

ModelsforChange
Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

***Measurable Progress
Updates***

Illinois Juvenile Justice Reforms
November 2012 - 2013

NOVEMBER 2013 UPDATES

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I. PREFACE

The last several years have brought about tremendous changes in our understanding of adolescent development and its impact on youthful offending. A major catalyst for these changes was research supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation that established a scientific base of knowledge for the causes, treatment and prevention of juvenile delinquency. In an effort to use this research to assist juvenile justice stakeholders improve their responses to youth crime, the MacArthur Foundation established the Models for Change initiative, a national juvenile justice reform program aimed at promoting more rational, fair and effective juvenile justice systems. Illinois was selected as one of four “core” Models for Change states based on its tradition of juvenile justice leadership, community and civic engagement, ongoing reform efforts, and receptivity to change. Since 2005, the goal of the Illinois Models for Change initiative has been to design, implement and support an integrated approach to achieving a model juvenile justice system, one in which the needs of youth, victims, families and communities are recognized appropriately, in which youth are treated as individuals with strengths and the capacity to change, in which communities are protected, and in which public and private stakeholders work collaboratively toward a common goal of continuously improving the juvenile justice system.

The Measureable Progress reports summarize some of the key changes in juvenile justice law, policy and practice that have taken place in Illinois during the period 2005 – 2013. These changes have accelerated over the life of the project and include a reduction in secure confinement and greater reliance on community-based alternatives, improved strategies and tools for juvenile justice planning and decision-making at both the state and local levels, expanded juvenile court jurisdiction, and extensive legislative and practice changes around issues as diverse as data collection and analysis, transfer, screening and assessment, indigent defense, restorative justice, diversion, and sentencing.

These changes and others would not have been possible without the collective vision and commitment of juvenile justice partners around the state, including prosecutors, law enforcement officials, judges, probation officers, defenders, service providers, agency leaders, and youth, community and family advocates. Illinois has also benefitted from the expertise and technical assistance provided through the Models for Change National Resource Bank and Action Networks.

Although our state has made tremendous strides in recent years, the goal of moving Illinois closer to a model juvenile justice system has not yet been achieved. Fortunately, Illinois has recently established new and strengthened leadership structures to steward the course of juvenile justice progress going forward. These include the Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, and the Illinois Juvenile Justice Research and Information Consortium.

A sincere thank you to each of you who has or will contribute to meaningful change in our state’s juvenile justice system. This summary of measurable progress acknowledges and celebrates your achievements. It is also intended to serve as a resource for other jurisdictions that seek to make improvements in their juvenile justice systems.

Illinois Models for Change

III. SUMMARY OF ILLINOIS LAW, POLICY AND PRACTICE CHANGES

Note: This compendium of progress is an effort to summarize major changes and activities occurring in Illinois since November 2012. It is a companion document and update to the October 2012 *Measureable Progress Report*. Many, but not all, of these efforts were spearheaded by Models for Change and its local, state and national partners.

ADJUDICATION AND SENTENCING

Judicial Sentencing Options Expanded

The General Assembly voted to expand sentencing options to allow delinquency judges to utilize more informal, less punitive approaches in HB3172. The bill allows a delinquency judge to enter an order of “continuance under supervision” prior to trial, if there is no objection by the youth, family or prosecutor or even after a finding of delinquency, if the court determines that the minor is not likely to commit further crimes, that the minor and public would benefit if the youth did not receive a criminal record and that this resolution is more appropriate than a sentence otherwise permitted under the juvenile court act. The statute also allows the court to terminate the continuance under supervision at any time if warranted and to vacate the finding of delinquency if warranted by the conduct of the youth and the “ends of justice.” HB3172 was signed by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn in July 2013 and became PA 98-0062.

AFTERCARE AND REENTRY

Juvenile Aftercare Program Established in Statute

The General Assembly passed legislation establishing by statute – for the first time in Illinois – an aftercare structure for youth leaving custody of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. The bill was modeled upon the pilot program launched by IDJJ in 2012 to remove youth leaving secure facilities from the caseloads of Department of Corrections Parole Agents and instead provide them with specialized, developmentally-appropriate and rehabilitative community-based supervision and support. The bill provides that “every delinquent minor committed to (IDJJ) shall be eligible for aftercare release without regard to the length of time the minor has been confined or whether the minor has served any minimum term imposed. Post-release aftercare supervision shall be administered by (IDJJ), under the direction of the Director.” Establishing a youth-specific aftercare program was spearheaded by the Department to improve outcomes of youth in its care. The step is also in alignment with recommendations of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, in its *Youth Reentry Report*, which strongly recommended the creation of a separate, youth-focused aftercare program to provide appropriate supervision and support to young people on parole, rather than being assigned to IDOC parole agents supervising large caseloads of adults, with limited support or resources to work with youth. The bill was passed by both houses in May 2013 and was signed by the Governor in August 2013 as PA 98-0558.

