



## **OJJDP FY 2022 National Listening Session: Feedback From National Organizations on OJJDP's Priorities**

July 25, 2022 | 11 a.m.–1 p.m. ET

### **Breakout Room 1: Treating Children as Children**

#### **1. What Does Treating Children as Children Mean to You?**

- The spectrum of childhood to adults is something that the government is always heavily involved in. Child issues are typically blamed on parents. At around the age of 14–16, those problems are then blamed on the child. During all this, we do not see the community stepping in. There really is no hope for a just system if the community does not take a bigger role in assisting children.
- We should use the science on adolescent and behavior development. Eighteen is an arbitrary number and we should still be treating children transitioning into adulthood as children.
- In order to treat children as children, we should decriminalize youthful behavior, stop arresting children, and put resources used for incarceration into communities.

##### **a. What do you think are best practices for treating children as children?**

- You need to change the narrative of the children who come in contact with the system. Are we understanding them and the troubles that they are having?
- We need to take somewhat of a preventative role to provide constructive spaces for them to experience joy and community.
- We need to look at it from a trauma-informed lens and provide training to practitioners to see that many children are coming from that space.
- If we start off with the notion that we have the capacity to change, then we can adopt practices that are suited for young people. It is important to limit law enforcement responses, where necessary, and have more of an emphasis on community intervention.
- Sometimes, the people we service are young moms who are also youth. So, our view is on the backend and watching the kids after they are born to ensure they are reaching their milestones to prolong the continuum of adequate care.
- Connect young people with mentors. Also connect resources to the siblings of young people who are system involved, to encourage them to move in different directions.
- Part of the problem is that the systems that work with kids and families are siloed. We have to span boundaries across agencies to really pull together resources for treating kids and their families.

#### **2. What are some challenges your organization is currently facing when trying to treat children as children?**

- There has been a fair amount of progress of certain systems recognizing the need to treat children as children. It seems that that approach does not apply to all children, though. There are children who come from a lower socioeconomic status, children who are of color, etc., who do not get access to these same systems.



- Agencies can go at odds over a perceived idea that children need to be punished first. This does not run parallel over the notion of treating children as children.
- This idea of treating children as children is that it sometimes disempowers them to make better choices. We need to think of ways of how to empower young people to take agency of their own actions and to understand the consequences.
- One barrier is a narrative created by the media, which focuses on the extreme cases, instead of the small wins that we do see in the day-to-day.
- A major challenge is the current narrative reminiscent of the super predator era that certain youth are responsible for a "spike" in violent crime, calling for tougher responses, which threatens to reverse and undermine the progress made in developmentally sound approaches.
- Trauma cannot be a defining label for a young person, but that is something that we tend to see.

**3. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) establishes four core requirements: (1) the deinstitutionalization of status offenders; (2) separation of youth from adults in secure facilities; (3) removal of youth from adult jails and lockups; and (4) reducing racial and ethnic disparities.**

- a. **What goals do you recommend OJJDP set for the jail removal requirement (which states must follow if they want to participate in the Title II Formula Grants Program)? (For example, zero youth in adult jails.) How can we get to that goal collectively?**
- There are a lot of adult facilities that don't emphasize how they can be supported to get children out of adult jail. A lot of children in adult jails do not have access to education whatsoever. Since this is a smaller number of areas that are utilizing the adult jails, perhaps targeting these areas to see what they need to keep children out of these facilities.
- b. **What is your organization currently doing to get there and how can OJJDP advance that goal?**
- What we have picked up on is what public defenders can and cannot do because of access to training. Youth defense is not prioritized. We also need to look at how to disallow youth from going to these adult facilities; it should not be an option.
  - If a state is in a position where a youth is in an adult facility, perhaps supporting an additional framework that allows organizations to step in to support that youth, would be ideal. This would allow the youth access to clinicians and mentors to guide them through this process.

**4. Can we undertake any work with partners like the National Sheriffs' Association, the American Jail Association, or others to help reach the specified goals?**

- Any and all partnerships are key. There are some newer elected sheriffs who are embracing change and they can/should be approached as champions. Also, [organization name redacted] would welcome ways to lift up and partner with OJJDP in supporting prosecutors committed to change.
- I think ongoing partnership involvement of subject matter experts from youth-serving organizations, mental health organizations, and organizations like the [American Jail Association](#) will help OJJDP successfully meet the goal of zero youth in adult jails.



