

March 2015

**Project Report:**

# **What Can the Cook County Juvenile Court Do to Improve Its Ability to Help Our Youth?**

## **A Juvenile Justice Needs Assessment**

Commissioned by Cook County Justice for Children and its Juvenile Justice Strategy Team

Compiled by the Mansfield Institute for Social Justice and Transformation at Roosevelt University  
and the Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice at Adler University.



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# What Can the Cook County Juvenile Court Do to Improve Its Ability to Help Our Youth?

A Juvenile Justice Needs Assessment

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## Juvenile Justice Strategy Team Members & Process

This group was convened by Cook County Justice for Children's then-Executive Director, Lanetta Haynes Turner. The Needs Assessment idea arose as a way of learning the relative strengths and the opportunities for positive transformation within the Cook County Juvenile Justice System. The study was a volunteer effort on the part of all researchers. The survey and focus groups were designed by students and employees of Roosevelt and Adler universities with input from the larger group and the staff of CCJC. Individual interviews were conducted by individuals from Adler and Roosevelt universities, with additional assistance by Professor Douglas

Thomson from Chicago State University. All processes were reported to Lanetta Haynes Turner and CCJC staff member, Syeda Naqvi. The final report was completed chiefly by (in alphabetical order) Tina Johnson of the Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice (IPSSJ) at Adler University, Nancy Michaels of The Mansfield Institute for Social Justice and Transformation at Roosevelt University and Elena Quintana, Ph.D., of the IPSSJ at Adler University. The final draft was completed after the installment of Juliana Stratton as the Executive Director of Cook County Justice for Children with input from her and Syeda Naqvi.

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# Executive Summary

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## Background

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According to a report prepared for the government by the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, almost 9 out of 10 youth who spend time in Illinois youth prisons end up going back to prison within three years of their release, with Cook County as the highest percentage out of ten counties (Smith 2014). This current study was conducted to increase understanding of the perceived strengths and weaknesses in the juvenile justice system. The more we know about the outcomes of detention and court involvement on youth and their overall neurological and social development, the better we can move forward. Further, our understanding that the majority of court involved youth have experienced complex trauma and have unmet basic needs is important as we consider the best options for rehabilitation and their overall success. This research allows us to increase our understanding further by tapping into the knowledge of juvenile justice stakeholders in order to identify best practices and opportunities that promote positive transformation for youth, families, and communities. This

report documents the responses and identifies existing attributes, best practices and challenges in the Cook County Juvenile Court and in the community. The data lead to a wide range of recommendations for change that will increase the success of youth in Cook County, from those that can be implemented in the court and in the community, to recommendations that will result in a paradigm shift in the system and in the ways that we think about youth and juvenile justice. The findings point toward an increase in education and coordination system-wide, with the court taking on a greater role in promoting prevention strategies aimed at keeping youth from entering the system in the first place. Most significantly, the findings point toward the need to keep youth in their communities with a strong emphasis on the system utilizing, building and cooperating with communities to both stem the flow of youth into the system, and for the young people who are in the system, to create a solid strategy to reintegrate youth successfully back into their communities.

## Study Methods and Participants

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The needs assessment utilized a combination of surveys, focus groups, and in depth interviews to gather the insights of myriad juvenile justice stakeholders. Over 200 respondents provided their thoughts and perspectives about the role the Court can play in helping our court-involved youth. Participants included current and former court-involved youth, the youths' families, community members, court personnel, service providers, and individuals in key leadership positions within Cook County's juvenile justice system.

## Study Results

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### *Stakeholder Interviews*

Throughout the study, stakeholders consistently pointed to the benefits of diversion and alternatives to detention as a key component and first step in helping youth successfully exit the juvenile court system. The key stakeholder interviews highlighted the importance of programs located within the communities they were serving, especially those that also provided wraparound services and included the whole family. There were several examples of successful community based programs such as Evening Reporting Centers, Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation, Urban Life Skills, Alternatives and overall, the use of Restorative Justice programming.

## Executive Summary *(continued)*

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### ***Youth and Family Focus Groups***

In focus group interviews with youth and families, several themes emerged regarding the strengths of alternatives/ community programs. For instance, a participant from one neighborhood expressed that court involvement gave them access to needed and desired support, guidance and mentorship with staff at the community organizations. Once court involved, youth were referred to these resources as conditions of their probation. One youth described a mentor as one person who provided guidance, hope, trust, and a different perspective on how to move forward and reintegrate into the community after their court involvement ended. Overall, these relationships cultivated through the community organizations made a difference in their lives. Little Village is the only jurisdiction that offers blanket referrals to ongoing mentoring programs as a condition of probation.

### ***Survey Respondents***

The survey results emphasized the importance of connecting youth to the community services in order to secure their safety, overall success, and to reduce their risk of recidivating. This included an emphasis on the importance of accompaniment throughout their court process and beyond, as well as, building relationships and guidance for reconnecting with family, community and school.

## **Challenges**

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- 1 The need for knowledge about community-based programs to avoid underutilization of programs leading to a reduced level of confidence in community programs.
- 2 The need for increased constructive and regular communication, coordination, accountability, and relationship building on the part of the Juvenile Court, Juvenile Temporary Detention, and Juvenile Probation with community service providers in order to effectively remove barriers and improve success of our young people.
- 3 Parents' need for court personnel, such as Judges or Public Defenders, to take the appropriate time to help them understand the Juvenile Court process, in general, and court proceedings, in particular.
- 4 Many at-risk youth needing services are unable to receive them without entering the juvenile justice system.
- 5 Court and other system personnel lack knowledge and understanding about brain development and overall child development, including trauma and mental health
- 6 Diversion as it is designed now requires a plea of guilt and is only court diversion, the child has a record and is still on probation. This is not real diversion. True diversion keeps youth from entering the system and requires an early intervention and prevention strategy.
- 7 The need for increased funding and/or more fully funded programs for diverting youth from secure detention. In addition, available programs need to be brought to scale so that more youth can be served for longer periods of time.
- 8 The need for understanding of the structural, racial and social factors that cause Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and effective solutions to create change in this area.
- 9 The need for coordination and cooperation between departments within the court and between the court and Chicago Public Schools (CPS).
- 10 The need for understanding and use of Restorative Justice practices.
- 11 The need for knowledge about work going on in the community.

## Executive Summary *(continued)*

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- 12 The need to reduce hesitancy by some stakeholders in referring youth to community, often due to a lack of knowledge about work going on in the community
- 12 The need for formal evaluation of program effectiveness and tracking of key data points and indicators of success.
- 12 The need for community to have better information about court involved youth and youth in the system in order for the youth to be best served in community settings.

## Recommendations and Potential for Change

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- 1 All juvenile justice stakeholders to share and jointly articulate a commitment to keep youth in the community.
- 2 Increase knowledge of and confidence in community-based alternatives to detention by assuring alternatives are known to Judges, and that the alternatives' effectiveness is properly evaluated and understood. This should include:
  - A Standards of care, contact, and practice must be understood by those offering community alternatives to detention
  - B Community visits for Judges and other court personnel to ensure a greater understanding of the work going on in the community
- 3 Educate parents and caregivers on the court process and how to help their children successfully meet their court responsibilities and successfully exit the system.
- 4 Elevate the understanding among Court personnel and all in the juvenile justice stakeholders that a preventative approach is a just approach and an early intervention and prevention strategy should be developed and embraced. This should include a set of achievable and measurable outcomes that can be shared between community agencies and court personnel
- 5 Offer judicial education and professional development for juvenile justice stakeholders on child development, brain science and trauma.
- 6 Establish joint advocacy for justice reinvestment which, when possible, shifts funding from intervention by governmental systems to community service providers that work with youth and their caretakers. This would include incentivizing prevention of court involvement by assuring that programs that work with court-involved youth are given funds for preventative and transformational programming.
- 7 Create an awareness campaign to increase understanding of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and ways to end it.
- 8 Identify and staff key bridge-builders within the juvenile justice system including individuals that can move between systems to assure that positive youth development is at the center of decision-making
- 9 Increase level of information sharing and data transparency across all juvenile justice stakeholders.
- 10 Increase mechanisms in diversion programs in order to reduce or eliminate system contact, and increase overall successful path to adulthood. Recommendations are intended to encourage reliance on community based solutions to juvenile crime and move away from system reliance.

## Introduction

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In 2012, there were “29,822 juvenile arrests in Cook County. Cook County accounted for a disproportionately large number of juvenile arrests, 64 percent, despite the fact that Cook accounts for only 39 percent of the youth population in Illinois.” (Kaba 2014) While court intervention is intended to reduce the likelihood of future offending, research findings suggest that, in fact, the opposite is true.

