



Juvenile Justice  
Advisory Group

# Annual Report 2022

## New York State Juvenile Justice Advisory Group 2022 Annual Report

The U.S. Congress requires the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) to report to the Governor and Legislature annually. This report fulfills that requirement for 2022.

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## ***I. Introduction and Background***

The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) created the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to support state and local delinquency prevention efforts and juvenile justice system improvement; establish grant programs; and outline federal standards, known as core protections, for the care and custody of justice-involved youth.

Reauthorization of the JJDP in 2018 updated the core protections, restructured the prevention components of the law, expanded OJJDP research and evaluation purposes, and increased reporting requirements and accountability. These changes took effect Oct. 1, 2019, the beginning of the federal fiscal year.

New York State Executive Order 80 established the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) as the required state advisory group for overseeing the development and implementation of the state plan, supervising the distribution of federal delinquency prevention funds and monitoring compliance with federal juvenile justice mandates. Board members are appointed by the Governor and represent a range of juvenile justice stakeholders: criminal justice, human services, court and research professionals, advocates, formerly justice-involved youth, community members and others.

The Executive Order also designates the state Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) as the agency that supervises the preparation of the state's juvenile justice plan, administers the plan and manages federal delinquency prevention funding allocated to New York. The DCJS Office of Youth Justice (OYJ) provides administrative support to the JJAG, and oversees the implementation and monitoring of contracts on the advisory group's behalf.

The Division of Criminal Justice Services and the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) collaborate on certain juvenile justice initiatives. From 2017 through 2019, DCJS and OCFS worked with other state agencies to implement New York's Raise the Age law, which increased the age of criminal responsibility to 18 in two phases: 16-year-olds were no longer charged as adults (Oct. 1, 2018) and 17- year-olds, a year later (Oct. 1, 2019).

The JJAG annually oversees allocation of approximately \$2.1 million in federal grants, which fund delinquency prevention efforts, effective interventions for justice-involved youth, and improvements to youth justice systems. In addition, the JJAG monitors the state's compliance with the four core requirements of the federal law:

- Sight and sound separation of juvenile delinquents from adult offenders.
- Deinstitutionalization of status offenders.
- Removal of juvenile delinquents from adult jails and lockups.
- Reducing disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system.

## ***II. Federal Mandates: Compliance and Monitoring***

States receiving federal Title II formula grant funding must comply with those four core protections. DCJS contracts with the state Commission of Correction (the Commission or SCOC) to

monitor and ensure compliance with the following requirements, which are related to permissible methods of confinement for youth.

- **Deinstitutionalization of status offenders** prohibits placing a youth who has been determined to be a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) in secure detention or correctional facilities.
- **Separation of juveniles from adult offenders** requires that juveniles who are alleged or found to have been delinquent and/or designated as a PINS must not have any contact with adult inmates awaiting trial or convicted of a crime.
- **Removal of juveniles from adult jails and lockups** prohibits using adult jails and lockups to confine juveniles for any length of time.

The Commission has statutory authority to monitor police lockups, local county correctional facilities and state prisons. Existing New York State laws meet or exceed federally mandated requirements for the custody and detention of status offenders and non-offenders; separation of juveniles from adult offenders; and removal of juveniles from adult jails and lockups. As a result, facilities statewide either meet or exceed federal requirements by complying with state law.

SCOC maintains a monitoring schedule that ensures that all adult jails, lockups, and secure facilities for juveniles are inspected at least every three years. These facilities must report certain incidents to the Commission, which reviews them and takes action as deemed appropriate. The state Office of Children and Family Services and New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) are responsible for operating juvenile facilities throughout the state. SCOC and DCJS have agreements in place permitting onsite inspections and reviews of records in all juvenile facilities throughout the state to ensure they are in compliance with federal standards.

New York's strategy for reducing racial and ethnic disparities (R.E.D.) in the youth justice system includes a state-level compliance management effort; support of local reforms; implementation of best practices that are designed to reduce disproportionate minority contact; and technical assistance to local government and nonprofit organizations. Title II funds partially support a full-time, statewide race equity coordinator at DCJS to monitor and improve the reporting of race and ethnicity-related data; identify and provide guidance on implementing best practices; and provide technical assistance and training on racial and ethnic disparities for local and state-level stakeholders.

The race equity coordinator is responsible for monitoring compliance with strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system across the state, using a data-driven process to promote an overall equity initiative that supports training, programming, and changing policy and practice. This includes working with state and local entities to enhance the quality and quantity of data measuring disproportionality, collaborating with localities to investigate root causes of disparity when disproportionality is found and implementing strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities and increase equity.

To accomplish this work, the race equity coordinator provides training and technical assistance to local and statewide partners, helping to identify policies and practices that may contribute to disparate treatment of youth of color in the system. Training includes both the historical

perspective of race equity and the impact implicit bias has on decision making and everyday practice. In 2022, the coordinator:

- Partnered with the DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, which offers the Fundamentals of Probation Practice (FPP) training for new probation officers and trained those individuals about racial and ethnic disparities and the mind science of implicit bias, racial anxiety and stereotype threat.
- Partnered with the DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, which offers Fundamentals of Community Corrections (FCC) training to individuals working in Alternative to Incarceration programs across New York State and trained those individuals about racial and ethnic disparities and the cognitive processes of bias.
- Introduced Healing Centered Engagement as a lens to employ alongside race equity work to highlight the importance of the necessity of systems and individuals to heal from historic and current traumas.
- Presented about racial and ethnic disparities at local and national conferences.
- Supported the Partnership for Youth Justice (PYJ) and other cross-agency groups working to address R.E.D.
- Supported the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) in their efforts to bridge the gap, help elevate and share important research and data that professors and students are undertaking regarding the educational and youth legal systems at Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU).