## **5. What challenges, if any, do you anticipate facing as a result of the pandemic when enforcing the jail removal requirement to remove juveniles from adult jails and lockups?**

- Jail facilities are not equipped for kids who are staying for an extended length of time. This was made worse during COVID because some facilities locked down and prevented engagement with other agencies.

## **6. If you had a magic wand, and no barriers existed, what would you say OJJDP's goal for treating children as children should be?**

- We wouldn't be talking about adult facilities at all. Children would be treated in a community-based setting to get their needs met.
- Make sure that the laws that are put into place are done so meaningfully and not just proforma.
- I would focus on prevention care and rehabilitation and not punitive systems to tailor to their needs.
- I would shift the focus on what is the norm and prioritize how the U.S. treats children in this country to set the precedent.
- Addressing structural barriers. Several ways to address this is through funding and working cross-agency, like sharing important data. The money we use to put children in adult facilities can be reallocated toward community-based alternatives.
- I would ask for more than one thing. One, decriminalize life-sustaining activities that young people are doing for survival (for example, decriminalize prostitution). We also want to address systemic bias and racism and provide training on this. Finally, we want to look at data on demographics and see who is coming into contact the most with the system and what solutions we can implement for these people.
- All support strategies and interventions, including families.
- I would focus on second chances and looking back to address/remedy kids currently in adult facilities and serving decades-long sentences.
- Extend all of these changes to emerging adults, up to 25 years of age.

## **7. What can OJJDP do to advance this key priority through the kinds of strategies and activities it undertakes? (For example, communications, webinars and training, publications, policy guidelines, and pilot programs.)**

- a. What policies, guidance, or communication would be helpful for OJJDP to develop to support the priority of treating children as children?**
  - We need to highlight the best practices from a local perspective. We are hearing a lot of great work that is being done with public defenders and court judges. We must elevate what it means to be a youth advocate in this space. If we can do this from the start, it will really shift the mindset of these professions to assist young people and treat it as a highlight of their careers and not a burden. There is value in this work. We need to emphasize that.
  - The first step is having all of the subject matter experts on a call together and providing feedback to build a framework. A lot of these kids have really high adverse childhood experience scores, so providing trauma-informed training to caretakers is a very easy way to start.
  - If there was an incentive for judges and attorneys to prioritize and push for change, whether it be more funding, this may help support the priority of treating children as children.



- If we want to have no detention, we need to address the issues far upstream. OJJDP needs to take coordination of federal agencies such as ACF and young people with lived expertise to help design ways be successful in prevention work.
- b. What additional ideas or recommendations do you think OJJDP should consider for the upcoming fiscal year?**
  - We need to invest in prevention and in community-based care.
  - OJJDP can work to shut down facilities and invest in community-based care. These are not competing goals and can be done simultaneously.

## Breakout Room 2: Serving Young People at Home, in Their Communities, With Their Families

### 1. What does it mean to you to serve young people at home, in their communities, with their families?

- a. What do you think are best practices for serving young people at home, in their communities, with their families?**
  - Support should be in the context of the family. Work has to be about young people and everyone who cares about them.
  - The services need to be in the context of the families and their communities. But those services need to be shaped by the communities themselves. So, we must listen to what the community needs and let the community tell us how to move forward.
  - Understanding how families in the community context shape critical questions in the legal system. The ways in which racial socialization happens in the family and in school, the ways young people learn about their own identities and development. How do parents guide that? How do schools, churches—all of that—guide that? How do we as service providers remain attentive to that and enhance that racial socialization? Since we are talking legal issues—we have to consider racial trauma and the effect of policing on critical legal questions, like search and seizure.
  - I think about this as serving the whole child and what does it mean to see the whole child. We are spirit, soul, and body and take all those components and see what that means. You really have to be in a community context. That all goes back to being part of our community that sees you as a whole person. That can be frustrating to go to the community and say, “See my whole child. See my child’s trauma.” Having the ability of having folks be able to see that whole child and know what that means.
  - The importance of looking at this from multiple dimensions. We still criminalize poverty. We need to make sure people have access to clean food and air and shelter. We can’t think about serving young people without thinking across these dimensions and how they all come together to influence how children react.
  - I interject that we need to change the language from *servicing* to *resourcing*. They say families are *underserved*, but they are really *under-resourced*. We need to understand how communities are divested. We have to start with the redlining maps, particularly in the urban settings. Do an analysis of how resources were divested and moved away from communities. Our historic



disparities trace along the same lines as our redlining areas. The areas that were identified as not as good, the red areas, if you will.