For example, a recent study found that, when compared to youth with comparable risk factors of adverse behavior and/or delinquency histories, but no juvenile court involvement, youth who appeared in court and received mild sentences (such as counseling, community service or restitution) were still **2.3 times more likely** to incur adult criminal records; youth placed on probation were **14 times more likely** to incur adult records; and, youth placed in a juvenile correctional institution were **38 times more likely** to have adult records (Gatti, Tremblay, Vitaro 2009).[i]

Clearly, the court system involvement has the potential to significantly increase a youth’s risk for recidivism and/or entry into the adult criminal justice system. Indeed, research finds that the unintended negative consequences of placing non-violent offenders in secure detention include: disruption of the connection to school, particularly any special educational services to which the youth may be entitled to by law; exacerbating mental health challenges among youth in detention which, in the extreme, can lead to suicide or suicidal ideation; increased acceptance of criminogenic thinking among youth through increased exposure to delinquent peers; and, ultimately, a substantially increased likelihood of reoffending. In fact, multiple confinements are more strongly correlated with higher recidivism than weapons charges, gang membership, or poor parenting (VanNatta and Kaba 2013). Research has consistently shown that low- and moderate-risk juveniles are less likely to reoffend when placed in community-based programs (VanNatta and Kaba 2013).

Moreover, despite successful efforts to dramatically reduce the detention population and improve the conditions of confinement at Cook County’s Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC), a recent study by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) finds that the JTDC facility can never safely meet the needs of Cook County’s children. Furthermore, the NCCD reported that, in 2012, well over 60% of the approximately 6,000 children referred to the JTDC had been accused of nonviolent, less serious, offenses **and did not belong there. In addition, as of 2013, well over 45% of youth only remained at the JTDC for less than a week** (Lewis and Kaba 2014).

In light of this research, and spurred by the belief that despite our noted progress we have more work to do, Cook County Justice for Children and its Juvenile Justice Strategy Team commissioned a comprehensive needs assessment to address one central question: **“What can the Cook County Juvenile Court do to improve its ability to help youth successfully exit the juvenile justice system?”** The first of its kind in Cook County to publically focus on the Juvenile Court’s role and leadership in improving court-involved youth outcomes, this needs assessment was conducted by the Adler School of Psychology and the Mansfield Institute for Social Justice and Transformation. Team members of the Juvenile Justice Strategy Team represented a broad cross-section of juvenile justice stakeholders including staff from the Child Protection Resource Section, Cook County Justice Advisory Council, Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, Juvenile Probation, as well as, community providers.

## Introduction *(continued)*

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Embedded in the findings of this research is the strong message that deinstitutionalizing court involved youth is in their best interest and in the best interest of community safety in Cook County. Each layer of this research—the survey, focus groups and key stakeholder interviews—revealed data that stressed youth are more successful when their needs are met through community alternatives versus institutional practices and settings.

What is interesting is that this data is in line with the foundation behind historic reforms such as the original intent of the establishment of the Cook County Juvenile Court in 1899 focused on rehabilitation over punishment. It is also in line with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Protection Act of 1974 which focused on the deinstitutionalization of juveniles and specified that juveniles not charged with acts that would be crimes for adults “shall not be placed in secure detention facilities.” The data gathered strongly emphasized increasing wraparound services that can help put youth on a path to success and recognizing community support and intervention as the best possible outcome for court involved youth.

The information that comes out of this project is timely as this and other recent research point to evidence of the devastating effects of the hyper-criminalization and institutionalization of our young people and the subsequent recidivism rates that lead to being system involved adults. The data points to a number of opportunities for a cultural and systematic shift in our approach with juvenile offenders. It is our hope that all stakeholders, both within the system and in the community that work to support juvenile justice will consider the evidence and implement the recommendations in this report to benefit youth, families and communities in Cook County.

## Methods and Participants

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The needs assessment utilized a combination of surveys, focus groups, and in depth interviews to gather the insights of a myriad of juvenile justice stakeholders. Ranging from current and former court-involved youth and families, as well as community members, court personnel, service providers, and individuals in key leadership positions within Cook County's juvenile justice system, over 200 individuals participated in the study and provided their thoughts and perspectives as to the role the Court can play in helping our court-involved youth.

### *Stakeholder Interviews*

Stakeholder interviews were conducted to solicit the perspectives of individuals in key leadership positions within the Cook County Juvenile Justice System. A total of nine interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. These stakeholders were chosen because they had significant roles within the juvenile justice system. In addition they were a strong representation of the various departments within the system including the judiciary, detention, probation, and other key partners of the Court.

### *Youth and Family Focus Groups*

Four focus groups were conducted in the Austin and Little Village neighborhoods of Chicago. Parents of court-involved youth, as well as court-involved youth participated in these sessions.

### *Survey Respondents*

A total of 169 people completed the electronic survey and over 250 people partially completed the survey. The survey was administered through Qualtrics, and a convenience sample was identified through the combination of the databases from Cook County Justice for Children, Mansfield Institute, and Adler University's Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice (IPSSJ). The databases included community based service providers and advocacy organizations, academics, policy and legislative advocates, community members, leaders and philanthropic organizations who work with youth, are interested in juvenile justice issues and/or work in the juvenile justice system in a variety of capacities such as: judges, detention personnel, probation officers, supportive services, legal offices, government offices and law enforcement.

## Study Results

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In summary, the needs assessment findings point towards a need for the Court to take on an increased role in promoting prevention strategies aimed at keeping youth from entering the system in the first place. Most significantly, the findings point toward the importance of keeping youth in their communities, with a strong emphasis on the need for the Court to increase its efforts to collaborate and build relationships with communities to stem the unnecessary flow of low risk youth into the juvenile detention center.

Participants also identified the need for the Court to play a greater role in working with communities, as well as the school system, in order to help detained youth successfully reintegrate into their communities upon their exit from the detention center, and to ensure that these youth have access to necessary supports, services and/or resources to prevent their further involvement with the juvenile justice system. In addition, the needs assessment results also underscore the overall need for an increase in system-wide coordination, transparency, and education about juvenile justice best practices in general, and the unique needs of juvenile justice involved youth in particular. These results are described in more detail as follows:

### *Stakeholder Interviews*

Stakeholder interviews were conducted to solicit the perspectives of individuals in key leadership positions within the Cook County juvenile justice system. These interviews enabled research staff to probe deeper into patterns revealed by responses to the online survey thereby enriching the study's ultimate findings and recommendations. Throughout the study, stakeholders consistently pointed to the benefits of diversion and alternatives to detention as a key component and first step in helping youth successfully exit the juvenile court system.

The key stakeholder interviews highlighted the need for more community based alternatives to detention programs within the communities served by the Court, especially those that also provide wraparound services and include the whole family, in order to keep youth within their communities and out of the Juvenile Temporary Detention center. Overall, there was a widespread perception across stakeholders that the Court could significantly strengthen its ability to improve outcomes among court-involved youth by increasing its utilization of community based alternatives to secure detention.

Although participants acknowledged the overall lack of such community based programs, they also provided several examples of successful community based programs already present in Cook County, such as Evening Reporting Centers, Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation, Urban Life Skills, Alternatives, and the use of Restorative Justice programming. Though these programs are currently utilized by the Cook County Juvenile Court, there was still a general consensus across stakeholders that an increase in the Court's utilization of these programs continues to be greatly needed.

## Study Results *(continued)*

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### ***Youth and Family Focus Groups***

As part of the Needs Assessment, focus groups were conducted with current and/or former juvenile justice involved youth and parents, with particular emphasis on those communities experiencing high levels of Juvenile Court involvement. Focus group interviews with youth and families yielded several key themes, such as the need for the Juvenile Court hearings/processes to be more family and youth friendly, the benefits and strengths of community based alternatives to detention programs, and the need for more mentors to not only help family and youth understand the Juvenile Court processes, but to also provide youth with mentoring throughout their entry into, duration within, and exit from the juvenile justice system.

For example, when asked about their involvement with the court process many of the court-involved youth and parents expressed a significant need for court personnel such as Judges or Public Defenders to take the time to help them understand the Juvenile Court process in general and court proceedings in particular. In addition, parents reported transportation difficulties, repeated court delays, and lack of childcare options, which led to not feeling supported or encouraged to be involved in court hearings and/or visit their child.

### ***Electronic Survey***

#### Survey Description and Results

The survey consisted of a total of 20 questions which were a combination of multiple choice and free response options. The survey results emphasized the importance of connecting youth to the community services in order to secure their safety, overall success, and to reduce their risk of recidivating. This included an emphasis on the importance of accompaniment throughout their court process and beyond, building relationships and guidance for reconnecting with family, community and schools, and greater collaboration between the Juvenile Justice Division and other Juvenile Court and system stakeholders, including the community at large.

Furthermore, participants identified the paradox of not being able to receive any preventative services for themselves and/or their children without first becoming involved with the juvenile justice system. For instance, a participant from one neighborhood expressed that court involvement was the only way they were able to have access to needed and desired support, guidance and mentorship with staff from community based organizations. Once court involved, youth were referred to these resources as conditions of their probation. However, at present, Little Village is the only jurisdiction that offers blanket referrals to ongoing mentoring programs as a condition of probation.