IDJJ Aftercare Program Going to Scale

As authorized by PA 98-0558 (discussed above), the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice is taking its aftercare program statewide. Created initially as a pilot program in Cook County, beginning in 2012, the aftercare model utilized federal ARRA funds to hire new, specially-trained aftercare specialists to provide case management, supervision and support to youth released from IDJJ facilities. This approach replaces the current statewide model, in which you are supervised by parole agents from the adult corrections system. Based on the impact of the pilot program, Illinois' State Fiscal Year 2014 budget allocates state funds to sustain the Cook County program and to expand its reach to the entire state. Aftercare positions have now been authorized and posted by the state's Central Management Services, with hiring and training in late summer 2013 and full program rollout to occur in early 2014.

Neighborhood Recovery Initiative Programs Continued

The Illinois General Assembly allocated continuation funding to support Neighborhood Recovery Initiatives (NRI) in Cook County. Launched in 2010, the NRI programs are part of a comprehensive effort to help strengthen and revitalize Illinois' urban communities. Based largely on feedback from the Governor's Anti-Violence Commission, NRI focuses on Illinois' most vulnerable neighborhoods and offers job and education opportunities, mentoring, parenting education and other support to youth and young adults returning to Chicago and suburban communities from the state's corrections facilities. The legislature allocated funding in the both FY13 and FY14 to continue the programs and, in 2012, tapped the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority to oversee and evaluate the programs.

APPEALS

Juvenile Appeals Expedited

In February 2013, the Illinois Supreme Court adopted new rules to significantly expedite appeals in juvenile delinquency matters, at the urging of Models for Change partners and the Illinois State Bar Association. Until now, juvenile cases were placed on appellate dockets on a "first in / first out" basis, in a queue with adult criminal cases. By the time juvenile appeals were resolved, individual issues were often moot, with youth having served full sentences. The challenges posed by these extended timelines have also limited development of a robust body of case law and appellate guidance to trial judges, prosecutors and defenders. Under new Supreme Court Rule 660A, effective May 1, 2013, expedited timetables and processes will govern filing, briefing and resolving appeals in delinquency cases, placing delinquency appeals on similar footing with other cases involving children, including child welfare and custody matters.

COMMUNITY-BASED ALTERNATIVES

Redeploy Illinois Funding Expanded

Illinois' State Fiscal Year 2014 budget significantly increases the Redeploy Illinois program budget, from \$2.38 million in SFY 2013 to \$4.88 million in SFY 2014. Redeploy Illinois was created by Public Act 93-0641 and implemented in 2005, with the support of Models for Change grantees and advocacy partners, to provide a financial incentive for the use of community-based services to youth and families, rather than reliance upon commitments to the state's Department of Juvenile Justice. Counties participating in Redeploy Illinois receive state funds to create or expand community-based programs and commit to a 25 percent reduction in the number of juveniles committed to state facilities from those counties. Youth diverted from the juvenile prison system remain in their home communities and receive comprehensive services that include counseling, substance abuse and mental health treatment, life skills education, and cognitive therapies. Since the creation of Redeploy, the DJJ population has been reduced from 1500 to under 900 youth, with the current population at its lowest level in two decades.

Adult Redeploy Illinois

The success of the juvenile Redeploy program served as a catalyst for the creation of the Adult Redeploy Illinois program, which provides resources to reduce unnecessary sentences to the Department of Corrections. While the program serves adults, many of those clients comprise a "young adult" population from 18 – 24 who would otherwise be incarcerated in the state's overcrowded prison facilities. The FY 2014 appropriation for Adult Redeploy Illinois was passed at the Governor's requested level of \$7 million in general revenue funds, up from \$6 million (\$2 million general and \$4 million in one-time federal funds) in FY 2013. The FY 2014 appropriation will fund continuation of the program in 12 counties (including Cook), bring on 25 more counties, and provide planning grants to additional counties not yet in the program. Between January 2011 and March 2013, 12 counties have diverted nearly 1,000 people from IDOC, with a net savings of almost \$17 million.

