

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

A large, stylized, light teal logo of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is centered on the page. The letters "OJJDP" are rendered in a bold, serif font. The "O" is a simple circle, while the "J"s are tall and thin, and the "D" is a simple vertical bar. The "P" is a simple vertical bar. The logo is set against a background of a classical architectural pediment, which is a shallow, triangular structure supported by two columns. The entire design is in a light teal color that matches the background of the page.

OJJDP

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

OJJDP's mission is to provide national leadership, coordination, and resources to develop, implement, and support effective methods to prevent juvenile victimization and respond appropriately to juvenile delinquency. This is accomplished through prevention programs and a juvenile justice system that protects the public safety, holds juvenile offenders accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services based on the needs of each individual juvenile.



**The Office of
Juvenile Justice
and
Delinquency
Prevention**

Shay Bilchik, Administrator

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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Introduction

Juveniles in crisis—from victims of abuse and neglect to serious, violent, and chronic offenders—pose a critical challenge to our Nation. Meeting this challenge requires not only a targeted and comprehensive strategy but the commitment of juvenile justice professionals and all who share our concerns about the future of our children.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) works with juvenile justice practitioners, government agencies, professional associations, community groups, and private citizens to provide opportunities for young people to mature into adults who contribute to their communities, while protecting law-abiding citizens from the impact of juvenile crime and violence.

Charged by Congress with the responsibility of leading the fight against juvenile violence and victimization, OJJDP collaborates with professionals of diverse disciplines in local, State, and Federal agencies and organizations to improve juvenile justice policies and practices. Ultimately, it is America's children and their families who benefit from the policies and projects undertaken and underwritten by OJJDP.

The activities reflected in OJJDP's mission encompass the spectrum of juvenile justice issues, including researching the causes and correlates of delinquency, developing and implementing cost-effective programs that prevent delinquency and reduce recidivism, and providing training that enhances the operation of the juvenile justice system and assists youth service providers.

OJJDP's initiatives share a common purpose—to promote practical solutions to the problems challenging our Nation's juveniles. This goal underlies a broad range of OJJDP programs designed to: prevent delinquency by affording at-risk youth positive alternatives and reducing the number of school dropouts; improve the

effectiveness of juvenile courts, corrections, and aftercare by establishing a system of graduated sanctions that effectively responds to serious, violent, and chronic delinquency; and prevent children from being victimized by neglect, abuse, abduction, and exploitation.

Ultimately, it is America’s children and their families who benefit from the policies and projects undertaken and underwritten by OJJDP.

OJJDP remains positive about the future of our Nation’s young people. Only a small percentage follow the path from occasional antisocial acts to serious, violent, and chronic offenses. Research indicates—and experience proves—that timely intervention can return many of these offenders to the path toward law-abiding adulthood. By working with dedicated citizens across America to prevent delinquency and strengthen the juvenile justice system, OJJDP seeks to ensure each child the chance to travel that path.

Overview

An Evolving Role

Congress enacted the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act in 1974. This landmark legislation established the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to support local and State efforts to prevent delinquency and to improve their juvenile justice systems. In accordance with the Act's purposes, OJJDP leads the national initiative to promote a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to meet the challenges facing America's children.

Since its enactment, the JJDP Act has evolved to meet new challenges. The Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984 charges OJJDP with a primary role in helping to find and protect missing and exploited children. In 1988 Congress created an OJJDP grant program to address the growing problem of youth gangs and to prevent and treat juvenile drug abuse. In 1992 OJJDP was given the lead responsibility to administer the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

The JJDP Act 1992 reauthorization established several new OJJDP priorities:

- ◆ Awarding State Challenge Grants.
- ◆ Developing services for juveniles in secure custody.
- ◆ Ensuring due process and effective legal representation.
- ◆ Providing gender-specific services.
- ◆ Providing information regarding hate crimes.
- ◆ Involving families in the treatment of offenders.
- ◆ Supporting delinquency prevention and treatment in rural areas.
- ◆ Promoting mentoring.
- ◆ Funding incentive grants for local delinquency prevention programs.
- ◆ Encouraging graduated sanctions.
- ◆ Developing model boot camps.
- ◆ Providing effective aftercare programs.

