



## **TTA Provider Collaboration Meeting: Listening Session**

### **With Administrator Ryan**

August 10, 2022 | 1–3 p.m. ET

### **Breakout Room 1 Notes**

#### **Treating Children as Children**

#### **1. What do you think OJJDP should do differently when it comes to treating children based on their developmental abilities?**

- Trauma screening should be first and foremost because whenever children come into the system, they are treated as criminals, even for truancy, even for not having a place to stay. I know children who are housed in Tribal juvenile detention centers because they do not have anywhere else to go.
  - There are services available now to youth through the age of 21. It would be great if we could look into expanding that age because youth still need continued access to resources and support. Solicitations should provide for this age extension.
  - There should be more funding opportunities to expand Tribal, rural, or underserved programs.
  - As an agency, we need to put youth at the table where they have an elevated role. How is OJJDP holding grantees accountable to give space for young people? We need to have real measurable ways that can include young people in the conversation and not just in a consultant type role. They are experts within this field.
  - Some states do not have adequate applications for Title II funding, so OJJDP can create better pathways for locally grown programming to obtain federal dollars.
  - The first entry point for young people is usually law enforcement. The best way to effect change for them is to train this initial touchpoint. We need to provide law enforcement with better training and resources. When you do training and you have investigators, juvenile officers, etc., and you talk about strategies, the first thing they tell you is that you need a buy-in from leadership. People within this domain do not typically receive training from the police academy on how to be trauma-informed, so OJJDP needs to take a bigger role in providing this training to law enforcement personnel. Many police officers do not know how to handle juvenile cases that they deal with and do not have interagency agreement with other entities.
  - Structurally, OJP could think about how to support all of these ideas and preparing for children who are parents and how we continue to treat them as children but also as parents.
  - Funding opportunities that support the prioritization of programs that advance collaboration would be helpful, specifically for individuals with developmental disabilities. Partnering with local organizations is a way to put this on the forefront.
  - We need to make sure that any agency is implementing best practices through data.
  - We need to recognize that older kids need different needs than very young children, especially if we are considering job opportunities for them, furthering their education, etc.
- a. **How can OJJDP do a better job of implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered care in juvenile justice systems?**



- Training correctional staff to be more healing-centered is important.
- I think being more specific across all the work we do around what types of traumas we are talking about and what the impacts are of racial trauma is a first big step.
- We need programs that prioritize ACEs [(adverse childhood experiences)] to help prevent young people from joining the juvenile justice system.

**b. How can OJJDP improve its implementation of culturally competent language and programming in juvenile justice systems?**

- We need to consider Tribal considerations of the youth when they are coming into the juvenile justice system. Tribal centers can have crisis centers that can intervene and treat youth as children and not as criminals.
- It is essential for OJJDP to prioritize the unique complexities of each Tribal community. Traditional justice approaches oftentimes include elders to help teach accountability. This advocate approach is not always considered “evidence-based,” so it directly impacts the programs’ ability to seek funding. OJJDP is making great strides in this area already and we would like to see more considerations on this in the future.
- One space that can be used is looking at subawardees that are culturally competent and responsive to LGBTQI+ youth. The grants can include some form of required trainings to ensure they are adhering to these expectations that are set for them.
- The set up of OJJDP to Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) does not really support looking at emerging adults or older youths. The very structure has BJA dealing with courts and prosecutors, and OJJDP has more conversation regarding service providers and how they get funded. Is there a way that these funding streams can carry over so both entities work as a cohesive unit?

**2. What can OJJDP do to support early intervention for youth before they enter the juvenile justice system?**

- We need to screen for healing needs as an early intervention strategy before system involvement.

**Serving Young People at Home, in Their Communities, With Their Families**

**3. What innovative ideas do you have for OJJDP to meet the needs of young people and families?**

- [State] has a great insurance-based program model that strengthens mentoring and mental health. This model could potentially help community-based organizations fill gaps if they do not have services at all. The parents are a big part of the equation. We would love to see more research on this model and how it potentially can be scaled.
- It would be interesting to see OJJDP incorporate families and youth in their peer-review and solicitation review processes. If we are guiding what communities need, we can have them tell us what is needed.
- We need to help families address their basic needs, like how can we provide adequate housing and address food security?