Last, both youth and parents expressed overall positive experiences once becoming involved with community based programs, and through the support and mentorship provided by their staff. One youth described a mentor as one person who provided guidance, hope, trust, and another perspective on how youth can move forward and reintegrate into the community after their court involvement ended. Overall, youth and parents agreed that these relationships cultivated through the community organizations in general, and with mentors in particular, made a difference in their lives.

## Perceptions of System Strengths

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Throughout the study, stakeholders pointed to the benefits of diversion and alternatives to detention for low to moderate risk youth as a key component and first step in helping youth successfully exit the Juvenile Court system. In discussions with youth and families, several themes emerged regarding strengths of these community-based alternatives to detention and the need for the increased funding for these and similar evidence based programs.

The primary benefit expressed by youth of their involvement with the Juvenile Court system was the support, guidance and mentorship with staff at the community organizations to which they were referred, either as an alternative to detention or as part of their probation after their cases had been adjudicated. In these mentoring relationships, it was typically one person who provided guidance, hope, trust, and a different perspective on how to move forward and reintegrate into the community after their court involvement ended. Overall, these relationships, cultivated through the community organizations made a difference in their lives. Similarly, the survey results emphasized the importance of connecting youth to community services in order to secure their safety, their overall success and reduce their risk of recidivating. This included an emphasis on the importance of accompaniment throughout their court process and beyond, as well as, building relationships and guidance for reconnecting with family, community and school.

The key stakeholder interviews highlighted the importance of programs located within the communities they were serving that also provided wraparound services and included family members and caregivers. One key stakeholder reported that in a successful community alternative, the important aspect is the feeling of connectedness that allows youth to feel supported by their environment. Another stakeholder's description of a successful community alternative explained that productive services move beyond simply addressing a

youth's minimal needs, "There is a shepherding component...and that's where the shepherd comes in, because what we do as parents is we guide, we train, we protect, we provide, we praise, we advocate so the child needs more than someone who's going to call in and say 'hey how are things going' or spend an hour but says 'OK, these are the things you need to get accomplished and I'm the person that's going to help you accomplish those things.'" Further, another key stakeholder spoke to the importance of utilizing existing community resources to engage youth stating, "One of the critical elements of a successful alternative is to work with community, so that community can bring some of what exists within the community here (to the community organization), and then hopefully connect with the youth.... But giving them also a place here that's a safe haven, give them a social activity; give them somebody to talk to, so they can't say there's nothing there." There were several examples of successful community based programs listed in the surveys, interviews and focus groups including Evening Reporting Centers, Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation, Urban Life Skills, Alternatives and overall, Restorative Justice programming. Community based services are in place to help communities address the issues that are most salient and pressing to them.

## Perceptions of System Challenges

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Although stakeholders listed many strengths, there were also challenges within the Juvenile Court system and within the larger context of the juvenile justice system that were identified. Given the understanding that the success of the Court in effectively addressing the needs of youth is integrally connected to the collective efforts of all system and community stakeholders, needs assessment participants pointed towards the need for increased collaboration, accountability, and relationship building of both the Juvenile Court and juvenile justice service providers.

All were in agreement that this is necessary in order to effectively remove barriers and improve outcomes. One key stakeholder specifically offered that a better juvenile justice system would be one that involves communication between all major players in the system, and the development of relationships and trust. Another stakeholder asserted, “Judges need an orientation of what services are out there and what services work so they will more regularly refer youth to the community alternatives.” In another interview a stakeholder discussed the significance of sharing successful strategies and the collaboration between agents stating, “the whole juvenile justice system is disjointed, so (it is important that) the juvenile justice community is connecting the dots of all the entities that are there to help juvenile justice, and share what we all have to offer in ways of strength, in way of resources.”

When asked about their involvement with the court process many of the court-involved youth and parents expressed a significant need for court personnel, such as Judges or Public Defenders, to take the time to help them understand the Juvenile Court process in general and court proceedings in particular. In addition, parents reported transportation difficulties, repeated court delays, and lack of childcare options, which led to not feeling supported in or encouraged to be involved in court hearings and/or visit their child. Another important concern that was cited by some participants, was the fear that at-risk youth were unable to receive ser-

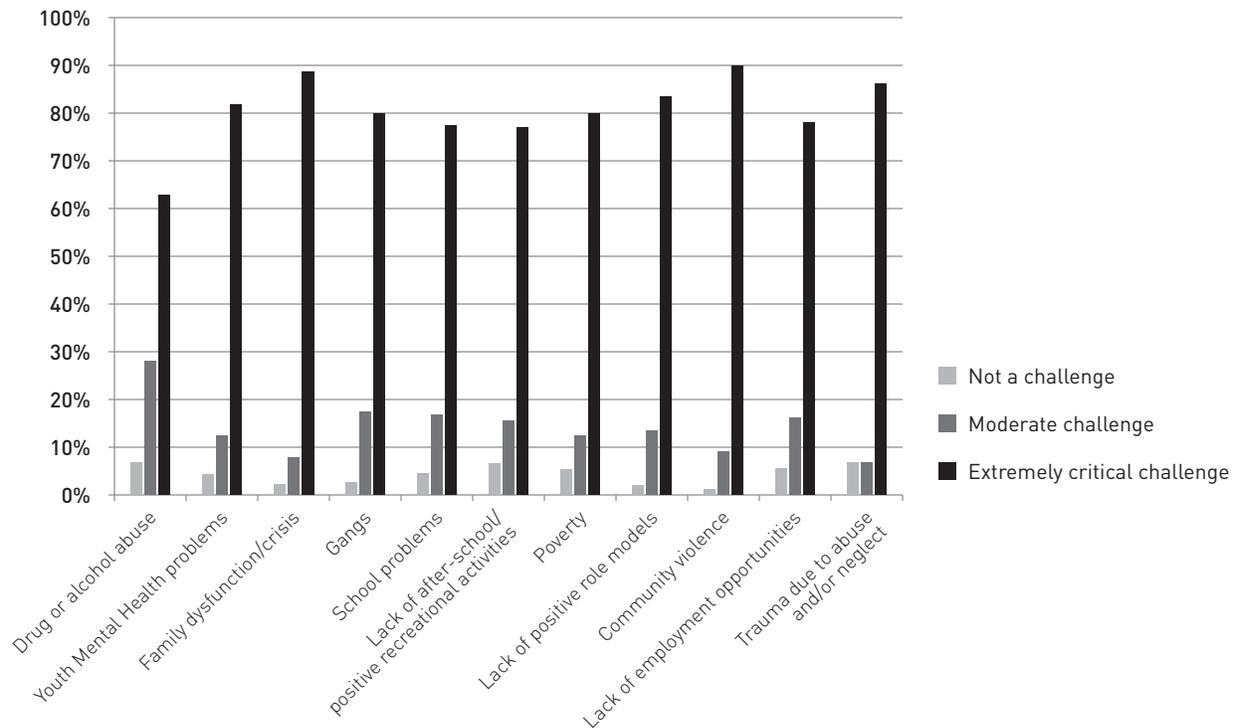
vices without entering the juvenile justice system. This is especially true when a young person that may have many unmet needs has a case that is not filed or when a youth is found not delinquent, and is then sent back to the community without gaining access to support or services. One respondent explained, “Even though we couldn’t prove the case it was clear that the person would benefit from services, but there was no way to get them to services.” The fear of this net-widening then, is even more troubling in the context of the larger goal of keeping youth from ever entering the system.

It is clear that a wide variety of factors must be taken into account when decisions are made by key stakeholders within the Juvenile Court. The charts below detail respondents’ views on the challenges that youth face when coming into contact with the justice system, the system’s challenges in addressing these issues, and areas for the system to focus on to improve youth outcomes. The final chart details participants’ views on which resources are adequately available in communities where court involved youth live.