Redeploy Illinois – Cook County Participation

The General Assembly passed HB2401 in May 2013 to allow the Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board and the Illinois Department of Human Services to work with Cook County officials to target Redeploy resources to particular neighborhoods or areas within the County. This modification of the Redeploy statute, signed by Governor Quinn in July 2013, is expected to facilitate the participation of Cook County, which commits the largest number of youth to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, in the Redeploy program without unreasonable risk of penalties for failure to reduce county-wide commitments. Cook County stakeholders are working through a Redeploy planning process as a precursor to seeking full program participation.

Youth Outreach Services Funded to Provide Youth Job Opportunities

Youth Outreach Services, a Models for Change Illinois grantee, received funding from the Chicago Public Safety Action Committee to provide summer youth programs. This “first wave” of \$1.7 million in grants to 11 local nonprofit organizations to provide mentoring, conflict resolution, and job training to more than 3,000 Chicago youth in over 20 neighborhoods. Participating youth also receive financial literacy training and are paired with a mentor for the duration of the program. The grants are the first in an effort launched by the Office of the Mayor to create a public-private partnership to raise \$50 million in funding to invest in programs to help Chicago's most at-risk youth by giving them positive alternatives. The programs will be evaluated for efficacy and impact by the University of Chicago Crime Lab.

Funding for New Intensive Reentry Strategies

In April 2013, Illinois allocated \$350,000 in Justice Assistance Grant funding, through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, to the City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services to provide job training, work experience, cognitive behavioral therapy and intensive mentorship support to a population of “high risk” former offenders and gang members, with a focus on young adults returning from incarceration. Unlike many programs, these resources will not exclude people with convictions for violent offenses. The City will provide matching funds for a comprehensive evaluation by the University of Chicago and, based on results, may be expanded as part of the City’s violence reduction efforts.

State-Wide Summer Jobs Program

The SFY2014 state budget includes \$14 million on state general revenue funds to the Summer Youth Jobs Programs for at-risk and justice-involved youth, operated by the Illinois Department of Human Services. These programs will provide paid job opportunities and training resources to youth across Illinois and are expected to complement the other jobs and summer programs for youth funded through the city of Chicago.

DATA AND INFORMATION

Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission Supports Juvenile “Data Warehouse”

The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission has earmarked funding to create a juvenile “Data Warehouse” in partnership with the Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The Warehouse will produce data analysis to assist Illinois’ juvenile justice practitioners and policy makers in understanding youth in contact with state and local justice agencies and system responses to those young people. While Illinois has several robust state-level data systems, data from those systems is not harvested or matched on a regular basis to help identify juvenile justice trends or to meet the needs of youth and communities across the state. The Data Warehouse seeks to fill this gap. State and local stakeholders, policy makers and practitioners participating in the Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council and the Illinois Juvenile Justice Research and Information Consortium will be asked to provide guidance, feedback and priorities for the project, as members of a Juvenile Justice Data Initiative Workgroup convened by the Commission.

NCSC Supports Information-Sharing Pilot

The National Center for State Courts is providing financial and technical assistance to develop technical and policy infrastructure that allows the exchange of data on youth who are involved in the state's child welfare system and also committed to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice due to delinquency-system involvement. The Illinois Juvenile Identity Matching Project was launched in late 2013 with the support of NCSC, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission and the state's executive branch agencies, including the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. The project will utilize federal technical standards, including the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) to create middleware and policies that facilitate the appropriate sharing of information between IDJJ and DCFS, with the goal of improving care and outcomes for youth served by both systems.

Chicago Youth Data Report Released

Project NIA's Chicago Youth Justice Data Project released "*Policing Chicago Public Schools 2: School-Based Arrests 2011 and 2012*" in May 2013. The report updates prior data releases and publishes difficult-to-obtain data from the Chicago Police Department on the types of offenses and demographics (including gender, age and race) of youth arrested on CPS properties in calendar years 2011 and 2012. Project NIA also worked with students from Loyola University to create an interactive application that allows individuals to search for crime and arrest data by school for the 2011-2012 school year. Established in 2009, Project NIA is an advocacy, organizing, public education, research, and capacity-building organization with the long-term goal of ending youth incarceration. Project NIA launched the Data Project to provide data-rich profiles of neighborhoods most significantly affected by the juvenile justice system.

