

Juvenile Reentry and Transition to Adulthood Issue Team

Briefing to the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

September 24, 2010

Information Collection Activities--Highlights

- Series of Issue Team meetings and subcommittee meetings – May through September
- Literature review of select articles, journals , and research cataloged into the following topical areas – JJ youth, foster care youth, transitioning, corrections, and Medicaid
- National Reentry Resource Center – Second Chance Act
- National Summit on Effective Implementation of the Fostering Connections to Success Act
- Interagency Work Group on Reentry
- Review of submissions from the Federal Register Request for Public Comment
- Expert Discussions: Shay Bilchik and David Altschuler; Models for Change
- National Resource Center for Youth Development – Children’s Bureau

Team Process

- Team formed into three subcommittee groups
 - Reentry via Juvenile Corrections
 - Aging out of the Foster Care/Juvenile Justice Systems.
 - Areas of Potential Reform
- Found areas of overlap
- Drafted recommendations with substantial team discussion and input

Highlighted Recommendations

1. OJJDP should conduct a national study of the collateral consequences experienced by youth when they return to the community from incarceration or transition to adulthood from foster care and juvenile justice settings. The aim of the study should be to develop recommendations for Federal and State law, policy and practice reform. The transition to responsible adulthood for youth exiting the justice system and returning to their communities is made far more difficult by the myriad of collateral consequences that result from their prior adjudications or convictions. Young adults with prior adjudications often cannot enlist in the armed forces and often cannot receive, or can only receive, a very

restricted driver's license, which has significant impacts on employment opportunities. Employers and educational institutions often ask for arrest rather than conviction history, so even young people tried in the juvenile court may be negatively affected by their past adjudications. Some adjudications or convictions make young people ineligible for academic financial aid, or can be used as grounds for denying access to public housing.

2. The U.S. Department of Education should require in-custody accredited education for all youth in custody. The transfer of credits and credit recovery are important education matters for juvenile justice-involved youth. SEAs, LEAs, and the custodial juvenile justice agency must take the lead in promoting the transfer of credits earned in accredited juvenile justice education settings across school boundaries. The Title I, Part D program tracks students earning high school credits as well as GEDs or diplomas. While it is somewhat complicated to measure and track these outcomes, it might be possible to require grantees to describe or demonstrate the implementation of at least one method to facilitate credit transfer and recovery.
3. Eliminate the eligibility requirement that excludes children and youth involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems from receiving Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) benefits so that children and youth in custody can receive the needed services these benefits cover. Some States have enacted policies to suspend, rather than terminate, juveniles' Medicaid/CHIP benefits upon incarceration, to maintain the suspension status during incarceration to the limits of Federal law, and then to facilitate reactivation of Medicaid/CHIP benefits on the day of release to the community. Although this strategy has the potential to significantly decrease the time between institutional release and accessing health and mental health care services, it is a less desirable and weaker policy compared to eliminating the Medicaid inmate exclusion.

Additional Comment for the Coordinating Council

As there is national movement on the overall reentry front, in large part due to the Second Chance Act, it is critical that the juvenile reentry and transitions to adulthood issues not be lost as we move toward creating a Cabinet level reentry council.