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** *What do you think are the most critical challenges facing the youth who come into contact with the Juvenile Justice Division?* (Responses=157)

Chart 1



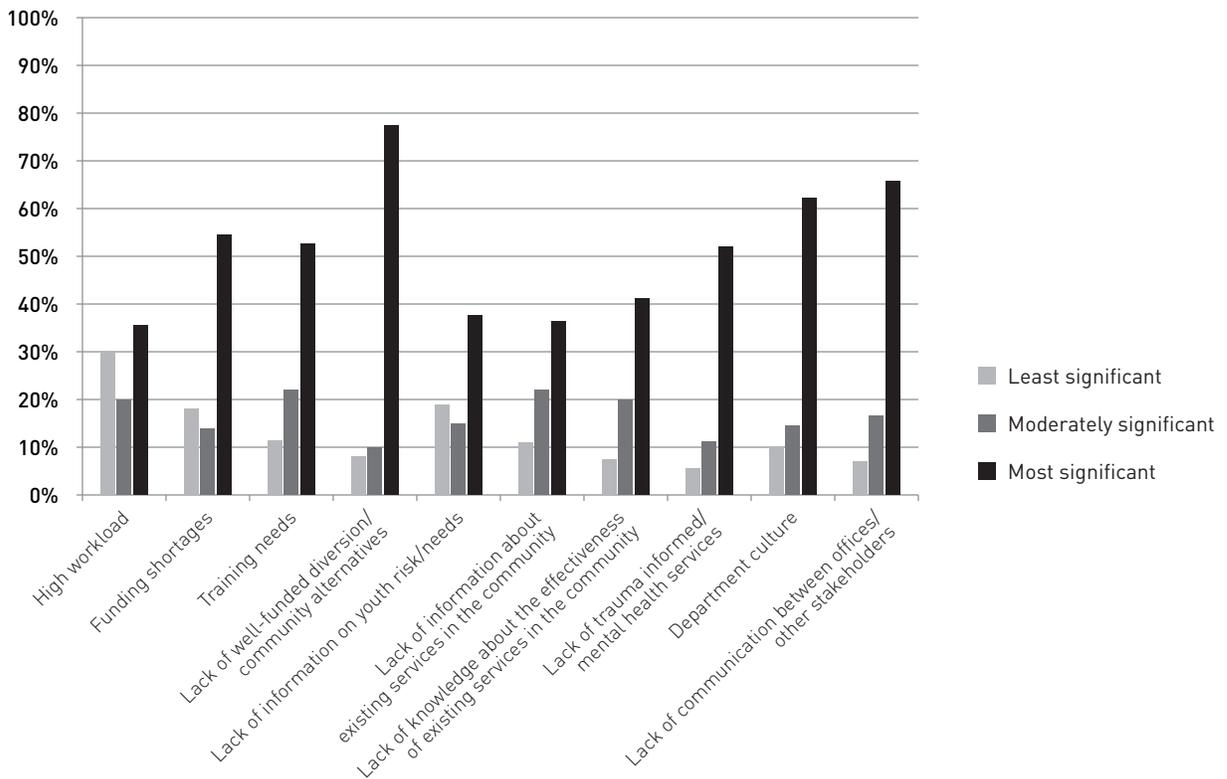
Most critical/highest challenges (highest mean) are family dysfunction/crisis, and community violence

Of note in this chart is that respondents often found that when there were challenges they were considered "extremely critical". This may suggest that respondents saw that the ability to meet the need, far out-weighted the resources necessary to address the issues.

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** *In your opinion, how significant are each of the following issues in affecting Judges' ability to help youth?* (Responses=151)

Chart 2

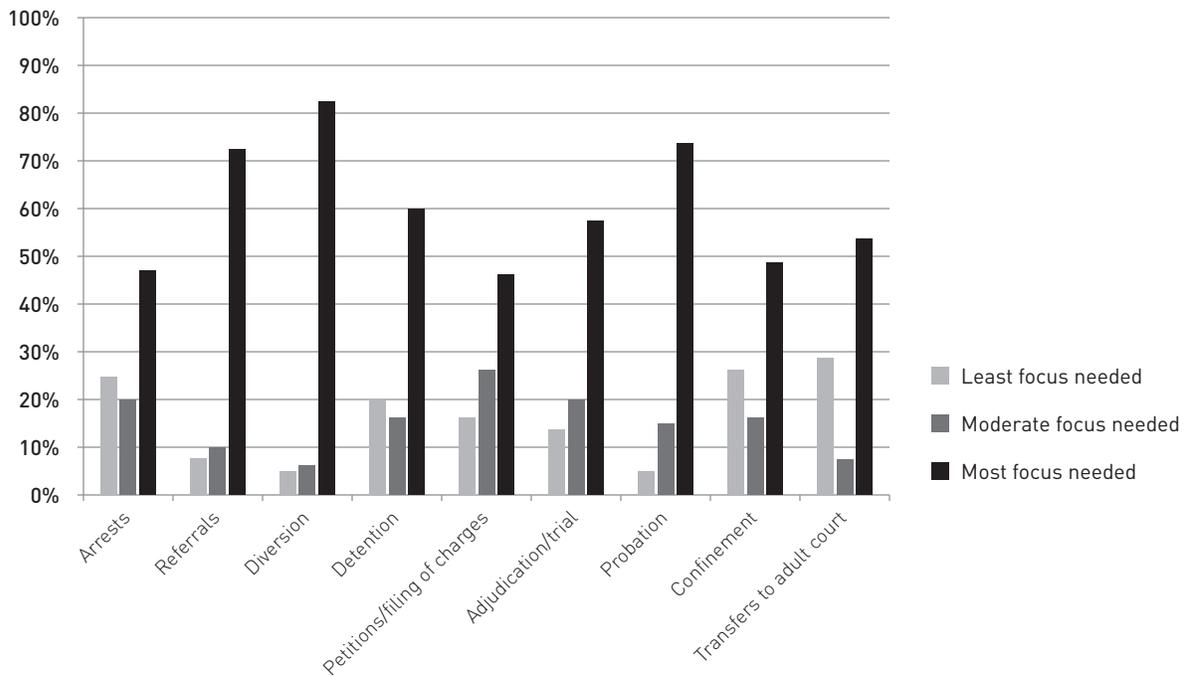


The least significant (lowest mean) issue chosen was high workload and most significant (highest mean) issue chosen was lack of communication between offices, and lack of well-funded diversion/community alternatives.

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** *Where do you think the Juvenile Justice Division most needs to focus its collaboration efforts in order to improve youth outcomes?* (Responses= 106)

Chart 3



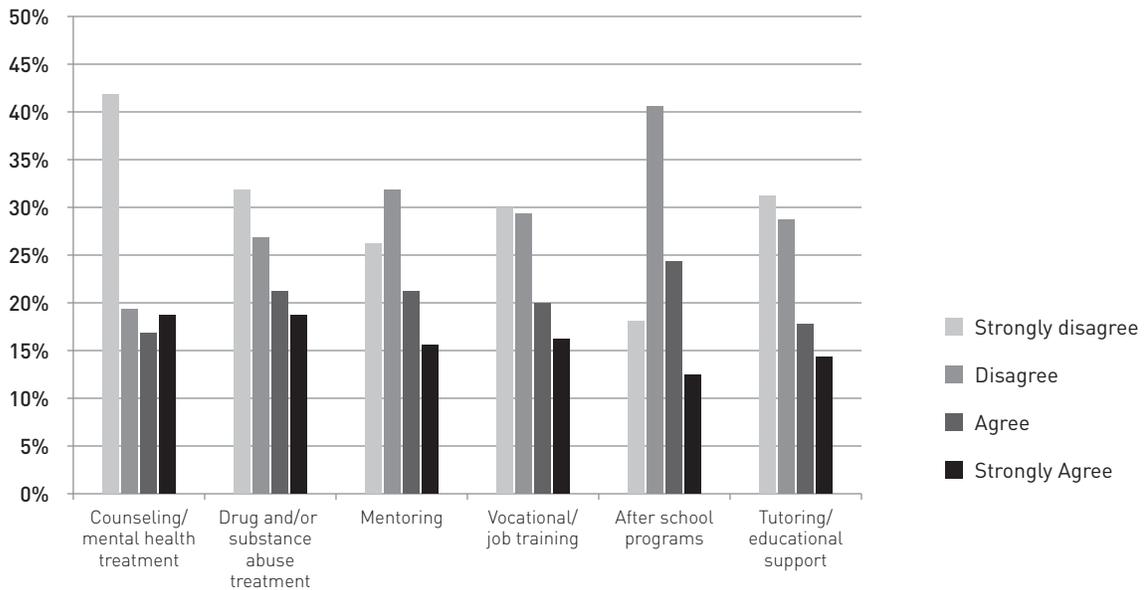
Survey respondents indicated that the Juvenile Court needed to most focus its collaboration efforts with diversion, probation and referrals in order to improve youth outcomes. These three response options had the highest mean for most focus needed. Also notable were the strong endorsements of “most focus needed” for all categories. Those endorsed by at least 20% of respondents as “least focus needed” included detention, confinement, arrests, and transfers to adult court. (Responses=93)

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** Please indicate your response to the following statement:

*“Given these challenges, I believe the following resources are adequately available in the communities where our court involved youth live. (Responses=152)*

Chart 4



This chart reveals a trend in the perception that most types of youth supports are not available after school. Adding “disagree” and “strongly disagree” categories shows that over 50% of respondents believe key supports are not available in the neighborhoods where many court-involved youth reside. Counseling/mental health treatment and after school programs had the greatest need listed (highest response strongly disagree that services are adequately available)

Although many respondents referenced examples of successful programming for youth once they were in the system, the need for increased funding and/or a lack of more fully funded programs for diverting youth from secure detention was a commonly noted concern. One stakeholder felt that an organization’s quality of services is often not up to par due to lack of funds, and further described their own challenge in serving young people for the extent of their term before running out of