#### **4. Community-based programs often are unable to access accurate data from state agencies in order to inform data requirements. Most agencies do not gather data on sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, or Tribe affiliation.**

##### **a. What supports can OJJDP provide to address some of these challenges?**

- There needs to be establishment of a collaborative network to address broad complex needs of families of young people involved with the juvenile justice system so they can be strong and supportive of the young person. There is an assumption that problems of young people do not have a root. What we have seen is that a young person has a lot of trauma and most of the time, it is not even their own trauma, some of it is generational.
- BJA just released funding to help mobile communication that can help TTA providers collect data for this. It would also assist with families having better access to this information.
- OJJDP can continue to support Tribal communities and programs. Taking youth away from their communities is detrimental, so continuing to fund crisis centers is crucial.
- TTA providers should be encouraged to learn more about the communities they are working with and create opportunities to work with them more closely. If there are cultural considerations that need to be made, these can be implemented and considered throughout the duration of the grant.
- In the Tribal context, encouraging Tribal-state collaborations can assist with data sharing.

#### **Opening up Opportunities for System-Involved Youth**

#### **5. What kinds of supports can OJJDP offer TTA providers to support organizations serving youth and their families?**

##### **a. What ideas do you have for how OJJDP can offer workforce development and education opportunities for youth transitioning out of the juvenile justice system?**

- Workforce programs that involve heavy training for managers who want to build pipelines for youth and opportunities have been successful. Programs that really target the workforce setting are transformational and would be a useful model to look at.
- Providing kids with more opportunities to further their education. Mentors would be great to walk young people on how to apply for scholarships and to provide them additional guidance that they otherwise may not have.
- When a young person gets a job, it would be great to see businesses and companies see the value of having a mentor assigned to them upon employment.
- Allow children to lead the process on what training programs they want to be involved in. I have seen many children in programs that they do not want to be part of. We also need to ensure that young people are getting incentives to join these programs, because what you will see is youth not taking these opportunities if they can't get paid for their time.
- Working with youth who are currently placed in facilities and giving them certification to help them transition out into adulthood. This would help them to find work immediately upon release. So having OJJDP working with businesses or organizations to see the value of hiring system involved youth.
- There are just vastly under-sourced opportunities not just for children but for adults, too. There are a lot of shorter grant terms that do not allow youth to access the full breadth of their resources so having OJJDP expand the duration of many of these grants would be great.



**b. What kinds of pilot programs can OJJDP offer to provide more opportunities for healing modalities and peer mentors for youth transitioning out of the juvenile justice system?**

- For Indigenous/Tribal youth, healing gatherings such as camps that focus on healing from their experiences of and exposure to trauma can be helpful. These include leadership camps, healing camps, and other culturally appropriate healing modalities.

**6. What steps can OJJDP take to improve community-based programming capacity and staffing?**

**a. What are some ideas for improving the capabilities of people who work with system-involved youth?**

- Training on grant writing and OJJDP grant management for non-grantees to minimize the fear around a federal grant.
- When we talk about culturally specific programming, OJJDP has a real opportunity to support Tribal sovereignty.

**b. How can OJJDP support TTA providers in expanding research and evaluation supports as well as communicating relevant outcomes that focus on progress instead of failure?**

- It is important to start requiring what young people are saying. What are youth saying in this? This will help build confidence for providers and organizations to continue to do their job if they feel like they are navigating in the right direction.

**General Questions**

**7. OJJDP's vision for this work is centered on racial equity and fairness for system-involved youth. Much of what we heard from listening session attendees focused on how the justice system "adultifies" children of color, or views them as older, "other," and more mature than white children, resulting in harsher punishments.**

**a. What types of programming supports can OJJDP provide to address racial and ethnic disparities and disproportionality in the juvenile justice system?**

- As TTA providers and as funders, we need to look at our own practices and language as far as, what are we promoting? What kind of language are we using when we refer to others? For example, students in special education. We give them this identity and so it is our responsibility to reflect and see how we can be more inclusive and respectful. It starts with us to set an example.
- A lot of racial disparities are only briefly touched upon when it comes to TTA providers. I think being able to share with people in-depth information on why things are the way they are and being honest about the history is important. In the mentoring field, we have seen a lot of progress made when we review the racist roots of the mentoring world itself.
- Training on biases and cultural biases, but not the surface level. We do a lot of training on cultural competency, but it does not address people's attitudes or beliefs. We need to find a way to challenge those.