As each reauthorization focuses our attention on the emerging challenges of the day, OJJDP continues to lead the Federal effort to meet local and State juvenile justice and delinquency prevention needs.

A Team Approach

OJJDP coordinates its diverse and comprehensive initiatives through a cycle of activity including planning, research, program development, demonstration, replication, training and technical assistance, evaluation, and information dissemination.

OJJDP also invites the involvement of the juvenile justice community in establishing policies, setting goals, identifying priorities, and developing programs. To this end, the Office works closely with designated State agencies, State Advisory Groups, juvenile justice practitioners, local governments, private agencies, U.S. Attorneys, and private citizens to ensure consideration of a broad array of perspectives.

OJJDP conducts its program activities through seven organizational components:

- ◆ Research and Program Development Division
- ◆ Special Emphasis Division
- ◆ Information Dissemination Unit
- ◆ Training and Technical Assistance Division
- ◆ State Relations and Assistance Division
- ◆ Concentration of Federal Efforts Program
- ◆ Missing and Exploited Children's Program

The Research and Program Development Division, the Information Dissemination Unit, and the Training and Technical Assistance Division constitute the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Institute offers a broad array of programs that serve juvenile justice professionals.

Research and Program Development Division

Transforming Knowledge Into Action

The Research and Program Development Division (RPDD) pursues a comprehensive research agenda, develops knowledge about specific problems, monitors trends, and analyzes the practices of the juvenile justice system. Research developed by RPDD is used to develop and test model programs. The research informs the Special Emphasis Division concerning demonstration program areas. In collaboration with the Information Dissemination Unit, RPDD provides research findings and statistical information for distribution to State and local officials to help them implement and evaluate juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs. To accomplish these goals, RPDD:

- ◆ Conducts national quantitative research to assess the problem of delinquency and determine how the juvenile justice system can respond most effectively.
- ◆ Monitors projects that explore such topics as the causes and correlates of delinquency, waivers of juveniles to criminal court, the juvenile justice system's treatment of minorities, and methods for preventing and treating delinquency.
- ◆ Develops and implements evaluation programs and strategies.
- ◆ Develops strategies to move research into practice.
- ◆ Maintains a statistics and systems development program to enhance information gathering and sharing among juvenile justice agencies.

The Division's Statistics and Systems Development program recently produced *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A National Report*. This landmark report transforms complex statistical information into easy-to-read charts and graphs. Each chapter provides a snapshot of a particular area of interest, such as juvenile demographics, delinquency, and juvenile court processing.

Helping Communities

Helping communities assess prevention and treatment needs is critical to effective juvenile justice planning, development, and management. To address this need, OJJDP developed a *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*. The *Guide* describes the detailed steps required to implement the broad principles of OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders.

The *Guide* consists of four parts:

- ◆ A step-by-step process for helping communities to assess their delinquency problems and identify viable solutions.
- ◆ A risk-focused prevention strategy that identifies effective programs in two juvenile age spans: conception through age 5 and age 6 through adolescence.
- ◆ A sequential process for developing a model juvenile justice system using graduated sanctions.
- ◆ An examination of the role of risk classification and needs assessment for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders.

The SafeFutures Program, OJJDP's continuum-of-care program, will test the Comprehensive Strategy in six sites. An evaluation of the SafeFutures Program will inform policymakers about the effectiveness of the Program and whether concentrating a range of program resources, from prevention to graduated sanctions, can contribute to a reduction in juvenile delinquency.

Special Emphasis Division

Advancing Innovative Approaches

The Special Emphasis Division (SED) provides discretionary funds to public and private nonprofit agencies, professional organizations, and individuals to carry out programs and activities authorized by the JJDP Act, including:

- ◆ Means to divert youth from the traditional juvenile justice and correctional systems and provide community-based alternatives to secure incarceration.
- ◆ Programs that strengthen and preserve families.
- ◆ Prevention and treatment programs for serious, violent, and chronic offenders.
- ◆ Law-related education programs that promote understanding and respect for the law.
- ◆ Programs to prevent and sanction juvenile hate crimes.
- ◆ Activities designed to reduce the disproportionate representation of minority youth in secure facilities.
- ◆ Programs to create gang-free schools and communities and community-based gang intervention strategies.
- ◆ Programs to test and evaluate an intensive aftercare model.
- ◆ Mentoring programs.
- ◆ Programs to establish a system of graduated sanctions for juvenile offenders.