IDJJ's Youth 360 Near Completion

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice is nearing completion of its new data system, called "Youth 360." The system will replace the Department's antiquated "Juvenile Tracking System," which was originally created in the 1980s to capture and track primarily demographic and offense information. The new program will capture all the previous data, but will also include the capacity for IDJJ staff to record and share more robust information on a youth's needs, assessment results and individualized caseplans. When fully operational, the data system will incorporate IDJJ's new "Youth Development Plan" to guide care of youth in facilities and in the community, following release. Youth 360 is expected to assist IDJJ administrative staff in managing the work and outcomes of the Department, allow front-line staff to access and share information more effectively, and provide external advocates with more data on the youth in IDJJ care and the state's interaction with those youth. This project builds on IDJJ's Models for Change grant to improve data capacity and is bolstered by a grant from the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission which provides data specialists who can communicate IDJJ's goals for individualized, rehabilitative services to youth to the system programmers.

DUALLY-INVOLVED YOUTH

Statewide LEAD Conference

The Illinois Collaboration on Youth and the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission partnered with the Indian Oaks Academy to present the first Illinois LEAD Conference at Kankakee Community College in June 2013. This conference, modeled on the Georgetown Public Policy Institute and Center for Juvenile Justice Reform LEAD Conference, brought together nearly 100 leaders in the child protection and juvenile delinquency fields to explore effective support of dually-involved youth and families. The conference featured four issues – including courts, families, education and community engagement – and included Models for Change grantees, leaders, projects and reform models. Conference participants will join facilitators for monthly conference calls following the conference, to encourage follow-through on ideas and partnerships generated at the conference itself.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

Adolescent Domestic Battery “Typology” Tool Undergoing Validation

The National Youth Screening and Assessment Project, with support from the MacArthur Foundation and in partnership with the Illinois Models for Change teams in Cook and DuPage counties is conducting a multi-state validation of the “typology” tool developed for use with families in contact with the justice system. The tool – and the cross-state validation work – will assist crisis responders, probation officers and others in diverting families experiencing ADB from the justice system, when possible, reducing unnecessary detention and incarceration and better responding to the needs of victims and families. To develop more informed, individualized responses to families experiencing ADB, site leaders worked closely with the National Center for Juvenile Justice Technical Assistance providers to map the dynamics and characteristics of families experiencing ADB and establish a “typologies” tool to aid in case management, treatment planning, training and development of a continuum of services for youth and families in crisis. This typology matrix relies on several key historic, emotional, behavioral, situational and other factors present in families experiencing ADB, and includes five distinct categories, with a guide to interventions most appropriate for each category.

FAMILY AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Youth Advisory Board Launched by IJJC

The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission launched the IJJC Youth Advisory Board – the first in the history of the SAG – to engage young people affected by the state’s juvenile justice system in system improvement efforts and to empower youth to tell their stories, select priorities and pursue reforms. Comprised of youth members of the Commission as well as a larger network of youth leaders, the Board has begun to organize a statewide coalition of youth and has presented its work to the Coalition for Juvenile Justice in May 2013. Beginning in 2014, the Board will oversee “mini-grants” for youth-focused projects and is playing a leadership role in selecting the Commission’s overall priorities and strategies.

INDIGENT DEFENSE

CFJC Receives MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions

The Children and Family Justice Center of Northwestern University's Bluhm Legal Clinic was one of 13 organizations in five countries receiving a MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions in 2013. Each year the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation makes grants to exceptional organizations making key contributions to fields that are core to the Foundation's work. In awarding \$750,000 to support the Center's infrastructure and communication strategies, the Foundation recognized CFJS's dual focus as a Model for Change grantee to provide zealous individual advocacy and contribute to sustainable and systemic policy reform.

JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION

Illinois Raises the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction

Governor Quinn signed HB2404 in July 2013 to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction in Illinois to 18 for youth charged with felonies. HB2402 passed by wide margins in both houses of the Illinois General Assembly, following release of a statutorily-required report by the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission documenting the impact of Illinois' move in 2010 to raise the age for youth charged with misdemeanors. (P.A. 95-1031 (2010); 705 ILCS 405/5-120). PA 98-0061 endows juvenile courts with original jurisdiction in all cases for youth under the age of 18, except for those subject to presumptive or automatic transfer under the Juvenile Court Act. The multi-year effort to gather data to document the need to raise the age and to demonstrate the impact on juvenile courts and youth was led by Models for Change partners and the Commission.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

IJJC to Fund Local Juvenile Justice Councils

Illinois' Juvenile Court Act encourages – but does not require or provide fiscal support for – the creation of local Juvenile Justice Councils to bring together local justice system leaders, community members, youth, families, service providers, educators and other stakeholders to prevent and address juvenile delinquency effectively and efficiently. Because this model of local governance, collaboration and data-driven decision-making has proven effective in Models for Change demonstration sites and other communities, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission has allocated federal funding to support councils in the development of data-driven, collaborative local juvenile justice plans which guide future system improvement efforts. In 2014, project sites will create local juvenile justice plans and policies to appropriately divert youth and families from the justice system while maintaining public safety, intervening effectively with youth who do become involved in the justice system and ensuring that the justice system produces positive outcomes for young people, victims of youth crime and the community.

Leadership Council Establishes Priorities and Focused Workgroups

The Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council was launched in July 2012 with Models for Change support to create a sustainable locus of leadership and collaboration among a key group of juvenile justice thought-leaders and decision-makers. The Council met quarterly in the second half of 2012 to begin to connect juvenile justice stakeholders with one another, promote communication, identify research and information needs, set system improvement priorities, and evaluate the state's progress toward a fair, rational and effective juvenile justice system. In January 2013, the Council identified four priorities (and four corresponding workgroups) for maintaining and enhancing system improvement momentum: data, youth and family engagement, behavioral health and diversion. Each workgroup has identified priorities and key strategies to guide its work through 2014. The Council is co-chaired by two Illinois Supreme Court Justices and the Director of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice.

Research and Information Consortium Launched

The Illinois Juvenile Justice Information and Research Consortium, established with Models for Change resources, held its first annual research forum in February 2013. The Consortium, which complements the structure and work of the Leadership Council, will work collaboratively among its members and with other change agents to identify Illinois juvenile justice system data and research needs, conducts and supports research that is policy and practice relevant, and assists in the process of assessing and reporting on the impact of policy and practice changes in the state. The Consortium includes state agencies, research institutions, and individual researchers who collectively have the experience and expertise needed to provide high quality juvenile justice data and research to policy-makers, justice-system stakeholders, and the public. The Consortium has established a juvenile justice research listserv and has begun producing information briefs to provide information and data to the Leadership Council and its workgroups.

Cook County Justice for Children Launches

Cook County Justice for Children launched in 2012 as a "successor" to the Jane Adams Juvenile Court Foundation. CCJC engages a board of knowledgeable citizens to promote transparency of the administration of the Cook County Juvenile Court and Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. It advises the court on effective court protocol and procedures based on best scientific knowledge and practice; raises public awareness and understanding of the court, the detention center, and the children and families they serve and works to ensure public and child safety while minimizing the number of youth removed from their families and exposed to detention, incarceration, or other public care.

The governing board includes citizen strategy teams charged with addressing specific issues relevant to achieving its mission. The governing board will report all approved recommendations to the Chief Judge, the Cook County Board, and the public as appropriate with an eye toward creating both public will and effective strategies for their implementation.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Commission Chair Authors Monthly JJIE Column

Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission Chair George Timberlake was tapped as a monthly columnist for the Juvenile Justice Information Exchange, posting articles on a wide range of juvenile justice issues, including balanced and restorative justice, school discipline policies and the efficacy of community-based support and services for justice-involved youth. The Juvenile Justice Information Exchange is an initiative of the Center for Sustainable Journalism at Kennesaw State University. The Center's mission is to support high-quality, ethically-sound journalism. To fulfill this mission the Center actively produces, researches and nurtures innovative ideas, new projects and strategic partnerships. The Juvenile Justice Information Exchange is the Center's premiere project.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES

IJJC Receives Federal Support to Address Disparities

In September 2013, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs awarded \$100,000 to the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission under the federal Disproportionate Minority Contact Community and Strategic Planning (DMC CASP) Project. DMC CASP funding supports state and local initiatives that prioritize DMC reduction throughout the juvenile justice system. The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission has established two goals for this award: to build awareness among system practitioners of systemic racial and ethnic disparities in the state's juvenile justice systems and to improve local and statewide data collection in order to sufficiently identify DMC issues and adequately measure progress toward DMC reduction through community-led strategies.

