



# Law Enforcement's Leadership Role in Juvenile Justice Reform

*Actionable Recommendations for Practice & Policy*

July 2014

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*Actionable Recommendations for Practice & Policy*

*July 2014*

IACP National Summit on Law Enforcement  
Leadership in Juvenile Justice  
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We're also appreciative of our panel discussion speakers: former East Palo Alto (CA) Police Department Chief of Police and current Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services Ronald Davis, Milwaukee

(WI) Police Department Chief of Police Edward Flynn, Spokane (WA) Police Department Chief of Police Frank Straub, Sausalito (CA) Police Department Chief of Police Jennifer Tejada, and Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence Executive Director Teny Gross.

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Of critical importance, we thank the participants who attended the symposium and worked so diligently to fashion the recommendations into a cogent action piece for IACP and the profession. Each participant was chosen for his or her work and commitment to this critical topic. Each participant contributed a unique and important perspective. We hope that we have synthesized and conveyed their contributions faithfully and accurately in this report.

In recognition of their efforts, we have acknowledged each summit participant at the end of this report in Appendix II. We also have acknowledged IACP project staff in Appendix III.





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# Preface

**A**n officer encounters a 13-year-old boy during the school day at a local skateboard park and discovers that the boy is chronically truant.

After being reported as a runaway, a 15-year-old girl is in a park with a group of older youth that includes known drug offenders. A police officer on patrol finds her.

A school resource officer breaks up a fight between two 12-year-old middle school boys.

Panicked foster parents call the police when a 16-year-old schizophrenic boy in their care threatens their daughter with a knife.

Police officers are usually the first contact that young people have with the juvenile justice system. And yet in many communities, law enforcement leaders have not been part of the discussion on juvenile justice reform and the development of policies and practices addressing youth. Sometimes it is because they may not see their agency as part of the juvenile justice system. However, it is often because others in the community working with young people—schools, service providers, legal professionals and others—have not embraced their involvement. The National Summit on Law Enforcement Leadership in Juvenile Justice was designed as a way to bridge that divide.

The need for juvenile justice reform is gaining widespread visibility as increased attention is directed at the high costs and low efficacy of youth incarceration and the ways public safety can be maintained while addressing youth in developmentally appropriate ways. With more than 70,000 youth confined on any given day in juvenile detention facilities and other residential

placements across the United States<sup>1</sup>—more than in any other developed nation—the treatment of juvenile offenders has attracted significant policy, research, and fiscal scrutiny and ultimately the concern of lawmakers and politicians.

When economists examined the juvenile court system in Chicago, for example, they found that incarcerating a young person not only reduces the chance of that individual earning a high school diploma (and thereby reduces their future individual success and economic value to society), it also increases the likelihood that person will commit more crimes.<sup>2</sup> The economists concluded that the \$6 billion the United States currently spends on juvenile corrections each year and the average cost of about \$88,000 for a youth's 12-month stay in corrections could be much better spent on strategies that maintain public safety but are both cheaper and better for the young person.<sup>3</sup> For example, day and evening reporting centers can be an effective alternative to incarceration for many non-violent offenders.

The need for juvenile justice reform has become an issue that many policymakers across the political spectrum can agree on and that mainstream media outlets

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2013). *Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2010*. <http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/241060.pdf>. This figure does not include youth held in federal facilities and adult prisons and jails. It also excludes those housed in facilities that are exclusively for drug or mental health treatment of for abused and neglected children.

<sup>2</sup> Aizer, A. & Doyle, J. (2013). *Juvenile Incarceration, Human Capital and Future Crime: Evidence from Randomly Assigned Judges*. [www.nber.org/papers/w19102](http://www.nber.org/papers/w19102).

<sup>3</sup> Aizer & Doyle. (2013)., citing Mendel, Richard A., The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2011). *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*. <http://www.aecf.org/OurWork/JuvenileJustice/JuvenileJusticeReport.aspx>.

champion. Now that juvenile justice reform efforts have made some significant changes over the course of the past two decades, this is a timely opportunity for those considering strategies and programs for their own community to learn from promising practices that have demonstrated positive outcomes elsewhere.

Identifying research-based tools and techniques for enhancing public safety while holding young people accountable in developmentally appropriate ways has been a central goal of the Models for Change initiative of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. By collaborating with government and court officials, legal advocates, researchers, educators, community leaders, and families, the MacArthur Foundation has advanced the body of knowledge on what works and helped many communities nationwide to implement lasting reforms to the way they treat young people who have committed crimes. Underlying these efforts is the belief that creating a more fair and effective juvenile justice system can ensure that all youth can grow up to be healthy, productive members of society.

Building on a two-year collaboration between the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the MacArthur Foundation, the National Summit on Law Enforcement Leadership in Juvenile Justice aimed to engage law enforcement leaders more fully in the ongoing conversation about what works and the effort to improve the juvenile justice system. The goal was to develop recommendations for practices and policies that advance a more constructive role for law enforcement when engaging with young people.

Aiming to increase the capacity of law enforcement to address juvenile victimization, delinquency and crime, the IACP has been working on juvenile justice reform for more than 15 years in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The IACP offers training, technical assistance, publications, and resources for law enforcement on topics such as youth interviewing and interrogation techniques, school safety and security, youth-focused policing, law enforcement responses to adolescent girls, cyberbullying and children exposed to violence. In these training and technical assistance tools and resources, the IACP incorporates strategies that are both developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed into law enforcement's roles related to youth, to increase cooperation and decrease the probability of

victimization, arrest, incarceration and recidivism while ensuring public safety.

Developing appropriate responses to youth can be difficult and sometimes run counter to organizational culture and officer training. Without leadership at the executive level, these misconceptions will be hard to eliminate. And yet there are numerous law enforcement agencies across the country that have already implemented the kinds of far-reaching reforms called for in this report, in close collaboration with partners in their communities. The IACP, with support from the MacArthur Foundation, seeks to empower other law enforcement leaders and their agencies nationwide to learn from and build on these successes.

# Erica's Story: How the Continued Interest of a Patrol Officer and a Caseworker Turned One Young Person's Life Around

*Erica Garcia, an Intensive Case Manager at Identity, Inc. offering programs supporting Latino youth and their families in Gaithersburg, Maryland, was the keynote speaker.*

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Erica Garcia's childhood was inseparable from poverty, violence, and drugs. They were at her doorstep, on her playgrounds, and in her home.

The third of four children born to a single, poor mother from El Salvador, Erica was raised in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of Washington, D.C. At that time in the 1990s, it was one of the toughest neighborhoods in the capital with crack on the streets and the murder-rate rising. She became immune to police sirens wailing and the shuffle of drug dealing.

With her mother working two jobs to make ends meet, "I did not get close supervision," Erica told the assembled audience during her powerful keynote speech at the IACP's national summit on juvenile justice.

By age 12, she had followed her older siblings' lead and ran away from home. Not long after that, she became involved with gangs, drugs, and other illegal activities. By 15, she was pregnant and had dropped out of school.

"I dated a gang leader who ended up getting killed by a rival gang," she said, adding that she was involved with many things that could have resulted in jail time. "Luckily, I was blessed to have a second chance to turn my life around."

Her first interaction with the police was not a positive one, she said. She was a run-away, and the officers wanted her to go home. But the officer who made that first contact, Officer Andres Marcucci of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C., ultimately became a defining influence in her life.

"Anytime he would see me in the streets, he would engage with me in a positive manner and always encouraged me to change my life around," she said. "He would always give me good advice, and I was never afraid to talk to him."

One of the things Erica most admired about Officer Marcucci was his presence in her community. "If there was a festival or other community event, he was there engaging with all the youth," she said.

Another profound effect on Erica's life path was the mentorship of Luis Cardona, who was doing gang-intervention work with Barrios Unidos when she met him. "I had no plan in changing my lifestyle," But he was, "another positive person who always encouraged me to be better," she said. By getting her involved in church, youth summits and conventions, Luis Cardona—who is a former gang member and ex-offender and is now the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator for Montgomery County, Maryland—helped her develop a new perspective on her life.

"Luis Cardona and Officer Marcucci were the few people who always believed in me even when my own family and friends did not believe in me," Erica said. "They encouraged me to believe in myself. I would like to thank both of them from the bottom of my heart for taking the time out to make a difference in my life."

Erica has gone on to earn her GED as well as a Bachelor's in Science from the University of Maryland. She is now applying to law school. She is raising her daughter, now 14. Additionally, Erica has taken on the role of mother to a younger brother with special needs, also 14.

The IACP is indebted to Erica Garcia for sharing her personal story with participants at the summit. There is, sadly, an abundance of cautionary tales about young people who did not get the second chance that Erica did to live up to their potential. Hearing how a police officer and a mentor helped to change one young life is inspiring and moving.

"You never know if you are that one person that will touch the life of that youth," Erica told participants at the summit. "I hope to make an impact on young people's lives just like Luis and Officer Marcucci did for me. That is my mission. It worked for me and those relationships are ones that I will always treasure."



# Executive Summary

There are many opportunities and a continued need for law enforcement to engage in a multi-dimensional, proactive approach to young people. The National Summit on Law Enforcement Leadership in Juvenile Justice was designed to support law enforcement agencies nationwide in becoming more effective leaders in juvenile justice reform. Bringing together a diverse group of 90 law enforcement executives and other juvenile justice system stakeholders, the International Association of Chiefs of Police convened the summit in Arlington, Virginia in September 2013 with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The multidisciplinary summit had two primary goals:

- To support law enforcement executives in developing the tools and understanding they need to make preventing and addressing juvenile crime a priority in their agencies while working with youth in effective and developmentally appropriate ways.
- To enable law enforcement leaders to take a more active role as change agents in their communities, working in collaboration with partners to bring their perspectives to policymakers at the local, state, and national levels.

Summit participants met for a day and a half to discuss how best to advance these priorities. The deliberations centered on the need for law enforcement to be “smart on crime” and keep communities safe by effectively addressing both the smaller proportion of youth who commit the most serious offenses, or are at highest risk of reoffending, and those youth who commit relatively minor offenses or might only rarely come into contact with the justice system. The summit participants developed the 33 recommendations, grouped into eight topic areas, that are outlined in this report for practices and policies that advance a more constructive

role for law enforcement when engaging with a broad range of juvenile offenders and at-risk youth.

## Preparing for the Summit: National Survey of Law Enforcement Leaders

An IACP survey conducted prior to the summit in Spring 2013, “Law Enforcement’s Leadership Role in the Advancement of Promising Practices in Juvenile Justice,”<sup>4</sup> revealed key insights into law enforcement’s role in juvenile justice reform that informed the summit deliberations. Law enforcement executives across the country were invited to take part in the survey detailing their experience with, beliefs in, and expectations for juvenile justice. The results reinforced the need for the summit and continued attention and resources focused on youth.

The survey was completed by 978 law enforcement executives nationwide. Their responses gave clear support for the goals and assumptions that underlie juvenile justice reform—that youth are different than adults and that public safety and the needs of individual youth are best served through approaches that recognize those differences.

But it was evident from the survey that law enforcement executives are not always sure how to implement these concepts, with whom to partner, and what their leadership role would look like.

While resources for juvenile offenders and at-risk youth exist within 85% of the respondents’ communities,

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<sup>4</sup> International Association of Chiefs of Police. (Sept. 2013). *Law Enforcement’s Leadership Role in the Advancement of Promising Practices in Juvenile Justice: Executive Officer Survey Findings*. <http://www.theiacp.org/Portals/0/documents/pdfs/IACPJJExecutiveOfficerSurveyFindings.pdf>.

only about a third of law executives find them to be effective. Why is that?

Although 79% of law enforcement executives agreed they should be heavily involved in their community's juvenile justice system, only one in five executives said they play a significant role. How can they contribute more?

While a large majority, 88%, of police executives believe there should be a separate justice system for juveniles, only 23% believe their local juvenile justice system improves safety. What makes them doubt their system?

Participants at the summit explored these questions and many others.

## Summit Participants

The diverse group of participants included mental health professionals, juvenile administrators, probation officials, researchers, and executives of juvenile justice advocacy organizations. Law enforcement executives were well represented as well as those at other levels of the police department chain of command, from patrol officers to commanders, community outreach officers to investigators. Juvenile defenders were in working groups with juvenile prosecutors as well as judges. Elected officials' experience was given the same weight as those who had been through the juvenile justice system themselves, as parents and offenders. And, because the voices of young people are often unheard, two teenagers from the Frost School in Maryland (which serves youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities and related special needs) participated as well.

## Summit Deliberations & Recommendations

Each summit participant was assigned to one of five multidisciplinary working groups tasked with developing recommendations for policies and practices to expand and improve the leadership role of law enforcement in juvenile justice reform:

- Leading Our Law Enforcement Agencies
- Youth & Family Engagement by Law Enforcement
- Police Leadership & Collaboration in the Community

- School Completion—Reducing Delinquent Behavior & Arrests
- Youth with Trauma Histories & Behavioral Health Conditions

This report sets forth 33 recommendations developed through the working group conversations and debate. Underlying many of the recommendations is the need to advance public safety by holding young people accountable while prioritizing rehabilitation over punishment. Another theme that was echoed throughout the deliberations was the need to address ongoing racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. The summit recommendations are divided into the following eight topic areas:

- (1) Making Juvenile Justice a Priority within Law Enforcement Agencies
- (2) Building Partnerships among Law Enforcement, Youth & Their Families
- (3) Collaboration & Information Sharing
- (4) Promoting Alternatives to Arrest, Court Referral & Detention
- (5) Expanding Data Collection & Promising Initiatives
- (6) Pathways to School Completion
- (7) Responding to Youth with Behavioral Health Conditions & Trauma Histories
- (8) Amplifying Law Enforcement's Advocacy on Juvenile Justice Reform

The report also provides highlights from the summit deliberations, outlining barriers to juvenile justice reform that law enforcement leaders and their agencies confront—as well as creative solutions for overcoming these obstacles. The report profiles successes in communities nationwide that were represented at the summit, detailing a range of ways that law enforcement agencies and their community partners have collaborated to improve their response to young people.

## Implementing the Summit Recommendations

When IACP provides technical assistance to law enforcement agencies across the country, agency executives typically ask three questions about any

recommended reform: (1) How much will it cost? (2) How many officers will it require? and (3) How long will it take to implement?

Throughout the summit, participants from across the juvenile justice community emphasized that reforming law enforcement leadership in this area is not about developing expensive new youth-focused programs, nor about creating or expanding police department juvenile units. Implementing many of the recommendations contained in this report would not necessitate substantial new spending or hiring additional officers. But the recommendations do call for a strong and long-lasting commitment from law enforcement leaders to implement fundamental, agency-wide changes in terms of how their officers view and respond to young people. Changing agency culture begins with clear communications from agency executives that implementing effective and developmentally appropriate responses to young people is a priority.

Many of the summit recommendations speak to the need for more effective collaboration and alignment of resources across the juvenile justice system. Law enforcement leaders clearly do not bear the sole responsibility for mobilizing that collaboration and fixing systemic defects that persist in numerous jurisdictions' juvenile justice systems. And yet many of the successes profiled in this report make clear that law enforcement leaders can have a tremendous influence over public perceptions and community priorities on public safety issues. By working with schools, social service agencies, political leaders, courts, families and others, law enforcement agencies across the country are already effecting wide-ranging reforms in their communities. Law enforcement leaders bring a credible voice to the need for more effective strategies and coordination across a number of sectors to prevent and address juvenile crime.

Some of the recommendations in this report – such as the expansion of training to enable law enforcement officers to respond more effectively to young people – clearly would necessitate redirecting or increasing the investment of resources by many agencies. Given the tough budgetary realities facing law enforcement agencies nationwide, IACP recognizes that any new investments are extremely challenging. Many of the law enforcement representatives at the summit acknowledged the difficulties inherent in expanding or creating new initiatives, but they also emphasized that

these investments pay back over the medium- and long-term. Numerous agencies that have undertaken the difficult task of improving their officers' understanding and response to young people, as well as collaborations with community partners have reported gradual but significant reductions in juvenile offending and reoffending.

The IACP and MacArthur Foundation hope the recommendations from the National Summit on Law Enforcement Leadership in Juvenile Justice will help to raise awareness among law enforcement leaders regarding avenues for exercising more effective leadership on juvenile justice within their agencies and beyond. We hope the summit will also empower a broad range of juvenile justice stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels to better support and collaborate with law enforcement to improve outcomes for young people, families, and communities.