- OJJDP can support Tribal communities by supporting funding the continued development of Tribal justice systems and prevention programs that are community-driven to support youth remaining connected with their families and relatives. OJJDP can also support Tribes through continued engagement and guidance related to the recent updates that acknowledge Tribal membership on State Advisory Groups.
- TTA providers should be required to learn about the Tribes' respective cultural beliefs and lifeways when they are in the role of providing TTA services to a particular Tribe. We should use person-first language, too.

## Breakout Room 2 Notes

### Treating Children as Children

#### 1. What do you think OJJDP should do differently when it comes to treating children based on their developmental abilities?

- One thought that comes to mind is that this is more of a communications or marketing issue. How can we as TTA providers lift examples from the partners we work with and share those examples among providers?
  - We see a need for a dedicated juvenile prosecutor when training juvenile defense attorneys. Often these positions are individuals right out of law school and transition out of the position quickly.
  - I think there is a need to for basic life skills training and education to help with reentry back to the community.
  - All comments so far have been excellent. I would add that we need to expand training about neurological and psychological development beyond prosecutors and law enforcement agencies to all criminal justice stakeholders.
  - Because of COVID-19, there has been more web-based training, which has allowed more people to attend, especially in rural communities, which has been great. But what we see now is in addition to training prosecutors and law enforcement agencies about the brain science, there needs to be more training regarding programs happening nationally. I think the prosecutors and law enforcement agencies we work with are open to alternatives to arrest or prosecution but need the example of successful programs in other jurisdictions.
  - This conversation reminds me of a quote from one of the school-based restorative justice programs: "Kids don't want to fight, they want to be heard." There is a movement to toughen up schools but there is a need for schools to be able to connect youth to mental health services, mentoring programs, and community-based organizations that provide these services.
  - This [interactive prosecutor diversion map](#) includes a category on early intervention with youth.
- a. **How can OJJDP do a better job of implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered care in juvenile justice systems?**
- I think when we talk about trauma-informed and healing-centered care, these terms need to be put in context and make sure its accessible for all youth not just low-level offenses.



- OJJDP's TTA providers have a wealth of resources. As TTA providers, we try to follow what others are doing and benefit from their expertise, and NTTAC shares information among TTA providers, but I think if there is anything OJJDP can do to help improve information sharing so that all the TTA providers are on the same page with regard to trauma informed care, the brain science, so that all TTA providers have uniform messaging to the field.
- A program called "Handle With Care" allows law enforcement agencies to use an app to alert a youth's school when they have been exposed to a potentially traumatic event. This allows the school to respond appropriately. How can we share these types of programs among TTA providers?
- Taking that a step further, I think we need to be intentional with including other TTA providers in our trainings and support. We are all very busy and tend to stay in our own lanes and become siloed. I think it would be helpful to work together to develop case studies or highlight other TTA providers when we are creating meeting or training agendas. I think we get so busy, we miss these opportunities to highlight each other's work.

**b. How can OJJDP improve its implementation of culturally competent language and programming in juvenile justice systems?**

- In terms of culturally competent language and programming when thinking of Indigenous youth and families, it is important to acknowledge the uniqueness of the youth's Nation. Each of the 576 federally recognized Tribes (and several hundred state-recognized Tribes) have different cultures, customs, and traditions. In order to connect with that youth, the approach must be specific to the youth's Nation.