- I am going to add on to that language idea: Cultural humility. When we talk about resourcing and working alongside young people, we need cultural humility. The discussion is about what we do instead of how we do it. How do we approach re-integration? When we think about resourcing young people at home, there is a deep disconnect in their communities. Many times, they are disenfranchised because of their legal status. They are treated as different.
- Regarding resourcing and neighborhoods: What percentage of the monies are going to organizations that are actually in the same neighborhood as young people that look like them? The racial disparities in funding are greater than the racial disparities in the system itself. Funding goes to the largest organizations that are often the least accountable to communities. Look at racial disparities in funding and how we might incentivize home-grown community organizations. They do a lot more than treat young people as cogs in a machine. They serve youth before, during, and after their system involvement. What strategies is OJJDP going to represent to support young people who are often the furthest from the resources?
- Regarding the resource comment, we also need to add mental and behavior health services. Supporting youth and making sure that mental health and behavioral health challenges are properly diagnosed, and resources are provided to help youth navigate those challenges are key. We need to properly diagnose rather than criminalize those behaviors.
- It's a historical issue. With Native youth, for example, this isn't new. We are seeing that in the juvenile justice system, Native youth are overrepresented.
- Ensure that there are not restrictions on funding that limit creativity and effectiveness of community-driven strategies.
- The [American Probation and Parole Association's Training Institute](#) website includes information on their [Juvenile Justice Forum](#).

**b. Do you have specific examples of implementing community-based alternatives and involving families in the treatment of youth?**

- Family-based alternative sentencing is currently being used in adult prisons, but it can be implemented in the juvenile justice setting. Some best practices are from Washington state. Also, a couple of the programs with [Parenting Inside Out](#) and attachment styles. Also make sure there are housing, meals, and transportation for youth to get to these programs. Make sure their needs are met first and then partner that with programming delivery.
- Young people say, "Stop creating programs." We prescribe so many programs, but we neglect to connect young people with their families and communities. Focus on what is successful in the community. Don't duplicate what is already there and working.
- Restorative practices. Restorative justice is reactive. Restorative practices is the umbrella of all the work. [Future Leaders of America](#) in California embeds restorative practices. How do we allow young people to see themselves as leaders? Give them a voice to impact the community in a way that is meaningful. Reactively, restorative practices were a great way to rebuild community and reduce the likelihood of harm. How do we build accountable communities proactively by tapping into the resources they already have?
- We have no shortage of examples of excellent alternatives, but how they come about and who creates them is really of importance. People want to replicate programs but not processes. Parents sharing their experiences with the system led to sitting down with a probation officer, which led to families debunking some of the things they were coming up with on their own.



Probation thought they should hire parent advocates. But they wouldn't trust them. But it helped reduce placements. We look at programs that are working and we try to replicate the program instead of investing in the community, especially the ones that are the most impacted. And let them design the programs.

- So many programs and so many people in the community are doing great things. The process is important—the people who do the work. One of the challenges is the metrics of success. The metrics of success put on these folks who are doing this great work are unreasonable. You have to broaden your metrics of success. It needs to be about more than just recidivism. Metrics are not realistic. Organizations are under such a tight microscope. Then it's like, "Oh, the program is not a success anymore."
- The little things that we celebrate in healing and restoring are so overlooked when we talk about data points.
- [Community Connections for Youth](#) (CCFY).
- Creating juvenile justice programs, although well intended, can undermine the ability for system-involved youth to connect to the natural community and interest-based networks. They deserve a chance to connect based on their dreams and interests instead of how we now connect youth based on a mistake.
- It's more important to build and resource what is already in the community and not prescribe programs that were created by researchers or consultants and did not involve the people impacted.
- Here are a couple of examples from CCFY: <https://cc-fy.org/home/research-and-reports/psp-evaluation/>; <https://cc-fy.org/sbcc-report-release/sbcc-download/report-download-attachments/>
- We need to resource community-based organizations to show their success!

## 2. If you had a magic wand, and no barriers existed, what would you say OJJDP's goal for serving young people at home, in their communities, with their families should be?