### ***III. Juvenile Justice Advisory Group Activities***

The JJAG conducted its first quarterly meeting virtually in 2022 and returned to in person meetings for its September and December quarterly meetings. Throughout the course of the year, the JJAG authorized funding concentrating in three main areas: mentoring, equity and healing, and restorative justice. Work also continued on prior approved projects connected to its Strategic Action Plan.

#### **A. Three-Year Plan for Juvenile Justice (2021 – 2023)**

Federal law requires states to develop three-year plans outlining long-range strategies for use of Title II Formula funds. During interim years, states submit annual applications that update accomplishments, provide juvenile justice data and demonstrate compliance with the federal law's core protections. The JJAG approved its three-year plan for 2021 – 2023 and began implementation of its new priority areas.

**PRIORITY AREA 1:** Support efficient coordination, alignment and delivery of services that reflect the priorities of state agencies and the Partnership for Youth Justice throughout New York State: Highlight successful practices and encourage the use of new tools and practices to increase system effectiveness and measure outcomes.

**PRIORITY AREA 2:** Establish and implement youth justice policy priorities: Effectively and proactively serve all youth who encounter the youth justice system, while placing an enhanced

focus on prevention and the following priority areas: racial and ethnic disparities; trauma, healing, and behavioral health; youth- centered services; partnerships with schools; police and community partnerships; and training and certification of youth-serving professionals.

**PRIORITY AREA 3:** Enhance positive youth, family and community impacts and outcomes: Partner with youth, families and communities in youth justice system work to improve outcomes and create meaningful connections for positive outcomes.

### ***Race Equity Work***

The race equity coordinator developed the state's three-year plan to advance racial equity. As a part of the data-driven, outcome-oriented plan, New York State will work to decrease disproportionality of Black youth by 10 percent by increasing the use of diversion. New York State utilized the data from the last two years to identify this target. The state also identified the following youth justice policy and programming priorities for the next few years to achieve this goal, all of which lay the foundation for New York State's

R.E.D. plan for 2021 – 2023:

- Enhance data capacity, collection and analysis to target interventions and measure outcomes.
- Development and implement New York State R.E.D. Advisory Committee Priorities aimed at providing guidance for best practice on R.E.D reduction strategies.
- Provide training and technical assistance for state and local youth justice systems and stakeholders.
- Monitor the implementation of systems change through an equity lens to ensure that all youth benefit from reform efforts regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.

In 2021, the DCJS Office of Youth Justice, Center for Children's Law and Policy, and the Youth Justice Institute also launched the New York State Policy Equity Academy. Teams of youth justice practitioners from Albany, Monroe, Onondaga, Schenectady, and Westchester counties participated in asynchronous and synchronous trainings, with the goal of building their capacities and skills so they can implement programs and policies to improve outcomes for youth of color in their communities. Upon completion of the virtual learning, teams received technical assistance from the Center for Children's Law and Policy, and Youth Justice Institute to develop and implement action plans to increase equity at adjustment (diversion) for Black youth. Plans are currently being implemented, with continued technical assistance being provided throughout 2023. This initiative was funded by the JJAG, federal Delinquency Prevention Programming, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

### ***Race Equity Trainings***

In April, August, October and December, Office of Youth Justice staff provided implicit bias and race equity training for OPCA's Fundamentals of Probation Practice and Fundamentals of Community Practice training for 50 new probation officers and 20 alternatives to incarceration program providers across the state.

### ***Big Brothers, Big Sisters Mentoring Program***

In March 2022, the JJAG approved funding to support targeted mentoring programs by partnering with three Big Brothers Big Sisters sites: Westchester and Putnam; Erie, Niagara and Southern Tier; and Southern Adirondacks. Each of the three sites planned to increase the number of mentor/mentee matches, including virtual and/or community-based activities, and to implement wrap-around services and treatment strategies that would be used to inform additional funding and programming opportunities for mentoring projects. In Westchester and Putnam counties, the Big Futures program was extended to 17 high school students and the mentoring programming added an additional 21 matches. Similarly, the Southern Adirondacks site successfully recruited 25 “Bigs” to serve as mentors, with a target of 50, by the end of the year. There were an additional 15 community-based matches during this grant period, with an average match length of 31.1 months. Erie, Niagara, and the Southern Tier program reported that child and family inquiries increased by 84 percent as a result of this funding, and new matches increased by 19.4 percent. Across all three sites, match lengths averaged 29.75 months with an average retention rate of 85.65 percent, which is higher than the national average.

In December 2022, the JJAG approved additional funding to support mentoring programs across New York State by expanding the partnership with the original three Big Brothers Big Sisters sites, and adding two new ones. Partnering with sites that have implemented evidence-based model programs, and those with excellent outcomes, is intended to drive expansion to other areas that will positively impact youth across the state. While all five sites will support jurisdiction specific programming, the three previously funded sites will “mentor” the two new sites as they build capacity within each of their programs. Programming is expected to begin in 2023.

### ***Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition***

Restorative justice practices are evidence-based practices to repair harm and improve outcomes for youth and communities. Restorative practices intentionally integrate principles of trauma-informed care to advance emotional health and well-being by building neighborhood social capital and equipping neighborhoods to organize based on community needs. Considerable overlap exists between trauma informed care principles (safety; trustworthiness and transparency; collaboration; peer support; empowerment, voice, and choice; and cultural, historical, and gender issues) and the principles of restorative practices (safety; collaboration; repairing harm; emotional healing; the inclusion of all voices as equals). Often restorative justice practices are embedded in specific youth serving settings, e.g., schools, probation departments and, to some extent, the court system. While some restorative practices have utilized community-based organizations, they have rarely been facilitated by individuals who live in the community where events occur.

