

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM: A 50-STATE FORUM

The Council of State Governments Justice Center
22 Cortlandt Street, 22 Floor
New York, New York 10007

Improving Outcomes for Youth involved with the Juvenile Justice System: An Opportunity for State Leaders to Learn about “What Works” and Federally Funded Technical Assistance

States have dramatically reduced juvenile incarceration rates, but have made far less progress reducing recidivism and improving other outcomes for youth arrested and in contact with the justice system. Every state requires a comprehensive statewide plan to improve outcomes for youth under supervision of the state or local juvenile justice system. Although some states have such a plan, few states have plans that meet all of the following criteria:

1. Establishes baseline recidivism rates and provides targets for improvement
2. Aligns system policies and practices with the research on “what works”
3. Demonstrates the support of the governor, legislative and judicial leaders, and representatives of local government, and positions these officials to track the implementation (and impact) of this plan

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) anticipates providing states that meet all of this criteria with the opportunity to compete for FY2016 Second Chance Act (SCA) awards of up to \$1 million to implement their comprehensive statewide plans.

As many states do not currently have such plans in place and are therefore not eligible to compete for this funding, OJJDP has charged the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC), managed by The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, to provide intensive technical assistance to four states in 2016 to help them develop statewide plans that would enable them to compete for SCA funding in the future.

Intensive Technical Assistance

The NRRC will provide selected states with 9–12 months of intensive technical assistance to assess their systems and help state leaders to apply the assessment findings to the development of a statewide plan to improve outcomes for youth.

Selected states will establish or charge an existing group of government leaders—comprised of a bipartisan team of lawmakers, judicial leaders, executive branch officials designated by the governor, local government partners, and other key stakeholders—to oversee the initiative, and

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identify one or two individuals designated by the governor and legislative and judicial leaders to chair the group.

The NRRC will provide the group with the following technical assistance:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment, including gathering and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, to assess the extent to which state juvenile justice policies, practices, and funding adhere to what the research shows is effective
- Present key findings and recommendations to the group
- Guide the group to translate the recommendations into a statewide plan to improve youth outcomes, which may include legislative, appropriation, and/or agency policy/practice changes, and help position state leaders to track the plan's implementation and progress

State Application Process and Timeline

States that are interested in hosting, with state leaders, a site visit from the NRRC to learn more about this intensive technical assistance opportunity and “what works” to improve outcomes for youth should submit a letter of interest to the NRRC **no later than Friday, December 4**. This letter does not commit states to participating in future technical assistance, but is rather an indication that one or more key state leaders (e.g., chief justice, a legislative leader, and/or governor) are interested in learning more about the resources available to support their improvement efforts.

Based on expressed level of state interest and demonstrated commitment across branches of government to advancing a statewide plan to improve outcome for youth, the NRRC will select up to eight (8) states to visit in the first quarter of calendar year 2016. During these visits, the NRRC will:

- Present to a group of state leaders on “what works” to reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for youth involved with the juvenile justice system; best practices for measuring these outcomes and using data to guide policy and resource allocation; and the opportunity to receive federally funded technical assistance from the NRRC to support the state's effort to develop a comprehensive statewide plan
- Facilitate discussions with state leaders in one-on-one meetings about the state's core challenges to and key opportunities for improving outcomes for youth

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- Explore with state leaders whether the state has the interest, capacity, data, and political support necessary to take advantage of this intensive technical assistance opportunity

The timeline for key activities associated with this site visit and state application process for intensive technical assistance from the NRRC includes:

- **December 2015:** States submit a letter of interest to the NRRC requesting a site visit.
- **January 2016:** Up to eight states are selected for day-and-a-half-long site visits.
- **January–March 2016:** NRRC conducts site visits.
- **March 2016:** Any of the eight states that are interested in receiving intensive technical assistance from the NRRC submit a letter of commitment to the NRRC, signed by state leaders from all three branches of government.
- **March 2016:** Four states are selected by OJJDP to receive 9–12 months of intensive technical assistance from the NRRC to assess their systems and develop statewide plans.
- **April 2016–February 2017:** States receive intensive technical assistance from the NRRC to develop statewide plans to improve outcomes for youth in their juvenile justice systems.

Next Steps

Interested states should submit a letter of interest, as per the attached template, **no later than Friday December 4** to Josh Weber at the NRRC at jweber@csg.org. For more information, please contact Nina Salomon at nsalomon@csg.org.

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