- OJJDP should make planning and coordination and capacity-build grants specifically for communities and grassroots organizations to engage in this process to design programs and eventually receive funding. When it comes to programing, you have to be a super-large program to get the contract. The communities that are the most impacted have been left so much out of the process, it is impossible to catch up. Maybe if OJJDP prioritizes the communities to fund and get a process in place that equips communities with what's needed to take over the lion's share of the resources to implement the programs in their communities.
- OJJDP would partner with HHS and others to provide holistic funding to communities. The [Safer Communities Act](#) is great opportunity to have resources in the community. Any way we can showcase that at the federal level would be great.
- Community is more a feeling than a place. It is technically a place, but it is about how we feel. I would un-restrict the funding more. Knowing that food is not just a barrier, it is why they are not showing up. Fund food, child care, language access. Staff are having to be translators or resources that are not most appropriate for the people we serve.
- How does the department define community? We are talking about communities of communities. That is different than interacting with community. Give youth safe risk opportunities. How do we help youth safely take those risks in a language that they are most comfortable?



- The goals should be centered around what do we owe community? What does OJJDP owe community? What does repair look like for violence that was state sanctioned and done? We need to fund all these systems, but all have played a role in the harm that youth have experienced. What do reparations really look like? The mental, the spiritual ... The violence has disrupted people from being able to be families and people's ability to connect with each other and with their neighbors. How do we repair the harm that has been done?
- I think OJJDP sits in a unique place to have real power over decriminalizing normal adolescent behaviors. Whatever role OJJDP can take to incentivize the redefining of behaviors that are considered delinquent is needed. Redefining the perceptions that our society has considered criminal: adolescent play, risk taking, aggressive speech. Close the door on the system that truly criminalized those behaviors. Once kids get in the juvenile justice system and they are placed on probation, they get violated for the most normal adolescent behaviors, like talking back to parents. We have to figure out how to decriminalize all of those behaviors. Use that legal toolbox in your belt.
- This is really fundamental. I think of it in terms of the school system. We apply that grace to white children, but we criminalize it for Black, Native, and Latinx children. I would like to see OJJDP move positively on that. It would have an impact on the backend of the system, as well. OJJDP can be the stop gap on the adultification and the bias.
- We need to change people within the system—legislatures.
- OJJDP can include a community engagement and education portion in granting. People are so set that those behaviors are bad, and they are as punitive as the system itself. We need to disrupt the myths that have been fed to communities.
- Data. National data on the juvenile justice system. There is no transparency or data to see how people are doing.
- What is criminalized versus what is not, like Black and brown kids and zero-tolerance policies. Those are only applied to white kids. Changing so we have true restorative justice and have it embedded in the process is one of the answers. Figuring some way of doing that so restorative, transformative justice is the norm rather than the exception. How do we make sure all of the kids impacted are part of that system?
- It takes a lot of funding. Funding for organizations to do the work internally before it impacts externally. Sometimes, the organization is not aligned to do the work of restorative justice and transformative practices. Just having a restorative circle is not restorative justice. Second, integrate authentic youth voice and collaboration. That is very widespread. Having an adolescent brain means really caring about a lot of different things: global warming, political vitriol, etc. How do we include a little about a lot of different topics in our programming? About things that are important to young people? Three: Funding specifically for capacity building is needed. We need to meet these kids where they are, online. We need technical materials and strategies to use these platforms, like WhatsApp and Instagram, to reach out to them. Communities have a hard time being present and giving feedback on these platforms.
- New mental health resources: [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act](#).
- Reconditioning and shifting the mental models of system actors.
- We need data in terms of out-of-home placements by jurisdiction and state.

**3. What can OJJDP do to advance this key priority through the kinds of strategies and activities it undertakes? (For example, communications, webinars and training, publications, policy guidelines, and pilot programs.)**



- OJJDP has a relatively small budget, but how can it leverage its funding to incentivize states and districts to do all the things we all are talking about and want to see? Can those funds be used for those resources? OJJDP has reinforced that barrier of research based. You don't qualify for the program if you're not research based. Can OJJDP boost those homegrown strategies?
- How are we doing? Do we know? Are less kids in institutions?
- Start to create more opportunities for generative conflict. Harm is actively happening. Create safe opportunities for people to fight and have conflict so people are not still harmed. It's not widely implemented. It's an abstract concept.
- OJJDP needs to help change the narrative regarding data in the juvenile justice system from negative data focused on recidivism to a strength-based focus on making systems capture data about opportunities available to those they serve.