Mandates to Collect Race and Ethnicity Data Passed

SB 1598, passed by the legislature and signed by the governor as PA 98-0528 expands the collection of race and ethnicity data by the criminal and juvenile justice systems in Illinois. Under the bill, all state and local police agencies would be required to identify and report, as accurately as possible, the race and ethnicity of each individual arrested. The legislation emphasizes the importance of self-reporting of race and ethnicity through the use of a standardized questionnaire, whenever possible. If self-identification is refused, arresting officers will deduce an individual's racial background and report it, indicating whether the form was completed by the arrestee or arresting officer. Under the statute, this arrest data must be submitted to the Illinois State Police daily. The bill imposes similar data collection mandates at other decision points, including corrections, probation and community-based programs. The data will be reported annually to both the state legislature and the governor. SB1598 was an outgrowth of the Illinois Racial and Ethnic Impact Task Force, formed in 2011 to devise practical solutions in standardizing the collection and analysis of racial data by the state criminal justice and corrections system.

Illinois Deemed Compliant with the JJDP Act

In 2012, Illinois was found to be out of compliance with the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act's core requirement to analyze and address Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) with the state's juvenile justice system. This finding of non-compliance by the Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention was based largely on gaps in the state's juvenile justice data, particularly with regard to court data. Non-compliance reduces the state's access to federal juvenile justice funds and imposes limitations on how remaining funds can be expended. In Spring 2013, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission completed a state-wide DMC assessment and submitted an appeal of the initial finding of non-compliance. While the state's appeal to OJJDP was successful, the Office and the Commission remain concerned about and focused on significant gaps in the state's juvenile justice data systems, which hamper efforts to understand and address the disproportionate impact of justice system policies on youth and families of color. The final report will be released to stakeholders in summer 2013, with strategic DMC reduction and data strategies to be implemented in response to the findings.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission Assumes JABG Funding Administration

The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, which serves as the "State Advisory Group," pursuant to state and federal statute, assumed oversight of the state's Juvenile Accountability Block grant funding in July 2013. Previously, the Commission was charged with administration of the state's JJDP Act funding and with providing guidance to the Governor, General Assembly, state agencies and other policy makers on juvenile justice matters. Since a series of appointments of experienced juvenile justice practitioners, youth advocates and community leaders strengthened the Commission in 2010, the Commission has issued a comprehensive study of the state's youth reentry / parole system, allocated funding to support the transition of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice from an adult-corrections model to a rehabilitative model, issued a series of system and program improvement grants and developed pilot projects to demonstrate the efficacy of community-based aftercare services. In May 2013, the Commission issued its comprehensive report on the state's efforts to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 18 and the General Assembly passed HB2404 which raises the age of jurisdiction to include youth charged with either misdemeanors or felonies, up to age 18. Based on this growing capacity, the Governor has transferred JABG funding administration to the Commission, to maximize the impact of the state's juvenile justice funding. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and the Illinois Department of Human Services have collaborated extensively to effectuate this designation.

Facilities Closed as Youth Corrections Population Drops

Illinois closed two IDJJ “Youth Centers” in response to plummeting youth populations. IYC Joliet was closed in February 2013 and IYC Murphysboro, which previously utilized a “bootcamp” model, was officially closed in December 2012, following removal of youth from the facility in July 2012. The closures leave six secure IDJJ facilities in Illinois, including the Pere Marquette “step down” facility, the Warrenville girls facility and the Kewanee “special treatment” facility, which is currently designated as the state’s primary facility for youth with sexual offending and / or behavioral health needs. Closure of the Joliet and Murphysboro facilities allows a portion of the cost savings to be invested in improved services for youth while in IDJJ facilities and in improved aftercare and reentry services for youth leaving juvenile prisons. In 2013, IDJJ’s population fell to fewer than 900 youth, the lowest level in more than two decades.