# Summit Overview

It was through daily police work of an officer in Washington, D.C. and the dedication of a diversion program manager that Erica Garcia was encouraged to reclaim her life, as she recounted to summit participants (See “Erica’s Story”). And while Erica is able to tell of her good fortune, too many young voices are not. They are young people who did not have an officer who regularly asked after them, whose attention deficit hyperactivity disorder combined with substance abuse was not recognized and referred to treatment, or whose local park was not reclaimed by law enforcement for youth but rather was left to gangs and guns. Those lives turned out differently. Those young people are why this IACP juvenile justice summit and the recommended actions are needed—so that fewer voices are lost and more are, like Erica’s, regained.

At the summit opening, a wide array of experienced and thoughtful project partners elaborated on the goals and mission of the gathering, laying out the challenges law enforcement leaders face and their tremendous capacity to advance meaningful reforms. After welcoming remarks from IACP Executive Director Bart Johnson, the participants heard from then-IACP President Chief Craig Steckler<sup>5</sup> of Fremont, California. “Law enforcement has not always been seen as a group to invite to the table when high-level policy issues are being discussed,” said Chief Steckler, “and that’s the historic mistake that we’re here to fix today.” Chief Steckler called on the summit participants to “work across all disciplines to keep good kids good, help troubled kids get better, and see to it that young offenders’ experience in the juvenile justice system puts them on a road back to being productive citizens.”

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<sup>5</sup> IACP President, 2012-13; retired from the Fremont Police Department in 2013.

Laurie Garduque, Director of Justice Reform at the MacArthur Foundation, which supported the IACP in convening the summit, spoke on the Foundation’s progress in changing the juvenile justice system through its ambitious Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice initiative, part of a 17-year commitment to juvenile justice. The initiative found through research that the justice system’s “tough on crime,” “one-size-fits-all” approach to young offenders, which was predominant in the 1990s, was not living up to the promise of increased public safety. Studies funded by the MacArthur Foundation have confirmed that there are significant differences in the brain development of adolescents that affect their ability to make sound judgments. “Kids are not adults,” Ms. Garduque said. “By treating them accordingly and holding them accountable in developmentally appropriate ways we can reduce the harm and risk they pose to themselves and others.”

“The future of juvenile justice reform is collaboration,” said Robert L. Listenbee, Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice, adding that his office will be looking carefully at the outcomes of this summit to see how law enforcement leaders can take a broader role in implementing reforms. Administrator Listenbee celebrated nationwide trends in reducing juvenile offenders’ incarceration, while remarking that substantial racial and ethnic disparities persist in rates of incarceration and other measures. He highlighted three research-based issues that are critical launching points for the summit:

- **Procedural Justice:** There should be fairness and the perception of fairness in the way the juvenile justice system and law enforcement officers engage with youth. Research has shown that young people comply with and accept the

decisions of legal authorities in their communities to a greater degree when they are treated with respect.

- **Implicit Bias:** Research has revealed new insights into the degree to which we are all susceptible to subconscious mental associations, particularly relating to race, gender and class.
- **Reconciliation and Truth Telling:** Many of today's active police officers were born after the civil rights movement, but some people in their communities may be living with pre-civil-rights memories and very real modern-day experiences that are reminiscent of those difficult times.

## Leading by Example

During a facilitated discussion, four police chiefs provided participants with their impressions of the juvenile justice system, successes and the challenges they have faced in dealing with youth in their communities and in collaborating with other juvenile justice system stakeholders, and experiences that have shaped the way they lead their departments with respect to juvenile crime. The panel was moderated by Teny Gross, Executive Director of the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence who has a long-standing successful relationship with the Providence, Rhode Island, Police Department. Mr. Gross shared that as a young man growing up in Israel, he served in the Israel Defense Forces. He told the summit participants that, "We had a better chance of coming out alive from Lebanon than a young black man does coming out of many of America's major cities." Mr. Gross has dedicated his life to reducing gang or group-related violence and working with both victims and perpetrators of violent crime.

Representing communities as diverse as Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Chief Edward Flynn); Sausalito, California (Chief Jennifer Tejada); Spokane, Washington (Chief Frank Straub); and East Palo Alto, California (Chief Ronald Davis), the candid panel discussion highlighted themes that would resurface throughout the summit.

### *Occupying Public Spaces*

East Palo Alto, California, with about 30,000 people was the per capita murder capital of the United States

in the 1990s according to Chief Ronald Davis,<sup>6</sup> with 42 murders in 1992. Since then violent crime has dropped considerably, with four homicides in 2010, eight in 2011 and seven in 2012, and comparable declines in other crimes. But the community, which is 65% Latino, has a high proportion of young people and there are neighborhoods that produce 1,400 to 1,500 calls for service a year.

"What is the impact on a young person hearing gunshots 24 hours a day?" Chief Davis asked. "How can you become a scholar when you can barely go to sleep because of the gunfire?"

With a philosophy that, "the greatest deterrent to crime is not a neighborhood saturated with cops, it is a neighborhood alive with residents," Chief Davis tried something that he admitted sounded "a little corny," but worked: Zumba. And bike rides. And family fairs. Together with public health partners, the police department invited residents into an area they hadn't been for a while: their local park. By occupying the parks in combination with active residents and an increased focus on community policing, shootings in those locations dropped by 60%.

### *Balancing Needs of a Few Serious Offenders and a Lot of At-Risk Youth*

"In Milwaukee over the past 20 months, we made 3,300 juvenile arrests, and 8% of the individuals we arrested had four or more arrests," Chief Edward Flynn said. "These 251 individuals accounted for 23% of all juvenile arrests."

Most offenders grow out of it, said Flynn, but a small group of serious offenders are hard to reach. But for both at-risk youth and repeat offenders, "It appears that society has delegated first response duties of social work, mental health, and substance abuse issues to the juvenile justice system."

Chief Flynn said his department decided to fill a void in programming for at-risk youth with leadership potential. Young people meet directly with the police in their neighborhoods as part of a program the department began in 2011 called Students Talking it Over with Police (STOP), for which the department was awarded

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<sup>6</sup> Chief Ronald Davis stepped down as Chief of the East Palo Alto Police Department in November 2013 upon his appointment as Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) of the U.S. Department of Justice.

the IACP Excellence in Law Enforcement Research Award. “Young people are exposed to us one way or another,” said Chief Flynn. “We explain our authority and procedures directly to them and we have found an improvement in the way we engage with youth and their reaction to us.”

On the other end of the spectrum, the repeat offenders list could be narrowed down to 81 young people still qualifying as “juveniles.” At the annual Milwaukee Mayor’s Ceasefire Sabbath,<sup>7</sup> a gathering of clergy that Chief Flynn attends each year, he decided he had heard enough platitudes. “I have these 81 guys,” he told the group of clergy, “and they get locked up four times in eight months because the system can’t help them. They need a body on them. Can you meet with them?” And to his surprise, they did: the clergy agreed to mentor the individuals one on one.

### ***Connecting with the Community***

When Chief Frank Straub arrived in Spokane, Washington as the new police chief in 2012, he found something that was very disconcerting to him: “Young people wandering the streets—they were black, white, Latino, Asian—and they had no connection to anything.”

He realized that despite efforts to reach out to them, there was a cohort of young people who remained outside of the reach of community services and disconnected from society. “We have to stop incarcerating our young people, but we also have to figure out how to get them to engage in their communities.”

In the summer of 2013, he introduced the Youth Police Initiative in Spokane, which places off-duty police officers in the lives of at-risk youth as basketball coaches, community service advocates, and personal mentors. “It breaks through the stereotypes so that they don’t just see police as blues, and we don’t just see them as baggy jeans,” he said. “It builds community.”

Chief Straub said that the organizational culture of police departments is changing. “We are social service providers,” he said. “Sure, there needs to be enforcement for the worst offenders—get them off the

street. But most of the effort is in building collaborations among social service organizations and moving on with legitimate policing, procedural justice and respect.”

### ***Doing More With Less***

Sausalito, California, located on the northern side of the Golden Gate Bridge in the San Francisco Bay Area is 90% white and has a very small juvenile population. Still, Chief Jennifer Tejada was surprised when she learned, upon arriving there, that there was little or no police interaction with the kids from a neighboring jurisdiction who attend school in Sausalito.

The argument for the community’s disengagement was that the kids didn’t live in her town. But that didn’t pass muster with her. Chief Tejada went to the school and asked them about their needs. “They didn’t have anyone to teach character education,” she said. “So I did it.” By setting the standard, she demonstrated through leadership the difference a little effort can make. She followed that by creating a program called “Recess Patrol” and asked each officer on duty to go by the school during recess if they don’t have a call for service. “They play basketball. They chat. And the kids feel like they can trust us and they aren’t just seeing us when we are arresting someone.”

## **Working Groups**

At the conclusion of the panel of police chiefs, participants were ready to jump into their job of developing recommendations for law enforcement practices and policies. Each of the summit attendees was assigned to one of five multidisciplinary working groups. Facilitators guided each group, and participants were asked to consider the following questions:

- What do law enforcement leaders and their agencies need in order to better address the issue?
- What can their partners at the local, state, and national level do to best support them in this work?
- What policies, forms of collaboration, educational resources, funding, and other types of support are most needed?

<sup>7</sup> During the annual Mayor’s Ceasefire Sabbath, clergy and faith-based leaders are encouraged to promote a common message of peace and non-violence during their services. See <http://city.milwaukee.gov/Directory/mayor/Initiatives/Ceasefire-Sabbath.htm#.U49p3HbD-70>.

Throughout their deliberations, participants in each of the following five groups chronicled challenges, debated the efficacy of various strategies, and shared success stories:

### ***Leading Our Law Enforcement Agencies***

This group was asked to think about ways law enforcement agencies could institutionalize more developmentally appropriate, effective responses to young people—specifically looking in-depth at leadership activities, agency protocols, training initiatives, and other steps that can be taken to accomplish this aim.

### ***Youth & Family Engagement by Law Enforcement***

This group was asked to explore ways that law enforcement agencies can more effectively engage with families and other individuals in a young person's network of support. They looked at the broad range of ways that encounters with police can be opportunities for positive youth development as well as ways agencies can institutionalize youth-focused community policing strategies into their day-to-day operations.

### ***Police Leadership & Collaboration in the Community***

This group was asked to look at overarching strategies for law enforcement executives to exercise a stronger voice in local, state, and national policy decisions and more constructive practices for information sharing and collaboration with local partners.

### ***School Completion – Reducing Delinquent Behavior & Arrests***

This group was asked to look at how best to promote effective roles for school resource officers (SROs) in the communities that choose to place officers within schools and to also address the numerous other ways that law enforcement executives and their agencies can play a leadership role on school discipline, truancy, and dropout.

### ***Youth with Trauma Histories & Behavioral Health Conditions***

This group was asked to consider the numerous youth who come into contact with law enforcement who have serious mental health conditions, substance abuse problems, developmental disabilities, or trauma histories and to look at ways that law enforcement can more effectively handle youth with these conditions or backgrounds. Specifically, what steps can law enforcement agencies take beginning with the first point of contact with youth who are alleged to have committed a crime and those who are at high risk for offending?

# Recommendations for Practice & Policy

The summit participants identified concrete steps that law enforcement executives can take to elevate the priority of preventing and addressing juvenile crime, to respond to youth in more effective and developmentally appropriate ways, and to take a more active role as change agents in their communities. This report sets forth 33 recommendations for policy and practice—as well as elaborates on the challenges that law enforcement agencies and their partners face and opportunities for collaboration to overcome barriers to reform.

The deliberations of each of the multidisciplinary working groups at the summit cut across multiple aspects of juvenile justice reform. Their discussions and recommendations centered on the following eight themes:

- (1) Making Juvenile Justice a Priority within Law Enforcement Agencies
- (2) Building Partnerships among Law Enforcement, Youth & Their Families
- (3) Collaboration & Information Sharing
- (4) Promoting Alternatives to Arrest, Court Referral & Detention
- (5) Expanding Data Collection & Promising Initiatives
- (6) Pathways to School Completion
- (7) Responding to Youth with Behavioral Health Conditions & Trauma Histories
- (8) Amplifying Law Enforcement's Advocacy on Juvenile Justice Reform

As the discussions described later in this report make clear, law enforcement agencies and their communities need support from partners at the national and state levels to overcome challenges and put the summit recommendations into effect.

## (1) Making Juvenile Justice a Priority within Law Enforcement Agencies

### *Overarching Principles Identified by Summit Participants*

**Direction from the top:** In order to effectively implement change, agency executives should make clear that developing balanced and effective responses to young people is a priority for their agency and communicate the belief that it is impossible to arrest your way out of the problem of juvenile crime.

**Law enforcement's leadership role:** Summit participants emphasized that law enforcement is not solely responsible for correcting the defects of the juvenile justice system but are one part of a complex system—and yet many law enforcement executives and their agencies have untapped potential to reform their own practices and to exercise leadership in their communities to advocate the development of more effective responses across a range of systems.

**Comprehensive solutions:** Rather than advocating for the expansion of specific programs geared to young people, summit participants emphasized the need for many agencies to undertake fundamental changes in their philosophy and practice. Specifically, participants called on agencies to more fully implement the principles of community policing across their operations and to institutionalize effective responses to youth that prioritize rehabilitation and are built on a recognition of the important differences between youth and adults.

**Agency culture:** There is often a need for multiple strategies in order to influence agency culture—particularly instilling in officers at every level the concept that youth should be viewed and treated

differently than adults. Additionally, it is important to build a police force that reflects the racial and ethnic composition of the communities it serves.

**Sustaining progress:** Proactive reforms initiated by agency executives can be difficult to sustain through leadership transitions, funding changes, and backlash from political leaders and community members following high-profile crime incidents. The slow work of changing agency culture and priorities—paired with actions to formalize reforms through agency protocols and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with community partners—can help to insulate reforms from being eroded.

## **Recommendations**

**1A.** Law enforcement leaders should identify and institutionalize juvenile justice as a priority within their agency by:

- increasing training;
- developing response protocols including effective techniques for interacting with at-risk youth and alleged offenders and processes for service referrals and diversion; and
- promoting collaboration with families, neighborhoods, other youth-serving agencies, and community-based service providers.

**1B.** Law enforcement leaders should incorporate the value placed on juvenile justice work into incentive rewards, performance evaluations and commendations.

**1C.** Law enforcement leaders should formalize systems for addressing youth via internal agency policies and memoranda of understanding with partners, in order to document priorities and practices and ensure their carry-over through staff transitions.

**1D.** IACP and peer organizations should support law enforcement leaders in implementing juvenile justice practices that are developmentally appropriate and cost-effective and that promote public safety by:

- developing model policies and best practices guidelines;

- providing training on the need for juvenile justice reform, effective practices, and reform strategies; and
- distributing information and resources through a juvenile justice email discussion list to help participants and alumni of juvenile justice training sessions and IACP members stay current and share ideas.

**1E.** IACP should work with law enforcement agencies and other partners to hold additional national and regional dialogues regarding juvenile justice reform that would include participation from officers at various levels, in order to engage emerging leaders and line officers in the effort to transform agency practice and promote institutional memory.

## **(2) Building Partnerships among Law Enforcement, Youth & Their Families**

### ***Overarching Principles Identified by Summit Participants***

**Building trust:** In some communities there is a legacy of mistrust which presents barriers to collaboration among law enforcement, youth, and their families. Empowering officers to effectively de-escalate conflicts, and fostering opportunities for officers, youth, and families to interact in non-enforcement capacities are among the strategies that can help build understanding and trust.

**Training:** Increasingly law enforcement agencies around the country are providing training to their officers to help them understand and respond appropriately to the ways youth differ from adults—and the ways youth often differ from one another depending on their cultural background. Yet in numerous jurisdictions, officers still receive little or no training beyond juvenile code provisions and other legal considerations regarding the handling of youth.

**Empowering families:** Parents and other family members often feel powerless in the juvenile justice system because they do not understand how the system works and find it difficult to advocate for their children.



**Revitalizing communities:** The most effective public safety strategies achieve a balance between enforcing the law when a crisis occurs and undertaking proactive steps to build strong communities. Law enforcement and the youth and families most affected by crime can be vital partners in community development and revitalization efforts.