## Breakout Room 3: Opening Up Opportunities for System-Involved Youth

### 1. What Does Opening Up Opportunities for System-Involved Youth Mean to You?

- The first thing that comes to my mind is that this core requirement is linked to the treating children as children core requirement. We need to know what opportunities are available in our communities for economic development, employment, and healing.
- I think education is a critical part of ensuring young people are successful. This is especially true for juvenile justice-involved youth who have had little access to quality education. We also need to make sure schools in the community are welcoming by not having school resource officers, threat assessments of students, or school hardening, which are all harmful and create a prison culture in schools.
- I think we need to eliminate barriers to youth having access to education, employment, and basic needs being met.
- To me this means that youth, particularly youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth, are free from discrimination in secure and nonsecure short- and long-term facilities.
- I think making sure kids' identities are respected and validated is important for them to be successful. Medical care and how they are housed in facilities need to be appropriate for transgender youth.
- I think this means equal access to the full continuum of care that non-justice-involved youth have access to. Not only education and employment, but scholarships and other enrichment activities. Opening opportunities means eliminating any barriers for youth that result from being convicted of a crime.
- I think of this in the context of a full continuum of care and opportunity for youth with a focus on equal access to all opportunities.
- In [community], they have utilized the Performance-based Standards (PbS) to improve the quality and application of data collected.
- In [community], when stakeholders are engaged to develop reentry opportunities for youth, they start the conversation by asking, "What do you think about when you think about a successful 25-year-old?" This should be the goal for all youth with regard to justice involvement. When you open the conversation, you have more open and positive dialogue.



- I think the fact that programming for juvenile justice-involved youth ends when the youth fulfill their requirements or age out of the system is a problem. Youth continue to need support after justice involvement ends.
- I agree, when we talk about opening opportunities, we need to think about services that don't end when system involvement ends and how we transition ownership of services to families and expand transition services, so we are not ending needed supports youth only have access to because of their justice involvement.
- I think this means making sure that youth are connected to restorative, healing, culturally sensitive services, and mentors in their community.
- I would like to piggyback on that comment and add there needs to be a continuum of resources that connect youth with local services, for example mentorship.
- I would add that we often think about youth-centric interventions, but we also need to transform other systems to support these youth. In society, there is stigma against justice-involved individuals, we need to address these issues, so employers, schools, and colleges are prepared to accept these youth with a culturally sensitive perspective to support transition.
- I think about the younger children. We often have services for 17- to 22-year-old youth, but I think we need to expand diversion programs for younger kids that include healing practices and prevent further system involvement. I think we also need to think about how we model healthy relationships for these youth, which is hard to do in a secure facility. We need to do whatever we can to keep these kids in the community.

**a. What do you think are best practices for opening up opportunities for youth involved in the juvenile justice system?**

- I think there are programs and services provided by child welfare organizations that could be incorporated into the juvenile justice system, and I think we should have youth involved in identifying opportunities.
- I think we need to expand access to expungement and sealing of juvenile records, but still have data available for research purposes.
- I think we need to ensure families are engaged in providing opportunities for youth.
- I think we need to expand effective behavioral interventions in schools prior to justice involvement. For example, we know schools that have quality special education programs with appropriate support have fewer referrals to the juvenile justice system.

**2. What are some challenges the field is currently facing when trying to open up opportunities for youth involved in the juvenile justice system?**

- I think there needs to be expanded access to equal opportunities for employment, for example we have often think about the ban-the-box initiatives, but even when youth aren't asked to disclose criminal history, they still are unable to find employment. It would be useful to determine why this is happening.
- The pandemic has pulled kids out of personal relationships and healthy connections with those in the community and positive peers and not to mention services for the kids in out-of-home placement
- The myth that youth behavioral threat assessments, school resources officers, and school hardening works, which it does not and is harmful. This myth is so perverse and hard to break through.



