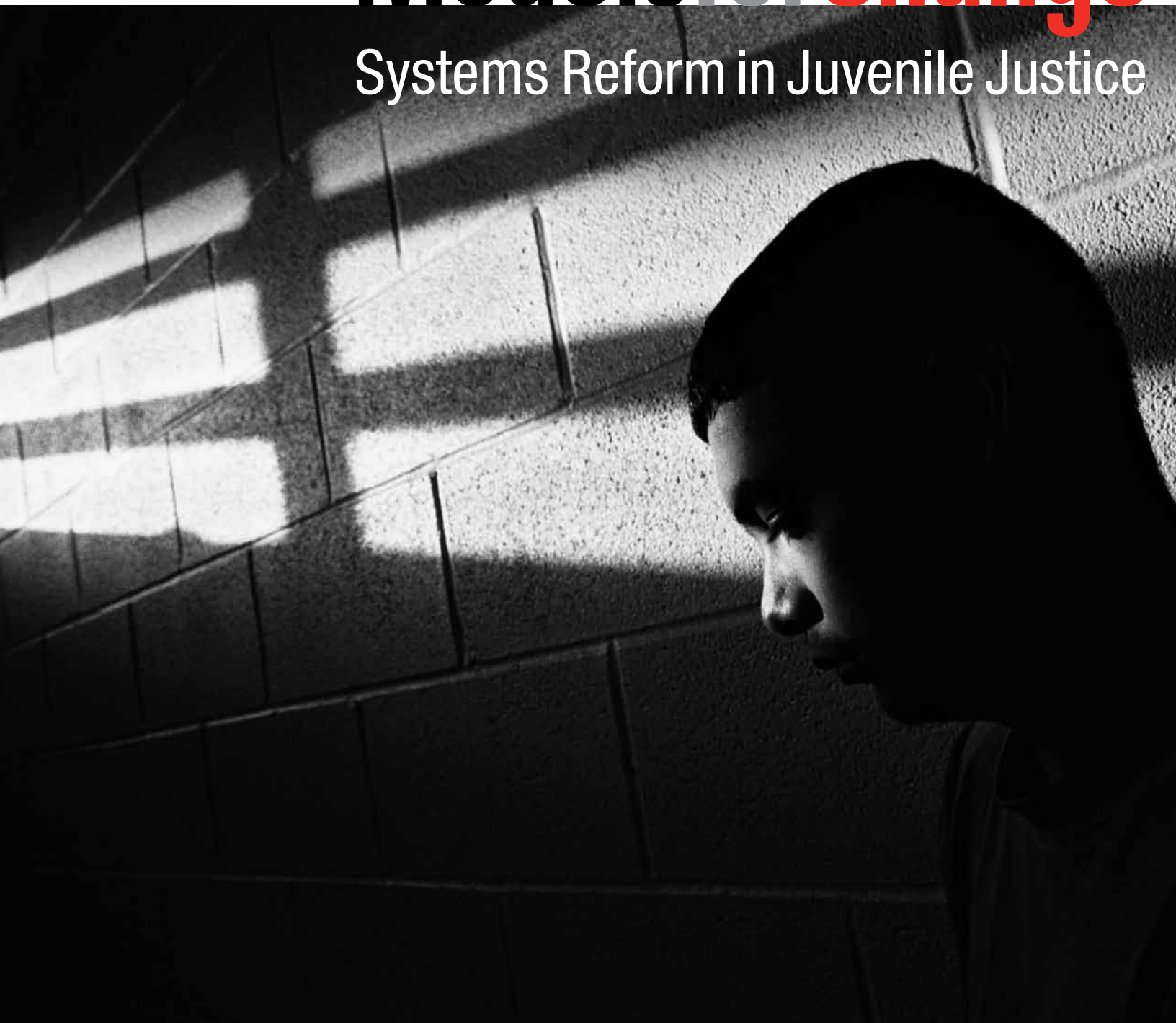


Overview

# Models for Change

Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice



## Overview

The United States' juvenile justice system was founded a century ago with the enlightened goal of providing individualized treatment and services to children in trouble. In the 1990s, however, the boundaries between the juvenile and criminal justice systems began to erode. Virtually every state passed laws that placed more young people in criminal court, instituted harsher sanctions, and allowed adults and youth to be incarcerated in the same facilities. That is the background against which the MacArthur Foundation entered the field of juvenile justice grantmaking.