**2. What can OJJDP do to support early intervention for youth before they enter the juvenile justice system?**

- I would say OJJDP can be very proactive in engaging community-based organizations that are anchored in the community. These organizations are doing great work and simply funding one or two additional positions could greatly expand the number of youth and families they are able to reach. In addition, engaging youth in these organizations connects the families to services and long-term positive supports.
- Here is a link to the [REACH](#) program, which is similar to the Handle With Care program. This program is also spearheaded by a prosecutor.
- This is similar to my idea to support reentry. I think TTA providers need to be allowed to coordinate with community-based organizations that provide life skills training to help amplify the voices of the youth they serve.
- I agree that the life skills programming comes into play here.
- I think we need to ensure all criminal justice stakeholders are aware of the impact of ACEs scores may have on youth down the road. Prosecutors and law enforcement need to know how high-risk youth are impacted and truly understand how ACEs scores can be implied to prevent adverse outcomes.
- Here is a [joint issue brief](#) the National District Attorneys Association did with the Addiction Policy Forum on ACEs.
- The local community-based organizations, specifically the small grassroots ones, are built around the local culture. When you invest in these programs, it multiplies impact because you have the cultural competence built into the program. Another piece is we need to expand the



focus from just the youth to include the family and neighborhood because when we only focus on the youth, we ignore all the elements needed for them to be successful.

- We are trying very hard to talk to prosecutors and law enforcement agencies about resiliency. It is like the Starfish Story [adapted from The Star Thrower by Loren C. Eiseley]; we want them to see how they can have a positive impact on youth.

### **Serving Young People at Home, in Their Communities, With Their Families**

#### **3. What innovative ideas do you have for OJJDP to meet the needs of young people and families?**

- I feel like a broken record, but I think communication is key. Prosecutors are willing to refer youth to diversion programs and alternative community-based programs, but often they are unaware of all the programs available. I think TTA providers can do more to promote collaboration between prosecutors and community-based organizations.
- I would like to lift up the value of working with community-based programs as credible messengers. During the COVID pandemic, many organizations shifted to provide support and access to public and mental health services for underserved populations with great success.
- Regarding supporting children having access to evidence-based assessment and evidence-based treatment, specifically evidence-based trauma treatment, without treatment, the research has shown an increase in substance abuse and other risky behaviors. Also, youth with PSB [(problematic sexual behaviors)] can be successfully treated in their communities when evidence-based treatments are available. Not only does this lead to better outcomes, it is also substantially less expensive than residential care. There is strong interest by child advocacy centers; however, accessing the training is challenging.
- Increased funding for community-based organizations that provide parent and peer navigators.

#### **4. Community-based programs often are unable to access accurate data from state agencies in order to inform data requirements. Most agencies do not gather data on sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, or Tribe affiliation.**

##### **a. What supports can OJJDP provide to address some of these challenges?**

- I have a few ideas. First, creating a community task force with critical system partners to develop and define what data should be collected and identify a central point in the community to collect the data. The organization responsible for collecting data must report that data back to the community in a meaningful way. Secondly, we need to be careful with regard to sexual orientation data. Often schools do not want to collect this data because they have concerns for youths' privacy if they are required to report non-aggregated data.
- Prosecutors traditionally do not have great data, which leads to poor data available to other agencies. Sometimes, this is because of the limitation of the case management systems and sometimes, agencies differ in how they define terms.

### **Opening up Opportunities for System-Involved Youth**

#### **5. What kinds of supports can OJJDP offer TTA providers to support organizations serving youth and their families?**



- We know that many other federal agencies have programs that provide services or supports to youth who are also involved in the justice system. It would be helpful if OJJDP could share how other agencies are funding programs that would benefit these kids. People in the field do not understand how the federal government works. As TTA providers, we can help break down silos and share that information.
- I would like to point out that this is intensive work, if we are going to do these things whether OJJDP provides funding. As people have said, our work involves breaking down silos, breaking down barriers, and building opportunities. What we see is every city is different. There are unique situations that require very intensive work if you really to provide support and services to be successful. We provide checklists, best practices but really doing the work to break down barriers is very intensive. I hope OJJDP recognizes and provides support.
- We have been providing support in [location] to help build up alternatives to incarceration programs. One thing we see is that the smaller organizations do not have the ability to expand capacity. They need an academy that covers things like how to apply for 501(c)(3) status and how to apply for grants.
- Here's information on the LISC collaboration with the L.A. County Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) program and the ATI incubation academy: <https://www.lisc.org/la-incubation-academy/>.
- Yes, that intentional effort to walk alongside the communities and families.