In March 2022, the JJAG authorized funding for the Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition (ECRJC) to establish and support an innovative practice of embedding restorative practices in the community by training members in restorative justice practices in cities where young people are entering the youth justice system. They developed a network of trained community members, organizations, businesses, and municipalities to address issues that most impact them through restorative practices. The Coalition served as a hub for community training, as well as utilizing community trained individuals for cases with restorative circles and practices that need to be



completed. To increase the diversity of trained individuals and restorative circle facilitators, the Coalition focused on offering this training to people of color. With the funding awarded from the JJAG, the Coalition was able to train 18 community members in restorative practices/circle facilitation and facilitate 27 restorative circles within communities throughout the City of Buffalo.

### ***Equity Champions Certification***

In September 2022, the JJAG authorized funding to develop an Equity Champions Certification program. The primary purpose of the initiative is to increase capacity statewide by creating a network of equity champions to advance awareness and build capacity to ensure equity is at the center of programming and policy development, improvement and/or change, at the state, local and community level. This will be accomplished by implementing a standardized equity-based and healing centered fundamentals curriculum that increases understanding, action planning and leadership for staff across youth-serving sectors. Providing education and skills -- to lessen predictability of youth justice system involvement based upon race and ethnicity -- is central to the program. Planning will take place in 2023, with the goal of launching the program in early 2024.

### ***Healing the Practitioner Learning Series***

At its September 2022 quarterly meeting, the JJAG approved funding to develop a Healing the Practitioner Learning Series. In light of COVID-19, community violence and racial injustice, there has been a lot of focus on what it may take to heal systems. However, it is imperative to also understand what is needed to heal the people that work these very systems. Youth-serving professionals are often charged with managing families in various stages of crisis, which were exacerbated by the pandemic. To support those individuals (who also are experiencing their own personal traumas, losses, etc.), the JJAG approved the development of a virtual training atmosphere for a healing, trauma, and overall wellness for youth-serving practitioners/educators surrounding the dimensions of wellness, including but not limited to: physical, emotional, social, community and purpose. Programming is expected to occur in 2023 and 2024.

### ***Elevating Healing and Advancing Equity Conference***

The JJAG also approved funding in December 2022 for the development and hosting of a conference that would allow for the exploration of research and best practices nationally, while also highlighting best practices and innovations within New York State. This conference will bring together youth-serving stakeholders, practitioners, youth and families to expand knowledge and further identify opportunities for partnership in advancing equity and elevating healing across New York State. The conference will focus on ways that young people and their communities, as well as multi-disciplinary stakeholders, such as law enforcement, probation, education and mental health professionals, etc., can work together to foster individual and collective healing, while combating racial and ethnic disparities. Specifically, the conference will focus on:

- innovative strategies and best practices in operating through an equity lens;
- how systems can foster individual and collective healing;
- the role that community, young people, and healing play in addressing R.E.D.; and
- the business case for advancing equity.

The primary goal of this conference is to help system stakeholders combat racial and ethnic disparities and identify solutions that foster healing through peer-to-peer learning, and expert training. Plenary and workshop sessions will provide participants a hands-on opportunity to explore solutions that have been shown to work in other jurisdictions. The conference is expected to take place in the fall of 2023.

### ***New York State Youth Justice Institute***

In July 2021, the JJAG renewed its funding commitment to the New York State Youth Justice Institute (YJI), which extends through the end of 2023. Also in July 2021, the YJI diversified its funding portfolio through a new MOU established between the University at Albany, which houses the Institute, and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Funding from the new MOU, which was renewed in 2022, supports many of the activities described below, including the inaugural New York State Peer Advisory Council, as well as the research evaluation of “Stepping Stones”—an alternative to placement/alternatives to detention program developed by Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth. Additional funding from federal and private grants awarded to DCJS also provide substantial support to the New York State Policy Equity Academy—an initiative by the YJI, the Center for Children’s Law & Policy, and the Office of Youth Justice. Finally, throughout 2022, the University at Albany continued its support of the Institute by providing funding for faculty and other expert consultants engaged in YJI-related activities, tuition coverage for doctorate students working at the YJI, in addition to student professional development, training, staff equipment, etc. As a result of this combined funding, in 2022 the YJI increased its research and technical assistance capacity by hiring a full-time research and evaluation specialist, in addition to two doctorate student assistants, bringing the total number of doctorate student assistant lines to four.

### ***Vision and Strategic Action Items***

YJI Executive Director Giza Lopes, Ph.D., has established a vision for the Institute to become the premier resource for evidence-informed policy and practice, nationally and beyond, by implementing the following strategies: serve as an information hub for stakeholders; cultivate and continually support practitioners’ commitment to research-informed practices; develop a prolific and ever-growing network of research by investing in future generations of juvenile justice researchers and leveraging the University’s academic expertise; foster and sustain synergy among stakeholders by bringing together government agencies, practitioners and academics to advance and share knowledge, brainstorm innovations, and engage in agenda-setting; and leverage current public investment to attract external funding that will enable the YJI to grow.