- I think youth who have experienced poverty, who are LGBTQ+ and Black, Hispanic, or Indigenous are dehumanized, which impacts how they are treated by society and the justice system.
- One challenge is a lack of culturally specific and responsive treatment providers. Programs need to hire staff who reflect the experiences of the youth they serve.
- One challenge I see is getting the people that work in the justice system to understand how system involvement can cause harm.
- I think it is difficult to advance reform and access to opportunities in an environment in which violence is increasing in some places. There is going to be a huge challenge in the coming months and years as the trend continues.
- Right now, staffing is a huge problem. Just having enough staff is a challenge.
- I think there is a lack of messengers in the field who can connect youth to services as well as outreach to youth to learn about opportunities in the community.
- It is a challenge to find providers who will work with youth who have been accused of a violent offense. They will take youth who “flee” or “freeze,” but not those who fight back when faced with traumatizing incidents.
- There is no mental health care system for children. There is a need for treatment providers that provide services to children. We also need to remove the stigma around seeking mental health services that prevents many families from seeking help.
- I agree and would add ensuring those services in communities and in schools are culturally affirming and trauma informed.
- I think we need to change the legal definition of delinquency. The current definition is no longer relevant and criminalizes normal childhood behaviors. I would suggest the definition should be limited to felonies.
- In communities where they have expanded de-incarceration of children, there are children who cannot go home and end up in detention centers. The only way to address this issue is to expand family conflict resources and community placements for kids that need a safe place to stay for a night or two.
- In addition to removing SROs from school, we need to change law enforcement involvement in the child welfare system, group homes, and foster care. Often the police are called when youth are in crisis. Special youth crisis units should be used instead of traditional police responses.
- I think communities need to develop methods to deal with individual trauma, community trauma, and historical trauma and not ignoring it or expecting people to just “handle it.”
- The new 988 system [referring to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and state plans for implementation] is a great hope for having the right responders on the scene when a youth is in crisis.
- In communities that are able to use data to reduce referrals, they can determine the location of the referral, and the race and ethnicity of the youth referred. Sharing this information with the places that have the greatest referrals and disparities can result in policy changes.
- I love that use of and sharing of data.
- Also, to the prior point about there not being a mental health system in most communities, one way to reduce referrals to justice is to provide access to services without a charge or justice involvement. In other words, expanding access to services as preventative care, not just “treatment.”
- A challenge I see is a lack of cross-training between agencies that serve youth including juvenile justice, schools, police, and child welfare. I think if these agencies had a better understanding of the strengths and limitations of each agency, it would help them work together to improve the



services provided to youth. In addition, we need to consider the impact of justice involvement on the family, for example they could lose section housing. We need to think about how to mitigate the collateral consequences of justice involvement for the families of justice-involved youth.

- I think we need to stop the school-to-prison pipeline. Recently, congress appropriated funding for school safety. It would be nice if OJJDP was able to require all grantees to report race and ethnicity data and incorporate practices to address disparities. We are now seeing an immigration-to-detention pipeline resulting from children leaving immigration detention facilities who have not been reunited with their families.
- Yes! We're hopeful and working to make sure those responders are responsive to the needs of youth, especially youth of color. Only three states had youth-specific aspects and funding to their 988 plans.
- I think the roll-out of 988 will be slow and possibly painful, but the hope is there.
- The data I would like to see OJJDP require its grantees to look at is racial and disability disproportionality in school arrests, school referrals to law enforcement, and school discipline. I would like to see OJJDP ensure that no money goes to programs that further those disparities, for example, school police, student threat assessments, student surveillance, and school hardening.
- [State] is a perfect example of how flawed our system responses can be. The state failed to hire enough staff to support juvenile facilities and failed to hold staff accountable when they did not follow the rules and/or protocols. In addition, the state failed to invest in services and programs in the community. As a result, youth have been moved to adult state prison for acting out.
- In [state], kids are held in isolation because they lack staff to have the required staffing ratios.

### **3. If you had a magic wand, and no barriers existed, what would you say OJJDP's goal for opening up opportunities for system-involved youth should be?**

- One idea I've been thinking about a lot is direct cash assistance that we see in other spaces.
- I think OJJDP should increase prevention funding to allow for a smaller juvenile justice system and more funding to support data capacity improvements.
- I agree with funding for technology. I have noticed that many agencies have used Recovery Act funds to improve their case management systems, however it seems like juvenile justice agencies have missed the boat. There is a need for support for juvenile justice agencies to improve case management systems.
- I think OJJDP can use its rulemaking authority to establish protections. This would ensure that OJP/OJJDP will receive comments from the public, including those with lived experience accessing services and in carceral settings and if finalized, would codify nondiscrimination protections in federal law.
- To that point, I think a lot the focus on reinvestment is shifting from the deep end of the system to the shallower end of the system. I think we need to focus on shifting dollars from the system to directly investing in youth and families before any system involvement.
- I would echo what others have been saying regarding the need for a youth-centered approach to providing services to youth and their families, which requires all systems to work together.
- I think OJJDP could help to change systems by providing stakeholders with information on how to provide support and access to services to youth and families prior to justice system involvement.