**a. What ideas do you have for how OJJDP can offer workforce development and education opportunities for youth transitioning out of the juvenile justice system?**

- I agree that information and support around expungement of juvenile records and understanding collateral consequences is important.
- I think there is a lack of or a lot of missing information about types of convictions follow them around and which ones do not. It would be helpful to provide specific resources to community-based organizations working directly with people that explain the steps for expungement and the collateral consequences.

## General Questions

**6. OJJDP's vision for this work is centered on racial equity and fairness for system-involved youth. Much of what we heard from listening session attendees focused on how the justice system "adultifies" children of color, or views them as older, "other," and more mature than white children, resulting in harsher punishments.**

**a. What types of programming supports can OJJDP provide to address racial and ethnic disparities and disproportionality in the juvenile justice system?**

- As mentioned before, examples of successful models.
- It's a challenge. I think about how children of color feel different from their white friends. I wish there was button I could push to change it. It's hard to put in words—hard to explain to people that aren't of color—the way we must talk to our kids.
- I think for OJJDP this is a great opportunity already moving in this direction. By lifting up the voice of youth and their families and have them explain to stakeholders their experiences. TTA providers can be the bridge to get the message out there from the bottom up. Many



practitioners in the system want to understand, but it's hard. Getting those voices out there is a great way to move forward.

- Folks have more in common than they don't. Sharing the experiences and voice of the youth with system stakeholders is key. They have a one-day training at the police academy where system-involved youth spend the day with law enforcement trainees, and lunch is the highlight of the day. Anything that can be done to connect prosecutors and law enforcement officers with people in the community is helpful.
- If OJJDP can do anything to help prosecutors improve data collection, that would be great. Often prosecutors' offices do not track racial or ethnicity data or don't think they need to know. This can lead to the misconception that there are not disparities, but there is no way to make that determination. If there were a way for OJJDP to promote recruiting prosecutors that look like the community they serve. We have seen that prosecutors who are more connected to the community are willing to talk to defendants and are more receptive to understanding the situation, which often leads to charges being dropped.
- This link to the [Pennsylvania DMC Youth and Law Enforcement Corp.](#) was shared in the chat during this part of the discussion.

## Breakout Room 3 Notes

### Treating Children as Children

#### 1. What do you think OJJDP should do differently when it comes to treating children based on their developmental abilities?

- Anybody working with kids in the juvenile justice system needs to have a really good understanding of what trauma looks like in kids, because the vast majority of those kids have experienced some sort of trauma, if not multiple types of trauma, and how that impacts developmental abilities. What looks like behavior issues are often trauma responses. I think that's just a real hurdle. Victim advocates may not be aware of the impact of child trauma..
- In the dependency court system, which has crossovers with juvenile justice-involved children, there's a similar lack of recognition of the effects of prenatal substance exposure for children. FASD [(fetal alcohol spectrum disorders)] in particular, is often disguised or diagnosed as something other than that. The vast majority of infants and children who have been exposed to substances are not recognized until they get involved with other systems, like the special education system or the juvenile justice system. Recognizing how that affects kids across the developmental spectrum and always having that developmental approach for kids, is of utmost importance.
- Emphasize the role of crossover youth and what that looks like, especially since 90 percent of crossover youth first were involved in the child welfare system. How do we intervene with a family-centered approach and engage the full family and mitigate some of the behaviors that later result in the youth getting involved in the justice system? Family treatment courts have been seen as a potential prevention model for future juvenile justice involvement, but we're really trying to move toward a full family-centered approach to prevent that child from later becoming involved in the justice system themselves. I think that the family-centered approach piece is something that we really need to emphasize.