SED works with the other OJJDP divisions to identify emerging juvenile justice issues through innovative program development and replication activities. The Division emphasizes collaborative programs designed to establish a continuum of care for at-risk and delinquent youth.

Special Emphasis Division Programs

The Special Emphasis Division is implementing several key programs to address serious and violent crime, delinquency prevention, and the need for more effective legal services for juveniles. Examples of these programs are:

- ◆ The Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offender Program helps jurisdictions examine and expand their systems of graduated sanctions and treatment services for juveniles.
- ◆ The American Bar Association is developing training materials to increase access to and improve the effectiveness of counsel for State and local defense service providers.
- ◆ The Comprehensive Gang Initiative has funded five sites to implement and test a model of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression.
- ◆ The SafeFutures Program demonstrates a comprehensive delinquency prevention, graduated sanctions, and treatment approach designed to improve service delivery systems for at-risk and delinquent juveniles.
- ◆ The Cities in Schools dropout prevention program delivers services to youth and families in the school setting, including entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, violence prevention, and health services.
- ◆ The Congress of National Black Churches is demonstrating a national program that provides support to black churches in more than 35 communities to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to prevent juvenile substance abuse and violence.

Information Dissemination Unit

Providing Reliable Information

Timely access to reliable information is crucial to enhancing efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system. The Information Dissemination Unit (IDU) collects, publishes, and distributes information regarding OJJDP research and program initiatives. IDU:

- ◆ Directs the writing, editing, design, and printing of OJJDP publications, including congressionally mandated reports.
- ◆ Edits, produces, and distributes OJJDP's journal *Juvenile Justice* to more than 60,000 readers, primarily juvenile justice system and youth-service professionals.
- ◆ Disseminates publications and information through nonprint media, including such electronic means of transmittal as the Internet and bulletin board systems.
- ◆ Monitors the activities of the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC), which supports OJJDP's information dissemination role.
- ◆ Coordinates the announcement of annual OJJDP funding opportunities.

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse

To enhance and expedite access to juvenile justice information and resources, OJJDP established the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC) in 1979. JJC links OJJDP's publications, research findings, and program information to juvenile justice policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and the public through a broad spectrum of services. JJC:

- ◆ Responds to more than 48,000 requests for information annually—received via their toll-free telephone line, letters, and online.
- ◆ Distributes almost one-half million reports, summaries, bulletins, fact sheets, and other publications annually.
- ◆ Provides online access to OJJDP publications and information via the Internet, fax services, and other electronic media.*
- ◆ Maintains a document collection and data base of more than 30,000 juvenile justice titles, offering onsite reference and library services.
- ◆ Acquires over 1,000 new titles each year, compiling abstracts for a document data base that comprises one of the most comprehensive juvenile justice holdings in the world.
- ◆ Shares OJJDP publications and information through exhibits and other means to some 75,000 attendees annually at major national, State, and local juvenile justice and youth-service conferences.

* For information regarding OJJDP's Internet mailing list, JUVJUST, and other online services, e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org, or call JJC at 800-638-8736.

Training and Technical Assistance Division

Improving System Capability

The Training and Technical Assistance Division (TTAD) strengthens the juvenile justice system, including law enforcement, juvenile courts, corrections, youth service, and child advocacy organizations by providing training, technical assistance, and state-of-the-art information. To carry out its mission, TTAD:

- ◆ Analyzes the training needs of professionals and volunteers working in the juvenile justice system, and develops and implements curriculums to meet those needs.
- ◆ Conducts training programs and technical assistance for Federal, State, and local governments; private agencies; professionals; volunteers; and others who serve the juvenile justice system.
- ◆ Provides training, continuing education courses, and technical assistance to court personnel.
- ◆ Helps communities establish programs with court-appointed special advocates to represent the best interests of children during judicial proceedings in abuse, neglect, and dependency cases.
- ◆ Supports the development of children's advocacy centers composed of multidisciplinary teams that coordinate the response to abuse and neglect cases in order to prevent revictimization.
- ◆ Provides needs assessment for community planning regarding such challenges as truancy, conditions of confinement, gangs, drugs, and firearms in order to develop effective programs.

