

Juvenile Justice Legislative Fact Sheet

Minnesota's Juvenile Justice System

Purpose: To protect public safety, hold youth accountable for their actions and provide youth treatment and rehabilitation.

Delivery Method: Mix of county and state, but largely a county-based delivery system resulting in 87 different systems and the intersection of schools, law enforcement, courts, corrections, mental health and chemical health providers, community-based organizations, human services, child protection and families.

Youth Involvement by the Numbers:

- 44,615 youth were arrested in 2007
- 14, 181 youth were on probation in 2007
- 2/3rds of youth arrested between 2005 and 2007 were males
- White youth accounted for 64.3% of juvenile arrests in 2007 and are 79% of the state's under 18 population.
- African American youth accounted for 28.7% of youth arrests in 2007 and are 6% of the state's under 18 population.
- American Indian youth accounted for 4.2% of juvenile arrests in 2007 and are 1% of the state's under 18 population.
- Asian youth accounted for 4% of juvenile arrests in 2007 and are 3% of the state's under 18 population.

Strengths of Minnesota's Juvenile Justice System:

- Scattered implementation of model prevention and intervention programs throughout the state, including diversion programs keeping youth out of the system.
- No large juvenile correctional institutions are utilized in Minnesota.
- Judicial discretion and limited use of automatic transfer of youth into adult system.

Challenges of Minnesota's Juvenile Justice System

- Overrepresentation of youth of color at every step of the process. Minnesota is among eight states with the greatest disparities between white and minority youth in juvenile custody (5:1 ratio or higher).
- Overuse of secure detention and out-of-home placement as an effective strategy.
- Disproportionate number of youth with a mental illness, chemical dependency issues or a disability involved in the system.
- Lack of high quality, proven and culturally competent community-based prevention and intervention programs and mental health and chemical health services available to serve all youth in the state in their own community.
- Insufficient and uncoordinated collection of data to identify youth involved in the system and track outcomes of programs, dispositions and recidivism rates.
- Positive outcomes for youth depend entirely on where a youth lives and the availability and quality of resources in their community, as determined by local government officials and juvenile justice professionals, with no state oversight. Diversion and model programs tend to be champion-driven and precariously funded, or not funded at all.

The Juvenile Justice Legislative Work Group

The Juvenile Justice Legislative Work Group is a collaboration of associations, individuals and key stakeholders advocating juvenile justice reform and positive outcomes for Minnesota's children. The group identified common priority areas to improve Minnesota's juvenile justice system and support investments in effective, cost-efficient and culturally competent community-based prevention and intervention programs for at-risk youth and youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The goal is to create a more effective juvenile justice system in Minnesota that promotes the well-being of youth while holding youth accountable for their actions and promoting public safety.

Juvenile Justice Coalition of Minnesota

The Juvenile Justice Coalition of Minnesota (JJC) is a systems change and advocacy based state-wide organization that promotes state level juvenile justice reform. The JJC is an unincorporated association of juvenile justice related professional organizations, state agencies, leaders and stakeholders. By serving as an innovator and convener, the JJC brings together Minnesota's juvenile justice community to advocate for successful collaborative models and the use of best practices to promote positive outcomes for youth.

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Source: The Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee's Annual Report and Recommendations to Governor Tim Pawlenty and the Minnesota Legislature for the State of Minnesota, October 2008 and Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative One Pager, 2008.