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### Background | Perspective

The rising rate of violent juvenile crime in the 1990s clearly called for new responses. But was it appropriate to treat young offenders as adults? Emerging evidence in the neurosciences seemed to confirm that children, well into their teens, are, in fact, different from adults. Other research pointed to the high individual and societal costs of the new legal measures, including increased recidivism, reduced educational and employment prospects, and troubling racial disparities. The Foundation entered the field with the ultimate goal of promoting a juvenile justice system that is rational, fair, and effective, and that is linked to other agencies and organizations. The system would hold young offenders accountable for their actions, provide for their

rehabilitation, protect them from harm, increase their life chances, and manage the risk they pose to themselves and to public safety.

The first phase of grantmaking, which began in 1996, grew out of the Foundation's long-standing interest in youth development. Grants were directed at two efforts: advancing the scientific knowledge base; and fostering the development of appropriate laws, policies, and practices. The Foundation sought to give decision makers the tools that would allow them to make rational choices for individual juvenile offenders—to assess their culpability, the possibilities for rehabilitation, and the risk of future, more serious offenses. Grants supported the establishment of the long-term, interdisciplinary Research



Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice, as well as training, advocacy, policy analysis, and public education efforts.

These grants laid the groundwork for significant change in the field. But after five years, it was time to take the effort to another level. As our nation's juvenile justice system entered its second century, the Foundation launched an initiative to help states become models of juvenile justice reform.

### Models for Change: A Framework

In partnership with its grantees in the juvenile justice field, the Foundation has developed a working framework for a model juvenile justice system.

The framework is grounded in eight principles that reflect widely shared and firmly held values related to juvenile justice:

- *Fundamental fairness*: All system participants—including youthful offenders, their victims, and their families—deserve bias-free treatment.
- *Recognition of juvenile-adult differences*: The system must take into account that juveniles are fundamentally and developmentally different from adults.
- *Recognition of individual differences*: Juvenile justice decision makers must acknowledge and respond to individual differences in terms of young people's development, culture, gender, needs, and strengths.
- *Recognition of potential*: Young offenders have strengths and are capable of positive growth. Giving up on them is costly for society. Investing in them makes sense.
- *Safety*: Communities and individuals deserve to be and to feel safe.
- *Personal responsibility*: Young people must be encouraged to accept responsibility for their actions and the consequences of those actions.
- *Community responsibility*: Communities have an obligation to safeguard the welfare of children and young people, to support them when in need, and to help them to grow into adults.
- *System responsibility*: The juvenile justice system is a vital part of society's collective exercise of its responsibility toward young people. It must do its job effectively.

Building on these principles, the framework defines goals, practices, and outcomes against which actual systems can compare themselves. In areas in which actual systems fall short or depart radically from this concept of the ideal, it is hoped that the framework will both stimulate and give practical direction to reform efforts.

## Grantmaking Strategy

The initiative's goal is to accelerate progress towards more rational, fair, effective, and developmentally sound juvenile justice systems in selected states—in the process developing models of successful system-wide reform that can be emulated elsewhere. The states—Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, and Washington—were chosen based on a variety of criteria, including their political and fiscal commitment to reform, support for reform both in and outside the juvenile justice system, and the likelihood that other states would follow their lead.

A lead grantee organization in each Models for Change state is responsible for identifying target issues, planning reform efforts, and working with state and local agencies and organizations in shaping and implementing those plans. An advisory board of key individuals and groups will assist in clarifying reform goals and objectives, outlining strategies, and monitoring the progress of the work.

Because system change requires coordination and documentation, the Foundation also has provided a grant to the National Center for Juvenile Justice to broaden the perspective

and “connect the dots” within and across states. Other national grantees—including some of the nation's leading experts and practitioners in juvenile justice—are serving as a resource network for all states.