Illinois named a “Comeback State” by the National Juvenile Justice Network

The National Juvenile Justice Network and the Texas Public Policy Foundation named Illinois one of nine “comeback states” for reducing reliance on incarceration and detention. Illinois joined California, Connecticut, Ohio, Mississippi, New York, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin as states in which youth incarceration rates spiked in the 1980s and 1990s but were then reduced through the implementation of policies and practices which keep youth in their home communities, employ evidence-based alternatives to incarceration and restructure juvenile justice funding, policy and practice. The report, released in June 2013, examines each state’s efforts to reduce reliance on costly, ineffective and unnecessary confinement of young people in secure facilities and instead to implement more rehabilitative, individualized and youth-appropriate responses to youth crime.

JHA Issues “Moving Beyond Transition: Ten Findings and Recommendations on IDJJ”

In April 2013, the John Howard Association of Illinois issued “Moving Beyond Transition: Ten Findings and Recommendations on IDJJ” to document the Department’s progress and struggles in fully transitioning from a punitive, corrections model to youth-focused, rehabilitative policies and programs. In the report, JHA highlights accomplishments and ongoing need to address the use of confinement, improve behavioral health and medical care for youth, enhance educational programming and family engagement, create independent oversight and grievance processes for youth, improve the availability and use of data, strengthen reentry and aftercare services. With Models for Change support, John Howard Association staff and trained volunteers regularly tour all facilities in the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. During these tours, monitors observe the challenges faced by both inmates and correctional staff and attempt to ensure that policies are implemented in a way that promotes public safety and youth well-being and rehabilitation. Following each visit, JHA issues a written report that focuses on critical matters such as education, medical and mental health care, disciplinary procedures and the physical condition of the facilities. These widely disseminated reports are read by everyone from lawyers to legislators, wardens to reformers, members of the Governor’s office to members of the public at large; they provide essential transparency and oversight to an otherwise overlooked institution and drive safe and cost-effective juvenile justice reform.

JHA Issues Report on IDJJ’s “Special Treatment” Facility

In August 2013, the John Howard Association released the results of its site monitoring of Illinois Youth Center Kewanee, which serves as the “special treatment” facility for male youth adjudicated delinquent for sex offenses and youth with acute mental health needs. Despite its designation as a treatment facility, Kewanee’s location in central Illinois creates challenges in filling specialized behavioral health positions at the facility and in delivering treatment, education and release-preparation services. As the JHA report also notes, Kewanee also provides maximum security housing to youth transferred due to the closure of IYC Joliet in February 2013. As a Models for Change grantee, JHA provides unique insight, analysis and collaboration to policy makers and practitioners within and outside IDJJ as the state transitions the Department to a youth-appropriate, rehabilitative model which utilizes evidence-based practice to protect public safety and improve youth care and outcomes.

DJJ and ACLU Enter Reform-Focused Consent Decree

The American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois and the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice have entered into a “provisional agreement” to improve conditions and services for young people confined at state-run juvenile justice facilities across Illinois. The settlement, reached in a federal class action suit filed by the ACLU in September 2012, calls for the development of a specific remedial plan to fix inadequate conditions and services for youth, based on the investigation conducted by three independent court-appointed experts. In accordance with the agreement, the experts filed reports in September 2013 describing living conditions, disciplinary practices, educational resources and behavioral health services available to youth in the state’s six IDJJ facilities. Based on these reports, the parties will file a proposed remedial plan with the court in early 2014. Upon court approval, the plan will be implemented by the Department, and monitored by the court-appointed experts and the ACLU.

STATUS OFFENDERS/TRUANCY

Addressing Truancy in Chicago Public Schools

The General Assembly created a new multidisciplinary body to provide policy guidance on truancy in the Chicago Public Schools, in spring 2013. HJR001 creates the Chicago Truancy Task Force, to include members of the General Assembly as well as representatives of City, County and State government, including the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. The Task Force will be staffed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

AFTERWORD

Any effort to catalogue a list of changes in law, policy and practice inevitably means that somewhat arbitrary decisions must be made as to how those efforts should be organized. For example, Illinois' expanded to use of scientifically-validated screening and assessment instruments to identify mental health disorders in youth might logically fit under several headings, including mental health, evidence-based practices, and secure confinement. In this summary, a decision was made to include each change or activity under only one heading. Readers and users of the document should contact the Models for Change initiative to suggest amendments and/or make corrections or clarifications. Suggestions may be sent to Diane Geraghty at dgeragh@luc.edu or Lisa Jacobs at ljacobs@luc.edu.