- I think a huge part of this is the training of the people who are interacting with the children from the juvenile justice system on the stages of adolescence and recognizing and understanding those different stages and abilities, while providing resources for responding to them appropriately.
- a. **How can OJJDP do a better job of implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered care in juvenile justice systems?**
  - It's really recognizing that kids don't exist in isolation. It really does take that family-centered approach. But you know, reaching out to those family members, providing that comprehensive service to the entire family to really disrupt those intergenerational cycles of multisystem involvement.
  - Just not just the biological family, but also positive supports. Sometimes the family isn't the best for that youth. So, we have to think about where that positive support is coming from that can get that kid on the right track. Get them feeling like they're supported. So, being very liberal with the definition of family is what I would say and taking more of a community approach.
  - Yes; give adolescents/youth opportunities to define who their family and supports are.
  - I also agree with understanding extended family involvement. Particularly when grandparents are raising children and providing supports and information to help them better understand the needs of youth.
  - Help families through peer support for every family member when possible.
  - We also need to ensure youth voice is included in services/plans.
  - I think OJJDP could help jurisdictions understand trauma-informed care for trauma-specific services, but also the trauma-informed systems. What does it feel like for that youth or that family to go through just even the physical environment of going to court? How do you look at the larger system and how it may be trauma triggering for parents for children?
  - By the time kids get into the system, just the interaction with the system has caused trauma. Build a first point of contact that itself is not traumatizing. There is not a first point of contact to getting services that is not traumatizing.
  - We know a lot of times, either the prosecutor or the law enforcement member is that first contact. One way to train prosecutors and law enforcement is a [REACH](#) team. It is a team of prosecutors and law enforcement and schools and social workers that are basically one big community network to make sure that kids exposed to violence get the mental health care they need. They have seen incredible results in decreasing violence, so I completely agree that family involvement is key.
  - I think one-third of child sex abuse happens between children and youth, and so those kids, while not likely to become sex offenders, they are highly likely to show up in the juvenile justice system. The good news is we have such effective treatment, the recidivism rate is low, but it's hard to find the whole wraparound of services you need. But, this is a behavior problem, and the families need services too. A lot of times, those resources don't exist to provide those services and that can impact the quality of care those professionals are providing. How to provide training around secondary trauma is vital.
  - Identify ways to provide more mental health support to all children and their families.
  - I agree. Grantees are struggling with addressing the mental health needs of the families they serve.



## 2. What can OJJDP do to support early intervention for youth before they enter the juvenile justice system?

### a. What does a continuum of care for youth look like if we plan to intervene before system involvement?

- Working with families whose parents are incarcerated and building that relationship between kids and parents. I think of continuum as a full circle. Having more interactions with families especially when parents are absent and really engaging families more and giving them a say in their services. Having staff and officers trained on trauma informed is really huge. A lot of officers assigned to work with these families struggle with that. The trauma-informed approach helps the families, but it also helps these officers too. Continuum is a continued process from when they walk in the door until they get the services they need.
- I think of the [five points of family intervention](#); services, engagement, and intervention points along this continuum of pre-pregnancy, prenatal, birth, post-natal, and childhood and adolescence. Really looking at it from birth to grave and how do we provide services, especially mental health, trauma, and substance use services along that continuum?
- I applaud OJJDP in using the word “healing.” It’s a qualitative term and not one a lot of people like, but it has to happen. But to have that focus right front and center, I applaud that. The youth and families feel so ostracized and feel guilt and shame. We really need to address the stigma. When we talk about trauma-informed care, so many people don’t understand it, but when they see it, they understand why they need to be more empathetic and sympathetic. I think OJJDP has a very powerful instruments that they’ve captured in their listening sessions, and I think being entrepreneurial in terms of how we could disseminate this to different audiences would help the world at large.
- When we’re talking about justice involved youth, we know 90 percent of those kids start out in child and child welfare and something like 25 percent end up in juvenile justice within 2 years of separation from child welfare. I think there’s such a large population of justice-involved youth that are coming from the child welfare system and the foster care system, that having child welfare, foster care, and juvenile justice systems partner together early on to disrupt the pipeline into the justice systems would be ideal.
- How would you have legal authority to intervene before system involvement?
- I would like to see programs, particularly mental health and helping to provide basic needs for children being raised by guardians and offer these services without income guidelines, which often leave out families whose income is above the poverty level but not at a level that they can provide additional needs for the child/children they are now raising.
- Yes, we are still working to identify the perfect training for officers, greeters, etc., within facilities. I feel some projects would really like to blend multiple trainings to get the perfect fit for staff.
- More engagement/partnership with schools to assist/support children is so important and needed.
- Collaboration among service providers (child welfare, education, mental health) is essential. Many systems work in silos, but everyone needs to be at the table with the youth/family to create their individual plan of care.
- Fully agree with this collaborative concept.