In line with each of these strategies, and with intentional effort to increasingly center young people’s voices, their experience, and foster their professional development, the following activities and initiatives have been undertaken or were in the planning stages by the Institute as of December 2022:

## ***Centering youth voice and experience, and fostering their professional development***

### **Activity #1 – Providing opportunities for experiential education for undergraduate and graduate students**

The YJI Scholars Program is a research-focused internship that trains students in a wide variety of research skills, develops their knowledge about youth justice topics, and connects them to relevant work at the state's leading agencies. The YJI refers to its interns as scholars to convey the Institute's commitment to their development as youth justice researchers and professionals. Most Scholars have interned for course credits through the University at Albany, although many have also volunteered or held renumerated positions. The Scholar cohorts are comprised of undergraduate- and graduate-level students from many departments within the University with most coming from the School of Criminal Justice (61%). Scholars have also come from business programs, data sciences, political science, psychology and social welfare majors. Historically, Scholars have assisted in the design and publication of the YJI's main website, microsites, social media, podcasts and interactive dashboards. They have also assisted in the organization of well-attended monthly and ad hoc events. Scholars participate in high-level meetings with stakeholders and are actively involved in research tasks from planning to dissemination. Their contributions have become integral to YJI's work. By December 2022, the YJI had trained 49 undergraduate and graduate Scholars as part of this program, with many continuing on to obtain doctoral or law degrees, entering the police force, or becoming practitioners in the field of youth justice.

### **Activity # 2 – NYS Youth Justice Peer Advisory Council**

In December 2021, with funding from OCFS, the YJI hired a full-time youth specialist to complete the planning process for the inaugural New York State Youth Justice Peer Advisory Council (YJPAC) and begin the recruitment process of its participants. Launched in Spring 2022, the Inaugural YJPAC consists of eight young adults, ages 18-25, with a lived justice system and/or runaway homeless youth experience. Its members come from across the state. The YJPAC's mission is to empower young adults with lived experience to become key advisors on youth justice policy and practice development in New York State.

## ***Training***

### **Activity #3 – YJI Lunch & Learn Webinar Series**

March 2022 marked the second anniversary of the YJI's "Lunch & Learn," a webinar series featuring cutting-edge research experts whose work can benefit youth justice practitioners. As of December 2022, the YI had hosted 25 webinars, with 6,446 registrations across all sessions and garnered many more asynchronous viewings in Facebook and other social media channels. Lunch & Learn webinars have covered diverse themes, such as restorative justice practices, the role of familial supervision in the context of juvenile probation, and system reforms for emerging adults. The audience for this series includes a mixture of academics, youth justice practitioners and educators from across the globe, as well as local, state, and federal employees. Surveys on participants' experiences are overwhelmingly positive. (A second annual report on the series was prepared for DCJS, OCFS, University leadership, and JJAG members and can be made available upon request).

#### **Activity #4 – Centering Racial Equity in Research**

In April 2022, the YJI hosted a workshop for selected researchers from New York State agencies and academia to deepen their abilities to build in a racial equity lens at all stages of their research—from design to data collection and analysis. That training was delivered by two nationally recognized scholars who focus on centering racial equity in research planning and implementation. Provided funding is available and there is approval by the Institute’s Executive Committee, the Institute plans on a new iteration of this training to explore the practical constraints related to collection of race and ethnicity data at different points of the system.

#### **Activity #5 – NYS Policy Equity Academy**

Launched in Summer 2021, the New York State Policy Equity Academy (PEA) represents a new training, technical assistance, and skill-building opportunity for youth justice professionals. It is designed to support local teams in their efforts to implement policies and reforms that target areas of racial and ethnic disparity in the youth justice system. This first iteration of the PEA was developed to target disparity at the adjustment (diversion) system point in New York State, and the initial teams are from the following counties: Albany, Monroe, Onondaga, Schenectady and Westchester. To support this training, the YJI developed a dedicated learning management system, which houses curriculum resources that can be accessed virtually by Academy participants.

The training portion of the Academy was completed in February 2022, and participating teams were awarded YJI certificates. In March 2022, the Center for Children’s Law and Policy and YJI began conducting technical assistance meetings with each team on a semi-monthly basis. The goals of these meetings is to support the teams as they implement R.E.D. reduction work plans developed as part of the initial training course. The technical assistance portion of the Academy will last up to 18 months, and teams will receive up to \$50,000 each to implement their reform plans.

### **Research**

#### **Activity #6 – Participatory Action Research with BIPOC Girls in New York State**

Since Summer 2021, the YJI has partnered with faculty from the University at Albany and Michigan State University to conduct a participatory action research project on the self-described needs and experiences of BIPOC girls across New York State. The study is designed to deepen the understanding of the experiences of girls (including those who identify as femmes, non-binary, and gender nonconforming) in New York’s criminal justice, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems, as well as factors contributing the participants’ healing and resiliency. The project, led by Sarah Mountz, Ph.D., and LeConte Dill, Ph.D., received Institutional Review Board approval in late 2022, and recruitment of participants has begun.

#### **Activity #7 – Local Data Needs Assessment Project**

In Summer 2021, the YJI and OCFS began work to identify needs and gaps in the abilities of New York’s localities to collect, access, analyze and use juvenile justice data in their decision-making processes. YJI is currently implementing a three-phase process to gather information from counties on needs and assets through a statewide survey, which was completed in 2022, as well as focus groups, and on-the-ground observation work planned for 2023.

### **Activity #8 – Stepping Stones Evaluation**

The YJI is conducting a process evaluation of Berkshire Farm's Stepping Stones program. The scope of the evaluation includes data from 2018 in three counties, including Saratoga, Washington and Erie. Data on youth and families in the program will be collected through a survey, interviews, a focus group, case files and program records. So far, the Institute's staff have scanned and redacted all relevant data, and the Institutional Review Board determined the evaluation component is exempt from the review process, allowing the team to begin processing the data in the fall of 2022.

### **Activity #9 – Violence Prevention: Collaborative Efforts**

#### *Evaluability Assessment & Survey of Outreach Workers:*

With support from DCJS' Research Consortium, the YJI has forged a partnership with faculty from the University at Albany to conduct an evaluability assessment of SNUG. The study, led by David Hureau, Ph.D., includes surveys of SNUG outreach workers from 12 sites, to be conducted from Summer 2022 through Spring 2023.

