activities and as a model and support for other federal, state, and local systems, agencies,

¹ Corresponding OJJDP Family Engagement Policy will be incorporated into a larger overarching document or as a stand-alone. A comprehensive plan will provide for youth and family-specific activities as well as allow for leverage of natural intersections and cross purposes.

and organizations. OJJDP understands that to ensure perpetuation of this policy and the guidance and practices the plan sets forth, systems must be developed, maintained, and promoted that respond to the youth and families with whom they come in contact.

In August 2014, OJJDP cosponsored the Coalition for Juvenile Justice's Annual Youth Summit, which was planned and executed in partnership with youth. At this event, more than 100 young people from across the country (SAG and non-SAG members, system-experienced and not) came together for 2 days and engaged in skill-building, networking, and leadership development. Emphasizing the value we place on events such as this which focus on cultivating and empowering a new generation of juvenile justice advocates, OJJDP provided scholarships to a number of participants who otherwise would not have been able to attend. OJJDP will also cosponsor this summit in 2015.

Agency leadership, in particular the Administrator, allowed significant opportunity for attendees to not just hear from OJJDP but more importantly, express their own experiences and impressions and recommendations for federal policy change. In conjunction with the 2014 Summit, OJJDP invited youth participants to provide insights on how the youth-serving systems they encountered engaged them in a meaningful way. Nearly 40 young people reflected on successful and not-so-successful practices, and OJJDP has used the feedback they provided to inform the development of tools, resources, trainings, and the consolidation of best practices described further in response to Recommendation 8.

OJJDP reinforces the unique value that young people bring and continues to consult them regarding the investment of resources to hone their expertise. In turn, these young people form the foundation of a growing pool of youth who assist OJJDP in the field, contribute to the development of supporting tools and resources, and offer perspectives and improvements to existing publications and activities. In partnership with national youth justice agencies, OJJDP will continue its commitment, as the FACJJ has recommended, to cosponsor youth summits and create additional opportunities for young people to convene and develop the skills, resources, and connections to ensure juvenile justice system reform. As the Office finalizes its engagement policies, OJJDP will work with youth to further refine their roles and responsibilities and ensure all actions (to the greatest extent possible) are youth-initiated and led.

- 8. The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP support states and local jurisdictions in developing structures and mechanisms to increase meaningful youth voice and engagement on juvenile justice issues, and in transforming policies and practices to view juvenile justice system-involved young people as partners in the juvenile justice system.**
 - a. OJJDP, in partnership with young people, should develop and disseminate information and resources to support states, SAGs, community organizations, and local jurisdictions in implementing policies, programs, and practices that support greater youth engagement and youth voice in the juvenile justice system.
 - b. OJJDP should support states and local jurisdictions in adopting policies and practices grounded in positive youth development and strengths-based approaches that ensure that young people in the juvenile justice system are viewed as system partners.
 - c. OJJDP should disseminate information on successful existing youth voice and engagement strategies at the state and local levels and should support SAGs in modeling youth engagement

at the state level. OJJDP should develop a biennial report evaluating youth and family engagement nationally to determine best practices and disseminate it as a resource. OJJDP should encourage SAGs to establish committees composed entirely of youth and to appoint at least one youth ombudsman and one youth member who is currently in custody to participate in SAG meetings and activities.

- d. OJJDP should work to build capacity and resources to carry out the work of the proposed interagency Youth and Family Engagement Team and provide support in expanding youth and family engagement trainings and technical assistance at the federal, state, and local levels.
- e. OJJDP should require that the 3-year plan for each SAG include youth-led projects. Mentoring by an experienced SAG member should not be discouraged. The youth-led project(s) should be substantially completed by youth SAG members and reported on as required of all other funded activities.

OJJDP's response: Concur

OJJDP's role in promoting youth engagement includes both modeling effective practices and advancing these practices across and among the nation's juvenile justice and youth-serving systems. Through its support of states and communities in development and institutionalization of engagement principles *in parallel* with the perpetuation of related promising practices, tools, resources, and information, OJJDP seeks to ensure that youth and their families are heard and are partners in the process. OJJDP believes (and evidence shows) true reformation is only achievable when policies and practices transform and, collectively, systems become grounded in these partnerships. An emerging consensus exists among researchers and practitioners that, when done well, youth engagement strategies can be powerful tools to improve juvenile justice policies and practices.