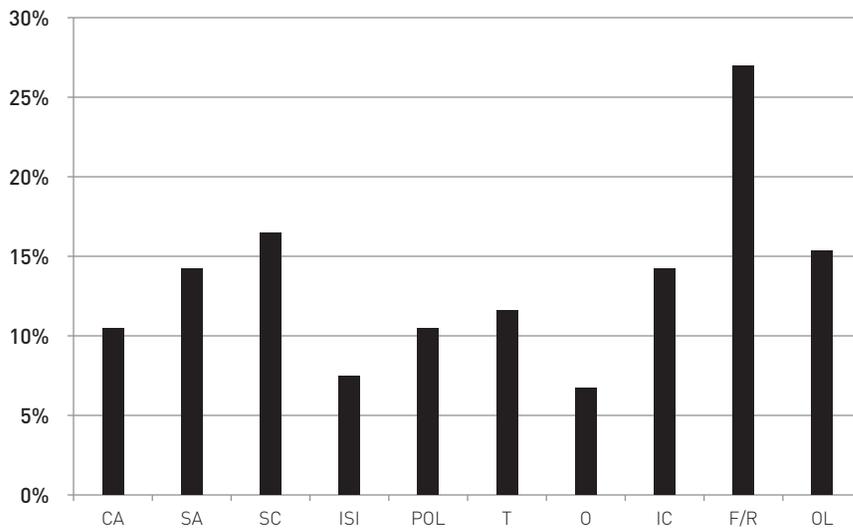
funding. In addition, there were many who felt that the available programs need to be brought to scale, yet with the lack funding available, this is not possible. A lack of funding reduced both the number of youth that could be served in the community and also the length of time served. With additional funding, programs such as Evening Reporting Centers could expand to include more services and extended hours.

The next challenge we explore is that system stakeholders lack knowledge about community-based programs. This lack of awareness results in programs being underutilized and contributes to a reduced level of confidence in community-based programs. In addition, of the programs known by stakeholders, there was some hesitancy in referring youth to those programs due to a lack of formal evaluation of program effectiveness and tracking of key data points and indicators of success.

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** *If applicable, what would improve you and/or your office's ability to play more of a role (in shaping reform efforts on behalf of youth involved with the Juvenile Justice Division)?* (Responses= 103)

Chart 5



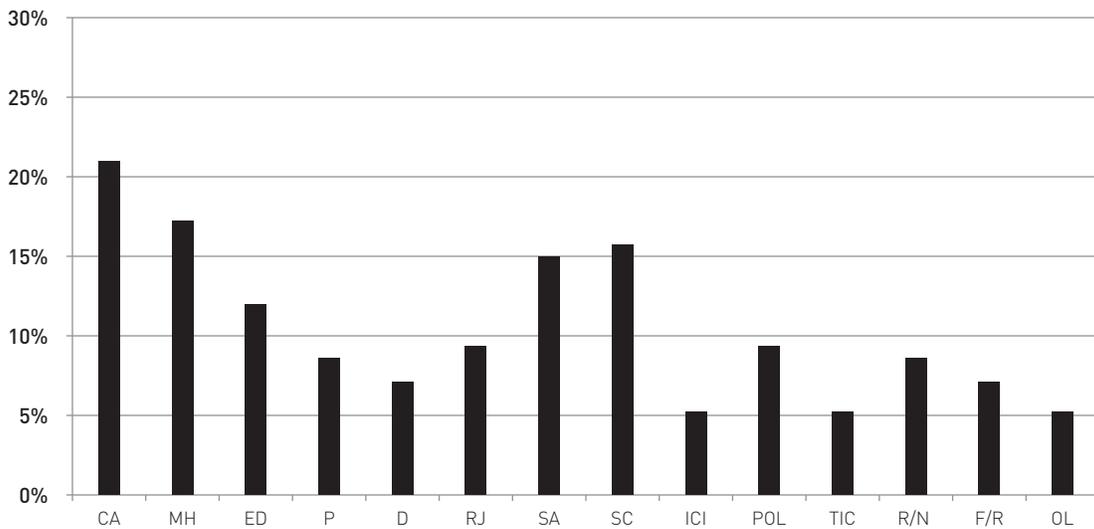
The codes in chart 5 reflect written responses. As this chart illustrates, the most frequent response (F/R) cited in order to achieve greater reform, was funding and resources.

Please reference the appendix for detail on additional responses.

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** *What do you think is one court policy or practice that, if changed, would most improve the Juvenile Justice Division's ability to help youth?* (Responses=114)

Chart 6

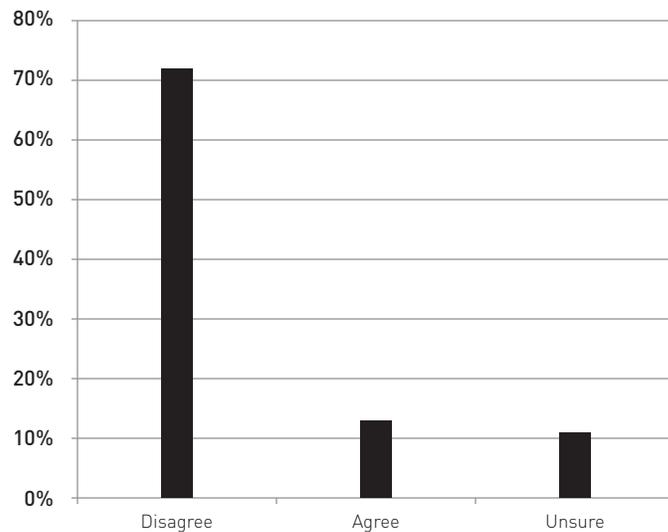


The responses indicated, community alternatives/diversion, mental health resources, system culture, and system accountability as the areas that would most improve the Juvenile Justice Division's ability to help youth.

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** Please indicate your response to the following statement: “At this time, I think the Juvenile Justice Division is transparent and accountable to the public.” (Responses= 105)

Chart 7



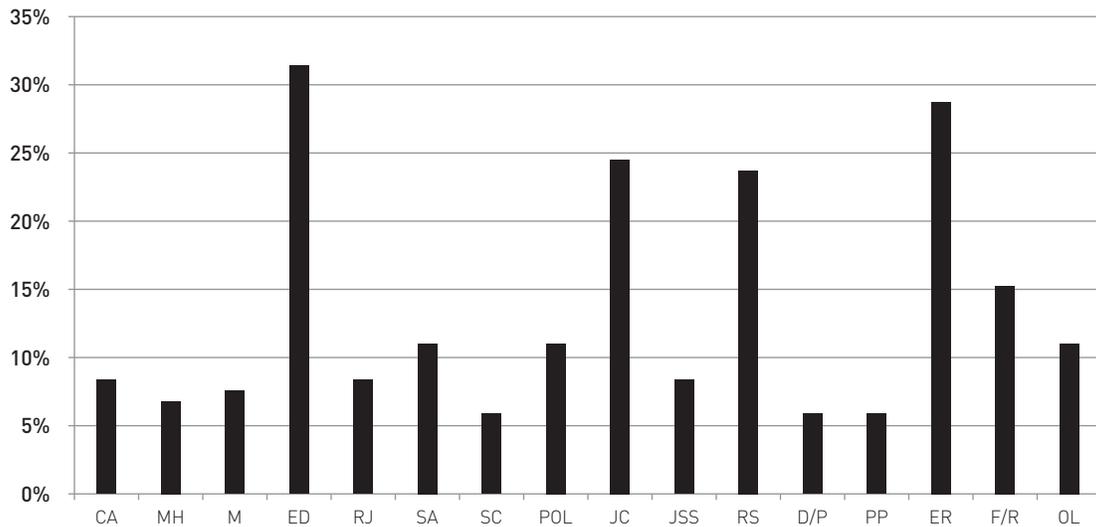
Strongly disagree or disagree: 72% and Strongly agree or agree: 17%

The responses in chart 7 significantly point toward desire for greater transparency and the accountability that this would allow. One stakeholder articulated what data sharing might look like: “I think what we need, and would be huge, is transparency. It should not be as difficult as it is in Cook County to get data on what’s happening to our system inside the system and outside the system... there needs to be more research on what works here and that research needs to be public, and the system’s response to that research needs to be public.” Another shared, “We as citizens pay taxes and should have a mechanism for systems accountability.” Without information sharing and trust between all parties, the available programs are not used to their full potential and fewer youth are referred for services.