## Serving Young People at Home, in Their Communities, With Their Families

### 3. What innovative ideas do you have for OJJDP to meet the needs of young people and families?

- a. **What types of resources, communications, policies, or trainings can OJJDP develop to meet the needs of young people and their families?**
  - Have youth tell their story and include youth in the process. Get that youth voice. Make sure it's not traumatizing for that youth to tell their story over and over. If you have it written down somewhere like DCS, then pass it on and share it to other agencies. Help them not to have to retell their story.
  - For juvenile justice, not only is there stigma associated with the kids, but then there's stigma associated with a parent. "It's the parents' fault the kid is in the system" Look at disrupting that stigma and giving families a voice. Provide in-home services to families, maybe with some court oversight. Maybe holding charges in abeyance. And consider other kids in the home. One may be in the system, and one may have had some involvement. Recognize that it is not a cookie-cutter approach. Make sure that is individualized.
  - As far as kids not having to retell their stories, all the folks who provide the wraparound services can do that for them. But they see the older kids as not needing advocacy. And they miss out on that and then they have to retell their stories. How do we get to those early agencies and make sure they understand the need for wraparound services? What we see with older youth is poly-victimization. It becomes a pathway to the juvenile justice system. The more we can understand how complex and multiple trauma can impact youth can really signal to us that these kids need extra care.
  - When we talk about racial and ethnic disparities, children of families of color are getting removed at higher rates than white children. How do we ensure that we're that our families are having equitable access to services, but also equitable outcomes when it comes to removals from the home? So, looking at data around that. OJJDP could help some of this effort. States are deterred from applying for grants. We are not able to use some of the grants the way OJJDP writes them. If OJJDP were to look at the way their grants are written and allow for other agencies outside to be lead on those grants, it would open up a lot of doors for more prevention approaches.
  - OJJDP should focus not just on the deep-end kids, but also look at the front end of the juvenile legal system. A single night of detention can have lifelong negative impacts.
  - Resources to help organizations become more trauma informed/aware so they can better help those they serve.
  - 50 percent of children who experience child sexual abuse are poly-victims, meaning they have experienced 7–10 different types of trauma during their lifetime.
  - More support for implementing restorative justice approaches in schools/courts/corrections to address accountability and harm outside of a punishment framework.
  - Something others may have heard of, the Handle With Care program, which is being implemented in several locations. This program allows law enforcement officers who have witnessed a child who was exposed to violence/trauma inform their local school to ensure the child is getting the support they need in school from their teachers or social workers. The state of New Jersey published this on [Handle With Care](#), if you would like to learn more about the program.



- Look at ways to help organizations expand services to better help clients, such as like NCMEC's [(National Center for Missing & Exploited Children)] [Team HOPE](#), a group of victim family members who help other families of missing and sexually exploited children (peer support), and Family Advocacy Outreach Network of approximately 300 mental health professionals who assist families of missing and sexually exploited children pro bono or on a sliding fee scale.

#### **4. Community-based programs often are unable to access accurate data from state agencies in order to inform data requirements. Most agencies do not gather data on sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, or Tribe affiliation.**

##### **a. What supports can OJJDP provide to address some of these challenges?**

- Its specific to almost all of the grants: The performance measures don't align with the priorities OJJDP is trying to achieve. What type of data needs to be collected to tell the true story about the impact of the grants or the impact on the implementation of the grants and for OJJDP to put a substantial amount of money into the communities to try to improve outcomes for families? The performance measures don't measure success, it's more like widgets. Have a work group at OJJDP look at the core performance measures. Also emphasize the importance of data and evaluation in the grant RFAs. There's no requirement and therefore no OJJDP priority that data matters. And longer grants are needed so grantees can show that they are actually making an impact on families. Five- to 7-year grants are needed.