OJJDP agrees with the FACJJ in the necessity of proactive supports, incentives, and requirements to ensure stakeholders and grantees reach systemic outcomes. To this end, and thanks in large part to the leadership of the FACJJ, OJJDP has made strides in planning and executing relevant activities.

Responding to the specific recommendations that the FACJJ has issued, OJJDP is committed to pursuing the following within the next year:

- **Developing and disseminating resources.** OJJDP recognizes that many youth-serving systems, community organizations, SAGs, and local jurisdictions across the nation have developed successful strategies to engage youth, in particular youth with prior or current juvenile justice involvement. Consistent with the recommendations, our priority is first understanding how youth are currently being engaged, identifying best practices and barriers to engagement, and developing resources to support stakeholders across the country in strengthening youth voice and engagement policies and practices.
- **Perpetuating youth as system partners.** Current research in juvenile justice, including the National Academy's *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach* and follow up *Implementing Juvenile Justice Reform: The Federal Role*, points to the need for and benefits of developmentally appropriate and positive youth development-grounded approaches for youth, staff, and the system as a whole. OJJDP will raise awareness among state and local

system leaders regarding the importance and benefits of strengths-based approaches to juvenile justice to encourage reform.

- **Monitoring and evaluation of youth engagement.** OJJDP will develop mechanisms to measure youth voice and engagement both at OJJDP and within SAGs, which must have a minimum 20 percent youth membership of the total board members.
- **Promoting youth engagement on state advisory groups.** OJJDP will encourage SAGs to increase youth voice and engagement, both among youth SAG members and among youth within their respective states, especially those under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system. OJJDP will recommend that each SAG include information specific to SAG youth engagement activities in each state's 3-year plan.

OJJDP will encourage SAGs to provide youth members with the opportunity and support to develop, propose, and pursue initiatives that raise awareness about or address juvenile justice system issues that are important to them.²

9. **The FACJJ recommends that the President, Congress, and OJJDP increase opportunities for collaboration between OJJDP and other youth-focused federal agencies on youth voice and engagement.**
 - a. The OJJDP Administrator should work with partner federal agencies via the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Coordinating Council) to create a national youth leader advisory group composed of young adults who are leaders within youth-serving systems to guide these agencies and the federal government on how better to engage youth in shaping federal youth-focused policies and programs and support state, local, and tribal governments in doing so.
 - b. OJJDP should research current policies, practices, and structures within other federal youth-serving systems that pertain to youth voice and youth engagement to identify successful approaches from other systems that could be applied within juvenile justice.
 - c. The President and the Congress should amend 42 U.S.C. 5616 (section 206 of the JJDP), Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, to include a provision for a total of three youth representatives to be appointed to the Coordinating Council by the Speaker of the House of Representatives (one), the majority leader of the Senate (one), and the President (one).
 - d. OJJDP should encourage the Coordinating Council to make it a priority to financially support the travel of youth representatives and appropriate adult supervisors (e.g., guardians, parents, SAG members), specifically for hotel and flight costs, to ensure their participation in the Coordinating Council face-to-face meetings to obtain meaningful engagement from the youth representatives.

OJJDP's response: Concur

² Examples include allocating SAG funding to a youth subcommittee (Colorado), a youth subcommittee managing a statewide Spirit of Youth Award process (Vermont, Wisconsin) or an essay competition on violence (Utah), creating their own initiatives (Illinois), or leading focus groups and site visits (other states...).

OJJDP will continue to enhance existing mechanisms and develop new initiatives that increase opportunities for collaboration within and among its youth-serving partners. As described above, the Youth and Family Subcommittee of the Coordinating Council—led by the Administrator and informed by member representation from the breadth of systems surrounding youth and their families—will identify and create opportunities for youth and family voice, inform the Office’s plan for system wide engagement within and across its Council partners, and guide these agencies in furthering both federal engagement policies and those of their constituencies. Additionally, this group will continue existing efforts to identify research and successful engagement across congruent systems, including policies, practices, and structures, that could be applied to juvenile justice and where juvenile justice-involved young people may inform those systems.