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** *Considering that dropout rates are associated with youth incarceration and recidivism, what policies or practices could the court implement to ensure that juveniles are able to re-enroll in school after discharge from the juvenile justice system?* (Responses= 118)

Chart 8



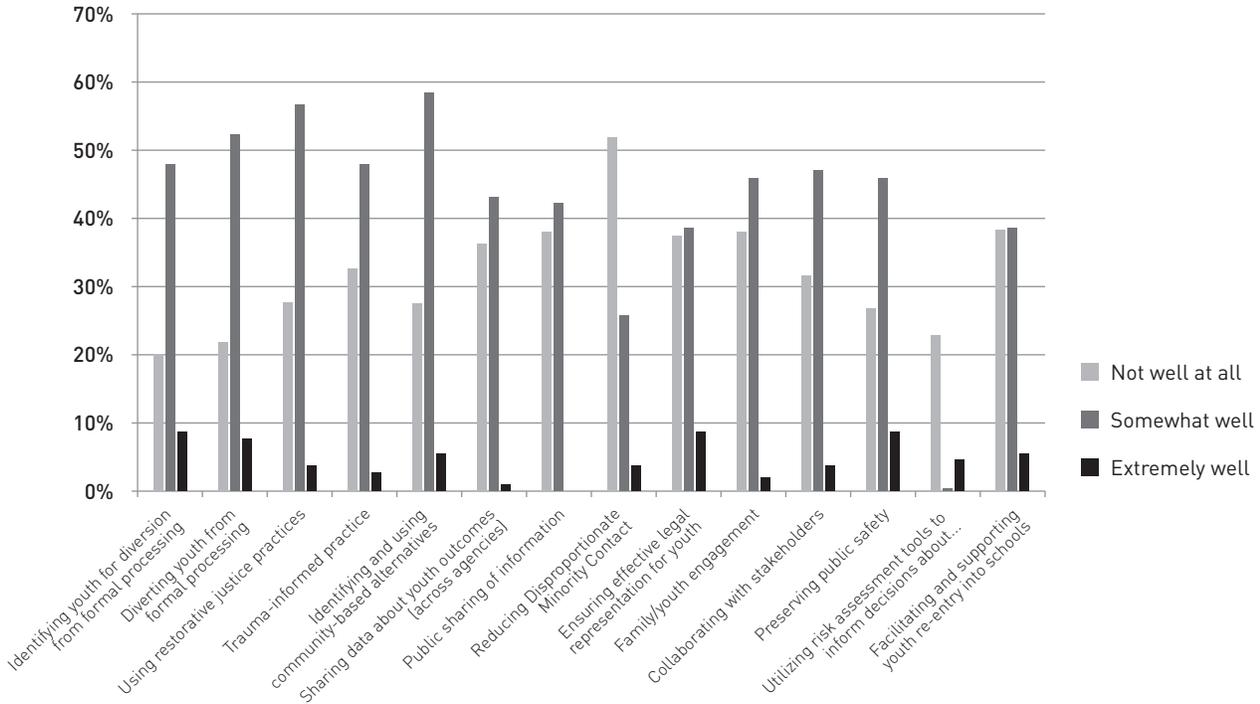
“ED” or Education, in chart 8 encompasses a number of written responses related to education such as staying in school while on probation and higher communication between the justice system and school prior to an adolescent release. “ER” refers to enrollment resources. Refer to appendix for other related codes.

Related to chart 8 are issues addressed through the interview data regarding how policies such as zero tolerance and other punitive forms of discipline in schools disproportionately affect youth of color and disengage students. A key stakeholder stated that not enough resources exist in the schools to positively deal with discipline, thus schools revert to law enforcement for matters the school should be equipped to handle. Additionally, stakeholders voiced that the historical and inherent racism in the system needs to be identified and boldly addressed on all levels – direct involvement with youth and ideological issues among all justice personnel.

## Perceptions of System Challenges *(continued)*

**Survey Question:** *In your opinion, how well is the Juvenile Justice Division doing in:*

Chart 9



Responses in Chart 9 point toward perceptions that most areas of the juvenile justice system are working somewhat well. There were some notable exceptions to these perceptions that suggest that system transformation is perceived as most necessary in the following areas including: 1. reducing disproportionate minority contact, 2. public sharing of information, and 3. supporting youth re-entry into school. Also important to note, not one category was dominated by the perception that the juvenile justice is doing “extremely well” in meeting any of the listed responsibilities. (Responses= 105)

Increased use of restorative measures in schools, such as peace circles and peer conferencing that keep youth in school was often cited as a remedy in the written responses and interviews. In one interview a school staff member shared her experience with Restorative Justice practices, “I tell the teachers if you start to see behavior that a young person has issues - that they can request the young person participate in a circle in lieu of suspension... They appreciate them because through the circles they get to hear the student’s point of view.”

Needs assessment participants also expressed great frustration with difficulties in school re-enrollment once a youth exited the juvenile justice system.

## Further Insight

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As mentioned above, nine in-depth interviews were conducted in addition to the survey and focus groups. These interviews enabled research staff to probe deeper into patterns revealed by responses to the online survey, thereby, enriching the study's ultimate findings and recommendations. In response to the question, "***What is your vision of a 'better' juvenile justice system?***" interviewees stated some of the following:

- "[M]aybe the Juvenile Court should be one where the best interests of the kid, community and victim have equal importance."
- "A system with people who really listen to kids- listen to what they have to say and know how to talk to them."
- "It's a system that's very small, where most of the work is done in the community and Juvenile Court is a place where people just come back to as their base but their work is outside."
- "I think it would be a great idea if the judges and prosecutors...had to go to juvenile justice facilities and toured them and talked to youth who are there and asked them about what it's like. And I think that they should have to, and I don't know how this would happen, but they also need to hear the alternative, right, because what you see when you're at Juvenile Court is you see the filtering down process. So you see the filtered; you get the kids that didn't get the pass from the police, who didn't get the pass from the prosecutor's office, that's all you see. So that's a much skewed picture."
- "Cook County is a very different animal and, as I mentioned to the Chief periodically, what he really needs is they need a guru, juvenile justice guru, not a Chief Judge. The problem is the direct line of authority - the reason he can't get anything done is he's the only person to get the answers from and he's not available."
- Several interviews illustrated a lack of support and guidance for young people among community members and that community members often turn to systems or to law enforcement instead of to one another to help care for youth. The notion was expressed that this in part comes from misguided media representations. One stakeholder described how the community may come to view young people in a destructive way: "They keep telling the same story over and over again, and it's a skewed story. It's a story built on propaganda, it's because negative sells so they sell negative. This whole notion of youth violence is a misnomer, youth are the victims of the violence. Too many youth are the victims of violence and too many youth are involved in violence, they're not the majority of the people doing the violence, but they're getting blamed for it."

## Creating a Way to Reclaim Our Youth: A System-Wide Paradigm Shift

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In the last few decades the United States has become increasingly “tough on crime” which translates into investing a huge amount of public dollars in the arrest, detention and incarceration of people living in this country. After much study, it has become increasingly clear that incarceration does not deter future system involvement, and is in fact the leading predictor of whether or not a young person will later be incarcerated as an adult (Bernstein, 2014).

There is increasing understanding of brain development in children and adolescents, and of the damaging effects of detention (Gately, 2014) However, it is now clear that the systems that have been put into place to curb crime are actually reducing potential for positive human development, and are, in fact, harming the youth that come into contact with these systems. It is time for a new method of investment. This would necessitate a fundamental shift of mindset. Specifically needed is a universally-held agreement among court personnel and all juvenile justice stakeholders about the young people they serve. This process would be aimed at creating a shift in the mindset about how young people become touched by the system in the first place including how particular communities of young people are systematically being prepared for the prison pipeline versus productive adulthood. In addition to revealing the structural sources that lead young poor and predominantly minority youth to the prison pipeline, is the important historical context of racism and social class exclusion and oppression.

This mindset shift will include a shift in how court personnel view their role and responsibility, from being those that uphold a system of punishment and control to one based on accountability, responsibility and prevention. The court should adopt an early intervention and prevention strategy with the overarching goal of re-allocating resources and responsibilities that focus on preventing youth from entering the system in the first place. For those youth who are already system involved, the primary focus should be looking toward community alternatives to prevent them from moving any deeper into the system.

Fundamental to this process is the idea of “collective responsibility,” that this shift will require those both inside and outside of the system taking collective responsibility and that both must come together in order for our youth to succeed. The philosophical shift could be steeped in the concept of, Ubuntu, a South African term which reflect the ideas that of connection, community and caring for all. It is stated in South Africa’s Interim Constitution created in 1993: “There is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation and need for ubuntu but not for victimization.”

## Recommendations

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This section outlines nine main recommendations. Beneath each recommendation are a number of bullet points that represent ways that these main recommendations may be realized. These ideas were gleaned from the research process but, in many cases, they are not fully articulated from the funding, staffing, and implementation standpoint. Rather, they are visionary steps that outline a path for the ways in which we can advance in order to realize the collective goal of helping young, court involved individuals to function in a productive way within the mainstream.

It is easy, in fact, to point out barriers to the implementation of some of the suggestions. However, corrective measures are not always easy, and creating a larger paradigm shift is indeed a generational burden that we feel is worth the potential ends as a boon to public safety, public investment, and the recapturing of significant human potential.