### **Recommendations**

- 2A.** Law enforcement officers should capitalize on opportunities to interact directly in non-crisis situations with youth and families—to inform them of officers’ authorities and procedures; build trust; reinforce the police department’s role as a positive, vital part of the community; and improve officers’ understanding of youth and their families.
- 2B.** Expand officers’ capacity to effectively respond to youth by offering cohesive training programs that enable officers to understand adolescent development; cultural differences among youth; mental health and trauma issues; and effective strategies for youth engagement, intervention and crisis response.
- 2C.** Educate families and law enforcement officers on how the juvenile justice system works, roles and responsibilities of entities at each stage of the system, how to involve families in a meaningful way, and the rights of youth and their families.
  - Juvenile courts, juvenile services departments, law enforcement agencies, and other youth-serving agencies should work together to develop juvenile justice system navigation guides for youth and families and to make these resources widely available.
- 2D.** Promote youth accountability, public safety, and improved understanding among juvenile offenders, victims, families, law enforcement, and other community members by implementing varied response systems that support communication and relationship building among these groups.
  - Expand avenues where appropriate for referrals in juvenile cases to mediation and other restorative justice processes, including diversion of youth by law enforcement agencies, juvenile courts, and other juvenile justice system partners.
- 2E.** Law enforcement leaders should assess ways that agency-wide policies and protocols can integrate principles of youth and family engagement; build trust and foster positive interactions among the populations they serve; and institutionalize effective, developmentally appropriate responses to youth.
- 2F.** Recognizing that past abuses by people in positions of authority and ongoing structural inequities have fueled a legacy of mistrust toward law enforcement in some communities, agency leaders should assess ways their policies and practices could be strengthened to better safeguard against racial and ethnic disparities.
- 2G.** Law enforcement agencies should be included as key partners in community improvement and revitalization efforts, in close partnership with other local government entities and community members.

## **(3) Collaboration & Information Sharing**

### ***Overarching Principles Identified by Summit Participants***

**Siloed decision making:** Across the juvenile justice system, decisions are often made in a silo, with various parts of the system rarely sharing information and collaborating to reach decisions and coordinate resources.

**Law enforcement left out:** Law enforcement is often unrepresented in efforts at multiagency and community collaboration on juvenile justice – whether because police leaders have not seen themselves as having a role in broader juvenile justice issues, or because other juvenile justice system partners have not invited them to the table. There are tremendous untapped opportunities for law enforcement leaders to leverage their understanding and credibility on public safety issues.

**Dispelling misperceptions:** Misperceptions that most law enforcement officers want to put youth behind bars often present a barrier to information sharing and effective collaboration. When law enforcement agencies and other juvenile justice system entities work together, it is clear they share a common mission.

### **Institutionalizing collaboration:**

Formalizing partnerships across the juvenile justice system can help to assure that reforms are sustained even when there are changes in leadership.

### **Recommendations**

- 3A.** Law enforcement leaders should establish or join an existing interagency juvenile justice council. Such groups can have numerous functions including sharing information about programs available for at-risk and system-involved youth, sharing data on crime statistics and the effectiveness of initiatives, assessing needs for data collection and youth-oriented programs and services, brainstorming about responses to challenges, reaching agreement about shared policies and priorities, improving communication and understanding among partners, and identifying opportunities to coordinate resources.
- 3B.** Communities should establish an interagency Juvenile Justice Coordinator position to convene interagency meetings and facilitate data collection, community needs assessments, and resource coordination to minimize duplication and maximize program effectiveness, and other functions.
- 3C.** Community partners should develop memoranda of understanding to articulate shared priorities, formalize collaborations on juvenile justice issues, and ensure continuity in case of leadership changes within law enforcement and partner agencies.
- 3D.** Law enforcement and partners including the judiciary, schools, youth services agencies and others should assess opportunities to share more information while maintaining confidentiality protections in order to:
  - enable law enforcement to make more informed decisions on referrals and diversion of youth;
  - enable community partners and political leaders to understand and assess crime trends and law enforcement response; and
  - facilitate improved coordination of resources to support youths' needs.

- 3E.** Training programs, webinars, best practices guides, and other resources for law enforcement should be developed on information sharing, collaboration, and key stakeholder development.

## **(4) Promoting Alternatives to Arrest, Court Referral & Detention**

### ***Overarching Principles Identified by Summit Participants***

**Ineffective strategies:** Large numbers of youth are arrested, referred to juvenile court, and detained for minor offenses—even as a growing body of evidence suggests these practices fuel recidivism rather than reducing the likelihood that youth reoffend.

**Lack of alternatives:** In some communities, law enforcement officers have few options for responding to youth in crisis and have to make a decision between arresting a young person and doing nothing. Law enforcement leaders can be powerful advocates for the development of effective services for youth and families focused on addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior.

**Need for referral and assessment systems:** Even in communities where resources such as community-based diversion programs are available, law enforcement officers are sometimes unfamiliar with these resources or there are no systems in place to support officers in making assessments and subsequent referral decisions.

### **Recommendations**

- 4A.** Law enforcement agencies should promote alternatives to formal processing where appropriate by:
  - developing protocols for employing options for diversion and citation in lieu of arrest;
  - utilizing standardized, objective decision-making tools that enable evidence-based risk assessment for juvenile processing and detention decisions; and

- collecting data on the implementation of programs to evaluate diversion criteria and to ensure that opportunities for diversion are applied in similar ways across races and ethnicities.

**4B.** Law enforcement agencies, other youth-serving agencies, and community partners should work together to quickly and directly address young people’s needs and minimize juvenile justice system involvement as appropriate by developing systems to:

- familiarize law enforcement officers with community resources and diversion opportunities for youth;
- streamline assessment and referral processes;
- share data on the effectiveness, access to, and utilization of programs; and
- identify gaps in services for youth and advocate for systems to address unmet needs.

## (5) Expanding Data Collection & Promising Initiatives

### *Overarching Principles Identified by Summit Participants*

**Maximizing scarce resources:** In an era of stagnant or diminishing resources, law enforcement agencies must measure the effectiveness of initiatives and be strategic in decisions about how they allocate dollars and officers’ time. In addition to guiding decision making, data can help law enforcement leaders to make the case for reforms.

**Balancing innovation and proven strategies:** Summit participants emphasized the benefits of putting into place evidence-based programs but cautioned that relying exclusively on proven initiatives can hinder innovation and make it difficult for diverse law enforcement agencies to implement solutions that are tailored to their needs.

**Leveraging partnerships:** Academic institutions can be vital partners in undertaking research on the effectiveness of law enforcement initiatives. Law enforcement agencies also need support from

partners in academia, government, and the juvenile justice reform community to help them understand how to effectively gather and use data.

### *Recommendations*

**5A.** Law enforcement agencies should strengthen research and data collection practices to:

- inform resource allocations and development of policies and practices to address juveniles and at-risk youth;
- accurately measure any racial and ethnic disparities and develop strategies to address these disparities; and
- increase awareness and build support among elected officials, partner agencies, and the community for effective juvenile justice strategies.

**5B.** Academic institutions and law enforcement agencies should develop partnerships to undertake rigorous evaluation of juvenile-focused initiatives and to increase law enforcement leaders’ understanding of the importance of data collection and ways research can inform agency practice.

**5C.** Law enforcement leaders need education on the collection and use of data. IACP and partner organizations at the national, state, and local levels—with support from federal government and foundation partners—should develop training and resources to facilitate researcher/practitioner partnerships and enable law enforcement agencies to better apply to decisions on arrest, diversion, and other aspects of their operations.

## (6) Pathways to School Completion

### *Overarching Principles Identified by Summit Participants*

**Prioritizing school completion:** Keeping young people connected to school is indispensable to achieve positive outcomes for individual youth and public safety as a whole. Law enforcement leaders have a crucial role to play in close coordination with school administrators, the judiciary, community members and others to craft effective school discipline, safety and truancy strategies that prioritize school completion.

**Need for clear guidance and training:** School resource officers and other police who work closely with schools need training and clear expectations among their agencies and school officials. With proper support, officers can improve school safety, foster understanding of the role of law enforcement and positive relationships between students and police, and coordinate with school personnel to proactively address the needs of troubled students before a crisis occurs. Executives should ensure that law enforcement presence in schools does not contribute to a “school-to-prison pipeline,” and that policies and practices do not lead to disparities based on race or ethnic background.

### ***Recommendations***

**6A.** Keeping young people in school is good for youth, families, and safe and healthy communities. School completion must be a central goal of school safety, discipline, and truancy policies.

- Schools should work closely with law enforcement agencies, families and community partners to develop alternatives to expulsion, suspension and court referral, and effective strategies to overcome truancy that minimize juvenile justice system involvement.
- Law enforcement, together with schools, should develop systems for assessment and early intervention to identify and meet the needs of youth with a recurring pattern of truancy or disciplinary problems.

**6B.** Law enforcement, together with school partners, should:

- clearly establish the roles and expectations of any school resource officers and other law enforcement officers who interface with schools, as part of a comprehensive approach to school discipline;
- work together to communicate roles and expectations and to offer cross-training for law enforcement officers and school officials; and
- develop written collaborative agreements among schools, law enforcement, and

other juvenile justice system partners that clarify shared priorities and delineate each party’s authorities and responsibilities. Key elements of such agreements include clear statements regarding what misbehaviors should be handled by school officials without law enforcement involvement, what offenses generally should or should not lead to arrest, and options for minimizing school exclusion and juvenile justice system involvement.

**6C.** Law enforcement agencies and schools should assess which student behaviors are most frequently leading to arrest within schools, whether school discipline and arrest practices are contributing to racial and ethnic injustice, and what strategies might be warranted to reduce unnecessary arrests and disparities.

**6D.** In jurisdictions that employ school resource officers, their selection, responsibilities, response protocols, training, and performance evaluations should prioritize school completion and the implementation of developmentally appropriate responses to youth that minimize juvenile justice system involvement:

- SRO responsibilities should prioritize a broad range of roles including developing positive relationships with youth, modeling excellence in law enforcement and fostering understanding of police functions and procedures, and coordinating with school officials and others to identify youth and families in need of support and develop strategies to meet their needs.
- SRO positions should be filled mainly with experienced officers who have demonstrated a commitment to youth, and law enforcement agencies should consider including the school administration in the selection of any officers placed in their school.

## (7) Responding to Youth with Behavioral Health Conditions & Trauma Histories

### *Overarching Principles Identified by Summit Participants*

**Prevalent challenges:** A large proportion of the young people who come into contact with law enforcement have mental health conditions, substance abuse problems, developmental disabilities, or trauma histories. These youth present distinct challenges in terms of how they interact with law enforcement and what their needs are. Law enforcement officers need training and protocols to enable them to better understand these issues and respond effectively.

**Connecting youth and families with resources:** Young people and their families are often in need of a wide range of services, and absent these services, criminal justice remedies alone will not be effective. As the first point of contact with many youth and families—long before any social services agency might learn of their needs—law enforcement officers have an opportunity to connect them with needed resources.

### *Recommendations*

**7A.** Law enforcement policies, practices and training should enable officers to respond appropriately to youth with mental health and substance abuse disorders and trauma histories by empowering officers to:

- understand the impact of these disorders and background on youth behavior;
- recognize and interpret the needs of a youth during first contact;
- respond appropriately with the aid of crisis intervention techniques to de-escalate conflicts and maximize the safety of officers, youth, and others; and
- make appropriate referrals to community-based services and minimize justice system involvement whenever possible.

**7B.** Training on youth with trauma histories should include information on:

- the powerful and lasting effects trauma has on young people and their behavior;
- ways that arrest and detention can contribute to youth trauma; and
- the critical role of law enforcement in helping children recover from traumatic experiences by reinforcing safety and security.

**7C.** As the first point of contact with many young people and families, law enforcement agencies have a unique vantage point to recognize unmet needs for behavioral health services and to collaborate with local government agencies and community-based providers to address systemic gaps in services.

## (8) Amplifying Law Enforcement's Advocacy on Juvenile Justice Reform

### *Overarching Principles Identified by Summit Participants*

**Leveraging influence:** Law enforcement leaders have a tremendous opportunity to leverage their credibility on public safety issues to advocate more effective responses to young people across their communities and at the state and national levels.

**Replicating successes:** Law enforcement leaders can learn from one another about effective strategies in other agencies and communities to address juvenile crime.

### *Recommendations*

**8A.** Law enforcement leaders should leverage their credibility on public safety issues and their agencies' unique vantage point as the first point of contact with many youth and families to:

- build awareness among political leaders, agency partners, and community members regarding effective, developmentally appropriate responses to youth crime—and the need to discontinue practices that neither further youth rehabilitation nor improve public safety; and

- identify gaps in resources and advocate for effective systems to meet the needs of youth.

**8B.** Examples of law enforcement leadership in juvenile justice reform should be documented and publicized in film, print, and through online media to increase awareness of successes and promote their replication.o

**8C.** Law enforcement leaders should maximize opportunities to share success stories and lessons learned with their counterparts in other agencies to increase the adoption of effective juvenile justice practices in peer agencies and throughout the law enforcement community.

**8D.** Law enforcement leaders should advocate for juvenile justice reform laws and policy changes at the state and local levels and IACP, together with law enforcement leaders, should advocate for federal juvenile justice reform legislation such as reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In 1974, Congress enacted the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act (Pub. L. No. 93-415, 42 U.S.C. § 5601 et seq.), which established the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to support local and state efforts to prevent delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system. On November 2, 2002, Congress reauthorized the JJDP Act. The reauthorization (the 21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act, Pub. L. No. 107-273, 116 Stat. 1758) provided continued support to OJJDP's established mission while streamlining the Office's operations and focusing its role. <http://www.ojjdp.gov/about/jjdpa2002titlev.pdf>.





# Highlights from the Summit Deliberations

The following section provides highlights from the summit deliberations and profiles successes in communities nationwide, some of which were represented at the summit, detailing a range of ways that law enforcement agencies and their community partners have collaborated to improve their response to young people.

## Making Juvenile Justice a Priority within Law Enforcement Agencies

### Direction from the Top

“If you don’t change the mindset of the chief, everything we talk about is an add-on. It has to become the core—problem-solving, community policing, evidence... If you keep trying to do things the same way, you’re a car that’s spinning its wheels,” said Ronald Davis, Chief of Police in East Palo Alto, California. Chief Davis expressed a view shared by many participants at the summit that developing more effective approaches to juvenile justice has to begin with leadership from the agency executive and must be embedded in comprehensive agency strategies to advance public safety.

Summit participants cited various challenges to elevating the priority of juvenile justice within law enforcement agencies and sustaining change, including organizational culture, staff and leadership turnover, and numerous competing demands for training and resources. These challenges can be overcome only through clear direction and sustained commitment from agency heads.

### Organizational Culture

Summit participants working both inside and outside of law enforcement expressed how important it is to champion alternatives to arrest and support for the needs of youth and families. It is a culture shift to move toward strategies that emphasize social services and rehabilitation while maintaining social control and officer safety, explained Chief Randy Carroll, who is retired from the Bellingham Police Department in Washington, and served as breakout group facilitator. Chief Thomas Weitzel of the Riverside Police Department in Illinois said that a balance needs to be found. “My officers receive so much firearms training, and yet they rarely fire a shot,” he said—and in some cases may never fire their weapon in the line of duty. “Meanwhile they have multiple contacts each day with juveniles.”

Another barrier to change is that law enforcement leaders sometimes feel unable to criticize the current system or initiate changes. Some fear for their jobs and some do not feel they can move toward change without



marshaling overwhelming data to counter political and community pushback.

Notwithstanding these barriers, law enforcement leaders favored promoting institutional change within agencies as opposed to imposing one-off new strategies. Without a fundamental change in strategy, some believe leadership agendas come and go with political will. As Chief Edward Flynn of the Milwaukee Police Department said, “When culture and strategy do not align, culture always wins.”

## Reframing Law Enforcement’s Role

A key ingredient to culture change cited by numerous summit participants was to develop well-defined policies and procedures that outline the specific responses leadership expects when officers encounter young people. Law enforcement leaders noted that sometimes what was missing in traditional, incident-based style of response was the “context” of the circumstances that created the incident. Working towards longer term solutions goes beyond only problem solving in the moment—where often the focus is justification for the actions taken and the documentation of probable cause. Agencies should be implementing guidelines and support structures that enable officers to undertake a broader problem-solving approach in collaboration with community partners.