OJJDP agrees with the FACJJ that the Office must model the youth engagement principles it upholds and support family and youth representation on the Coordinating Council, either by formal designation or factoring in appointment of practitioner members. OJJDP continues to prioritize participation at Coordinating Council meetings and listening sessions³ of young people who have experienced the juvenile justice and partner systems. Having young people at the table, as a resource and experts, is valuable each time. We look forward to enhanced engagement, presence, and impact.

10. The FACJJ recommends that the President and Congress amend the JJDPA to include language that strengthens youth voice and engagement at the federal and state levels.

- a. Amend 42 U.S.C. 5633 (section 233) to require that at least one-fifth of each SAG be composed of young adult members, defined as individuals younger than 28, at least two of whom must have current or prior juvenile justice system involvement. Provisions should be included that outline SAG reporting requirements on young adult membership, further define what constitutes youth engagement (such as meetings attended, votes cast, and subcommittee participation), and describe how young adult members transition on their SAGs to become adult members.
- b. Amend the JJDPA section on the FACJJ to require that at least one-fifth of the FACJJ be composed of young adult members, defined as individuals younger than 28, at least two of whom must have current or prior juvenile justice system involvement. Provisions should be included that outline FACJJ reporting requirements on young adult membership, further define what constitutes youth engagement (such as meetings attended, votes cast, and subcommittee participation), and describe how young adult members transition on the FACJJ to become adult members.

OJJDP response: Concur In Part

³ For example, see the earlier mentioned, “Creating and Sustaining Fair and Beneficial Environments for LGBTQ Youth: An OJJDP Listening Session” held at OJJDP on November 6 – 7, 2014, and the November 2014 OJJDP Roundtable “Enhancing the Infrastructure To Support, Sustain and Expand Mentoring Programs.” At the latter event, OJJDP engaged several youth who have benefited from either mentoring another individual, being mentored, or both. Their perspective was compelling and honest and included representatives from state advisory groups, crossover youth, the LGBTQ community, and system-involved youth, ensuring that a diverse youth voice was part of the discussion. Furthermore, their unique perspectives provided for discussion on ways to more fully support mentoring for underserved populations.

OJJDP supports the FACJJ's recommendations for strengthening youth voice and engagement at the federal and state levels. As previously mentioned, the Office is committed to widespread infusion of these principles. OJJDP agrees that refinement of the JJDP Act, in particular provisions regarding SAG membership, is warranted. Youth and family participation, current and prior system involvement, specificity around engagement, and transition or "age-out" planning should be considered in any amendment discussions. OJJDP staff supporting the Office's overall reauthorization efforts are aware of these recommendations and charged with their consideration.

In accordance with the JJDP Act, OJJDP is required to ensure that the FACJJ membership is reflective of the state advisory group it represents and has consistently prioritized diversity of perspectives in its appointments. When the JJDP Act is reauthorized to include additional requirements for SAG members, OJJDP will revise the FACJJ criteria accordingly. Until then, and in conjunction with the previously mentioned revisions to the FACJJ bylaws, OJJDP will continue to ensure appropriate representation and explore inclusion of expanded appointment of youth SAG members.

OJJDP would again like to recognize the FACJJ on its thoughtful recommendations and reiterate its intent to see through the commitments made here. For youth engagement specifically, and in all we do across the continuum to ensure our children grow healthy, happy, and free from violence, OJJDP will work in partnership with youth ensuring true success and a new generation of juvenile justice leaders.

11. The FACJJ recommends to Congress, OJJDP, and other relevant federal agencies that the issue of school engagement should be highlighted as a key item in juvenile justice reform.

The FACJJ recognizes the work that is being done in the area of juvenile justice reform and the reinvestment of federal, state, and local dollars to more effective incarceration, intervention, and prevention strategies. At the same time, the FACJJ believes special attention should be given to school engagement because research repeatedly confirms that the school-to-prison pipeline is real, and any reform effort must substantially raise the importance of school engagement.

OJJDP's response: Concur

Leadership in the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education are committed to their continued partnership and their work with other public and private entities to ensure that our schools support every student's academic, social, and emotional learning needs, and that minor and nonviolent student misbehaviors, which comprise the large majority of discipline incidents, are addressed within the context of the school and not the court system. This effort is referred to as the Supportive School Discipline Initiative (SSDI).

OJJDP has prioritized and given high visibility to the reduction and elimination of racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice systems' reform efforts and has called out contributing factors, such as exclusionary student discipline and student referrals to court, as an important component in these reforms.

