

Profile of Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Funding: Illinois

Overview

The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission (IJJC) serves as Illinois' federally-mandated state advisory group (SAG). The group administers the state's JJDPA funds and provides the governor, General Assembly and other policy makers with recommendations for improving and supporting the state's juvenile justice system. The IJJC reports to the governor and state legislature on its work, including the expenditure of funds granted by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and on the status of the state's compliance with the four core requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA).¹

Illinois is currently in compliance with the core requirements but relies heavily on the federal juvenile justice investment to maintain compliance by, among other measures, ensuring that status offenders² are not held in secure confinement, and ensuring that youth are not held in adult facilities, nor come in contact with adult offenders.

Unfortunately, significant cuts in the federal investment in juvenile justice nationwide have put the important work of the IJJC in jeopardy. Between FY2010 and FY2014 alone, Illinois experienced a 43 percent reduction in its Title II and JABG funding. Funding levels have continued to diminish since that time, with allocations cut by a quarter of a million dollars between FY13 and FY14 alone.

**Title II and JABG
Funding FY10:
\$2.45 million**

**Title II and JABG
Funding FY14:
\$1.39 million**

**Decrease of 43% over
the past five years.**

Because the IJJC also leverages these federal resources to obtain support from private funders, and to enter into partnerships that maximize the reach of the federal juvenile justice investment in Illinois, cuts to the JJDPA funding have a deeper impact than the amount of funds lost might imply.

In all its efforts, the IJJC seeks to not just provide programmatic funding, but to pilot and demonstrate approaches that can have long-term positive impacts on the state's juvenile justice policy and practice. The following are some of the activities and outcomes that the IJJC has funded through federal investment:

¹ The four core requirements of the JJDPA are: (1) deinstitutionalization of status offenders, (2) separation of adults and juveniles in secure institutions, (3) jail removal; and (4) reduction of the disproportionate number of minority youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system (DMC). For more about the four core requirements, go to: http://www.act4jj.org/about_requirements.html.

² A status offender is a juvenile charged with or adjudicated for conduct that would not, under the law of the jurisdiction in which the offense was committed, be a crime if committed by an adult. 28 C.F.R. § 31.304(h) (West 2006).

Supporting Local Governance and Innovation: For the past year, the IJJC has supported Juvenile Justice Councils in ten jurisdictions across Illinois. Local councils gather stakeholders from the system and the larger community to collect and analyze data, evaluate their system's strengths and weaknesses, and develop a plan to improve local juvenile justice. Their work includes an emphasis on understanding and addressing racial and ethnic disparities. In the upcoming year, the number of councils will expand and together the councils will participate in collaborative learning opportunities focused on diversion and high needs youth.

The IJJC supports many local initiatives aimed to protect public safety, prevent or limit system involvement, provide developmentally appropriate services, and set youth on a positive trajectory as they enter adulthood.

- In two downstate, rural jurisdictions, the IJJC has enabled the adoption of trauma informed practices.
- Across the state, the IJJC supports a variety of restorative justice approaches, including the establishment of restorative justice hubs in targeted communities, victim reparation initiatives, the use of peer jury and teen courts, and school-based, parent-facilitated peace rooms.

Responding to Sexual Offenses Committed by Youth: Following a legislative mandate from the Illinois General Assembly, the IJJC devoted its attention to studying youth who come into the juvenile justice system following sexual offending behavior. Its report, "Improving Illinois' Response to Sexual Offenses Committed by Youth: Recommendations for Law, Policy, and Practice," laid out recommendations to support development of best practices in treatment and supervision, along with an explanation of the harmful effects of juvenile sex offender registries.

Developing Models to Address Youth Charged with Domestic Battery: Responding to data indicating an increase in domestic violence incidents with youth as the aggressor between 2002 and 2009; overrepresentation of minority youth arrested for domestic battery; patterns of "overriding" standardized scoring tools to admit youth charged with domestic battery into secure detention; along with a tendency for youth charged with domestic battery to appear multiple times before the court, the IJJC dedicated portions of its federal funding to developing a model to address adolescent domestic battery. This partnership between national, state, and local partners of the Models for Change Initiative, including the National Center for Juvenile Justice and the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project, and three communities across the state, has yielded a new understanding of families in crisis and the underlying factors that result in youth domestic battery charges.

IJJC funding has enabled sites to develop a matrix to classify youth behaviors, which is currently being evaluated in multiple states by the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project, identify a model continuum of services for families in crisis, and conduct safety

planning with youth and families to better respond to their specific needs. Like many of the other initiatives funded by the IJJC, the adolescent domestic battery project seeks to support community-based services that prevent youth and families from entering the justice system unnecessarily, improve outcomes of youth involved in the justice system, and enhance public safety.

Screening and Assessment: Responding to an increase in suicides among incarcerated youth in Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) facilities, IDJJ sought and received support from state and national Models for Change partners to assess the way youth in state juvenile prisons are provided behavioral health care. Among other findings, the resulting report emphasized the importance of individualized screening and assessment of youth and individualized programs of treatment.

In response to the report's recommendations, the IJJC worked closely with IDJJ to develop and support an ambitious plan to implement evidence-based mental health screening and assessment as well as trauma-sensitive, family-focused assessments of youth in state facilities. Over the past year, the IJJC has supported IDJJ's implementation of the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument, a research-based "criminogenic" risk, needs and strengths assessment. At the same time, IDJJ staff are being trained in a holistic, individualized case-planning model. Without continued robust federal support, it is unlikely that the state could sustain its commitment to maintaining these initiatives, which are essential to improving the outcomes of youth in secure care and preserving the safety of communities to which they return.

Planning for Reentry and Building Community-Based Networks for Incarcerated Youth: The IJJC is committed to developing and implementing proven approaches to address the needs of system-involved youth and to increase public safety.

The IJJC spent nearly two years studying the barriers facing youth as they exit IDJJ facilities. The resulting "Youth Reentry Improvement Report of 2011" highlighted areas for improvement in areas of sentencing schemes and release decision-making; reentry supervision models; revocation and due process; and case management models. Since the report's release, the state and IDJJ have made significant progress in implementing recommended reforms. A grant from the Public Welfare Foundation has augmented the IJJC's federal resources in pursuing reentry reforms.

Also, since 2012 the IJJC has dedicated \$1.5 million for grants to non-profit community based service agencies who have provided evidence-based reentry, planning and service delivery. These agencies serve targeted communities with high volume and racial and ethnic disparities at the point of secure confinement. The resulting knowledge gained from these pilot projects has informed IDJJ's ongoing efforts to improve reentry services.