

LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM

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The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS/the Partnership) is a national, nonprofit, non-partisan association focused on improving outcomes for justice-involved youth by supporting the administrators, staff, educators, trainers, and behavioral health providers of juvenile correctional, detention, and detention alternative programs across the United States of America.

Mission: NPJS provides professional development and technical assistance to promote best practices and standards in the field of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention with the goal of positively impacting youth, families, and communities.

To this end, the Partnership supports legislation, programs and policies aligned with our mission and offers guidance through position statements, research articles, and technical assistance to improve understanding of issues and initiatives affecting juvenile justice service delivery and system reform.

The Partnership's legislative and regulatory agenda is grounded in resolutions adopted by the general membership at the Annual Symposium. These resolutions collectively form the NPJS Platform. Responsibility for developing and implementing strategies rests with the Partnership's Board of Directors, standing and special committees, and staff, with engagement and support of the general membership.

The Partnership may support legislation that establishes directives or mandates for juvenile justice services if two key criteria are met: first, the legislation must be based on a rationale supported by best practice theory and research and demonstrate potential to benefit justice-involved youth ; second, it must be vested with sufficient fiscal and structural resources to ensure members can implement it effectively, avoiding unfunded mandates.

To support the mission identified above, be it resolved that:

The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) advocates for policy and practice within the juvenile justice system that positively impact youth, families, and communities, and contributes to enhanced public safety. This commitment is guided by the following core values:

◇ **Expertise and Access**

Ensuring access to NPJS members as subject matter experts across the full continuum of services and interactions with youth and families—from diversion through residential care to system independence.

◇ **Cultural Competence**

Promoting healthy adolescent development and reducing disparities for system-involved youth through professional, respectful, positive and supportive relationships and rehabilitative environmental experiences.

◇ **Evidence-Informed Practice**

Supporting the adoption of evidence-informed decision-making that promotes effective practice and continuous quality improvement within the juvenile justice field.

◇ **Workforce and Youth Development**

Advancing professional skill development for individuals working with youth, as well as youth and families through education, training, and engagement.

Public Policy Details

Expertise and Access

A. The Partnership supports legislative and administrative requirements that are developed within the context of the regulatory and legislative process, and which include the input of the field experts (NPJS and stakeholders) who must implement them.

Cultural Competence

B. The Partnership supports legislative remedies that ensure access to funding for behavioral and physical health care services for justice-involved youth.

C. The Partnership supports efforts to maintain access to services and programs that can address the needs of youth across the continuum of care, from the least restrictive in-home to secure, based upon the identified risk and needs of youth.

D. The Partnership supports efforts to increase community-based programs that engage those support systems youth rely on and need to become independent and productive citizens. These services should be available from initial system involvement through successful transition out of the system.

E. The Partnership supports efforts to place youth in developmentally appropriate settings designed to meet their individualized needs. The Partnership promotes corrective interventions that recognize, respect, and preserve the individuality and dignity of each youth.

F. While ensuring the safety of society at large remains a duty and an important priority, the Partnership supports placements out of a youth's home or community only when necessary and for the length of time required to assure community safety.

G. The Partnership supports initiatives that improve connections between families and local resources.

H. The Partnership supports efforts to address the broader ecological factors that contribute to juvenile crime, including but not limited to socioeconomic inequality, implicit racism, and historical trauma.

I. The Partnership supports Federal requirements that maintain separation of juveniles from adults.

J. The Partnership supports funding and continued efforts to decrease disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system and ensure equal access to culturally appropriate interventions for youth of color.

K. The Partnership supports the creation and implementation of policies and programs that prevent or reduce threats of physical, emotional, and psychological harm to youth in the facilities and community-based programs.

L. The Partnership promotes utilization of evidence-informed “Best Interest Determinations” when making placement decisions. These standards should include considerations of competency, risk, needs and availability of programs/services that match the youth’s identified risk and needs.

Evidence-Informed Practice

M. The Partnership supports long-term funding solutions for services targeting justice-involved youth that incentivize the use of evidence-informed practices. Specifically, the Partnership opposes juvenile justice legislation that shifts greater responsibility to local governments providing adequate funding support.

N. The Partnership supports efforts to create and maintain data that informs quality assurance systems that then guide operational and policy decision-making.

O. The Partnership supports innovative initiatives that depart from conventional practices, provided they are backed by significant scientific research and aim to improve outcomes and reduce recidivism, or are part of a practice-based, evidence-informed program.

Workforce and Youth Development

P. The Partnership supports the development and ongoing delivery of training programs that promote a comprehensive approach encompassing organizational leadership, operational oversight, and front-line staff skills to address the multiple and complex needs of justice-involved youth.

Q. The Partnership supports educational programming for youth as a critical component of comprehensive rehabilitative juvenile justice systems. This standard includes year-round academic engagement and pro-social development programming for justice-involved youth.

R. The Partnership supports funding and technical assistance to access for juvenile justice service providers, improving their ability to provide an approach that balances the needs for community protection, competency development, and victim restoration for justice-involved youth.

S. The Partnership supports efforts to enhance juvenile justice career opportunities, workforce development, and staff retention.