Based on the information received from the analysis of the surveys, focus groups and key stakeholder interviews, the Juvenile Justice Strategy Team developed concrete recommendations based on the study findings. Following are some of our initial recommendations that we hope will help inform the Juvenile Court's ongoing efforts to consider policies and practices that may enable it to best meet the needs of youth and help them achieve the Court's mission to "promote a juvenile justice system that protects the community, imposes accountability for violations of law and equips juvenile offenders with competencies to live responsibly and productively." The ultimate goal of these recommendations is to promote community responsibility and sustainability in addressing the behaviors, needs and services for youth and reduce and eliminate, where possible, reliance on systemic/institutional interventions.

Through a comprehensive analysis of all data measures, surveys, focus groups and in depth interviews, the research team compiled a list of recommendations broken down into four categories:

- Recommendations for *the court or larger justice* system on what they can implement to improve upon current practices;
- Recommendations to agencies and stakeholders in the *community* on recommended actions to be taken to complement and facilitate the court's efforts;
- Recommendations that cannot be completed without collaborations with *schools*; and
- **Broad** recommendations on how to achieve a paradigm shift in attitudes and ideology across the juvenile justice system as a whole.

Each recommendation will be coded as "justice," "community," "schools," or "broad change" to exemplify the aspects to each of the recommendations.

1

There is an overwhelming systemic change that cuts across all feedback and is at the core of the paradigm shift before us in the field of juvenile justice. It is near blanket desire to commit to provide resources that will allow the court to **keep youth in communities**. Feedback overall, points towards adhering to a last resort principle in decision making; one that imposes any form of coerced confinement only after considering and ruling out other options as insufficient to achieve the intended purpose.

**Recommendation:** Implement a weekend bond Court, or a similar process, to reduce the needless detention of youth in the JTDC due to a lack of a court calendar on weekends and holidays. **(justice)**

**Recommendation:** Increase knowledge and use of community-based alternatives to detention and all least restrictive measures via court-appointed community advocates, and/or judicial visits to community. **(justice)**

## Recommendations *(continued)*

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**Recommendation:** Support public safety dollars being invested in communities to bring to scale programs that support youth and prevent them from becoming court-involved. **(justice, community, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Coordinate with internal and external agencies/stakeholders to better serve youth. **(justice, community)**

**Recommendation:** Implement legislative and judicial policy changes to increase community referrals. **(broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Promote jobs programs for youth in the community and other programs such as Restorative Justice that replaces social capital and increases community safety, empowerment, and accountability to one another instead of the stat. **(community)**

**Recommendation:** Establish restorative hubs in the community that include wrap around services, accompaniment, hospitality, mentorship, parent and whole family support and promote a community wide restorative culture. **(community)**

**Recommendation:** Appoint an employee of the JTDC act as a community release advocate responsible for knowing why each youth is being held there. Daily reports will document why the youth is still detained and what steps by whom must occur for release. **(justice)**

**Recommendation:** Establish a strong, ongoing youth/family/community advocacy presence to push the judiciary and the Cook County board to maintain and extend detention center reforms established under the federal court order. **(community, broad change)**

2

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**There is a strong need for increased collaboration between court and system personnel and community. In addition, processes should be put into place that will lead to increased familiarity and knowledge of the programs and services that support youth in the community.**

**Recommendation:** Implement a judicial education program to increase the court's knowledge of the communities served by each of its courtrooms to facilitate a more effective judicial process and a better understanding of community assets. This can be achieved through visits to key community service centers, schools, and also by having a local service audit reported to the court on a biannual basis. **(justice, community)**

**Recommendation:** Assign personnel to serve as a liaison between the community and the court to facilitate judicial education to juvenile division judges about the community services available in the district they serve. It is recommended that these community liaisons stay informed about the development of new community programs relevant to court involved youth and their families, as well as have an eye for gaps in the community programs for youth and be able to make recommendations on behalf of the court to community stakeholders. **(justice, community)**

**Recommendation:** Embed probation officers in the community/district they serve in an effort to increase connection to schools and support structures relevant to the success of their charges. **(justice, schools, community)**

**Recommendation:** Improve coordination between justice personnel and Chicago Public Schools to reduce arrests, court referrals and ensure reenrollment after release from court commitment. **(justice, schools)**

**Recommendation:** Conduct a service audit, especially in key communities where youth are more likely to be arrested and/or detained, and make this information available to judges, probation officers, schools, and other youth gatekeepers to encourage use of services over criminalization of youth. **(community, schools, justice)**

**Recommendation:** Create a coalition of service providers that can provide adequate services and supports for court-involved youth. **(community)**

## Recommendations *(continued)*

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**Recommendation:** Actively identify services that are not present within community and attempt to work within the coalition to remedy this. **(community)**

**Recommendation:** Focus on and provide referrals for preventative measures in schools and communities that will keep youth from entering the system. **(schools, communities)**

3

**Be transparent, internally and publicly, with data and information** that can aid in tracking treatment and services provision for court-involved youth.

**Recommendation:** Make available aggregate community-level juvenile justice data. This includes the following categories; number of juvenile arrest, youth in detention, youth on electronic monitoring, status in school both at arrest and when released into community. Basic demographics regarding race, gender, and zip code or community within the County can also inform service need. **(justice)**

**Recommendation:** Ensure that service providers are also transparent and provide evaluations of their programs/interventions. **(community)**

**Recommendation:** Community members can partner with probation to track court-involved youth in each respective community, especially those experiencing the highest rates of juvenile arrest and detention. Called “Radar” meetings in the Back of the Yards community, schools, service providers, and probation work together to make sure each young person in need receives attention and assistance. This group can document the services they receive and whether or not they are re-connected with educational opportunities. **(justice, community)**

4

**Provide adequate support and services for youth at all stages of their involvement with the Court** (i.e. from pre-trial to exit and re-entry)

**Recommendation:** Implement Court-Appointed Juvenile Justice Advocate positions to help ensure that youth and families understand the court proceedings and can advocate for and assist youth in the school re-entry process. **(justice, schools)**

**Recommendation:** Juvenile Court judges should take the time to explain the court process and/or case proceedings to youth and parents at the start of each hearing. Family-friendly written materials should also be developed so families can better understand the process and how to best support their youth. **(justice)**

**Recommendation:** Increase family-friendliness of the court by informing parents of the presence of the children’s room at the Juvenile Court, where parents can receive day care on a limited basis, or by providing a limited number of bus passes to parents to facilitate travel to/from the courthouse. **(court, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Take a coordinated approach to reentry including identifying strategies that ensure youth are prepared for successful reintegration prior to their exit from the court system and/or the JTDC. Examples of ways to operationalize this include removing common barriers to reintegration, such as youth not having identification or immunizations that may prevent their access to school once released. Greater priority should be given to rehabilitation of youth while in custody. Additionally, facilitating early involvement of community agents to assist those youth prior to their re-entry could bridge the services between detention and successful community reentry. **(justice, community)**

## Recommendations *(continued)*

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**Recommendation:** Assure that all court-involved youth in your community have court accompaniment by connecting community-based service providers with court involved families. In Little Village, for example, every court-involved youth can receive accompaniment and support from Urban Life Skills, a local agency. **(community)**

**Recommendation:** Automatically expunge juvenile records at age 18. **(justice, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Implement Restorative Justice re-entry process perhaps in circles during pre-release period to insure successful transition back into the school community. Circle facilitation should involve community or hub members along with court personnel. After release, circles should continue in the community and include school personnel, peers, family members and Restorative Justice Hub personnel. Circles should focus on promoting social inclusion, emotional strength and relationship building, and empowering youth to engage in determining their path towards success and reconnecting in the community in a safe way. **(community, justice, schools)**

5

---

**Promote Restorative Justice programs** and practices to prevent entrance into the juvenile justice system. Use of restorative practices has been shown to result in positive outcomes for youth who are system- involved and those who are at risk of entering the system. Restorative Justice practices should be used internally among all court personnel and at every juncture of court involvement. A holistic, system wide approach to Restorative Justice is most effective.

**Recommendation:** Ensure an understanding of the philosophical framework of Restorative Justice among all systems personnel.

- Strong partnerships should be developed with the Restorative Justice community and most Restorative Justice practices should be carried out in the community as much as possible
- Those that are facilitated in the JTDC should include Restorative Justice community representatives to help facilitate Restorative Justice practices

**Recommendation:** Create a pilot restorative Juvenile Court in the community that would allow for community members to join judges and court personnel to carry out the proceedings using the grounding principles of Restorative Justice. **(justice, community, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Allocate juvenile justice funding sufficient enough to provide services to youth receiving community-based restorative intervention. **(court, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Conduct training of court personnel in Restorative Justice practices to increase awareness of options for restorative treatment of youth in schools and communities. **(justice, communities, schools, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Restorative Justice practices should be considered during pre- and post- sentencing, in the courtroom, and with victim /offender /community circles.