More specifically, the earlier described Smart on Juvenile Justice initiative addresses the antecedent, remediating, and related factors to racial and ethnic disparities, including inappropriate and inequitable school discipline; law enforcement training; judicial training efforts,

including the School Pathways project of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; grants to support police/community relations and trust; and system reform.

Finally, it is important to note that while SSDI and related efforts share the goal of keeping the majority of students actively engaged in school and out of court, the two departments are also working together to support young people who become justice-system involved. The two departments are collaborating on a number of fronts to ensure that students in the justice system receive a quality education and support in successfully transitioning back into a home school upon their return to their community. This is an important part of OJJDP's mission to ensure that young people's interactions with the justice system are rare, fair, and beneficial.

12. The FACJ recommends that OJJDP be actively involved in the development and dissemination of a roadmap for schools to consider when revising or reforming school discipline policies.

OJJDP's response: Concur

OJJDP and the Department of Justice are actively involved in the development and dissemination of a number of documents, resources, and events intended to help schools, justice system stakeholders, law enforcement, and others implement promising and best practices. Primary resources include:

- **Federal School Discipline Guidance Package.** This package, released in January 2014, is innovative because it not only offers legal guidance to jurisdictions, it includes a "Dear Colleague" letter outlining school districts' legal obligations to equitably administer student discipline, a guiding principles document with links to research and best practices for improving school climate and discipline, a database of technical assistance resources for school communities, and a searchable compendium of school discipline laws and regulations.

The Department of Justice partnered with the Department of Education to offer a series of six webinars (from January through June 2014) that provided detail on how to use and apply the various components of this package. Of particular note are the three webinars that included practitioners' perspectives on how to apply the guiding principles.

- **Letter to Chief State School Officers and State Attorneys General.** This letter from the Attorney General and Secretary of Education, issued in June 2014, clarifies approaches and practices to appropriately meet youth educational needs in correctional education settings. Further guidance and additional resources were issued in December 2014 for juvenile facility administrators and educators.
- **School Discipline Consensus Report.** In June 2014, the Council of State Governments released this comprehensive roadmap to reforming school discipline. They are creating an interactive web site (soon to be live), with FAQs and tools to guide policy makers, schools, etc.

Beginning in November 2014, OJJDP began offering a series of six webinars that distill the five major chapters of the report into digestible components offered by practitioners and policy makers. As was the case with the webinar series, we organized for the Federal School Discipline guidance package, this webinar series focuses on implementation and

practicalities of changing policy and practice for schools, police agencies, courts, and communities.

- **National Leadership Summit on School Discipline and Climate.** On October 6-7, 2014, we held a National Leadership Summit on School Climate and Discipline that brought together teams of high level education officials, justice system leadership, parent and youth advocates, law enforcement, mental and behavioral health specialists, and others from 20 states, the District of Columbia, and Baltimore, MD, to create or enhance their existing plans to improve school disciplinary practice and reduce student entry into the juvenile justice system. The summit provided the opportunity for states and local jurisdictions to develop concrete strategies and take important steps toward disciplinary and juvenile justice reform.

Our work with these states and localities will continue through the Supportive School Discipline Community of Practice and other vehicles, and our own learning from the summit will inform our grant-making efforts and how we support the field.

Additionally, OJJDP received a new appropriation in fiscal year 2014 to invest in professional development and capacity building among schools, courts, police, and communities related to establishing safe, supportive learning environments.

- **School Justice Collaboration Program.** The overall purpose of this initiative is to enhance collaboration and coordination among courts, schools, mental and behavioral health specialists, law enforcement, and other juvenile justice officials to help students succeed in school and prevent negative outcomes for youth and communities.

13. The FACJ recommends that OJJDP collaborate with other relevant federal agencies to develop training for school-based officers and educators on efforts to address the school-to-prison pipeline and its impact on DMC in the juvenile justice system.