## Advancing the Models

Efforts in targeted states cannot yield models of successful system change unless they are studied, documented and explained to the field. Ensuring that the work of the Models for Change initiative in each state has an impact beyond that state's borders calls for two basic kinds of efforts: efforts to document, assess, and understand the process of change; and efforts to spread the news about it. A range of vehicles and strategies will be used to develop and disseminate information about the initiative—the knowledge it generates, the innovations it fosters, the results it achieves, the lessons it teaches, and the possibilities it opens up—to a national audience. In addition to reports, briefs and other informational materials available to the public through the Models for Change website ([www.modelsforchange.net](http://www.modelsforchange.net)), other ways of promoting systems change to juvenile justice audiences will include organized visits to pilot sites, state and national conferences, and outreach to the media. “Action networks” of practitioners and policymakers from other states will also be formed, to share reform ideas, strategies and knowledge with Models for Change participants.

As systems change efforts begin to show results, the Foundation will encourage the expansion of those efforts. The National Center for Juvenile Justice will develop materials and resources that can be used by other states, and communication activities that create interest and demand. But progress will also come organically, as the first states produce a critical mass of individuals and groups that serve as emissaries of reform. Success across different states will demonstrate that reform doesn't depend on a charismatic leader or an unusual alignment of forces. It will help other states see that barriers to systems change can be overcome—that there are many pathways to reform.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

**When and why did the MacArthur Foundation enter the field of juvenile justice grantmaking?** The Foundation began making grants in the field of juvenile justice in 1996. The investment grew from our long-standing interest in youth development and was sparked by an unsettling national trend to treat youthful offenders as if they were no longer young.

**What do you wish to achieve through your grantmaking in this area?** Our goal is to promote a juvenile justice system that is rational, fair, and effective—one that holds young offenders accountable for their actions, provides for their rehabilitation, protects them from harm, increases their life chances, and manages the risk they pose to themselves and to public safety.

**How will the Models for Change initiative advance that goal?** The initiative will identify and accelerate promising statewide models for juvenile justice systems reform. In each state a lead entity or organization is identifying systemic leverage points for targeted reform investments. The lead entity then partners with state, county, and national organizations to bring about change in those target areas, in the process helping the state to become a model of successful juvenile justice reform.

**What does a model system look like?** We do not believe that there is a single model—in fact, we are investing in multiple states with the express goal of promoting several different models. We do believe, however, that a model system must reflect eight key principles: fundamental fairness; recognition of juvenile-adult differences; recognition of individual differences; recognition of young peoples' potential; public safety; individual responsibility; community responsibility; and system responsibility.

**How is the initiative structured?** A lead entity oversees planning with local grantees and stakeholders and coordinates grantees' implementation work. A national resource bank of grantees provides training, technical assistance, and other support as needed. A technical resource center documents reform implementation, assesses its effects, and reports the results.

**Which states did you select for investment, and why?**

Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, and Washington were selected based on their record of progress, the likelihood of realizing successful outcomes in three to five years, and their potential as bellwether states. The states have very different histories and cultures, population demographics, economic resources, political landscapes and types of challenges. By examining change in states at different starting points, Models for Change aims to make it easier to generalize the lessons learned and replicate progress nationwide.

**Who are the lead entities in those states?** The lead entity in Pennsylvania is the Philadelphia-based Juvenile Law Center. In Illinois it's the Civitas ChildLaw Center at Loyola University Chicago. In Louisiana it's the Louisiana Board of Regents. And in Washington it's the Center for Children and Youth Justice.

**How will progress be measured in each state?** We will track five key outcomes.

- Impartial and unbiased decision making* (reduced racial disparities)
- Retention of youth in the juvenile justice system* (reduced transfer and waiver to adult criminal court)
- Pro-social development and engagement* (increased participation in education and rehabilitation and treatment programs and services)
- Public safety* (reduced recidivism)
- Informal local handling of delinquency* (reduced reliance on incarceration and increased use of community-based alternative sanctions).

**How will you gauge the overall success of the initiative?**

The success of the initiative will be judged by the extent to which the sites targeted for change show progress toward stated goals; to which change in targeted areas moves the state closer to having a model system; to which minority overrepresentation and racial disparities are reduced; and to which progress shown in Models for Change states motivates leaders in other states to take on the challenges of reform.