## Low Esteem of Juvenile Work

Participants said they regularly encounter perceptions within the judicial system and law enforcement community and among policymakers that juvenile justice work is a “secondary assignment” or a “dabbling field.” This is reinforced, they said, by practices of managers placing new or inexperienced professionals on juvenile work with the premise it’s “adult-problems lite.” Practitioners will assure you it is not.

“What about doctors? Do we start them off in pediatrics?” Asked Chief Carroll. “Why should we start a new detective on the juvenile beat? Or throw new public defenders into ‘kiddie court’ to learn?”

To counter these practices, participants suggested providing intensive juvenile justice training to law

enforcement officers as well as designing rewards, pay incentives and certifications that set standards for the value placed on juvenile justice work.

## Policy Legacy & Sustainability

A leader with vision can bring in sweeping changes and energize an agency, and new strategies and programs may be put into place supporting juvenile justice. But how do leaders ensure their legacy lasts and innovations will not be rolled back in the wake of turnover?

Some in the juvenile justice community said they experienced frustration when years of work changing processes and developing partners evaporated following a leadership change. Participants advocated formalizing policy changes and establishing memoranda of understanding with partners to institutionalize changes within law enforcement agencies and their communities.

There was also interest among participants in continuing the conversations begun at the IACP summit in future regional and national multidisciplinary gatherings. “In the days and years ahead when the country is distracted by something else, we need to keep this issue alive,” said Chief Dean Esserman of the New Haven Police Department and the Chair of IACP’s Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Committee.

## Resources & Expectations

Participants highlighted the need for promising policy and practice supported by more law enforcement training. However, law enforcement representatives at the summit made it clear that officers today are already tasked with an expansive list of mandated training and additional requirements that will continue to take away from an officer’s time in the field. Expectations of expertise are such that officers need to be nimble enough to shift from dealing with an active shooter, to a terrorist threat, to a car accident, to a kid who needs help.

There was a healthy debate in the discussion sessions about the ever-expanding and evolving role of law enforcement in communities. Some law enforcement executives expressed frustration with the notion that amid these rooms full of experts and active and engaged advocates, it was the cops who were expected to make connections with at-risk youth. “We are continually

asked to take on more and more,” said Chief Walter McNeil of the Quincy Police Department in Florida, speaking for many law enforcement executives at the summit.

Participants representing other roles in the juvenile justice community were empathetic to those concerns. They emphasized they do not expect officers to do social work, but the initial response a young person receives from law enforcement can go a long way to starting a process that others can then take over. Meanwhile several police chiefs acknowledged that reorienting priorities is hard work but said this work pays off in the long run. A theme heard again and again was that law enforcement and their partners cannot continue to invest money and personnel in counterproductive strategies. Agency leaders must continue to strive to meet the “smart on crime” mantra and make difficult decisions needed to integrate more effective approaches into their daily work.

# Articulating Juvenile Justice Priorities through Revised Protocols: SRO Guidelines in Battle Ground, Washington

*by Bob Richardson, Chief of Police  
Battle Ground Police Department, Washington (23 sworn officers)*

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## **Background**

I currently have the pleasure of serving on the Executive Committee for Clark County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives (JDAI) program and I strongly support both JDAI and restorative justice concepts. However, as a police chief, I am concerned that the restorative justice concepts being implemented in the juvenile court system weren't translating to our officers out in the community. Examples of this include, "we should take the juveniles to the detention facility and book them because that's what we do," or "we need to do this to teach them a lesson," or "this is the only punishment the juvenile will receive." Part of this issue is training; another part is outlining our expectations of our officers through policy and procedures and reinforcing these expectations in our performance review process.

When officers, who are out on the streets, are not aligned with the concepts of promoting alternatives to arrest, this causes confusion, resentment, or frustration for the youth we respond to, school officials, and parents we interact with.

## **Situation**

On November 14, 2013, an 11-year-old male middle school student with a history of disruptive behavior, who was in the process of being evaluated by the City of Battle Ground school district for special education arrangements, left the classroom and went to the office in an attempt to go home. After his request was denied, the student entered a different classroom and became defiant to the teacher who was attempting to get him to leave. This caused the Assistant Principal to become involved.

The student then ran into the hallway and would not respond to a request to go back to the school office so his parents could be called. As a result, the Assistant Principal called the school resource officer to the location to handle with the situation. The SRO was unaware of the student's background, including the fact he was under evaluation for special education needs. In addition, under Washington State law, disturbing school or willfully disobeying school administrative personnel is a misdemeanor crime.

The SRO talked to the student for approximately 10 to 15 minutes, after which he and the Assistant Principal decided to walk the student to the school's office. As the SRO grabbed the student's upper arm to escort him to the office the student struggled and both ended up in a tussle. The officer placed the student on the ground, handcuffed him, and moved him to the office where his parents were called. The student was transported to the Battle Ground Police Department and then released to a parent.

Needless to say, the parents and school district personnel were upset over the situation, and this was especially true after the incident was reviewed on the school's security video. I want to point out that the SRO did nothing wrong based on Washington State law and department policy and training. However, it is obvious that when a situation results in a police officer using force on an unarmed 11 year-old student, clarifications to the policies and procedures should be considered to avoid such an incident from happening again.

## ***Aftermath***

Ultimately the juvenile court, juvenile probation, law enforcement officers, and school officials need to share a common philosophy on juvenile offender reform if we are going to have any success. With regard to this particular occurrence I had the following concerns:

- The SRO should not have been involved in what amounted to be a school disciplinary issue. Had the Assistant Principal attempted to escort the student to the office and the student had assaulted him it would have been appropriate to have the SRO get involved.
- The SRO, after making the arrest, should have released the student to the parent at the school rather than transporting the student to the police station first. Transporting the student would only be necessary if there were a need for additional investigation, collection of evidence, taped interview, etc.
- SROs or other law enforcement officers should not transport juveniles to a detention facility unless there is a danger to public safety, a juvenile arrest warrant, probation violation, or a parent or responsible party cannot be located for release. Detention is ineffective for changing the criminal behavior of the juvenile, and requires parents to spend a great deal of time away from their other children or place of employment. It is also an inefficient use of resources that takes time away from other SRO duties.

I think the moral of this story is we all have to be on the same page—juvenile court, juvenile probation, police officers and school officials.

## ***Policy Changes***

The intent of our policy changes was to give our police officers more direction on the philosophy of restorative justice, which will be reinforced by continuing education on the subject. With clear guidelines our officers can understand what our expectations are for arresting juvenile offenders so they can understand how to be good stewards of the process. This includes some very simple changes:

- 1) Differentiate between disciplinary issues and criminal problems.
- 2) De-escalate school-based incidents whenever possible.
- 3) Whenever possible, SROs and other police officers should release juvenile offenders to a parent or guardian as soon as practical—usually at the school or the scene of arrest. If further investigation is required, then they may transport the juvenile to the police department to be processed and subsequently released to a parent or responsible adult.
- 4) Only book into detention those juvenile offenders who are a risk to public safety, or where necessary, those who have an arrest warrant or probation violation, or where there is no parent or responsible adult available.

Finally, police officers have to understand their role in the juvenile justice system. By understanding that secure detention of juvenile offenders in and of itself will not deter them from future offenses. Albeit a temporary solution, the goal is to correct the immediate behavior and provide the juveniles resources to correct their own behavior. This can be achieved through allowing them continued access to education, their families, support systems, and changing their outlook on law enforcement from a negative to a positive.

As the front line of the justice system, we have the obligation to the youth of our community to ensure the concepts of restorative justice are incorporated into the values and practices of our organization – which then provides the necessary support for young people to overcome mistakes and become productive members of society.

# Building Partnerships among Law Enforcement, Youth & Their Families

**D**uring the opening session at the summit, OJJDP Administrator Robert L. Listenbee and Chief Ronald Davis of the East Palo Alto Police Department in California each spoke of a long history of mistrust toward law enforcement that pervades numerous communities—particularly communities of color where memories of civil rights era abuses by people in positions of authority remain ingrained in the public memory. Even in communities that do not have to overcome this kind of legacy, there are barriers to trust and understanding among law enforcement, youth, and their families. As we heard from numerous participants at the summit, youth and their families are often unaccustomed to viewing law enforcement officers as potential allies—particularly because many encounter law enforcement only in times of crisis.

Moreover, longstanding disparities in the justice system’s treatment of youth of color and their families persist in communities across the country—disparities that begin at the point of arrest and culminate in disproportionate incarceration of people of color. These inequalities have had a tremendous toll on families and communities and on the prospects for constructive interactions among law enforcement, youth, and families.

## Building Trust

For Chief Ronald Davis, building trust with members of the community in East Palo Alto has been integral to everything his agency does—and in his estimation, that trust is a necessary ingredient to effectively promote public safety. Key approaches have included engaging with young men of color in non-enforcement capacities, such as restorative justice dialogues and listening sessions on community safety issues, and

demonstrating to the community that harsh penalties are reserved for those situations where there is truly no effective alternative. “We still do major takedowns,” said Chief Davis, “but the difference is the community can look at us and know that’s not the chief strategy. I have a mandate from the community to remove serious criminals from the community.”

Several summit participants also emphasized that building police forces that reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the communities they serve can contribute to community trust and help to address disparities in responses to young people and families.

## Training to Foster Mutual Understanding

Training for law enforcement on differences between youth and adults and appropriate strategies to respond to those differences is crucial to enable better understanding and more constructive interactions between police and youth. Increasingly, law enforcement agencies around the country are providing training to their officers on topics such as adolescent development and youth culture; de-escalation techniques appropriate for youth; juvenile interview and interrogation; interacting with youth with mental health conditions, disabilities, or other special needs; and alternatives to arrest and detention. Yet in some jurisdictions, officers still receive little or no training beyond juvenile code provisions and other legal considerations regarding the handling of youth. This narrow approach to juvenile justice training misses opportunities to transform the way officers view and respond to youth.

In some jurisdictions, efforts to reduce the disproportionate arrest of youth of color have been

central to law enforcement training initiatives. As described in greater detail below, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, all new police academy cadets and many more experienced officers take part in a one-day training that brings together police and youth of color to foster mutual understanding and reduce the likelihood that encounters between police and youth will result in confrontation and arrest.

While emphasizing that training is indispensable to changing attitudes and enhancing knowledge, several summit participants noted that training efforts are most effective when implemented in support of policies, protocols, and systems of accountability designed to assure effective and appropriate responses to young people.

## Opportunities for Positive Engagement

In addition to formal systems for youth-police interaction such as the training program in Philadelphia, there are countless opportunities for law enforcement and youth to interact and break down the barriers to mutual understanding. As we heard from summit keynote speaker Erica Garcia, Officer Andres Marcucci of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C. was a visible presence in her neighborhood: “If there was a festival or other community event, he was there engaging with all the youth,” she said. And this made a difference in how Erica viewed the police.

Although officers frequently take it upon themselves to connect in positive ways with youth in their communities, they are more likely to do so when agency leaders make clear that these kinds of interaction are a priority. As we heard from Chief Jennifer Tejada of Sausalito, California, she asks her officers to visit the local schools during recess if they don’t have a call. Chief Tejada has seen that casual games of basketball during recess can go a long way: “The kids feel like they can trust us and they aren’t just seeing us when we are arresting someone.”

## From Family ‘Blaming’ to Constructive Engagement

Sometimes there is a perception among law enforcement and other juvenile justice system partners that many young people who get into trouble with the law do not

have a parent or other family member who is invested in holding them accountable and connecting them with needed services. But as Grace Bauer, a parent activist whose son spent time behind bars, explained at the summit, when family members do not take an active role, often it is because families feel powerless in the juvenile justice system. Frequently, families do not understand how the system works and find it difficult to advocate for their children. Because of a history of systemic racism, they might also expect the deck will be stacked against them. Moreover, law enforcement and other justice system officials sometimes fail to appreciate the degree to which basic economic and logistical realities can present obstacles to family participation, such as the fact that parents often rely on public transportation and juggle multiple jobs to make ends meet.

Ms. Bauer observed there is often a counterproductive cycle of “family blaming”—a perception shared by numerous participants in a survey she helped to conduct of more than 1,000 parents and other family members on their experiences within the juvenile justice system.<sup>9</sup> For Ms. Bauer, treating families with respect and offering them tools to navigate the juvenile justice system, beginning with the point of arrest, can go a long way.

## Communicating with Youth & Their Families

Participants agreed that when law enforcement responds to an incident involving a young person, there is an opportunity after the incident to communicate with the youth, the family, or the community about what happened. But how to handle the follow-up was an area of debate.

Following the resolution of an incident, some participants said they felt it was appropriate for an officer to explain to by-standers and family why they did what they did in an effort to branch out from an enforcement role to relationship-building. “It is important to have the courage to explain what you just did to those watching,” said Captain Bryan Parman of the Portland Police Bureau in Oregon. “We are given

<sup>9</sup> See Justice for Families. (Sept. 2012). *Families Unlocking Futures: Solutions to the Crisis in Juvenile Justice*. [http://www.justice4families.org/media/Families\\_Unlocking\\_FuturesFULLNOEMBARGO.pdf#public](http://www.justice4families.org/media/Families_Unlocking_FuturesFULLNOEMBARGO.pdf#public).



the authority to use force to maintain control. It doesn't always look good. We have an obligation to explain."

Others in law enforcement were not so sure. "When you have a line officer who is dealing with juveniles who have become more and more violent and disrespectful to the officers, that officer is not going to be too interested in explaining anything to anybody," said Major Charles Newell, youth crime prevention coordinator with the Memphis Police Department in Tennessee. An option recommended was for a separate officer, perhaps one with an existing relationship with the individual, family, or community group, to go out and talk about what happened.

Whether it is officers on the scene or someone else filling this role, having someone talk through law enforcement decisions becomes helpful "because it helps de-escalate the situation in these communities," said Luis Cardona, the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator in Montgomery County, Maryland and a former gang member. "When you look at these situations all around the country, how do you say to officers, 'We know you want to go home, but the community also needs you there to feel safe'?" Cardona also emphasized that institutionalizing processes for reflecting on law enforcement decisions helps to equip officers to respond going forward with best practice approaches to dealing with complex public safety issues.

## Improving Understanding & Accountability through Restorative Justice

"Restorative justice" has long been a hallmark of the juvenile justice reform movement. Indeed, OJJDP developed a national "Balanced and Restorative Justice" initiative beginning in 1993, whose guiding principles include:

- "Crime hurts individual victims, communities, and juvenile offenders and creates an obligation to make things right";
- "All parties should be a part of the response to the crime, including the victim, if he or she wishes, the community, and the juvenile offender";
- "Accountability for the juvenile offender means accepting responsibility and acting to repair the harm done";

- "Restoration—repairing the harm and rebuilding relationships in the community—is the primary goal of restorative juvenile justice."<sup>10</sup>

The basic concept that repairing damaged relationships is crucial to sustaining safe and healthy communities underlies programs such as community mediation and community conferencing. Parent advocate Grace Bauer urged the replication of restorative justice initiatives such as the programs of the Community Conferencing Center in Baltimore, Maryland, which receives referrals for juvenile cases from the Baltimore City Police Department as well as schools, prosecutors, the court system, and Department of Juvenile Services—frequently as a diversion from formal justice system processing. During a community conference, victims, offenders, their respective family members or other support people, and sometimes other affected community members come together to discuss what happened, how everyone was affected, and how to resolve the matter and prevent it from recurring. In some cases, the police officers who responded to a reported crime participate in the conference—providing an opportunity for direct engagement among youth, families, and other community members.

Lorig Charkoudian, Executive Director of Community Mediation Maryland, explained at the summit that mediation and other conflict resolution approaches can be powerful tools across the juvenile justice system—from early intervention to reentry and at various points in between. Charkoudian described ways that mediation can be an effective truancy reduction strategy, whereby teachers, parents, and children work together to explore reasons for a child's absenteeism and develop solutions. Mediation can be an effective tool for addressing fights among youth that might otherwise lead to assault charges. In the reentry context, mediation can help young people and their family members to address underlying conflicts and work through plans before a release from incarceration.

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<sup>10</sup> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (undated). *Guide for Implementing the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model*. <http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/implementing/about.html> and <http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/implementing/balanced.html>.