TTAD also assists the State Relations and Assistance Division in carrying out the State Formula Grants Program and the Special Emphasis Division in replicating model programs through targeted training and technical assistance.

Advancing Informed Legislation

Through a grant to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), OJJDP seeks to help State legislators explore the causes of youth crime and craft solutions to juvenile violence. The project focuses on the multifaceted dimensions of youth violence and the comprehensive and systematic policies needed to combat it.

The project offers a means by which State legislators and their staff can analyze juvenile justice policy across committee jurisdictions and other structural lines. It affords State legislators timely information drawn from research, innovative models, and legislative and other reform initiatives.

Project goals include:

- ◆ Developing leadership capacity in enhancing State juvenile justice systems.
- ◆ Helping State legislators in the strategic assessment of juvenile justice options.
- ◆ Collecting data on juvenile violence and providing information on programs to combat it.
- ◆ Monitoring, evaluating, and disseminating information regarding policy developments in State legislatures that address juvenile violence.
- ◆ Facilitating dialog among juvenile justice professionals, State legislators, and policymakers.

State Relations and Assistance Division

Building Partnerships for Youth

The State Relations and Assistance Division (SRAD) manages OJJDP's Part B Formula Grants Program, which helps 56 State jurisdictions to prevent and treat delinquency and improve their juvenile justice systems. In pursuit of these objectives, SRAD, working with each participating State's Juvenile Justice Specialist:

- ◆ Oversees the development and implementation of the comprehensive State juvenile justice plans that determine priorities for the expenditure of State Formula Grant funds.
- ◆ Monitors State compliance with JJDP Act core requirements: deinstitutionalization of status offenders and nonoffenders, separation of juveniles and adults in institutions, removal of juveniles from adult jails and lockups, and addressing disproportionate minority confinement where it is found to exist.
- ◆ Provides training and technical assistance to States in formulating and implementing their State plans.
- ◆ Awards and monitors Title V discretionary funds that are provided through States to enable communities to implement local juvenile delinquency prevention plans.
- ◆ Awards funds to States to conduct Challenge Grant activities under Part E of the Act.

State Advisory Groups (SAG's), appointed by governors, establish program policy and review State plans and formula grant applications. Through their national organization, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, SAG's are provided with program information and administrative support to make annual action recommendations to the President, the Congress, and the OJJDP Administrator.

Preventing Delinquency

Congress authorized the Title V Program in 1992 to foster community collaboration in developing and implementing local plans to prevent at-risk juveniles from becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. To receive Title V funds from State agency grantees, communities formulate a comprehensive, risk-focused prevention plan.

In 1994 Congress appropriated \$13 million to begin implementation of the Title V Program. Fifty-two States and other eligible jurisdictions applied for and received funding. In the second year, more than \$19 million was made available for direct award to States and \$1 million was awarded to local jurisdictions under OJJDP's SafeFutures Program.

To complement the Title V Program, OJJDP offers two phases of risk-focused prevention training to local community leaders. The first phase brings together key community leaders to provide them with tools to mobilize their communities to address delinquency prevention issues. The second phase trains community leaders, practitioners, grassroots community groups, and other community planning team members to complete a comprehensive risk and resource assessment of their communities. By the close of 1995, nearly 4,000 community leaders and practitioners had received Title V training.

Through OJJDP's technical assistance contract with Community Research Associates, communities can access prevention related technical assistance, including information on promising prevention programs.

Concentration of Federal Efforts Program

Coordinating Federal Action

The Concentration of Federal Efforts Program promotes interagency cooperation and coordination among Federal agencies with responsibilities in the area of juvenile justice. The program seeks to eliminate duplication of effort and ensure that juvenile justice funds are used in a cost-effective and coordinated manner.