OJJDP's response: Concur

In June 2014, OJJDP played a lead role in developing a day-long, cross-system meeting that the U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of Ohio hosted. School officials, school resource officers (SROs), other law enforcement, probation officers, teachers, youth, community organization representatives, parents, magistrates, and judges came together to learn about best practices and to discuss policy and practice changes with a goal of keeping more kids in school and out of court. We plan to use this model for other U.S. Attorneys who wish to convene cross system events to identify and address ineffective policies and programs that funnel young people into the justice system unnecessarily. In organizing this event, we used the convening power of SSDI to call upon expertise from our colleagues at the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and colleagues from the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and the Community Oriented Policing Services Office. We will continue to draw upon these agencies' expertise as we seek to expand this and other efforts.

Finally, we will continue to develop and disseminate a number of resources and guidance to help schools, justice system stakeholders, law enforcement, and others implement promising and best practices, including those highlighting impacts on DMC.

- 14. The FACJJ recommends that DOJ include, in all of its law enforcement requests for grant proposals, language that requires grant applicants to indicate how they are addressing juvenile DMC in their communities and how the proposed grant activity will promote those efforts.**

OJJDP's response: Concur

Prior to posting, OJJDP reviews all competitive solicitations to:

- ensure that the performance measures that award recipients are required to report to OJJDP data on race and gender, when appropriate.
- promote evidence-based programming to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, when appropriate.
- promote focused training and technical assistance on race and gender, when appropriate.

- 15. The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP encourage and support study and research on disparities within multiple youth-serving systems and their impact on juvenile DMC. OJJDP should use the research to develop models or best practices for cross-systems collaboration to reduce DMC in the juvenile justice system.**

OJJDP's response: Concur

In response to the FACJJ's recommendation 6 calling for the support and development of evidence-based practices aimed at DMC and reducing the racial disparities that exist throughout the juvenile justice system, OJJDP continues to prioritize systematic reduction across the country, including the study and research to develop cross-system reduction models. The Field Initiated Research and Evaluation (FIRE) program and forthcoming Studies Program on Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice are two research initiatives OJJDP is funding to address DMC. Early results from the DMC FIRE study, indicate that nine study jurisdictions have reduced DMC at various points throughout their juvenile justice system, including arrests, referrals to court, charges filed, secure detention, transfers to adult court, and increasing diversion. In line with FACJJ's finding that law enforcement is the gateway to the juvenile justice system, Connecticut, Tulsa County, Oklahoma, and Utah County, Utah, have reduced DMC at arrests. The designated state agencies that receive OJJDP Title II Formula Grant funds facilitated and funded these reforms.

- 16. The FACJJ recommends that OJJDP support an initiative to fund and create a campaign that educates families and communities about DMC, its impact, what is being done to address the issue, and how they can be part of the solution.**

OJJDP's response: Concur

OJJDP has begun to educate communities about DMC through a variety of activities. They include:

- **Enhanced Training and Technical Assistance on Racial and Ethnic Disparities /DMC.** In fiscal year 2014, OJJDP launched a new training and technical assistance effort focused on reducing racial and ethnic disparities/DMC. OJJDP selected the Development Services Group, Inc. and the W. Haywood Burns Institute to provide training and technical

assistance aimed at reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. This is the first time that OJJDP has dedicated a training and technical assistance program specifically on this issue, with such a comprehensive approach. The training and technical assistance center addresses community level education activities, among an array of other strategies.

- **OJJDP's Community and Strategic Planning (CASP) Project.** OJJDP developed CASP to help states and their localities reduce DMC through data collection and analysis, local assessment studies, community capacity building, implementing promising/effective delinquency prevention and systems improvement strategies, and evaluation via a prescribed curriculum. As stated in recommendation 15, Utah County, Utah, at the direction of the designated state agency that receives Title II formula grant funds, has successfully implemented the CASP curriculum and been identified in the FIRE study for reducing DMC at arrest, referrals to court, detention, and increasing diversion. Utah County has decreased DMC for Native American youth, which is directly related to many of DOJ's initiatives that include, but are not limited to, the Attorney General's Task Force on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence and the Interagency Group on Native American/Alaska Native Youth and Disproportionate Minority Contact.
- **OJJDP-MacArthur Partnership.** OJJDP is also supporting the Effective Reduction of Racial and Ethnic Disparities Project through its broader partnership with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The project provides funding to the Center for Children's Law and Policy to engage with local jurisdictions to help them reduce overrepresentation and disparate treatment of youth of color at key juvenile justice decision points and reduce their unnecessary entry and penetration in the juvenile justice system. A key component of this work is engagement with community stakeholders.