# The Pennsylvania DMC Youth-Law Enforcement Curriculum

*by Rhonda McKitten, Director of Juvenile Grants and Policy,  
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The Pennsylvania Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Youth-Law Enforcement Curriculum addresses adolescent development, youth culture, and youth coping strategies, and brings youth-police dialogue into the training of law enforcement officers. The curriculum was developed by law enforcement officers, juvenile justice stakeholders, community members and psychologists with support from the MacArthur Foundation Models for Change and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Designed for both police recruits and experienced officers, the one-day training helps officers distinguish between normal adolescent behavior and criminal conduct and helps officers understand the environmental and developmental bases for adolescent behavior. Developed in 2009, the curriculum has since been offered to more than 900 Philadelphia recruits and officers. The curriculum has also expanded to Lancaster and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and been adapted for use in other states.

The curriculum is divided into four modules. Modules I and II are based on Minority Youth/Law Enforcement forums that have been conducted in Philadelphia since 2003. Cadets observe facilitated discussions between minority youth from the community and experienced law enforcement officers. Youth from local high schools and community programs participate with cadets both as panelists and as audience members. The goal of the panel discussion is to identify issues, concerns, and recommendations for improving youth and law enforcement relations from the perspectives of experienced law enforcement officers and youth. After the panel discussion, the cadets and youth in the audience are given an opportunity to discuss the panel in facilitated small groups.

In Module III, police cadets and youth are separated for instruction on adolescent development and youth culture. Cadets learn about youth culture, adolescent brain development, concepts of hyper-vigilance and hyper-masculinity, and the distinctive characteristics of boys' and girls' coping strategies. Cadets discuss the environmental, physical and biological reasons why teenagers think and behave the way they do and how adolescent responses to authority differ from adult responses. In a separate session, youth are taught to identify how adolescent development, environmental influences, and issues of respect impact their behavior with law enforcement. Youth discuss options that can contribute to safe and positive interactions with police.

In Module IV, youth and cadets rejoin to participate in a series of facilitated role-play exercises designed to reinforce the previous training and give cadets the opportunity to practice what they have learned.

# Collaboration & Information Sharing

A common complaint across the juvenile justice system is that decisions are all too often made in a silo, with various parts of the system rarely sharing information and collaborating to reach decisions—whether decisions about particular cases or broader programmatic and policy direction. Law enforcement has been particularly absent from efforts at multiagency and community collaboration on juvenile justice. IACP’s nationwide survey of law enforcement executives revealed that just 22% of chiefs reported they participate in juvenile justice advisory groups, and just 35% said others in their agency participate in such groups.<sup>11</sup> Sometimes police leaders have not seen themselves as having a role in broader juvenile justice issues in their communities. But as numerous summit participants explained, frequently other juvenile justice professionals have not invited law enforcement to the table.

Participants discussed a range of functions that juvenile justice task forces or coordinating councils can undertake—including collaborating on individual juvenile cases, discussing crime trends and response strategies, sharing information about options for diversion and other community-based services, developing and assessing juvenile justice initiatives, and coordinating on policy reforms.

Oftentimes failures to coordinate in these areas stem from—and also perpetuate—a lack of trust and understanding among law enforcement and prospective partners. Due largely to long-engrained stereotypes about law enforcement attitudes and actions toward youth, other government agencies, schools, and service providers have been understandably reluctant to share information with police—even in cases where there is

no legal barrier to information sharing. As such, law enforcement agencies often lack information that could help them make decisions regarding diversion and referral to services.

In communities where law enforcement and other juvenile justice system partners have worked together—even for discrete initiatives like a joint training program—there has often been a ripple effect in terms of improved understanding and prospects for future collaboration. In Philadelphia, said public defender Rhonda McKitten, police have been involved in minority youth-law enforcement forums in collaboration with the Defender Association of Philadelphia, the District Attorney’s Office, and other agencies that are part of the city’s Disproportionate Minority Contact Working Group. “Those relationships have carried over into other work in Philadelphia,” explained McKitten. For Marc Schindler, Executive Director of the Justice Policy Institute and former Chief of Staff and Interim Director of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services in Washington, DC, the key is developing relationships and commitment at top levels. “It’s classic team building,” said Schindler, “you’ve got to do something together, come with the best idea you can and then try it. Even if you fail, relationships will be built if you get past the planning stages, no matter the outcomes. It’s worth taking a risk.”

## Same Mission, Different Conversation

As part of developing new collaborations to achieve juvenile justice goals, advocates and practitioners in the reform community as well as schools, the judiciary, and law enforcement are learning that communication can be the hardest part of working together—even when it seems like everyone’s saying the same thing. “Success” for some in law enforcement might mean locking up wrongdoers, while for many in the advocacy

<sup>11</sup> International Association of Chiefs of Police. (Sept. 2013). *Law Enforcement’s Leadership Role in the Advancement of Promising Practices in Juvenile Justice: Executive Officer Survey Findings*. <http://www.theiacp.org/Portals/0/documents/pdfs/IACPJJExecutiveOfficerSurveyFindings.pdf>.

community the vision of success might be that kids never have to talk to the police again. “We hear law enforcement having conversations about locking kids up,” explained Marie Williams, Executive Director of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, “and this fuels perceptions among some reform advocates that law enforcement’s priorities and conversations about juvenile justice are not aligned with those of advocates. However, everyone can agree that having less crime committed by juveniles, facilitating more service referrals, and ultimately needing to lock up fewer young people are shared goals.”

Coming at the same mission of improving outcomes for juveniles from divergent perspectives can create innovation, but there are sometimes conflicting practices and perspectives. Participants pointed out that police might think probation is sheltering a kid, while probation may think the police are out to get a kid under their supervision. Schools may use the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to refuse to speak to law enforcement about a student without a subpoena, while police may be trying to engage in supportive rehabilitative work for the student, but need more information.

From the law enforcement perspective, chiefs said there is a lot of stereotyping about police. Often community partners assume law enforcement is coming from a “lock-em-up” mentality even if this isn’t the case. “We sit down at a table and try to get through stereotypes,” Chief Frank Straub of the Spokane Police Department in Washington, said of his non-law enforcement partners. “I have to let you into CompStat meetings [regular meetings to analyze crime data and strategize on responses] and be respectful to you, and you have to let us into meetings you don’t think we want to be at.” Only then, he said, can partners begin to see they actually want the same thing.

Chief Flynn also challenged the notion police want to put youth behind bars, saying attitudes among his colleagues in law enforcement have shifted tremendously. Chief Flynn touted the capacity to change perceptions of law enforcement through interdisciplinary collaborations: “People tend to keep to their stereotypes and don’t test them. When we put our people at the table with schools, judges, their eyes get so open. They are shocked that we are humans. Stereotypes tend to break down with exposure.”

## Leveraging Law Enforcement Influence

Participants felt strongly that law enforcement agencies have tremendous—and often untapped—potential to exercise influence on juvenile justice issues. A refrain introduced by Chief Flynn was repeated in discussion groups throughout the summit: When law enforcement calls a meeting, people show up.

Those gathered suggested that law enforcement leadership make the most of this asset by calling meetings on juvenile issues and establishing local task forces or coordinating councils if such groups are not already meeting regularly in their community. Law enforcement doesn’t have to have all the ideas, resources, or solutions. The willingness of agencies to be open to those who do—and to marshal their clout within in the community to bring people together—will be a significant contribution.

In numerous communities there is already an active juvenile justice task force or coordinating council, but law enforcement has traditionally been unrepresented or underrepresented in these groups. “If you’re not part of a committee, don’t wait to be asked,” said Evelyn Lundberg Stratton, a former justice on the Ohio Supreme Court and current consultant on juvenile justice reform. “The other players might not think to ask you,” she continued.

Judge John B. “Ben” Roe of the Ogle County, Illinois Circuit Court said the expansion of the local juvenile justice council in his jurisdiction, to include law enforcement and other system components, made for a much more effective collaboration. “The council,” explained Judge Roe, “started as court-involved and it wasn’t very successful. As we got more stakeholders involved, it became more productive—provided people with a forum to generate tools, resources, innovations.”

## Institutionalizing Collaboration

Just as turnover within law enforcement agencies poses challenges in terms of sustaining reforms, high turnover across the juvenile justice arena and ever-changing political landscapes mean that progress in developing partnerships is often difficult to maintain. Participants made various recommendations for institutionalizing collaboration among law enforcement and other components of the juvenile justice system, including developing memoranda of understanding and assuring

there is depth of participation in collaborative working groups, with two to three people involved from each organization to insulate against turnover. “Build in redundancy,” suggested Philadelphia public defender Rhonda McKitten, “so if someone leaves, we aren’t left in a lurch.” McKitten further suggested keeping minutes and a record of any actions is important for ensuring the institutional memory of a collaboration. Jack Calhoun of the National League of Cities agreed to the importance of written records, both for institutional memory and to serve as a “tracking and accountability mechanism.” It’s important, he said, to record “who commits to do what by when.”

Another suggestion was to establish a local juvenile justice coordinator position—both to ensure collaborations are maintained and to support law enforcement and agencies in their effort to share information and develop constructive policies for the handling of juveniles. Although most states have a juvenile justice specialist who manages compliance and reporting on the requirements of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA), it is relatively rare to have a dedicated juvenile justice coordinator at the local level. Understandably, participants raised questions about how such a position could be financed, but proponents pointed out that a coordinator could help save costs by reducing redundancies and improving the effectiveness of the local juvenile justice system.

## The Referral Black Hole Versus Confidentiality Concerns

Riley Shaw, Chief Juvenile Prosecutor in Tarrant County, Texas, observed that the police he works with are often frustrated after they make an arrest or referral and then do not hear any follow-up. “They don’t know if a kid was sent to placement, or has received any specific services. They don’t know what has happened between then and next time they see kid on the street.” Shaw explained, “police are the initial point of contact on 99% of those system ‘touches,’ so information needs to flow back to them.” His observations echoed findings in IACP’s survey of law enforcement executives. Just 25% of executives said their agency receives information on the outcomes of youth they divert or refer to services. The survey found that access to some types of information, such as mental health and substance abuse conditions, is even rarer at the front end, as police are making decisions

about how to handle a young person who gets in trouble with the law.

Schools, youth-serving agencies and a range of other juvenile justice stakeholders are understandably apprehensive about sharing sensitive information about youth. Public defender Rhonda McKitten with the Defender Association of Philadelphia raised concerns about breaches of confidentiality and the potential long-term consequences for young people: “If we are sharing case specific info as opposed to aggregate data, there is a higher possibility that kids’ records could leak out and be sold. The more widely we disseminate data out of court, the harder it is later on to clean up that young person’s record.” Although these concerns are specific to individualized data, as noted below in the discussion of data-driven decision making, there are also serious gaps in the gathering and sharing of aggregate information on program effectiveness.

Legal constraints such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), FERPA, and other laws at the federal and state level create restrictions on sharing young people’s health, educational, and other records. Yet in many jurisdictions around the country, law enforcement and other juvenile justice system components have worked together to establish systems for sharing information while maintaining privacy safeguards for youth and their families. Joshua Laub with the New York City Department of Education favored breaking down information sharing constraints: “I’m not advocating sharing information that pathologizes kids or families, but action specific information—information you need to case manage a kid to success.”

In numerous jurisdictions, collaboration is hindered by a belief that federal and state privacy laws prevent schools, police departments, social services agencies, and other local partners from sharing information—whereas in some cases information can be shared if proper confidentiality protections are put in place. In 2000, OJJDP created the National Juvenile Information Sharing Institute (NJISI),<sup>12</sup> a training and technical assistance initiative to increase the capacity of youth-serving agencies to exchange pertinent information. NJISI aims to improve procedures and policies for secure information sharing across state, local, and tribal governments and community-based programs.

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<sup>12</sup> Formerly the National Juvenile Information Sharing Initiative. <http://www.juvenileis.org/njisi.html>

According to numerous summit participants, the starting point for any efforts to expand information sharing must be improved understanding and increased trust among law enforcement and other agencies—trust that comes only from the slow work of relationship building. This is one reason many participants at the summit emphasized the importance of law enforcement taking an active role in juvenile justice working groups.

## Focus on High-Risk Offenders

There was wide agreement at the summit that law enforcement and their partners have a responsibility to improve responses and outcomes both for first-time and minor offenders and for repeat and serious offenders. Multiple law enforcement leaders discussed ways their agencies have engaged in successful partnerships to address the needs of high-risk offenders.

Spokane Police Department in Washington has worked to identify the 5-10% of chronic offenders and developed intervention teams with a dedicated group of police officers and mental health providers. At weekly CompStat meetings, explained Chief of Police Frank Straub, representatives from law enforcement, drug court personnel, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and probation officers focus their discussion on these difficult cases. These partners have worked around HIPAA information sharing barriers to effectively coordinate on providing wraparound services to youth. “We are trying to triage cases to work collaboratively to reduce the percentage of highly active youth,” said Chief Straub. “It’s a carrot and stick approach, with corrections versus all the other alternatives. We select kids out of that group who we will target to receive intensive services.”

## Juvenile Information Sharing in Hawaii

*by Stephanie Rondenell, Director, National Juvenile Information Sharing Institute*

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Hawaii’s Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) is a statewide system that combines juvenile offender information from the police, prosecutors, family court, and the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility for use by the participating agencies in tracking and sharing information on youth. Hawaii’s JJIS was implemented in the 1990s and was the first statewide juvenile justice information system in the country. Information is collected pertaining to arrests, offenses, detentions, dispositions, demographic data and other personal characteristics, suicide risk, gang affiliation, drug use, and social services and treatment programs that have been provided or are available to the youth and their families. The JJIS is also the repository for statewide information on runaway and missing children.

The system is used by police officers, probation officers, judges, prosecutors, and correctional workers who need to know the status of individual youth at any point in the justice process. With the comprehensive information available in JJIS, agencies can make informed decisions that balance community safety with the objective of restoring as many juveniles as possible back into the community.

Law enforcement has been integral to the development of the system since its inception, and there is broad law enforcement representation on the State of Hawaii’s Juvenile Justice Information Committee, including the Chiefs of Police from the Counties of Hawaii, Kauai, Maui, and the City and County of Honolulu.

The National Juvenile Information Sharing Institute (NJISI) has been working with the State of Hawaii’s JJIS for the past five years providing training and technical assistance focused on collaboration strategies, interoperability policies, and development of memoranda of understanding. The NJISI has also assisted the State of Hawaii in reviewing state statutes that govern information sharing, as an initial step towards developing statewide guidelines for sharing information across a broader range of systems including juvenile justice, law enforcement, education, human services, mental health, and community treatment providers.

# Cambridge Safety Net Initiative: Collaboration on Prevention, Intervention & Diversion

*by Commissioner Robert Haas, Cambridge Police Department, Massachusetts  
and Dr. James Barrett, Cambridge Health Alliance and Harvard Medical School*

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Prior to 2008, the Cambridge Police Department took an approach similar to many other urban police departments where it managed its juvenile offenders in a very traditional fashion. Often police response was driven by a reactionary approach. We responded to juveniles only as the cases came to the attention of the police, which resulted in few options in terms of response. Minor offenses were typically ignored and the more serious cases were referred to the courts. We were finding that the seriousness of juvenile offenses was on the rise, and oftentimes the responses taken by the Department did not achieve the desired results of reforming behaviors.

Recognizing that the behaviors we were seeing are symptomatic of larger and more complex issues, we initially looked for ways to divert juvenile offenders away from the juvenile justice system and instead refer them to social service providers. Since its inception that approach has greatly expanded from purely a diversionary model to one that is now designed to foster positive youth development, promote mental health, support a safe community and schools, and limit youth involvement in the juvenile justice system through coordinated services for the Cambridge youth and their families. The Cambridge Police Department, Cambridge Health Alliance, Cambridge Public Schools, and Cambridge Department of Human Services-Youth Programs work in a partnership called the Cambridge Safety Net Collaborative that is specifically designed to focus on prevention, intervention, and diversion from juvenile delinquency through an approach of a coordinated services model.

In support of these changes, the Cambridge Police Department has expanded and reorganized its Youth/Family Services Unit to ensure this collaborative philosophy and approach are central to the Unit's activities. The Department has also provided agency-wide trainings and orientations to familiarize every officer with our approach to juvenile offenders, children in need of services, and kids who might be engaging in risky behaviors—and to equip them with tools to respond appropriately in the field. Every officer receives training on juvenile behavior, unique aspects of youth cognitive development, the challenges young people face, behavior symptoms that might suggest the need for further intervention, and techniques for effectively dealing with youth. In situations where officers need assistance, they also have on-call or pager access to a clinical psychologist. Together with our partners, the Cambridge Police Department has undertaken a fundamental shift in how we address juvenile crime and respond to the complex needs of the young people in our community.