#### *Outreach Workers Professional Certificate:*

Similar to the process for the Policy Equity Academy, the YJI is collaborating with DCJS OYJ to develop a formal YJI certificate course for violence prevention outreach workers in New York State. The initial cohort of students will consist of SNUG outreach workers, with subsequent iterations open to other outreach workers and those interested in becoming outreach workers. The certificate course will launch in late 2023.

#### *SNUG Dashboard prototype:*

Throughout 2022, students at the YJI have been working on an interactive dashboard prototype to be shared with SNUG and DCJS leadership in early 2023. The prototype displays gun violence metrics by locality, as well as SNUG staff-related data.

### **Project RISE**

The YJI has partnered with OYJ to conduct a process evaluation of [Project RISE's](#) roll-out, implementation, planning, and decision-making throughout the project's first five years. This includes working in collaboration with OYJ staff and local stakeholders to assess the use of existing metrics and development new relevant qualitative and quantitative metrics of the project's impacts on the jurisdictions. Wherever feasible, and working collaboratively with a sample of grantees and subgrantees, the Institute will propose tangible recommendations on how grantees and subgrantees can collect relevant, holistic information that will improve their ability to compete for future private, state and federal grant opportunities.

### **Technical Assistance**

#### **Activity #10 – Technical Assistance and Research Assistance that are Responsive to Partners' Needs**

One of the chief objectives of the YJI is to provide technical assistance to its partner agencies and localities in New York State. To facilitate, systematize, and track its receipt of technical assistance requests, the YJI maintains a Technical Assistance Request Portal, which allows stakeholders to request specific assistance and describe needs, timeframes, points of contact

and other relevant information. The portal is accessible on the main page of the YJI's website. All requests are reviewed by the YJI's associate for training and technical assistance and executive director. Examples of technical assistance and research activities that are responsive to our partners' needs include:

#### *Mentoring Dashboard*

Since August 2021, the YJI and OYJ have been collaborating on the development of a statewide mentoring dashboard. The dashboard is designed to serve as an interactive repository of information on programs available for families, service providers and justice stakeholders seeking mentoring services for youth. The dashboard will be launched in January 2023 to mark National Mentoring Month.

#### *Literature Review: Physical Health Issues Affecting Youth Behavior*

As a result of a technical assistance request from the New York State Partnership for Youth Justice, the YJI has created a brief annotated bibliography of research articles and practitioner-based resources pertaining to physical medical issues causing behavioral problems/delinquent behavior in youth. This project was finalized in Fall 2022.

#### *Safe Harbour*

As part of its MOU with OCFS, the YJI has been developing a reflective brief on the implementation processes and successes of the Safe Harbour Act. These efforts have included developing a brief outline, interviewing Safe Harbour implementation stakeholders in four counties, conducting relevant research on the implementation history and context, and writing an initial draft of the brief. Moving forward the YJI will produce a final draft, contract with a graphic designer and marketing consultant, and develop a release/public education strategy in partnership with OCFS.

#### **Activity #11 – Repository of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices**

In 2022, the YJI launched an interactive tool to support practitioners identify evidence-based youth justice and family-focused programs and practices, nationwide. The Evidence-Based Programs and Practices in Youth Justice Clearinghouse was created with the continued support and input of various youth justice stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who directly serve youth. YJI researchers continually maintain/update the resources contained in the dashboard.

#### **Information Hub and Dissemination**

##### **Activity #12 – Web Content and Microsites**

The YJI's website is a dynamic source of information and is routinely updated. The website also hosts area-specific microsites, including one focused on racial justice resources, and another microsite, which will be launched in 2023 to focus on youth gender issues.

##### **Activity #13 – Newsletters and Social Media Presence**

###### *Social Media*

The YJI has a robust presence on social media: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Each week, the YJI publishes "Did you know?" posts on these platforms, as well as other relevant



information. The number of followers on each of these platforms continues to grow and amplifies the presence and brand of the YJI in the state and beyond. We plan to continue investing in this strategy in coming years. The initiative is supported primarily by the efforts of our Scholars.

#### *On the Same Page – Monthly Newsletters*

The Institute routinely publishes a newsletter, “On the Same Page,” which is distributed to over 3,000 unique subscribers. The YJI newsletters feature relevant research, news and evidence-based information to a growing audience. The newsletters include research briefs prepared by YJI Scholars on diverse youth justice topics the Institute has produced several awareness-focused outreach campaigns featuring topics such as gun violence and runaway and homeless youth.

#### **Activity #14 – “Let’s Talk About Youth Justice” Podcast Series**

Each year, YJI Scholars plan and produce a podcast episode for our series, 'Let's Talk About Youth Justice'. Launched in July 2022, this year's episode focuses on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Justice. In this episode, Scholars interviewed staff and leadership from Mediation Matters and the Midwest Center for School Transformation. The resulting conversation focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the “school-to-prison pipeline.” The episode also discusses the role of school-based restorative justice programs.

#### **Activity #15 – “Latinx Youth: A Profile” Issue Brief**

The Institute routinely produces issue briefs on select topics. This year Institute staff produced an issue brief on issues impacting Latinx youth. The brief was launched in September 2022 to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month. Institute staff were invited to present this work to diverse stakeholders.

#### **Activity #16 – News Coverage of Youth Justice Issues**

Over the last three years, YJI Scholars have created a database of youth justice news articles from all over the world. Each article is coded by theme and displayed in an interactive, publicly available dashboard. The dashboard has been accessed over 2,600 times and was independently selected as a ‘featured viz’ by Tableau Public. Next steps for this project include data analysis, identification of trends in media coverage, and exploration of other research questions. YJI graduate students presented preliminary findings of this project at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting in Atlanta, in November 2022.