The Concentration of Federal Efforts Program is carried out in consultation with the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Coordinating Council), an independent body within the Executive Branch originally established by the JJDP Act in 1974. Through this consultation, the Concentration of Federal Efforts Program:

- ◆ Develops objectives and priorities for Federal juvenile delinquency programs and activities.
- ◆ Identifies Federal programs that promote a unified and cooperative approach to juvenile justice issues.
- ◆ Submits annual recommendations to the President and Congress concerning the coordination of Federal juvenile delinquency programs and activities.
- ◆ Assists operating agencies in carrying out their responsibilities.
- ◆ Conducts evaluations and studies.
- ◆ Coordinates the submission and publication of annual juvenile delinquency development statements by Federal agencies administering a Federal juvenile delinquency program.

Coordinating Council

The JJDP Act established the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as an independent body within the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. The Council's primary functions are to coordinate all Federal juvenile delinquency prevention programs, all Federal programs and activities that detain or care for unaccompanied juveniles, and all Federal programs relating to missing and exploited children.

Chaired by the Attorney General, the Council meets quarterly. The OJJDP Administrator serves as the Council's Vice-Chair.

The Council, as restructured by the 1992 amendments to the JJDP Act, comprises nine ex-officio members from Federal agencies and nine non-Federal members who are juvenile justice practitioners. The ex-officio members are the Attorney General, the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Labor, Education, and Housing and Urban Development, the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

In response to Attorney General Reno's call for a "national agenda for children," the Coordinating Council developed the *National Juvenile Justice Action Plan* to support State and local efforts to comprehensively address the needs of the Nation's children.

Missing and Exploited Children's Program

Keeping Children Safe

The Missing and Exploited Children's Program coordinates activities under the Missing Children's Assistance Act concerning missing and exploited children, including preventing abductions, investigating the exploitation of children, locating missing children and reuniting them with their families, and addressing the psychological impact of abduction on the child and the family. To enhance the safety of children, this OJJDP program:

- ◆ Supports the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, a clearinghouse and resource center that collects and distributes data regarding missing and exploited children and operates a national toll-free hotline for individuals to report information regarding missing children and to request information needed to reunite missing children with their legal custodians.
- ◆ Provides training and technical assistance to State clearinghouses, nonprofit organizations, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and attorneys.
- ◆ Assists jurisdictions in developing procedures to implement multiagency and interdisciplinary responses to missing and exploited children and their families.
- ◆ Participates in National Missing Children's Day ceremonies. This annual May 25 observance increases public awareness of issues regarding missing and exploited children.
- ◆ Conducts incidence studies on missing and exploited children, coordinates resources, and implements programs and projects to benefit missing and exploited children.
- ◆ Staffs the Federal Agency Task Force for Missing and Exploited Children, which coordinates the delivery of Federal services to missing and exploited children and their families.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Since 1984 OJJDP has been the principal funding source for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). A private nonprofit organization, NCMEC directs national efforts to find and recover missing children and raise public awareness about the prevention of child abduction, molestation, and sexual exploitation. The OJJDP/NCMEC partnership coordinates the efforts of law enforcement agencies, social service providers, elected officials, judges, prosecutors, educators, and public and private organizations to address child exploitation.

Among its activities, NCMEC provides the following services:

- ◆ Technical assistance to parents, private agencies, and law enforcement, including case management analysis.
- ◆ A national toll-free hotline.
- ◆ An information network for the exchange of data and photographs of missing children.
- ◆ Legal and technical assistance training programs.
- ◆ Professional and general interest publications.
- ◆ Support for 47 State missing children clearinghouses.
- ◆ Assistance in international child abduction cases under the Hague Convention.
- ◆ Coordination of Project ALERT, which uses the services of volunteer retired police officers to provide onsite assistance to local police in complex missing and exploited children cases.

For Further Information

The challenges presented by juveniles in crisis require coordination and information exchange among Federal agencies, State and local governments, professional organizations, researchers, and other juvenile justice professionals. OJJDP is a committed partner and invites you to participate. Through OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, information, publications, and resources covering a broad range of juvenile justice topics are as close as your phone, fax, computer, or mailbox.

Phone: 800-638-8736
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