*For more information:*

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/cpd/communityresources/safetynetcollaborative.aspx>



# Promoting Alternatives to Arrest, Court Referral & Detention

Law enforcement officers often complain they see the same kids cycle through the system again and again and nothing changes. This frustration stems largely from the fact that large numbers of youth are arrested, referred to juvenile court, and detained for minor offenses—even as a growing body of evidence suggests these practices fuel recidivism rather than reducing the likelihood that youth reoffend.

Many law enforcement agencies across the country are integrating core juvenile justice reform principles of prioritizing rehabilitation rather than punishment into various aspects of their operations. But for numerous police officers, the ultimate breakdown between supporting the philosophy and putting it in practice comes at 2:00 a.m., after a call leaves them with a juvenile in need of services and nowhere to take them but jail. Even those officers who are aware of the distinct developmental needs of youth often feel helpless because their field reality is out of sync with the talk of their juvenile justice training. “We have jail on demand, we should have treatment on demand,” pointed out Shane Gardner, community outreach sergeant for the Clark County Sheriff’s Office in Washington.

## Making Risk Assessment & Diversion a Matter of Course

Jurisdictions that have had the greatest success in diverting youth from the juvenile justice system have systematic practices for assessing young people’s needs and connecting them with appropriate services. In Miami-Dade County, Florida, every juvenile who is arrested is taken to a centralized Juvenile Assessment Center that conducts intake, screening and assessment

24 hours per day, seven days per week. Licensed mental health professionals oversee referrals to diversion services based on screening and assessment tools that examine risk to reoffend, substance abuse and mental health conditions, and other needs. A key advantage of Miami-Dade’s system is that it offers a “one-stop shop” for diversion as well as formal processing, to make it relatively simple and time effective for law enforcement officers to connect youth with systems that will address their needs. It also formalizes the process of determining if a youth’s case should be sent through the court system or be diverted.

Miami-Dade’s centralized system has also enabled dozens of law enforcement agencies of varying sizes across this south Florida county to pool their resources with those of other youth-serving agencies. This resource sharing has allowed agencies to develop processes and generate diversion options that would be unachievable for any single department. Although this kind of collaboration does not happen overnight—Miami-Dade’s system has been more than 15 years in the making—the successes there could serve as a model for jurisdictions across the country. Even if a centralized 24-hour assessment center is not geographically or financially feasible in every corner of the United States, Miami-Dade’s system demonstrates prospects for partnering with neighbors and across a range of juvenile justice system components to develop creative approaches to effectively and efficiently divert youth, where appropriate, from the formal justice system.

The Brookline Police Department in Massachusetts has launched an initiative to rationalize and systematize its decisions—whether to divert or formally process youth as well as decisions to release or detain. In collaboration



with the University of Massachusetts Medical School, the department is developing a risk assessment instrument to enable officers to base these decisions on evidence-based measures of risk that a young person will reoffend or fail to appear in court if they are formally charged. Although detention risk assessment instruments have frequently been used in juvenile probation and judicial contexts, Brookline is unique in the employment of risk assessment at the initial point of contact with youth. In addition to promoting public safety and optimal outcomes for youth, the use of a risk assessment tool has the capacity to reduce racial and ethnic disparities by ensuring that youth are handled fairly and consistently irrespective of their race or ethnic background. As with Miami-Dade's assessment system, these assessments within the police department make the question of whether to divert youth an automatic part of their processing.

## **Need for Information about Programs & Their Effectiveness**

Some in law enforcement expressed frustration in connecting with community services, knowing which diversions work and finding ones that are reliable. In an era when agencies are increasingly turning to data to make decisions, law enforcement executives said they often need evaluations of the effectiveness of programs before partnering. "Police want to engage in this process, too," said Deputy Commissioner Kevin J. Bethel of the Philadelphia Police Department. "We don't want to just move these kids around in and out of jail. But we need data. We need to know what programs are working."

Just 25% of law enforcement executives surveyed by IACP said their agency receives information on the outcomes of youth they divert or refer to services. Access to aggregate information about the effectiveness of programs for juveniles is also rare, with just 23% of executives saying their agencies receive such information. Large law enforcement agencies are more than twice as likely as smaller counterparts to receive information about overall program effectiveness—49% of agencies with 250 or more sworn officer's report receiving this information. Among agencies in small and rural jurisdictions, fewer than one in five have access to data on program effectiveness.

A related challenge is that law enforcement officers are often unaware of the services and programs that are available. The Portland Police Bureau has taken steps to assure its officers develop a strong understanding of the range of options for meeting the needs of young people, as well as an appreciation for the complex challenges facing youth and their families. Every new sworn officer undergoes System Integration & Resource Network (SIRN) training. In addition to providing an overview of how the juvenile justice system operates, adolescent development basics, and community policing fundamentals, the SIRN program gives recruits the opportunity to spend time interning with community providers to learn about their programs and interact directly with the youth they serve.

## **Scarcity of Juvenile Services**

Numerous summit participants gave voice to the reality that in smaller towns and rural areas, the existence of any nearby services can be a challenge—let alone something that is known to be effective or that an officer can turn to in the middle of the night. A related challenge frequently cited in rural and urban areas alike was that programs and services are available only for youth who have been committed to the juvenile justice system or who meet other specific, narrow criteria. Often these restrictions are driven more by resource constraints than program design—and the needs of many young people who would benefit from the programs go unmet. Joshua Laub, Director of Youth Development for the New York City Department of Education, observed: "I hear kids talking, 'so I got caught and I got into this program and I really like it.' And he wants to take his friend with him, but the friend hasn't gotten caught, and if you're not on this probation list, you're not eligible for this program. So it's great when a kid finds a program they really like, but the problem is these programs get so filtered they can't include a lot of kids who really need them."

Four out of ten law enforcement executives surveyed by IACP cited an insufficient number of programs as a chief obstacle to diverting youth from the juvenile justice system. During the summit plenary panel discussion, Chiefs Flynn and Davis debated the implications of constraints on community resources for youth. Chief Flynn decried the trend toward closing juvenile corrections facilities without robust reinvestments in community-based services, saying "We're seeing

reduced incarceration, but young offenders are receiving neither sanctions nor services.” Chief Davis agreed communities must invest in programs and services for young people, but he disagreed this should be a prerequisite for reducing the number of youth behind bars. Noting the adverse effects of an overreliance on incarceration, he said “I’d rather see a kid on the street and deal with them there than incarcerate them.” Chief Davis pointed out that tightening budgets are often the motivation for states and localities to move away from failed public safety practices, saying, “People change for many reasons—we’d like to see change because

we align philosophies, but if you’re broke and can no longer afford to incarcerate people, that’s an okay place to start.”

A theme frequently articulated throughout the summit was the need for police to be advocates in their communities for more services for youth. As the first point of contact with many youth and families in trouble, police have a keen sense for the myriad needs that are going unmet and can bring a credible voice to the importance of expanding community-based service options.

## Development of a Police Risk Assessment Instrument for Juvenile Diversion & Detention Decisions

*by Captain Michael Gropman, Brookline Police Department, Massachusetts  
and Dr. Gina Vincent, University of Massachusetts Medical School*

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Young people who have not committed serious criminal offenses, are not flight risks, and are unlikely to reoffend do not ordinarily require pre-arraignment detention. In fact, they may be candidates for pre-arraignment diversion and may benefit more from social service intervention than detention. In Massachusetts, police possess the discretion to arrest or bring before the court any individual found in violation of a criminal statute. The decision to initiate court proceedings is typically based on an individual officer’s subjective presumptions about a young person’s flight risk or their risk to public safety. This critical decision, however, should instead be informed by research evidence.

In Massachusetts, the Brookline Police Department is collaborating with researchers at UMass Medical School in the development of a valid screening tool to facilitate use of the research on juvenile offending into decisionmaking by police officers. The first project tested risk factors for rearrest and failure to appear for arraignment (FTA) in a sample of 100 arrested youth by tracking their FTA and rearrests over one year. The result was a ten-item pilot version of the Police Risk Assessment Instrument (PRAI). We are currently cross-testing the validity of the PRAI with youth arrested or brought before the court in four other Massachusetts police departments. Once this cross validation is complete, the PRAI will be tested outside of Massachusetts in an effort to corroborate national application. The goal is to provide police officers with a scientifically valid screening tool to help formulate objective and research-based decisions about pre-arraignment diversion and detention for youth.

# Juvenile Assessment, Diversion & Citation in Lieu of Arrest in Miami-Dade County

*by Morris Copeland, Director of Juvenile Services, Miami-Dade County, Florida*

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The Miami-Dade Juvenile Services Department (JSD) provides a comprehensive approach to providing the necessary services to arrested and at-risk youth of Miami-Dade County. JSD's Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) is a 24/7 centralized arrest facility responsible for the intake, booking, screening, and assessment of all juveniles in contact with law enforcement in Miami-Dade County. JSD is also responsible for a continuum of comprehensive prevention and diversionary services to arrested and at-risk juveniles and their families. The JAC opened in late 1997 as a bureau under the auspices of the Miami-Dade Police Department. In October 2002, the Miami-Dade JAC was established as an independent county department expanding its mission to include an array of vital services for children and families.

From 2000–2007, under the leadership of former Director Mrs. Wansley Walters, the JSD piloted a new way of processing arrested juveniles in a proven and effective manner serving more than 13,000 youth with a 75% success rate. The Post-Arrest Diversion (PAD) was innovative in offering a mechanism to keep first-time, non-violent misdemeanor offenders out of the juvenile justice system and to allow for the arrest record to be expunged upon successful completion. The partnership with our local juvenile justice partners was pivotal in our overall successful implementation of this initiative.

Due to the successes of the PAD Program, we implemented a countywide Civil Citation initiative in 2007 as an alternative to a traditional arrest. Civil Citation represents a true systemic prevention model by allowing first-time misdemeanor offenders to receive complete and targeted treatment services. We collaborated with all 37 law enforcement agencies within Miami-Dade County, and we were able to reform the protocol on addressing first-time misdemeanor juvenile offenders. Rather than issuing an arrest, officers now issue a Civil Citation for youth to receive the same level of evidence-based assessments and treatment available to arrested youth. A treatment plan and referral plan are developed that address individual and/or family needs. Upon successful completion, the youth will not have the stigma of a criminal record.

Our Civil Citation program allows the re-deployment of existing resources to serve a more productive, cost-effective function. An independent economic study concluded that arresting a juvenile was significantly more expensive than Civil Citation, which costs 37% less than other available diversion programs, and less than half the cost of secure detention. Since 2007, over 14,000 youth have been referred to our program. Civil Citation has accounted for a 23% reduction in overall arrests since inception, with an unprecedented successful completion rate of 84% and a 95% minority participation rate.

Our continuum of services is designed to address the root causes of juvenile crime and prevent further delinquent behavior. Since 1998, the outcomes of our successes have resulted in a 67% arrest reduction, over one million police hours returned to the community, a yearly \$33 million gross systemic savings, and a \$20.2 million net savings each year. We collect and analyze data constantly from a wide range of variables so that policy, services and funding decisions can be strategically applied to the needs of the children, their families, and the community.

*For more information:*  
<http://www.miamidade.gov/juvenileservices/>

# Expanding Data Collection & Promising Initiatives

A theme echoed throughout the summit was the need to make tough decisions in this era of diminishing resources. Data collection and assessment were seen as indispensable to any effort to redirect resources to the most effective uses and to build and sustain support for these tough choices within law enforcement agencies and among political leaders and other community partners. “We must work with partners to be more rigorous about reporting data and measuring performance,” proclaimed Chief Frank Straub of the Spokane Police Department in Washington. “Sometimes we don’t get it right and you have to decide to tweak or kill a program. But if you don’t have data, you don’t know whether you should tweak or kill it,” explained Chief Straub. Deputy Commissioner Kevin Bethel with the Philadelphia Police Department emphasized, “What we measure we generally improve upon.”

Andrew Moore, Senior Fellow at the National League of Cities, echoed the importance of basing resource decisions on measures of effectiveness: “We have to be willing to stop doing things that aren’t working to reroute money to more productive pursuits.” Former Texas State Senator Jerry Madden, who spearheaded corrections reforms in his state, said, “Somewhere along the line you have to be willing to say this spending is a waste.” But Chief Flynn pointed out one key challenge: “Wasteful practices have strong constituencies.”

## Balancing the Benefits of Proven Programs with Encouraging Innovation

While numerous summit participants emphasized the benefits of putting into place evidence-based programs, some also cautioned relying only on initiatives already proven can hinder innovation. Notwithstanding his

advocacy of measuring program effectiveness, Chief Straub decried an “overemphasis on bringing in a program that already works.” He explained, “What is disconcerting when some funders are funding only evidence-based programs is this is stifling innovation. We have to still fund innovation and then quickly cut it off if it’s not working.”

Chief Craig Steckler of the Fremont Police Department in California expressed pride that many of his peers are not afraid to experiment and emphasized “best practices” are a nice starting point in that you can take ideas from other jurisdictions and tweak them. But he warned against “letting action plans gather dust while things get studied to death.”

Teny Gross, Executive Director of the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence in Providence, Rhode Island, cautioned that the emphasis on proven best practices can encourage “a Walmart-ization of programs—a bias to big non-profits.” Gross observed “hybrid programs are often most successful.” Several summit participants emphasized that small community-based organizations are often best positioned to understand and address the unique needs of their communities.

Roseanna Ander, Executive Director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab, echoed the sentiments on the tension between innovation and evidence-based programming: “We must inspire innovation,” said Ander, “but what is missing when that happens, is that we don’t show how those programs work. We have to figure out how to help organizations evaluate themselves.”

## Data as a Tool to Build Support for Innovations

Summit participants shared stories of how gathering and sharing data on program effectiveness has been crucial for generating buy-in within law enforcement agencies and among partners. Morris Copeland, Director of Juvenile Services for Miami-Dade County, emphasized his department reports back to police representatives on the successes of initiatives for diversion and citations in lieu of arrest. This has been a powerful tool in building support among officers at various levels. Seeing the data, Copeland observed, has sometimes turned skeptics into advocates for this system overall. “They want the best for our children; they just have to believe in what you are doing and see results,” Copeland explained. “We send them data every month, and that makes us credible. That’s how we were able to get cooperation.”

Jonathan Capp, Business Administrator for Marlboro, New Jersey, said that “using data to support the argument”

is key when police are interacting with political leaders. Evelyn Lundberg Stratton, a former justice on the Ohio Supreme Court and current consultant on juvenile justice reform, observed that presenting data to back up a program or proposal can be powerful for securing funding or advocating policy changes. “When we were able to take data when we went to the legislature, that gave them political cover to do what they wanted to do,” explained Stratton.

Some of the law enforcement leaders at the summit observed that their peers are often interested in using data more effectively in agency operations, but they are sometimes unsure where to start. They emphasized that academic institutions can be powerful partners for undertaking joint research ventures and that academic researchers can also help agencies to assess what data is most important to capture and how best to collect and use data. Peer agencies that are already using data more extensively can also serve as resources.

## Milwaukee Police Using Data to Identify Prolific Juvenile Offenders, Develop Intervention Strategies & Measure Outcomes

*by Chief Edward A. Flynn, Milwaukee Police Department, Wisconsin*

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During the summer of 2011, we reported a rise in crimes related to non-traditional youth offender groups. These groups differed from traditional gangs in that they were not geographically based; while some engaged in drug dealing, this was not their primary source of revenue or method of operation. Intelligence suggested these groups were responsible for hundreds of auto thefts, robberies, burglaries, and random acts of violence. Over time, the violence escalated. Offenders utilized social media to facilitate crime, organize events, and more recently, to report on law enforcement activities through real-time online communication.

To address the problem, we used data analysis to identify the most prolific juvenile offenders, develop intervention strategies, and measure outcomes. The Juvenile Offender Group, established by the Intelligence Fusion Center in 2012, created risk assessments for high-value targets that were incorporated into the disposition (sentencing) phase of offenders. Applying the principles of previous research, which indicates that a small percentage of offenders are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime, we examined about 3,300 juveniles arrested over a period of 20 months, and found that nearly 8% (251) of the youth offender population constituted our most prolific juveniles.<sup>13</sup> We recognized the need for a collaborative approach and, among other strategies, have reached out to the faith-based community to mentor high-risk offenders.