- I think it would be helpful if OJJDP could double down on funding for implementation and research for programs that are gender and/or culturally responsive and resources to share these programs with other jurisdictions. We hear about pockets of outlier programs, but we don't have a way to share this information across jurisdictions.
- I think more and better data is wonderful, however we need to be careful that schools and community programs including mental health data on children is not shared with law enforcement.
- Yes. What's incentivized in the new gun control legislation is concerning.
- Yes! To that point, moving from a transactional to a transformational system.
- I think it would be helpful if OJJDP could set up a youth council to help draft RFPs to ensure they are youth-centered and, if legal, can they peer review proposals if over 18?
- I would like to see OJJDP require jurisdictions to demonstrate equal access to programs and services that work.

#### **4. What can OJJDP do to advance this key priority through the kinds of strategies and activities it undertakes? (For example, communications, webinars and training, publications, policy guidelines, and pilot programs.)**

- For me two things come to mind; first I think a lot of jurisdictions could use technical assistance on how to better engage youth and families in ways that do not cause additional harm. Secondly, I don't understand why agencies say they do not have the capacity to collect data. They are reporting a lot of required data. For example, the required compliance and PREA [(Prison Rape Elimination Act)] data. It seems like they need to share additional data that is not required for federal reporting.
- I think the decision making OJJDP will be doing with its sister agencies resulting from the creation of additional school violence prevention grants should focus on future training on violence prevention programs that work and are not discriminatory. This new legislation includes support for a federal clearing house on school safety best practices, some of which are harmful. OJJDP can help ensure these programs work. In addition, the bill establishes an advisory board. OJJDP can ensure child welfare and civil rights experts are members of the board.
- There is a lot of research about the collateral consequences for justice systems involving adults, but there is not much research on the impact on youth. Additional publications about the impacts of youth justice involvement would be helpful. OJJDP could increase funding for pilot programs and research that include family support.
- I think increasing the amount of funding available in its discretionary grants program for states and localities that shifts resources away from detention and incarceration in favor of effective community-based alternatives (that can competently serve youth of color, LGBTQ youth, youth with disabilities).
- I think increasing funding and training, expanding data capacity, and holding more listening sessions where a diversity of programs can be in the same room with law enforcement agencies to show the positive impacts of diversion and deflection programs, and more spaces to improve cross-collaboration between agencies.
- I wondered if it would be possible to require grantees to make sure that states have training for police that is focused on harm reduction and alternatives to arrest for youth.



- I think communities need support to shift the narrative from the super predator to focus on the resilience and strength of justice-involved youth.
- IACP. International Association of Chiefs of Police put together some pretty good resources under [Models for Change](#).
- Regarding training for law enforcement, I would like to lift up [Strategies for Youth](#).
- The *Raising the Bar on Juvenile Reentry: What Young People Say They Need* webinar was terrific.

#### **5. How can OJJDP support better cross-system collaboration to lead to improved opportunities for youth involved in the juvenile justice system?**

- I think it is important to promote share programs that work among treatment providers and system stakeholders, so people do not feel like they need to reinvent the wheel.
- I think OJJDP could support the creation of a Health and Human Services Department of Health Services commissioner to help break down silos—someone who could lead reimagining, someone that thinks outside of silos.
- I feel like a broken record, but I have to say we need more youth-centered services and investment in more outside-the-system approaches.
- I think we need to increase data-driven decision making, but also have families at the table.

#### **6. What additional ideas or recommendations do you think OJJDP should consider for the upcoming fiscal year?**

- How much money does OJJDP have? I think listening to sessions with Congress would be great.
- Keep states in the [JJDP] ACT! There has been a lot of attrition. I heard someone talking about the progress we have made, but we need to hold the line. The DMC [(disproportionate minority contact)] has not improved. There are fewer kids in the juvenile justice system, but funding for juvenile justice agencies has increased.
- [State] was keeping five secure deep-end facilities open for 35 kids!