#### **Opening up Opportunities for System-Involved Youth**

#### **5. What kinds of supports can OJJDP offer TTA providers to support organizations serving youth and their families?**

- Expungement: It is very important to support attorneys and other advocates who are filing individual petitions for youth, but we also need policy change. We don't know where records end up. If we are truly going to address it, we need to address it systemically. We need to address it at the state and federal level to make a change.
- A lot of organizations are struggling with community resources in rural areas. Provide access for things like telehealth. But realize that families don't have Wi-Fi. So maybe providing an access point for those things—a cell phone with Wi-Fi or a Community Center that they could go to.

#### **6. What steps can OJJDP take to improve community-based programming capacity and staffing?**

- Burnout is part of the problem. We need to address that fatigue to fulfillment. Have their leadership check in with a focus on well-being and making sure that those agency heads focus on that too.
- Organizational support is needed. We need well-run organizations. So many things that wear staff down is they are working in organizations that don't have enough resources to build good leaders. So, for OJJDP to allow use of grant funds on how are we supporting and training them. How can we use grant funds just to become better organizations and offer TTA?
- There has been a little resistance to work on organizational capacity. If there were a stronger endorsement from OJJDP about how that really will contribute to sustainability in the field, that would be wonderful.



- We talked about burnout and partnerships. A lot of times it comes from convening over food. Being able to host meetings. Meeting over coffee. If you feed them, they will come. To be able to use grant funds toward food would increase your resources and your results.
- The conference cost approval process is such an important part of our work, but it's so hard to complete the process. It ends up costing more in staff time than the event itself. Fixing that would be a big ask for us from OJJDP.
- Provide an opportunity to be a platform for innovation. There are amazing people doing amazing things. Continue ways to allow that to happen. What policies could OJJDP implement? Like a felon-friendly job fair. It's so much more than employment. "Community betterment and job fair" event. It makes the stigma disappear. OJJDP could be a platform for people to bring ideas to scale into other places or other parts of the country.
- Supporting leadership training for leaders within organizations.
- Food seems like such a small thing, but it really impacts the ability to convene people!
- More training time can happen if folks don't need to take extensive breaks for meals.
- Definitely conference cost approval reform!
- I think we are all in on conference cost approval reform!
- I don't think this is particular to OJJDP, but I do think those bureaucratic processes get invented in administrations and then never re-examined. They pile up. I love when grantors do an audit of their requirements and pare it down to what is really necessary.

## General Questions

**7. OJJDP's vision for this work is centered on racial equity and fairness for system-involved youth. Much of what we heard from listening session attendees focused on how the justice system "adultifies" children of color, or views them as older, "other," and more mature than white children, resulting in harsher punishments.**

- a. What types of programming supports can OJJDP provide to address racial and ethnic disparities and disproportionality in the juvenile justice system?**
  - This is also in the child protection system. It might relate to the organizational capacity piece. For services organizations to work more with a DEI [(diversity, equity, and inclusion)] lens. At the end of the day, it's organizations that are impacting our youth and they need to work with a DEI lens.
  - If OJJDP is requiring some data information, it requires services to look at their data and realize, "We thought we were providing equitable services," but when we really drill down and know what data we need to be collecting and what to do with that data, that could be a game changer.
  - Dig into the history of systems we work with and teach defenders about that. We always have kids who have to take meds and if they don't, then they go back into the system. But if we view that in the lens of the Tuskegee experiments, it puts a different frame around it. They have to look at all the elements that might be driving that family and that child to react the way they do.
  - Requiring the integration of youth voice in all services and case plans. Also, the use of data again. All outcomes should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and other key demographic information.
  - The training of recognizing those factors needs to be developed as training for all of the groups that interact with these children.



- RFAs should include a section asking the applicant to describe specific goals they have related to addressing disparities and activities or tasks the grant will fund to help them address those disparities.