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<sup>13</sup> A prolific juvenile is defined as one who has four or more arrests during the time period.

# Evidence-Based Policing in Philadelphia: Understanding What Works, How Much Works, Where it Works & When it Works

*by Deputy Commissioner Kevin Bethel, Philadelphia Police Department, Pennsylvania*

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In 2008, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey put forth a crime fighting strategic plan to the Mayor of the city outlining the Philadelphia Police Department's four-year strategy. Guided by data, information, intelligence and evidence-based practices, "Smart Policing" was a guiding principle to the strategy. This included evaluating the effectiveness of agency practices.

An example of this overarching strategy occurred in 2009 when the Department embarked on its first significant evidence-based experiment. Through collaboration with Temple University's Department of Criminal Justice, the Police Department initiated a footbeat study that involved more 200 officers assigned to 60 randomized hotspots throughout the city to test the effectiveness of foot patrols on reducing violent crime. The results of this study demonstrated that the footbeats do in fact reduce violent crime, and this evidence based strategy is now a permanent part of our department's crime fighting strategy. Since 2008, the Department has seen a 20% reduction in overall violent crime and a 37% reduction in homicides.

To identify high-risk juvenile offenders and actively engage youth in the community, the Department developed the Juvenile Enforcement Team (JET) and Youth Violence Reduction Program. These strategies use data in an effort to reduce the probability of juveniles reoffending or being involved in violent crime. The JET Team consists of six police officers and a sergeant embedded with juvenile probation officers to ensure the fidelity of their mission. To support these efforts, the Department has created a 24 hours per day support mechanism capable of data mining across 14 separate databases (including social media) and providing real-time information to officers and investigators in the field. Additionally, more than 1,200 closed circuit television cameras feed into this site.

The Department has embedded an analyst within all 21 patrol districts and is fully committed to the concept that data and evidence-based strategies are key ingredients to drive long-term success. To be an effective police department in the 21st century, it is vitally important that we maximize the deployment of our personnel and harness the power of our partners in the field to drive or enhance our objectives.



# St. Paul Police Using Data to Reduce Racial & Ethnic Disparities

*Excerpted from “JDAI News: Addressing Disproportionate Minority Contact in Ramsey County”  
published by Ramsey County Community Corrections, Minnesota (2012) <sup>14</sup>*

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Disproportionate minority contact (DMC) continues to be a concern for the St. Paul Police and others involved in the juvenile justice system. In 2010, 11% of all youth arrested were arrested for disorderly conduct, but of these arrests, 74% involved black youth. In the fall of 2011, the St. Paul Police Department set out to examine 2010 arrest data to determine whether the St. Paul Police’s policies regarding juvenile contact were contributing in some way to DMC. Commander Gene Polyak of the Police’s Youth Service Section chose the tool of decision point analysis to get a grasp on the policies and practices that might yield unintended consequences.

Polyak approached the problem as a skeptic. “I felt the system was fair. When I began looking at the data, I began to see unfairness.” He realized that some policies resulted in disparities, even though the policies were enacted with the best of intentions and enforced fairly. “Let’s say we have a juvenile who is picked up for shoplifting at a commercial business,” explains Polyak. “Our policy is that if the business wants an arrest, the officer will arrest the person, issue a citation, verify the juvenile’s identification, and then turn the juvenile over to a parent or guardian.”

This policy would be fair if all juveniles had two-parent families or available extended family networks. But data show that Minnesota’s African American juveniles are disproportionately members of single-parent families (58%, compared to an average of 28% across all ethnic groups). In single-parent families, the parent may be working two or three jobs to make ends meet and a guardian may be unavailable. “If there is no guardian, the juvenile is brought to the police department,” says Polyak. “This puts the offender on a different path. He or she may sit in a holding cell, or be put in a shelter house while we find a parent.”

## ***How Decision Analysis Works***

“Policies and procedures influence outcomes,” says Polyak. He describes decision points as veins in a leaf. “Each vein represents a path an officer might take with a juvenile offender. The veins (paths) have to each be looked at to ensure there are no unintended consequences.” Using this approach, Polyak has uncovered unintentional outcomes at various points in the chain of decisions, including those related to curfew codes, police referrals to diversion, the practices of school resource officers, and as already described, juvenile arrests. Two areas jumped out as especially prone to disproportionate contact: disorderly conduct arrests at school and police referrals to diversion.

## ***Disorderly Conduct at School***

“We were surprised at the number of youth arrested for disorderly conduct, and that 70% of those arrested were youth of color,” says Polyak. In researching the decision points regarding this issue, “we noticed that the state statute on disorderly conduct at school is somewhat vague and can be enforced using varying standards. We want youth to be accountable, but we want to make sure school administrators, SROs, and teachers are all consistent in understanding what behaviors should be dealt with at the school level and what should be referred to the police.”

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<sup>14</sup> Reprinted with permission from Ramsey County Community Corrections; full text available at <http://www.ramseyjdai.org/pdf/JDAI-Spring%202012%20Newsletter.pdf>.



But there are no bright lines here. For example, fighting in high school is a complicated issue. Though involving juveniles in the court system too early can have longer term negative consequences, choosing not to involve law enforcement may endanger other youth, school personnel, or the child.

### ***Diversion***

Polyak also discovered disparities in police referrals to diversion. Diversion is an important option when appropriate because juveniles referred to court may, depending on the offense and their age, find their court record is open to the public. This may affect future employment, housing, military service, driver's licenses and participation in sports. "A juvenile record may have long-term effects," notes Polyak. "Sometimes the impacts don't occur for years after the event."

Participation in diversion requires that the parent agree to it, and that parent and child are able to attend required meetings. The schedules of single-parent families and low-income families make parental involvement difficult for some groups. Homelessness, frequent moves, and English barriers mean some parents never receive notice that their child is eligible for diversion. These barriers affect families of color disproportionately.

### ***Immediate and Future Changes***

St. Paul Police and St. Paul Public Schools have begun making changes in response to the decision point analysis. These include creating an SRO manual, review of the parent-child handbook at the schools, changes in the supervision process for SROs to improve the process for disorderly conduct arrests at school, and the use of mentoring programs. But Polyak notes that more needs to be done. "We have to improve our practices and help juveniles avoid future involvement with the criminal justice system. At the same time, we have to maintain public safety and make sure there is accountability."

# Pathways to School Completion

There are differing opinions within the juvenile justice community about the most constructive role for law enforcement in schools. Spanning the spectrum of opinions, most people recognize police presence in schools must include proper selection and training of any school resource officers (SROs) and clear expectations among school officials and law enforcement. When not implemented appropriately, law enforcement presence in schools can contribute to what is recognized as a “school-to-prison pipeline” and stark disparities based on race and ethnic background. However, when carried out effectively, police presence can improve school safety and foster understanding of the role of law enforcement and positive relationships between police and students. Police officers working in schools can also facilitate close coordination between their agencies and school personnel to proactively address the needs of troubled students before a crisis occurs.

Regardless of whether a community chooses to place officers within schools, there are a range of important ways law enforcement can and should take leadership in collaboration with the education system and other community partners. Police are well poised to observe the effects of zero tolerance policies that push out students—often for minor disciplinary infractions that do not impinge on the safety of classmates and teachers. Law enforcement is also on the front lines of the community’s response to truancy, as young people skipping out on school frequently come into contact with the police. Given their vantage point and the ramifications for public safety of counterproductive strategies, law enforcement leaders have a crucial role to play in the dialogue on how to keep young people connected to school.

## Defining Roles & Raising the Stature of SROs

A revealing insight about the relationship that can develop between students and SROs came from a high school student at the Frost School in Maryland, which serves youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities and related special needs. “I feel somewhat safe with cops at school,” he said. “He’s there when something happens. But when they just come in from the outside it’s like, ‘Why are you here?’ It’s better when you see them every day and know their name rather than a stranger with a gun and a badge.”

Some felt the SRO’s role was over-emphasized, arguing that if kids aren’t safe at home and in their communities, they won’t do well at school and that the real emphasis of law enforcement should be placed outside of schools. Others disagreed. Many said SROs are vitally important in handling the vast number of calls coming from schools—and they couldn’t do their work without them.

Participants largely agreed the SRO post was no place for a rookie. Rather, a significant amount of juvenile-specific training and experience is needed. Law enforcement executives pointed out that, with bonus pay in some jurisdictions and assured weekends off, the SRO position is a good assignment. Some participants urged law enforcement leaders to burnish the reputation to demonstrate the agency’s value placed on juvenile work.

Discussions highlighted the need for law enforcement to get out of the business of enforcing infractions of school discipline codes and low-level misdemeanor offenses that could be handled without justice system involvement. As numerous participants observed, zero tolerance policies and an overreliance on arrest within schools have frequently pushed students, particularly

racial and ethnic minorities, out of the classroom and into the juvenile justice system. “If our concern is interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline and encouraging graduation,” said Assistant Chief Michel Moore, director of special operations at the Los Angeles Police Department, “we need to be more direct with law enforcement about how our current models are counterproductive to completion of school.”

When schools exclude young people from the classroom, police are the first to observe that communities are often made less safe. Not only are these young people more likely to engage in crime during their out-of-school suspension or expulsion, but they are also more likely to drop out of school and become entrenched in an ongoing cycle of criminal behavior.

School discipline policies are outside the control of law enforcement. Yet summit participants felt law enforcement leaders have a responsibility to articulate to education officials, political leaders, and others their observations on the detrimental effects of ill-conceived school discipline policies. Moreover, if invited to the table, law enforcement can work with school officials and other community partners to develop alternatives to suspension and expulsion for young people who misbehave in school.

## Collaborative Agreements on School Discipline & Arrests

Increasingly, communities around the country with high rates of school-based arrests, overreliance on suspension and expulsion, and extensive racial and ethnic disparities are recognizing that training for police and informal agreements among education and law enforcement may not by themselves be sufficient to reverse these trends. A growing number of communities have adopted formal collaborative agreements on the appropriate responses to school-based misbehavior. Such agreements lay out clear commitments among school systems; law enforcement agencies; and, in some cases, a broad range of other entities including courts officials, prosecutors, public defenders, and probation.

Summit participant and advisor Steven Teske, Chief Judge of the Juvenile Court of Clayton County, Georgia, led his county’s development of one of the nation’s first

school discipline cooperative agreements in 2004.<sup>15</sup> The signing of the agreement coincided with cross-training for law enforcement, school staff and counselors, and juvenile intake officers to ensure uniform understanding of how to use the agreement. “I have found that when law enforcement is engaged at the table, the best strategies are discovered to keep kids in school and out of the courts while simultaneously keeping schools safe. When this occurs, school climate is collectively impacted toward positive student development that benefits the entire community,” said Judge Teske. Since the agreement was implemented, Clayton County has reported improved interactions between students and police, increased graduation rates, and substantial reductions in campus-based incidents and arrests for fighting, disorderly conduct, obstruction of an officer, and disrupting a public school.<sup>16</sup>

Increasingly over the last decade, other jurisdictions around the country—from Florida to Kansas to Colorado—have drawn upon lessons from Clayton County to develop and implement their own collaborative agreements among law enforcement, school officials, and other juvenile justice and education stakeholders.

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<sup>15</sup> The full text of the agreement is available at: <http://www.jdaihelpdesk.org/collmodagree/Clayton%20County%20GA%20School%20Referral%20Cooperative%20Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Advancement Project (undated). *Ending the Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track: Clayton County, GA*. <http://safequalityschools.org/pages/clayton-county-ga>.

# A “Triad” Model of School-Based Policing: SROs as Teachers, Counselors & Law Enforcement Officers

*by Mo Canady, Executive Director, National Association of School Resource Officers*

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The presence of school resource officers in schools has become an important part of the duty to protect children on campus. Parents and local officials in communities around the world enjoy an effective relationship with local police as part of a school safety plan.

In order to fully realize the benefits of the presence of local police, the officers must be trained properly. Officers’ law enforcement knowledge and skill combine with specialized SRO training for their duties in the education setting. This training focuses on the special nature of school campuses, student needs and characteristics, and the educational and custodial interests of school personnel. SROs, as a result, possess a skill set unique among both law enforcement and education personnel that enables SROs to protect the community and the campus while supporting the educational mission. In addition to traditional law-enforcement tasks, such as searching a student suspected of carrying a weapon or investigating whether drugs have been brought onto campus, SROs’ daily activities can include a wide range of supportive activities and programs depending upon the type of school to which an SRO is assigned.

Trained and committed police officers are well-suited to effectively protect and serve the school community. These SROs contribute to the safe-schools team by ensuring a safe and secure campus, educating students about law-related topics, and mentoring students as counselors and role models. Over the last 23 years, the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) has become the world leader in school-based policing. We have trained thousands of officers based on the “triad” model of school based policing, which divides the SRO’s responsibilities into three areas: teacher, counselor, and law enforcement officer. NASRO offers multiple courses for SROs, their supervisors, and school administrators to help communities develop a strong foundation for successful school-based policing programs.

*For more information:*  
[www.nasro.org](http://www.nasro.org)

# Community-Based Strategies to Combat Truancy in Louisiana & Georgia

*by Annie Salsich, Director, and Alessandra Meyer, Senior Program Associate,  
Vera Institute of Justice – Center on Youth Justice*

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Every day, youth across the country enter or are at risk of entering the juvenile justice system because of behaviors that are problematic but noncriminal in nature. The most common of these behaviors—known as status offenses—is truancy. Over the last two decades, truancy violations have comprised the largest proportion of all status offense cases petitioned to juvenile courts nationwide. In 2010, truancy was the most serious offense in 36% of the 137,000 status offense court cases—that’s nearly 50,000 cases taken to court for skipping school.<sup>17</sup>

Several states and localities nationwide have implemented community-based and family-focused alternatives to juvenile justice system involvement for truant youth. These alternative options are reducing family court caseloads, lowering government costs, and providing more meaningful and lasting support to children and families. Law enforcement has played a critical role in making this shift in approach possible in several jurisdictions.

In Rapides Parish, Louisiana, law enforcement worked closely with local stakeholders to implement a school exhaustion form designed to reduce the influx of truancy and other status offense court referrals from schools. Before making a referral, school officials are now required to carry out and document a series of in-school interventions intended to address the student’s underlying behavior. This intervention, which contributed to a 47% decrease in the number of youth referred to the parish’s status offense system from 2006 to 2011, was in keeping with law enforcement’s belief that school issues should remain school issues unless a serious incident ensues.<sup>18</sup>

Just a few states to the east of Louisiana, law enforcement executives in Clayton County, Georgia partnered with court officials and others to address a dramatic increase in the number of school-initiated status offense referrals in their county. To keep truant youth and their families out of court, they established the Clayton County Collaborative Child Study Team—a collaborative panel to assess the cases of status offending youth and connect them to appropriate services within the community. This panel, which includes a law enforcement representative, and other local reforms led to more than an 83% decrease in school referrals to juvenile court between 2003 and 2013.<sup>19</sup>

*For more information about these and other community-based approaches to truancy,  
visit the Status Offense Reform Center of the Vera Institute of Justice:  
<http://www.vera.org/project/status-offense-reform-center>*

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<sup>17</sup> Puzzanchera, C. & Hockenberry, S., National Center for Juvenile Justice. (2013). *Juvenile Court Statistics 2010*.

<sup>18</sup> Data provided to the Vera Institute of Justice on March 6, 2014 by the 9th Judicial District Court through the work of Models for Change and the Institute for Public Health and Justice.

<sup>19</sup> Data provided to the Vera Institute of Justice on January 18, 2014 from the Clayton County Juvenile Court.

# Denver's Intergovernmental Agreement on School Discipline: Collaboration among the Police, School System & Community

*by Dr. Eldridge Greer, Director of Mental Health & Assessment Services,  
Division of Student Services, Denver Public Schools*

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In 2013, Denver Public Schools, the Denver Police Department, and a community stakeholder group, Padres y Jovenes Unidos, worked collaboratively to create an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the school district and the police department. This forward-thinking agreement helped to put in place strategies and procedures to drastically reduce the school-to-jail track. Specifically, the agreement made data collection and information sharing between the two agencies more transparent and clarified the presence, responsibilities and role of school resource officers.