### **Outreach Efforts and External Funding**

#### **Activity #17 – Committees & Local, State, and National Presence**

YJI staff routinely participates in and provides technical assistance and increased capacity to a variety of state committees and initiatives, including the New York State Partnership for Youth Justice and its subcommittees. Additionally, the executive director and associate for technical assistance routinely identify and engage with relevant national and local stakeholders to introduce them to the work of the Institute and look for collaborative opportunities. In 2022, Executive Director Giza Lopes, Ph.D., was selected as a Fellow of SUNY-wide Hispanic Leadership Institute. Finally, YJI staff presented their work at the National Conference on Juvenile Justice in Pittsburgh in March 2022 and at the American Society of Criminology’s Annual Meeting in Atlanta,

in November 2022. Staff also attended the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges 85th Annual Conference, held in July 2022 in Reno, Nevada, as well as the Indian Child Welfare Act Fourth Annual Conference in Syracuse, N.Y. in September 2022.

### **Activity #18 – External Funding**

The YJI remains committed to seeking funding that will help it grow and move toward self-sustainability. To that end, it has responded to multiple private funding opportunities in 2022. For instance, in collaboration with DCJS' OYJ, SNUG and SUNY Criminal Justice faculty, YJI staff helped develop an application for funding a research evaluation of SNUG. The grant was due in September 2022, and its solicitation focuses on research and practice partnerships between academic research institutions, public agencies and non-profits.

### ***Georgetown Certificate Program – New York State Girl-Centered Practice***

The JJAG approved funding in 2018 that allowed DCJS to solicit localities interested in sending teams to Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform's certificate programs aimed at enhancing skills and competencies around youth justice. Each participating team then developed a capstone project that would demonstrate successful implementation of what was learned, with attention to measurable outcomes.

In September 2021, in conjunction with the Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center, Georgetown piloted the New York Girl-Centered Practice Virtual Certificate program. This certificate program was designed to help New York localities with their efforts to best meet the needs of girls in a collaborative, multi-system manner. As a part of its commitment to advance the intersectionality between race and gender equity, DCJS identified the following priority areas related to girls in the youth justice system:

- Increase skills and local capacity for providing services to girls in the youth justice system.
- Increase available funding, programming, and services available to girls across the state.
- Embed policies, procedures, and programming into existing work to account for intersectionality between race and gender.
- Partner with girls who have lived experience to inform policy recommendations and changes.

The intensive program gave teams and individuals the tools and knowledge to apply a girl-centered approach to their practices, policies and programs. Understanding the necessity of a shift from reactive to proactive responses, and by including reflective practice and a strengths-based approach, the program not only focused on the challenges faced by girls in child-serving systems but also illuminated the strengths and protective factors common to this population. The training also highlighted effective policy and practice reforms that take a holistic approach to addressing the needs of system-involved girls, while aiming to also prevent unnecessary involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Professionals from Suffolk and Nassau counties, SNUG Street Outreach Programs, the state Education Department, Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children, the Youth Justice Institute, Office of Youth Justice, and Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives



participated. Teams are working to submit their capstone proposals for feedback, and state agency partners will begin meeting to operationalize what was learned in their individual agencies. Teams are being provided with ongoing technical assistance from Georgetown. Teams convened for the last time in February 2022. Nassau and Suffolk county teams had capstone projects that were subsequently approved by Georgetown. They focused on addressing the gaps for girls who are victims of human trafficking, providing safe spaces for girls within the juvenile justice system as a whole, and programming to their unique needs. However, in Nassau County, staffing changes led to the dismantling of the team and prevented full program implementation. Suffolk County is still in process of implementing their programming.

## **B. Support for Regional Youth Justice Teams**

Nine Regional Youth Justice Teams continued to foster cross-county, multi-disciplinary approaches to juvenile justice program and policy work. Office of Youth Justice staff serve as liaisons between the teams and the state, advising the teams of state-level trends and initiatives and communicating local concerns and accomplishment to state agencies and other state-level policymakers.

In 2022, DCJS continued assisting the teams in implementing their final plans for funding the following projects, as well as funding for an outside entity to assist with the grant requirements:

### ***Capital Region***

The Capital Region team's work focused on restorative practices and trauma- informed care.

- The Trauma Champions Collaborative completed all six Wellness Series through the New York State Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. This six-part series focuses on recognizing and combating secondary stress, vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, workforce trauma and increasing overall health and wellness. Each month, over the six months, two-hour sessions include specific topics such as: boosting resiliency, understanding and navigating impacts of trauma and shared trauma for ourselves and our workforce, addressing burn-out, self-care protocols, and recognizing and managing stress and secondary traumatic stress. These sessions were offered at no cost to the Capital District.
- The Restorative Practices Workgroup re-engaged restorative practices with local school staff during this period, as there was a program pause due to COVID-19. The workgroup selected Mediation Matters for the development and delivery of two trainings, over five weeks, to school staff in four local districts. Following the training, Mediation Matters offered implementation support to the participating districts so that the new skills could be put to use. Mediation Matters is also committed to on-going coordination of the districts involved so that a network of districts, all with staff trained in conflict resolution and restorative practices, can connect with one another and provide support and on-going feedback.