[www.modelsforchange.net](http://www.modelsforchange.net)

# ModelsforChange

## National Resource Bank

The Models for Change initiative makes grants to national organizations that together constitute a national resource bank—a treasury of knowledge and tools, training and technical assistance, advocacy and public education strategies—that those working on juvenile justice system reform at the state and local levels can draw upon. Current initiative grantees include some of the leading experts and practitioners in the field:

- Center for Children’s Law and Policy
- Coalition for Juvenile Justice
- Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators
- Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform
- Justice Policy Institute
- Juvenile Law Center
- National Academy for State Health Policy
- National Center for Juvenile Justice
- National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice
- National Council of La Raza
- National Juvenile Defender Center
- National Youth Screening Assistance Project
- Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps
- Technical Assistance Collaborative
- Vera Institute of Justice
- W. Haywood Burns Institute

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## Core States

Models for Change is an effort to guide and accelerate the nation’s momentum toward more rational, fair, effective, and developmentally appropriate approaches to juvenile justice, through investments in innovative policy and practice models that can be studied and shared. Central to the Models for Change strategy is its long-term partnership with four states: Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, and Washington. By supporting comprehensive reforms in these core states, chosen for their prominence, diversity, and readiness for change, Models for Change seeks to create a variety of models of replicable system reform.

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### Pennsylvania

Since being launched in Pennsylvania in 2004, Models for Change has helped to stimulate a range of transformative policy and practice reforms. These include statewide improvements in the data needed to assess racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice processing, as well as local innovations that provide models for responding to them—such as more structured detention intake screening, a “Graduated Sanctions Court” that addresses probation violations without unnecessary incarceration, and a new training curriculum designed to change the way police recruits and minority youth interact. Because these innovations are being studied and adopted in other communities, and receiving state promotional and funding support, they are having impact far beyond county borders.

Sweeping changes have also been made in Pennsylvania’s approach to identifying and addressing the behavioral health needs of court-involved youth, with statewide training, research, and data collection efforts overseen by a state task force; a coordinated group of local demonstration projects; and a vast expansion of routine mental health screening and risk/needs assessment.

A comprehensive aftercare reform movement is likewise altering the way Pennsylvania youth are reintegrated into their communities following placement. State leaders have agreed on aftercare policy goals, counties have been assessed and helped to align their practice with those goals, and line workers across the state have been trained in effective reintegration techniques. The quality of career preparation for Pennsylvania youth in placement has been enhanced. And

pilot experiments in local jurisdictions—having worked out new approaches in areas like school reintegration and job training—are now being absorbed into county budgets and packaged for replication elsewhere.

### Illinois

Illinois’ juvenile justice system has undergone a remarkable structural transformation since 2005, when Models for Change was launched in this state. Research and policy work by Models for Change grantees have been crucial to the achievement and implementation of these reforms, which are “right-sizing” juvenile justice in Illinois along lines that make fiscal sense and match developmental realities. In just the last few years, juvenile court jurisdiction over most cases involving 17-year-olds has been restored. A reformed funding structure has begun to eliminate perverse fiscal incentives to incarcerate youth and give local communities the resources they need to treat them at home. A new Department of Juvenile Justice has been separated from adult corrections. And the results of a statewide assessment of delinquency representation have prompted reforms that are strengthening the children’s defense bar. Models for Change-supported public education, training, technical assistance, and research are central to the state’s efforts to make these beneficial changes into permanent realities.

Models for Change has also funded an array of local demonstration projects that are opening up new possibilities for community-based responses to youth in conflict with the law. Local Models for Change sites have instituted reforms

that strengthen and formalize governance structures needed to serve youth locally; improve local data and planning capacity; and model less formal and less punitive ways to serve and treat multi-system youth, youth whose charges are rooted in family violence, and youth with mental illness and other special needs. The state has already begun investing in many of these ongoing projects, so that other communities can continue to learn from them.

### Louisiana

Since 2006, Models for Change partners in Louisiana have been working to sustain and accelerate the dramatic progress made there since the 1990s in establishing a more fair, effective, therapeutic, and community-based system of responses to juvenile offending. Models for Change has been instrumental in expanding access to local evidence-based alternatives to formal processing and incarceration in Louisiana, disseminating knowledge of these alternatives, funding direct training on evidence-based techniques, and helping the state to leverage funding for Louisiana's first Functional Family Therapy (FFT) teams. Models for Change demonstration sites and the state Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) have also led the way in adopting scientifically sound risk/needs assessment practices, using a common assessment tool to guide supervision recommendations and inform placement and service planning. Both local access to FFT and use of the assessment tool are expanding and being institutionalized statewide.

