Support for Prosecutors Who Work With Youth

One of the ways the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) ensures children are free from violence and crime is by increasing the competency of prosecutors involved in child welfare and juvenile delinquency cases.

Cases involving the physical or sexual abuse of children are among the most difficult to prosecute. In addition to not wanting to retraumatize the child, several factors—such as difficulty eliciting testimony from young victims, a lack of forensic or corroborative evidence due to delayed disclosure by the child or a witness, and the quality of the investigative child interview—affect a prosecutor’s decision to move forward with the case and the case outcome. OJJDP’s specialized training and technical assistance help prosecutors overcome such obstacles.

Juvenile crime has serious implications for youth and communities. Prosecutors must make thoughtful, research-informed decisions to protect the public and offer delinquent youth opportunities for rehabilitation. They must also contend with challenges specific to juvenile court. Evolving victim rights laws, transfer to adult criminal court, and expanded juvenile court jurisdiction are some of the complex issues that prosecutors face. OJJDP’s robust training curriculum helps juvenile prosecutors successfully balance youth justice with public safety.

Training and Technical Assistance

Training and Technical Assistance for Child Abuse Prosecutors Program

This program aims to improve prosecutors’ interactions with child victims, child-interviewing techniques, investigative methods, and presentation of evidence in court. In fiscal year 2019, the program supported 59 trainings on child abuse prosecution. More than 5,600 professionals attended the trainings.

Addressing the Training Needs of Juvenile Prosecutors

Funding through this program helps states develop or expand training for juvenile prosecutors and their support staff. The program promotes training in trial techniques, procedural law, assessing risk and protective factors for youth, and determining youth’s readiness for rehabilitation.

OJJDP also funds training and technical assistance to help prosecutors lead juvenile justice system improvements within their communities. The training teaches prosecutors how to design and implement proven strategies to reduce offending and improve youth outcomes.

For More Information


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