**Recommendation:** Reallocate school safety dollars to include space, training, and personnel that would provide restorative, trauma-informed discipline. (schools, broad change)

**Recommendation:** In collaboration with the Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Police Department, develop concrete policies that replace punitive actions with Restorative Justice practices instead to reduce arrests on school grounds. Use Restorative Justice interventions to replace expulsion or arrest in school. A peace circle or, restorative conference should be scheduled at the school or in the community to educate all stakeholders on the process and culture change. **(community, schools, broad change)**

## Recommendations *(continued)*

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6

### **Increase knowledge of trauma and adverse childhood experiences so that the treatment of youth is informed by a thorough understanding of adolescent brain science. (justice, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Juvenile Court, Juvenile Probation, and JTDC staff should receive trauma informed trainings, including an understanding of the trauma-informed practices and procedures that are most consonant with fostering positive social development, attachment, and conscience. **(justice)**

**Recommendation:** Partner and contract with universities, and other agencies (i.e. Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition) to conduct trainings within the community to educate on the effects of trauma and adverse childhood experiences. **(community)**

**Recommendations:** Assure that all stakeholders understand changes in practices that can lower youth criminalization as a result of this greater understanding of brain science and working with youth that have experienced complex trauma. **(justice, school, community)**

**Recommendation:** Advocate for adequate mental health care access and services. **(community)**

7

### **Address the challenge of policing and communities, emphasizing shared problem-solving and restorative practices to build relationship and increase trust between community members, youth and police.**

**Recommendation:** Scale up and replicate local resources such as the YMCA's "Bridging the Divide" project that bring youth and police officers together to build understanding through shared dialogue. In order to increase trust and minimize offending, create positive spaces for youth and law enforcement to interact and learn more about each other and their experiences of community. **(justice, community)**

**Recommendation:** Address racial disparities in arrest by tracking race and ethnicity in successful diversion referrals and reporting aggregate data regarding the same. **(justice)**

**Recommendation:** Pilot Restorative Justice options for arrested juveniles. Evanston, IL has a program that offers family conferencing, as well as community accountability conferencing for juveniles brought in for "minor offences." **(justice, community)**

**Recommendation:** Promote school safety through restorative processes and school security officers rather than police officers on site. Having officers on-site increases the likelihood that a criminal justice intervention will prevail over a Restorative Justice intervention. Restorative Justice preserves the likelihood that a young person will remain in school, rather than be put out on the street or into detention where he or she is unlikely to advance academically after becoming court-involved. **(justice, schools)**

## Recommendations *(continued)*

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8

### Address racial disparities at every level of juvenile justice involvement.

**Recommendation:** Through a comprehensive professional development program, racial disparities must be addressed in every level of the court system with a goal of increasing understanding of the way in which adolescent development is affected by exposure to trauma, as well as awareness around cultural variations and building empathy and a deeper understanding about the young people coming into the system. Training will focus on increasing awareness of cultural and racial history and customs, and barriers that exist as a result of societal and structural issues like racial inequalities, the immigration process, school push-out, zero tolerance, and poverty. **(justice, schools, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Create goals to reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact *(the phenomenon of Black and Latino youth coming in contact with the criminal justice*

*system in far greater numbers than they are represented in the general population)*. Present the data behind cultural and social factors that has led to the overwhelming overrepresentation of African American males in the JTDC. **(justice, broad change)**

**Recommendation:** Build positive regard for court involved youth, and actively message about youth to reduce the existing negative stereotypes and overall fear of youth. Relationship building approaches like Restorative Justice and exposure between justice gatekeepers and youth and their families can build empathy and understanding. **(justice, broad change)**

**Recommendations:** Create incentives to reduce racial disparities for reduction in youth arrests, and detention, and increases in school reintegration post-arrest. **(justice, community, broad change)**

9

**Divert early and often.** True diversion is prevention. Appropriate resources should be provided to youth before they are at risk of contact with the juvenile justice system. Points of contact for true diversion should be in the community, school, and at other “first responder” points. At the very least, a more formal diversion plan should be in place for each diverted youth that includes ensuring diverted youth have the same access to services as youth in custody, and that those harmed in the process also have access to services and support. Mechanisms should be in place to avoid formal processing of youth in order to reduce or eliminate the negative collateral consequences including further involvement with the criminal justice system. Removing these barriers will increase overall successful path to adulthood. **(justice, broad change, community)**

**Recommendation:** The diversion process should include an assessment and service plan of the youth’s needs, based upon an analysis of what intervention, treatment and community services will provide the best outcome for the referred youth and reduce the likelihood of future findings of delinquency. Ensure diversion program includes a mechanism in place to analyze the youth’s individual social, emotional, and developmental needs, and then tailors an intervention plan, treatment and community support services based on this analysis.

Assessments of diversion success should include input from the youth, agency, harmed party (victim), family/ caregivers and community members where practicable. **(justice, broad change, community)**

(Note: chances for success will increase if justice personnel follow recommendation number 2 of increasing relationship and understanding of existing community services for youth)

**Recommendation:** Widen the segment of youth that are eligible to receive diversion programs. **(justice)**

## Recommendations *(continued)*

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**Recommendation:** Ensure family members/caretakers, those harmed (victims), and community members (including faith based leaders and school personnel, where appropriate) are included in the diversion plan. Ensure that community based agencies are resourced and equipped to assess the needs of the harmed party (victim) and provide referrals and/or treatment and community based services.

**Recommendation:** Eliminate processing that would leave any trace of justice involvement **(justice)**

- Station adjusted youth whether formal or in formal should not be arrested nor should an arrest record be created
- At point of station adjustment, police should refer youth to community based organization or service (It follows that this could only be successful with strong relationship building between police and community so that police see the value in community, per Recommendation 7)
- No misdemeanor arrest should be reported to the State Police
- Police should have the discretion to report or not report, juvenile felony arrests to the State Police
- Police should charge juveniles with misdemeanor versus a felony wherever possible
- Diversion status must not impact a youth's ability to expunge his arrest record
- Encourage and incentivize the police department to station adjust rather than refer detained youth to Juvenile Court.
  - Station adjusted youth be referred to restorative community based agencies for assessment and services.

**Recommendation:** Insure diverted youth have the opportunity to take responsibility for any harm caused to victims and community members based on Restorative Justice philosophy. **(justice, community)**

**Recommendation:** Probation Department performance should, in part, be measured by the success of diverted youth. **(justice)**

## Conclusion

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If we are to keep youth in community, now is the time to reduce system-wide contact with youth while also promoting ongoing work to strengthen community efforts to be less dependent on law enforcement and the system. The challenge before us is to shift our focus towards reducing accountability to the state and increasing responsibility in the home and the community. This is achieved through providing appropriate resources and supports needed in order to increase positive outcomes for the youth, parents and community while promoting personal responsibility, public safety, and positive citizenship opportunities. To do this resources and supports are needed that help increase the ability for family and community to take responsibility for their youth. Attending to the needs of those harmed by providing real services, and not simply prosecution of the person who harmed them, is an important addition to improving justice and healing.

Positive human development depends upon greater communication and collaboration between the court, families, communities, service agencies, schools, faith-based institutions, and mental health service providers. Further, we must be honest about the corrosive effects of racist overrepresentation of youth of color caught in the system. It is crucial that system contact be an opportunity to connect to services and the mainstream, and away from danger and distress. System stakeholders and community members must work together to ensure a path for court-involved youth to re-enter into a positive role in their respective communities without stigma.

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## Appendix A

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### Code List

The following is a list of codes used to identify common themes in the survey results

<b>CA</b>	Community Alternatives
<b>D</b>	Diversion
<b>D/P</b>	Discipline Policies
<b>ED</b>	Education
<b>ER</b>	Enrollment Resources
<b>F/R</b>	Funding/Resources
<b>IC</b>	Interdepartmental Communication
<b>ICI</b>	Increased Community Involvement
<b>ISI</b>	Increase System Involvement
<b>JC</b>	Juvenile Justice/Chicago Public Schools Collaboration
<b>JSS</b>	Juvenile Justice Support Services
<b>M</b>	Mentoring
<b>MH</b>	Mental Health
<b>O</b>	Outreach
<b>OL</b>	Out Lier
<b>P</b>	Probation
<b>POL</b>	Policy
<b>RJ</b>	Restorative Justice
<b>RS</b>	Re-entry Support
<b>R/N</b>	Risk/Needs Assessment
<b>SA</b>	System Accountability
<b>SC</b>	System Culture
<b>T</b>	Training
<b>TIC</b>	Trauma Informed Care

## Appendix B

### Traditional court processes compared to Restorative Justice practices

	Courts	Circles
Participation	Restricted: primarily reliant on experts	Inclusive: primarily reliant on community
Decision Making	Adversarial	Consensus
Issues	Broken state laws	Broken relationships
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past conduct</li> <li>• Individual responsibility</li> <li>• State legal requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past, present, and future conduct</li> <li>• Individual and collective responsibility</li> <li>• Needs of all parties meet</li> </ul>
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banishment</li> <li>• Punishment</li> <li>• Coercion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reintegration</li> <li>• Healing/support</li> <li>• Trust/understanding</li> </ul>
Procedure	Fixed rules	Flexible guidelines
Results	Winners/losers	Finding common ground to maximize all interests