## **Central New York**

A team of 17 juvenile justice leaders from seven Central New York counties completed its Results Based Leadership (RBL) project, which was designed to support the vision that all youth involved in the region's juvenile justice system can learn from their mistakes and stay in their communities safely. The training was broken down into two main sections:

- Bringing Together Stakeholders that are in Alignment to Make Positive Change – Theory of Aligned Contribution: Understanding the importance of having a diverse group of stakeholders working together toward a common result and how to work toward getting people into high action and high alignment with the work.
- Creation of a County Results Action Plan to advance youth justice priorities of the region as well as meeting the needs of youth in the individual counties.

Building up on the creation of the County Results Action Plans developed in 2021, the Regional Youth Justice Teams issued six mini grants to Broome, Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Tioga and Tompkins counties. Meeting the unique needs and challenges of the youth in those counties, the mini-grants provided funding for the following initiatives:

- Increased access to prosocial activities, including membership dues and transportation support to attend programming.
- Implementation of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Health Therapy for licensed clinicians to who serve justice involved youth, with the goal of providing prevention services to PINS youth prior to deep end system involvement.
- Implemented school-based mental health services and providers to support the needs of youth in schools.
- Expanded restorative justice practices training and implementation in probation and child welfare agencies in the region.
- Expanded vocational opportunities for youth, including age-appropriate job training, life skills coaching and development, counseling and work readiness skills and provided supervised and independent work experiences.

In addition to the spot grant funding outlined above, the team funded training for the following initiatives:

- Think Trauma: six virtual trainings entitled, "Think Trauma: A training for those in youth serving programs." In addition, a virtual train-the-trainer was provided to support 10 individuals to deliver the curriculum independently.
- Think Kids Collaborative Problem Solving Tier 1 Training: provided training in an evidence-based approach to understanding and helping children and adolescents with a wide range of social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Participants learn to advance their skills in applying the model through a combination of didactic lectures, role-playing, videotape examples, case presentations, and breakout groups, with topics of specific interest to clinicians and educators. Training included the five cognitive skills that are lacking for kids with challenging behaviors as well as strategies to address behaviors.

- Youth with Problematic Sexual Behaviors (YPSB) with Oklahoma University Health Sciences Center, National Center for the Sexual Behavior of Youth: Provided two different trainings for youth justice practitioners.
  - Broad-based training to discuss abnormal versus typical sexual behaviors, effective behaviors, how to establish a community change team and strategies to negate myths associated with the YPSB population.
  - Youth Needs Progress Scale Training: conducted a six-hour workshop to cover the core knowledge and competencies related to the scale, followed by an eight-hour workshop to discuss and support implementation of the Youth Needs Progress Scale (YNPS).

### ***Finger Lakes***

The Finger Lakes team continued its work with Coordinated Care Services Inc. (CCSI) to implement and expand trauma-informed practices in the region. This work assisted stakeholders in developing a common understanding and language, fostered growth and collaboration, and supported implementation practices. CCSI also assisted teams in using the TRUST tool to identify areas of need and options for addressing them.

Work also continued on the YPSB initiative in partnership with the Western New York and Central New York Regional Youth Justice Teams. Training for senior leaders and clinicians in Oklahoma University's Problematic Sexual Behavior Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy continued, and several participating clinicians reached fidelity to the model in 2022. The team also participated in broad-based training regarding facts and myths associated with the YPSB population.

### ***Long Island***

In 2022, the Long Island Regional Youth Justice Team continued its efforts to promote prosocial activities for youth who were housed in the detention facility. The team continued its partnership with Suffolk County Community College for a second installment of the virtual Suffolk Theatre Arts Program. Youth were given writing prompts and activities by a theater professor and explored the power of telling their stories through monologues. The second installment culminated in a performance of their monologues. Additionally, the monologues of the young people were captured in a powerful illustrated time lapsed video named, "From the Shadows into the Light: A Collective of Expressions from Juvenile Detention." The hope is to be able to house the video on the YJI website, alongside the previous one, as a powerful reminder of the voices of our youth and their experiences within our detention centers.

### ***Mid-Hudson***

In 2022, The Mid-Hudson team continued its efforts to move the region toward being trauma-informed by using the Attitudes Related to Trauma Informed Care (ARTIC) survey instrument to assess organization and employee attitudes toward trauma-informed care and determine readiness and training needs. The ARTIC is the first reliable and valid measure of trauma informed attitudes. Because this scale is relatively easy to administer (10-15 minutes), and because it covers seven domains, it can be used as a baseline to assess organizational readiness and specific training needs within and across agencies. The survey complied over 1,200 responses

from across the region, with mental health and youth bureaus achieving the highest response rates. Across the Mid-Hudson region, the collective scores indicated strong trauma-informed attitudes and beliefs amongst county employees. However, they acknowledged that their explicit knowledge and confidence about trauma informed care is lower than their implicit attitudes about it. In other words, there is an inherent understanding of the importance of trauma-informed care. However, there is a gap in the knowledge to articulate “why” and to contextualize some of the practices that are being used as trauma-informed. Based on qualitative responses across the seven counties in the region, three prominent themes developed:

- The need for training of all staff, regardless of level;
- The need to address workplace culture, such as supervisory practices and interpersonal staff relations; and
- The need for support from leadership.

The team hopes to use the results from this survey and make training changes, providing staff with knowledge and increased confidence around trauma-informed practices. Subsequently, the team hopes to re-survey participants with the hope of seeing an improvement in the areas noted in the survey.

### ***Mohawk Valley***

In 2021, the team completed programming related to diversion efforts and ensured that justice-involved and at-risk youth have access to evidence-based, individualized services to prevent further system involvement and ensure their success in school, at home, and in the community. Three model initiatives show improved outcomes for youth: detention diversion coordination, Knowledge Empowers You (KEY), and Service Provision for Individualized Needs (SPIN). Programs served youth from age seven to 17.

