

Illinois Juvenile Justice Research and Information Consortium

Briefing Document

Responding to Youth and Families in Crisis: Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services (CCBYS)

This summary of Illinois' youth and family crisis response program is one in a series of briefing documents highlighting key programs or components of the state's juvenile justice system. These briefing documents are intended to inform and assist researchers, policy makers and practitioners and to respond to queries posed by the Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council.

Overview: The Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services Program (CCBYS) is Illinois' primary crisis response system to prevent young people from entering either the child welfare or juvenile justice (delinquency) systems unnecessarily. CCBYS is a statewide program created by Illinois statute and funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services to designate a community-based service provider in every Illinois county or community to provide immediate crisis intervention programs for runaways, youth locked out of their homes or in conflict with parents or caregivers, and young people in immediate physical danger.

- Law enforcement, schools, families, hospitals and others refer youth in crisis to the program rather than arresting, detaining or referring the youth to the justice system for services.
- A CCBYS worker responds on-site within 60 -90 minutes, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The CCBYS provider works to immediately de-escalate the crisis, stabilize the situation and plan for longer-term resolution of the challenges facing the young person and family.
- Locally designed and led, with state funding and support, CCBYS is an essential part of the safety net for kids in danger and an essential resource to law enforcement and the courts, who depend on the program to divert youths from costly and potentially harmful arrest, detention or child welfare system involvement into community-based supports and services.
- This crisis response program is premised on consistent research showing that unnecessary arrest or detention of young people fails to address underlying causes of "status offending" or family crises and, instead, harms young people and families and wastes scarce justice-system resources.

CCBYS Services: In addition to immediate crisis intervention and de-escalation services, CCBYS workers help young people secure emergency housing if needed and follow up with counseling, case management, and links to resources in the community. Sometimes CCBYS workers help families work through conflicts that result in a youth running away or being kicked out of her home. Other times, CCBYS programs work with families experiencing acute mental health or substance abuse problems, trauma and cycles of abuse or violence. At all times, the goal is to keep young people and families safe and to find practical, community-based and individualized solutions and services to address a family's needs, produce positive outcomes and avoid unnecessary arrest, detention, incarceration or DCFS involvement. The 24-hour crisis intervention response system is available in emergency situations for referrals from youth, parents/guardians, police, courts, schools, Safe Place and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at the following toll free number: **877-870-2663**.

The CCBYS *mandatory / core population* is youth ages 11 – 17 who are:

- Absent from home without consent of parent, guardian or custodian;
- “Beyond the control” of their parents/guardians or custodians in circumstances which constitute a substantial or immediate danger to the minor's physical safety;
- Unwilling to return home and without access to an alternative voluntary residential placement; or
- Denied access to the home, with parents or guardians refusing to make provisions for another living arrangement.

In addition to this mandated population, CCBYS *may* provide services to other youth, including:

- Youth who have committed a delinquent offense and are referred by local law enforcement or probation departments;
- Station-adjusted youth (i.e. arrested but not referred to court) or placed on probation supervision to prevent further involvement in the juvenile justice system;
- Youth at high risk of violating probation/parole or re-offending;
- Youth with risk-taking behavior (gang involvement, violence, drugs, etc.);
- Youth with incarcerated parents or siblings;
- Homeless youth;
- Youth who present as "medium or low risk" on the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) and require intervention services; and
- Youth in need of truancy intervention services.

CCBYS Outcomes: In 2012, CCBYS programs served 6,373 youth, with 44% of cases in Chicago and Cook County. About half of the youth served each year are referred by local law enforcement, with an additional 25% referred by families or the youth themselves. Schools and afterschool programs were the third-largest referral source. The impact is significant:

- 85% of youth return home or to a family-approved living arrangement
- Less than 6% end up in secure confinement or as wards of the state (DCFS)
- 77% successfully complete their case plans
- The average time in the program is just over 4 months

Cost Savings: In addition to providing support to extremely vulnerable youth, CCBYS programs save substantial money. Without CCBYS programs, many or most CCBYS clients would become involved in the state's child welfare or delinquency systems, simply because law enforcement or schools have few other viable alternatives, services or community-based support.

- The annual cost per youth in DCFS care is \$36,174.
- The approximate cost for a two week stay in an Illinois detention center is \$4,200.
- Commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice averages over \$98,000 per year.
- The average cost-per-youth in CCBYS services is \$1,733.

CCBYS funding has been cut by 39% since 2009, straining this critical safety net. While the Governor's SFY2014 budget proposes funding CCBYS at a flat level from SFY2013, further cuts may be proposed as the state's budget is negotiated. For more comprehensive information on the Illinois Department of Human Services CCBYS programs , see <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30768>

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For more information on Illinois Models for Change, go to www.modelsforchange.net.