A Models for Change “data warehouse” has been established, assembling referral, processing, detention, and commitment information from local and OJJ administrative data systems. With analysis and assistance from Models for Change experts, local parishes are using these data to understand their youth populations, track out-of-home placements, measure outcomes, and set reform priorities. Housed permanently in a university setting, the data warehouse forms the basis for an expanded system of data-driven decision-making in Louisiana that will be sustainable beyond the life of Models for Change.

### Washington

Models for Change partners in Washington have been working since 2007 on a range of ambitious goals, in-

cluding developing better ways to re-engage truant youth without formal court processing and confinement. A state task force has been convened to propose amendments to state truancy enforcement laws, and local sites are experimenting with approaches that emphasize prevention and school-based intervention, consistent screening and assessment, joint training of local school and court personnel, and diversion to specialized programs and services to get youth re-engaged in school, job training, or gainful employment.

Local Models for Change sites in Washington are using data-driven strategies to reduce minority involvement with juvenile justice, developing practical ways to minimize unnecessary detention that their data show disproportionately impacts minorities—like instituting a call reminder system to help ensure routine hearing attendance, and using non-custodial warrants when low-risk youth fail to appear.

Models for Change-sponsored research, technical assistance and support are also enhancing collaboration and coordination in the handling of “crossover youth” involved in the juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health, and other systems, using such techniques as expanded information-sharing and extensive cross-system training.

### The Next Phase of Reform

Having invested more than \$110 million in research and model programs that point the way toward more effective, humane, fiscally responsible, and developmentally appropriate responses to the problem of youth crime, the MacArthur Foundation is now committed to working with other private and public funders in support of a national campaign to speed the pace and expand the scope of juvenile justice reform throughout the United States. The time is right for such a campaign, which will build on shared values, a gathering consensus regarding what works, and a solid foundation of public support for investment in youth. Over the next five years, with support from the MacArthur Foundation and guidance and funding from other groups committed to the regeneration of juvenile justice in America, the national campaign will raise the priority and urgency of juvenile justice reform as an issue for citizens and policymakers alike, create nationwide demand for a range of sensible and achievable policy reforms, and achieve such reforms in a majority of states



## Action Networks

In addition to supporting the development of juvenile justice system reform models in four core states, Models for Change convenes three “Action Networks” to focus on accelerating reform in particular issue areas. The Action Networks are devoted to reducing disproportionate minority contact (DMC) with the juvenile justice system; finding better ways to identify, divert, and treat court-involved youth with mental health needs; and improving juvenile indigent defense policy and practice. Each of the three Action Networks seeks to create a platform that will support peer-to-peer learning and collaboration, spread innovative practice, and cultivate a new generation of leaders.

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The DMC Action Network is a Models for Change-supported forum for sharing knowledge and accelerating progress in reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

The DMC Action Network, launched in 2007 and coordinated by the Center for Children’s Law and Policy, brings together teams from across the country, and provides them with opportunities to share knowledge and experience, hear from national experts about effective DMC reduction strategies, and use what they learn to improve practice back home. In addition to local DMC demonstration sites in the four core Models for Change states, DMC Action Network members include 11 competitively selected sites in 4 additional states. In all there are 17 active DMC Action Network sites in 8 states:

- Illinois
- Kansas
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- North Carolina
- Pennsylvania
- Washington
- Wisconsin

As part of their participation, DMC Action Network sites agree to communicate regularly with their peers, to collaborate to solve problems, and to implement at least two strategic innovations that are likely to have an impact on DMC. Through regular reports, teleconferences, an e-newsletter, an e-mail listserv, and an annual conference, the sites share their implementation experiences, compare strategies and results, get questions answered, and build a peer-to-peer learning network around these strategic innovations. Strategic innovations being modeled by DMC Action Network sites include:

- *Data innovations*, including improvements in routine tracking and reporting of the data needed to understand and monitor DMC, and in collecting and reporting DMC Performance Measures.

- *Cultural/language competency and community responsiveness innovations*, including cultural competency training for staff, translation of forms and notices, and community outreach and engagement efforts.
- *Pre-adjudication screening and diversion innovations*, including standardized detention risk screening and expansion of accessible and culturally relevant detention alternatives.
- *Post-disposition innovations*, including graduated sanctions for probation violators and measures to enhance the success of disposition options for youth of color.

The Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network is an effort to establish a leadership community at the forefront of mental health and juvenile justice issues.