### ***North County***

The following counties received grant funding to support the following:

- *Franklin:* Implemented the Cornell University Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) for Families Training of Trainers and community education and prevention programming to support foster care parents and caregivers over a five-day train -the-trainer model. Fifteen stakeholders participated in the training, and an evaluation tool and training manual are in the process of being created for the county to use in the future.
- *Clinton:* Trained 12 families in the Incredible Years curriculum to provide access to parenting programs and independent living skills. The Guiding Good Choices curriculum was completed by three staff and two youth. Eight youth engaged in an t evaluation of the Love146 training.
- *Essex:* Trained four teachers and three staff in the MindUp training program, which is intended to build resilience and provide positive school- wide culture and climate.
- *St. Lawrence:* Continued the Trauma-Informed Care Initiative, which includes partners from Youth Advocate Programs, Department of Social Services and probation. Implemented the Trauma-Informed Organization Change Manual; continued Core Champion meetings; and expanded training to other partners throughout the county.

- *Jefferson and Lewis:* Implemented a Restorative Practices Training program through The Resolution Center of Jefferson and Lewis Counties. The program engaged youth ages seven to 17, as well as school staff and partner agencies, teaching youth how to approach conflict constructively, practice active listening skills and model this behavior within the community. Jefferson County continued to support a traveling teen center, which allowed high school students to engage in STEM activities, cooking lessons and a wellness series. Over 120 students were served by the traveling teen center.

### ***New York City (Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee)***

As COVID-19 gripped New York City, the Administration for Children's Services saw a significant drop in the number of youths being arrested and admitted to its secure detention facilities. There were steep declines in detention admissions for most offenses, with the exception of family offenses, which dramatically increased. While the admission of youth to secure detention on charges stemming from family conflict was not new, the increase during a public health crisis, in the midst of a nationwide focus on racial justice issues, brought this issue to the forefront of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) for resolution. The fact that all families struggle, but it is almost exclusively Black and Brown children in New York City that experience the arrest and admission to detention in response to family conflict, also elevated the critical importance of this issue for the JJAC. Citywide strategies for diverting youth from admission to secure detention, and the design of non-law enforcement-led responses to family conflict cases, were lacking.

To build upon efforts by the Department of Probation and the Law Department to divert prosecution and reduce formal court appearances for these youth, JJAC leadership moved forward with a multi-stage process aimed at:

- avoiding the exposure of youth to secure detention after family conflicts;
- consistently engaging families as quickly as possible, with local supports and services delivered by neighborhood-based agencies in their home communities; and
- partnering with all relevant city agencies and community partners to create safe alternatives to the traditional law enforcement-led approach to these cases.

At the programmatic level, JJAC leadership has enlisted the support of Community Partnership Programs (CPPs) operating in neighborhoods nearest the NYPD precincts experiencing the greatest number of family offense calls. The primary goal is to promptly connect neighborhood-based support services with youth and families involved in these cases.

The CPPs are networks of small, neighborhood-based service providers, working both together and separately, to meet the wide range of needs among families within the communities they serve. While these networks have tended to focus on child welfare-related services, they seek to expand their scope of service to include engagement with youth and families within the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system, many of whom are dually involved in both systems. The goal is for CPPs to reach out directly to families within 24 hours of an arrest to offer whatever support might be needed to help alleviate the pressures that may have contributed to the event that led to the police call. This outreach is intended to achieve several objectives:

- Interrupt the cycle of family violence that is often involved in such cases when immediate family intervention is not available.
- Make families immediately aware of relevant and accessible resources for assistance in their communities.
- Familiarize families with an established community support network that could be a resource in the future to avoid a repeat of the events that lead to police being called.

In 2022, CCPs received technical assistance and began a pilot program aimed at increasing support to families experiencing conflict that landed them in contact with the legal system. The pilot program lasted for six months, and many of the families involved have remained connected or have been referred for further supports. While formal technical assistance has ended, informal technical assistance still occurs through the partnerships that have been formed.

At the policy level, as funding allows, the JJAC hopes to work with the Vera Institute of Justice to help coordinate citywide forums focusing on family conflict cases; exploring current practices; and developing long term solutions to a more effective approach to responding to youth and families in the midst of familial crisis.

### ***Western New York***

The Western New York team hosted a virtual training on the Racial Equity Impact Analysis Tool (REIAT), attended by 30 participants from a variety of agencies from all five counties, including social services, probation, community-based nonprofits, family court, and Legal Aid. To sustain the initiative, two REIAT coaches received additional training to provide ongoing, embedded support to the organizations that participated in the initial training.

The Western New York team also expanded upon its restorative practices work, with the goal of replicating the Erie County Family Court Restorative Practices Program in family courts in Niagara, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany counties. Capacity has been established in Chautauqua and Allegany counties, and in Erie County. The scope of the Family Court Restorative Practices Program has been expanded and now collaborates with the Erie County District Attorney's Office on cases involving youth facing an unauthorized use of a motor vehicle charge.

Work also continued on the YPSB initiative in partnership with the Finger Lakes and Central New York Regional Youth Justice Teams. Training for senior leaders and clinicians in Oklahoma University's Problematic Sexual Behavior Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy continued and several participating clinicians are reached fidelity to the model in 2022. The team also participated in broad-based training regarding facts and myths associated with the YPSB population and in the YNPS training described above.

The JJAG approved the following grant awards in 2022:

PROJECTS	AWARD
Big Brothers Big Sisters (three sites)	\$150,000
Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition	\$50,000
Equity Champions	\$250,000
Healing the Practitioner Series	\$125,000
Big Brothers Big Sisters (five sites)	\$550,000
Elevating Healing and Advancing Equity Conference	\$150,000