Focus of the IGA is directed at ensuring that the school district has opportunities to participate in the selection process for SROs prior to their assignment in schools, in order to ensure a positive fit with the school community and culture. SROs are to receive annual training on areas including child development, cultural competence, restorative approaches, and working with students with disabilities. In their role in school buildings, SROs are to use de-escalation strategies and follow the district's discipline policy, which de-emphasizes consequences and emphasizes restorative, therapeutic, and administrative approaches to student discipline. Significantly, focus of the IGA clarifies due process protections for students and families. Students and parents must be notified as soon as possible when a student is ticketed or arrested. Further, principals are to be notified when a student at their school is ticketed or arrested. It is the school district's belief that through successful implementation of the IGA, Denver can eliminate the school-to-jail track that negatively impacts our students.

*For the full text of the Intergovernmental Agreement:*  
[http://b3cdn.net/advancement/e746ea2668c2ed19b3\\_urm6iv28k.pdf](http://b3cdn.net/advancement/e746ea2668c2ed19b3_urm6iv28k.pdf)

# Responding to Youth with Behavioral Health Conditions & Trauma Histories

A large proportion of youth who come into contact with law enforcement have serious mental health conditions. The numbers are staggering: close to 70% of youth in contact with the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable mental health disorder; over 60% of youth with a mental health disorder also have a substance use disorder; and almost 30% of justice-involved youth have mental disorders serious enough to require immediate attention.<sup>20</sup> Trauma histories are widespread—with many youth having experienced violence as either victims or witnesses, including those who have suffered physical or emotional abuse, neglect, or abandonment. These youth present distinct challenges for law enforcement—both in terms of how they interact with police and what their needs are. As such, law enforcement would benefit from a deeper understanding of adolescent development and mental health in order to better interpret and respond to youth behavior beginning with the initial point of contact.

Specialized Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for law enforcement is an effective strategy used by agencies across the country to train officers on response techniques appropriate for adults experiencing some type of mental health crisis. However, the majority of crisis training currently offered focuses on adults—with little training on adolescents and response techniques appropriate for youth. Officers should receive information to include adolescent development, common psychiatric disorders and treatment strategies, crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques, interacting with

families, and legal issues guiding interaction with youth.

In addition to training law enforcement on how to properly identify and respond to youth with behavioral health needs, it is equally important to have community resources available so that police may connect young people and their families with appropriate services and minimize contact with the justice system. Law enforcement officers can also benefit from training regarding the treatment options and other resources available in their communities.

## Understanding Trauma

Trauma for any person, including children and teenagers, is a subjective experience, says Dr. Steven Marans, a child and adult psychoanalyst and the Director of the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence and Childhood Violent Trauma Center at Yale University of Medicine. Dr. Marans, who shared his expertise with a summit discussion group, provided a working definition of trauma for his colleagues: “Trauma is defined as an injury and occurs when the individual is confronted by an overwhelming, unanticipated danger that leads to the subjective experience of helplessness, loss of control, and terror. It also leads to immobilization of usual methods of decreasing danger (fight or flight) and neurophysiological dysregulation that compromises affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses to stimuli.” Post-traumatic symptoms, explained Dr. Marans, can be understood as reflections of attempts to reestablish a sense of control.

<sup>20</sup> Shufelt, J.S. & Cocozza, J.J., National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. (2006). *Youth with Mental Health Disorders in the Juvenile Justice System: Results from a Multi-State, Multi-System Prevalence Study*.



In some communities, virtually every young person is touched by constant threat of violence. The East Palo Alto Police Department in California has been working with the California Endowment to measure the impact of hearing gun shots 24 hours per day. “Kids in these high-crime areas are operating in a constant state of fight or flight. How can these kids compete in school when they’re taking cover in bath tubs at 2:00 a.m.?” asked East Palo Alto Police Chief Ronald Davis.

A 2008 national survey sponsored by OJJDP in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that more than 60% of youth had experienced violence in the past year—either as victims or witnesses of physical or emotional abuse by a caregiver, neglect, assault, sexual victimization, kidnapping, and a range of other forms of violence. Many more youth experienced one or more forms of violence over the course of their lifetimes.<sup>21</sup>

## Addressing Behavioral Health & Trauma Needs

Young people with trauma backgrounds or behavioral conditions and their families are often in need of a wide range of services. Absent these services, criminal justice remedies alone will not be effective. When a young person is accused of a crime, police can refer the youth to services in conjunction with arrest and prosecution, or as part of diversion from formal processing.

In some communities, law enforcement officers have the option to refer at-risk youth to services even if they are not alleged to have committed a crime. Meanwhile in other communities, police and others in the justice system confront frustrations that the only way to access services for young people is to arrest and charge them with an offense. Frequently, law enforcement officers are the first to come into contact with these young people and their families, long before any social services agency might learn of their needs. An estimated 30 to 40% of all police calls for service nationally are for intimate partner violence and domestic disturbances, reports the National Task

Force on Children Exposed to Violence.<sup>22</sup> “When trained and partnered with other service providers, police are perfectly placed to identify children who are traumatized by domestic violence, assess immediate and future threats, and follow up with visits to evaluate victims’ safety and other concerns,” observes the Task Force. In the wake of the recent research demonstrating the prevalence of trauma and traumatic stress among justice-involved youth, mental health professionals are calling for a “trauma-informed system”—one that accounts for trauma as a matter of course.

While law enforcement representatives at the summit acknowledged there is a high presence of trauma and behavioral health conditions among juvenile offenders, some were wary of placing unrealistic expectations on officers. “We’re not interested in training law enforcement to be social workers or psychologists,” said Joseph Cocozza of the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. “We just want them to be able to recognize if this is a mental health issue or something else, and to learn how to appropriately respond and de-escalate situations.”

Some summit participants suggested expanding the implementation of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training into law enforcement agencies and even advocated it become part of regular core training. CIT training enables law enforcement officers to respond more effectively to people experiencing mental health crises by helping officers to understand the behavior of people with mental illness, employing tools to de-escalate crises, and connecting individuals and families with mental health services.

Major Charles E. Newell, Youth Crime Prevention Coordinator with the Memphis Police Department (TN), endorsed that kind of training. “We are light years ahead now with our CIT team from where we were before when officers came in contact with youth with mental health issues,” Major Newell said. “Now we have doctors that come in and talk about signs to look for in adults and children. There has to be continuous training and collaboration with a psychologist. We are creatures of habit.”

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<sup>21</sup> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2009). *Juvenile Justice Bulletin: National Survey of Children’s Exposure to Violence*. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/227744.pdf>.

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (2012) *Report of the Attorney General’s National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence*. <http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf>.

An unresolved issue in the discussions was assigning responsibility for identifying and addressing the needs of traumatized children and those affected by behavioral health issues. Some mental health advocates suggested that, given law enforcement's direct knowledge of youth, they should play a proactive leading role in identifying young people in need and connecting them with services before trouble gets worse. Some of the individuals representing law enforcement in these discussions felt the best they could do, given their skill set and resource constraints, would be to provide incident-based identification of trauma and mental health issues.

Numerous participants advocated a broader voice for law enforcement in decisions about what programs and services are available in their communities to meet the unique needs of youth with trauma histories and behavioral health conditions—for example, specialized mental health and drug courts; diversion options such as teen courts, mediation, and restorative justice programs; educational supports; reentry initiatives; and a broad range of treatment options.

## **Law Enforcement's Role in Following Up on Service Referrals**

In the wake of referring a young person to social services, participants believed there may be an opportunity for a follow-up by law enforcement. But others had deep concerns about the concept of a police officers taking on ongoing responsibilities toward the families of children or adolescents who have behavioral health or trauma issues. While this could help police develop a relationship, it might not be beneficial for the young person. "I have due process concerns about police speaking to youth about behavior which they could be arrested for," said Lauren Dollar, law fellow at the Georgetown Law Juvenile Justice Clinic. She also expressed worry that such follow-up could conflate the role of law enforcement with a social service provider in the eyes of the individual and family members. Some law enforcement participants also expressed reservations about the feasibility of police taking on this role alongside numerous competing responsibilities.

# Crisis Intervention Teams for Youth in Utah

*by Detective Ron L. Bruno, CIT Utah Program Director, Salt Lake City Police Department*

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Law enforcement agencies in Utah have participated in Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) since 2001. In each participating agency, a cadre of officers receives 40 hours of CIT training to enable them to understand mental health issues and respond effectively to individuals experiencing mental health crises through de-escalation tactics and techniques. After responding to an incident involving a person with mental illness, CIT officers then participate with providers of mental health resources as members of a team to find appropriate long-term solutions to meet the needs of the individual and community.

In 2011, Utah launched the CIT for Youth program, which takes the same concepts of Crisis Intervention Teams, adds some additional documentation, and focuses on the youth of our communities. Law enforcement officers who have already completed the core CIT training receive eight hours of additional CIT for Youth training to enable them to understand the particular needs of young people dealing with mental health issues and to engage in effective community partnerships to address their needs. More than 50 officers across the state have received CIT for Youth training to date, and the program continues to expand.

Law enforcement agencies establish partnerships via a memorandum of agreement with schools, mental health services, advocacy organizations, and other resources that can become members of a young person's support system. Any of these entities can identify a young person who is struggling with mental health issues, and representatives of each entity work together as team members to support the identified youth.

A meeting of the team members, parents, and the youth themselves is held to discuss the causes of the young person's struggles and craft possible solutions. Each team member provides input regarding his or her abilities and limitations in support of the youth, and a strategic plan is developed that reflects the input of the team, the family, and the youth. This plan is recorded on a document called a "Community Behavioral Contract" (CBC) that is signed by each team member as well as the parents and the youth.

Copies of the CBC are provided to each team member so that support can be provided regardless of where the youth is at the time. For example, a copy will be maintained by the school to put into motion the support the school will offer at a time of struggle. A copy will be maintained by the law enforcement agency so any CIT law enforcement officer that becomes involved with the youth will have pre-identified direction of what course of action should be taken.

With this type of support and by working in partnership with the family and youth, a reduction of these youth spiraling into the criminal justice system can become a reality.

*For more information:*  
[www.citutah.com](http://www.citutah.com)

# Amplifying Law Enforcement's Advocacy on Juvenile Justice Reform

Law enforcement is not solely responsible for correcting the defects of the juvenile justice system. And yet many law enforcement executives and their agencies have untapped potential—not only to reform their own practices, but also to exercise leadership in their communities and beyond to advocate more effective responses across a range of systems.

As the foregoing discussion makes clear, there are innumerable opportunities for law enforcement executives and their agencies to collaborate more effectively with other public agencies, schools, court officials, youth, families, and other partners at the local level. Law enforcement leaders can also bring their perspectives to bear on policy decisions at the local, state, and national levels. Several police chiefs who participated in the summit have testified before their state legislatures and the U.S. Congress, and numerous summit participants emphasized that law enforcement

leaders can transcend partisan and ideological battles to speak with unmatched authority on public safety issues. Elected officials and the public pay attention when law enforcement leaders advocate stronger investments in early intervention for at-risk youth and strategies that hold young offenders accountable while prioritizing rehabilitation over punishment.

Law enforcement leaders can also effect juvenile justice reforms by sharing stories of their successes and lessons learned with their peers in other law enforcement agencies. The National Summit on Law Enforcement Leadership on Juvenile Justice was conceived largely as an opportunity for this peer-to-peer learning. Summit participants called upon the IACP, other law enforcement organizations, and partners in government to provide ongoing opportunities for law enforcement leaders to share information and to publicize successes and encourage their replication.

# Law Enforcement Leadership in Juvenile Justice: Agency, Community & Beyond

*by Chief Dean M. Esserman, New Haven Police Department, Connecticut*

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It has become evident that the previously held strategy that we can arrest our way out of the crisis of juvenile crime hasn't worked. One child is arrested every 21 seconds in America,<sup>23</sup> and yet for many troubled children, involvement with the justice system will further entrench a cycle of crime rather than offering a path to a more productive life.

Law enforcement is often the first point of contact with children and families in crisis, giving us a unique vantage point to understand the complex challenges they face and a tremendous opportunity to craft more effective responses. Law enforcement leaders can bring a powerful voice to the need to move away from the lock-em-up strategies that are failing our communities. As the primary guardians of public safety, we have an unparalleled level of credibility on these issues. I believe we have a responsibility to leverage that influence—both to make changes within our agencies and to educate political leaders, local partners, law enforcement peers, and the public.

I have made it a priority in New Haven and the other communities in which I've served to develop more effective strategies for juvenile crime prevention and early intervention, and to promote the widespread replication of these strategies. A huge proportion of the young people who ultimately commit crimes were themselves victims and witnesses of violence in their homes and communities. The New Haven Police Department, together with the Yale Child Study Center, has been at the forefront of responding to and aiding the recovery of children and families exposed to violence, through the development of the Child Development-Community Policing program—a model that has been replicated in many other communities. I am now working in collaboration with partners at Yale University, OJJDP, and the IACP to increase understanding and effective response to children exposed to violence among law enforcement leaders and officers nationwide.

I have testified on multiple occasions before state legislatures and the U.S. Congress, including urging the federal government to expand investments in innovative and cost-effective crime reduction strategies focused on prevention and strong partnerships with the community. It is crucial that political leaders at the local, state, and national levels hear from law enforcement leaders about the efforts we are undertaking to advance public safety and the support we need to implement reforms.

In 2013, I became the Chair of the IACP's Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Committee. In this role I am seeking to raise awareness across the law enforcement profession regarding more effective strategies to prevent and address juvenile crime and child victimization—and to empower law enforcement leaders to have a larger voice in advocating reforms. The National Summit on Law Enforcement Leadership in Juvenile Justice has been an important step in focusing national attention on the urgent need to chart a better course for our nation's children and communities. I hope to sustain this conversation in the years ahead by convening regular juvenile justice conferences in New Haven that will enable law enforcement leaders to learn from one another's successes and challenges and to connect with partners that can support them in this important work.

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<sup>23</sup> Children's Defense Fund. (2014). *The State of America's Children 2014*. <http://www.childrendefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/2014-soac.pdf>.



# Conclusion

By convening the National Summit on Law Enforcement Leadership in Juvenile Justice, the IACP and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation took a united step forward to reinforce the importance of law enforcement leadership in juvenile justice system reform. It was not surprising that summit participants agreed there should be a clearly defined reform role for law enforcement leaders and worked diligently to articulate the specifics of such a leadership role. This report represents the summit work and offers 33 detailed and actionable recommendations.

As first responders, law enforcement officers make critical choices that affect juvenile offenders and at-risk youth every day. Thoughtful and evidence-based decisions made during these encounters can in many instances turn first responders into “first preventers.” For those youth who enter the juvenile justice system at the point of arrest, it is urgent that actions are taken to minimize further penetration into the system. Our juvenile justice system reform goals must include maximizing potential for successful return to the community as well as reduction of juvenile re-offending. This summit report calls for law enforcement leaders to advance this vision by supporting pathways to school completion and promoting, wherever feasible, alternatives to arrest, court referral, and detention.

Moving beyond individual officer and youth interactions, law enforcement leaders can and should be an influential voice in calling for over-arching juvenile justice system reforms at the community,

state, and national levels working to improve the likelihood that youth will not re-offend and will go on to live productive and successful lives. The summit affirmed that law enforcement leaders are in a unique position to be conveners of change as they collaborate with community organizations, school systems, parent representatives, mental health providers, youth, and others in order to create and sustain communities that are safe, productive, and healthy.

IACP and the MacArthur Foundation are proud to present this report to the law enforcement community. Redefining the role of law enforcement in the juvenile justice system is a difficult task, however this report provides concise recommendations for changing juvenile justice system outcomes. The forthcoming challenge is for law enforcement executives across the country to take the next critical steps: review this report, assess your agency and community response to juvenile crime, determine which recommendations are most critical to you and your community, create a plan of action, and collaborate with a broad set of community and justice partners to put that plan into motion. As law enforcement executives are ready to lead, IACP, the MacArthur Foundation, and OJJDP can serve as significant resources, providing guidance and best practice information on all aspects of juvenile justice and at-risk youth. Juvenile justice reform will not happen overnight, but it can move at a much greater pace with the support and leadership of law enforcement leaders across the United States.







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