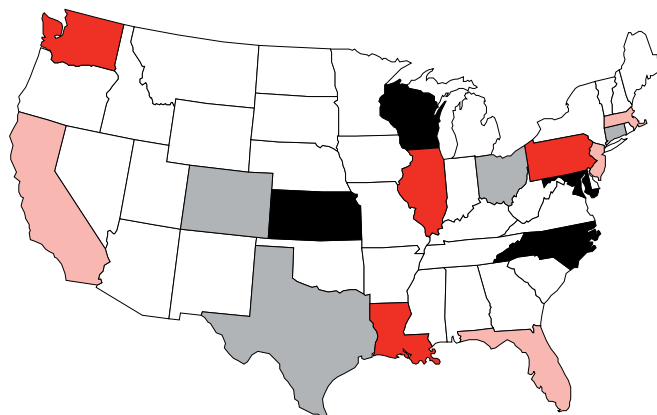
Created in 2007 as a forum for developing and exchanging ideas and strategies to identify and meet the mental health needs of young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, the Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network is coordinated by the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice at Policy Research, Inc. It is intended to foster the sharing of ideas, information, resources, and expertise; to stimulate the development of new and innovative approaches to problems; and to disseminate what is learned nationally. Over time, Action Network participants will individually and collectively help to shape the way the nation as a whole responds to the mental health needs of court-involved youth.

The Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network includes teams representing the states participating in the Models for Change initiative and from four additional states:

- Connecticut
- Colorado
- Illinois
- Louisiana
- Pennsylvania
- Ohio
- Texas
- Washington

## Action Network States

- Models for Change Core States
- Juvenile Indigent Defense Action Network States
- DMC Action Network States
- Mental Health Action Network States



In addition to individual projects, each state participating in the Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network is collaborating with other teams in strategic innovation groups. One such group is focusing on front-end diversion, implementing such measures as crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers, urgent response teams in schools, and specialized mental health probation programs. A workforce development group seeks to improve the system's capacity to recognize and respond to youth with mental health needs through comprehensive mental health training and education. A family and youth engagement group is developing multiple approaches to family strengthening and involvement, including training juvenile justice staff and stakeholders on how to engage and partner with families, educating families on how to become effective advocates for their children, and developing resources and tools for juvenile justice staff and families to support these training and education initiatives.

**The Juvenile Indigent Defense Action Network seeks to develop and implement new solutions and strategies to improve the delivery systems of legal services to juvenile justice-involved youth and to strengthen and enhance juvenile indigent defense nationwide.**

The Juvenile Indigent Defense Action Network, launched in 2008 and coordinated by the National Juvenile Defender Center, brings together defenders, policymakers, judges, and other stakeholders to share the latest information and resources on juvenile indigent defense, foster the development and exchange of ideas, and engage in innovative strategies targeted at improving access to and quality of representation for children in juvenile delinquency proceedings.

Juvenile Indigent Defense Action Network members represent the core states participating in the Models for Change initiative and four other competitively selected states:

- California
- Florida
- Illinois
- Louisiana
- Massachusetts
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Washington

Teams participating in the Network are primarily focusing their energies on (1) developing and implementing strategies to improve juveniles' access to skilled defenders and (2) establishing an infrastructure of state, regional, and local resource centers to support the work of those defenders. Teams working to improve juveniles' access to counsel have implemented strategies to accelerate the appointment process to ensure representation at juvenile detention hearings, create presumptions of indigence to facilitate early appointment of publicly paid counsel, reduce waivers of counsel, and increase post-dispositional and appellate representation. Teams working to create juvenile defender resource centers seek to foster a more cohesive juvenile defender community—with access to training, technical support, mentoring, best practice information, motions banks, listservs, hotlines, data and case management innovations, and other resources to keep defenders connected and engaged, improve their practice, and support their participation in juvenile justice planning and public policy bodies. Through group meetings, monthly calls, contributions to a quarterly newsletter, and participation in a listserv, the Network is also actively collaborating on other work, including the creation of best practice standards for juvenile defenders and a week-long, intensive juvenile training immersion protocol.

**While their work is at different stages of completion, all three Action Networks already appear to have succeeded in establishing and promoting useful practice innovations, disseminating knowledge, and building learning and leadership networks that will be of permanent benefit to youth who come in contact with the juvenile justice system.**