



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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Interstate Compact on Juveniles

by Christopher Holloway

The Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ) is a multi-State agreement that provides the procedural means to regulate the movement across State lines of juveniles who are under court supervision. Specifically, ICJ is a legal contract between all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Guam that provides for the monitoring and/or return of any juvenile who:

- ◆ Has run away from home without the consent of a parent or legal guardian.
- ◆ Is placed on probation or parole and wants to reside in another State.
- ◆ Has absconded from probation or parole or escaped from an institution and is located in another State.
- ◆ Requires institutional care and specialized services in another State.
- ◆ Has a pending court proceeding as an accused delinquent, neglected, or dependent juvenile and runs away to another State.

What Is a Compact?

Simply stated, a compact is an agreement between two or more States for cooperative effort or mutual assistance. Dating as far back as the 1780's, compacts have been established to address issues that arise among States. Many of the earliest compacts were designed to settle boundary disputes. To solidify the contractual nature of compacts, Congress included in the Crime Control Act of 1934 a provision that States ratifying compacts are bound to observe the terms of the agreement until the compact is formally renounced by the State. Compact provisions take precedence over conflicting State laws and take precedence when the provisions are inconsistent with existing laws of a compact State.

History of ICJ

In the early 1950's, *Parade* magazine published a series of articles entitled "Nobody's Children," which depicted the plight of runaways in America. Inspired by these articles and recognizing that action

was needed, a group of organizations sought to develop a uniform set of procedures to facilitate the return of juveniles who ran away to other States and to create a system in which juvenile offenders could be supervised in other States. Representatives from the Council of State Governments, National Council on Crime and Delinquency (formerly the National Probation and Parole Association), National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, American Public Welfare Association, National Association of Attorneys General, and Adult Parole and Probation Compact Administrators Association drafted ICJ to meet these needs. The Compact was approved by these organizations in January 1955 and ratified by all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Guam by 1986.

ICJ Today

The Association of Juvenile Compact Administrators (AJCA) compiles statistical data on Compact activities. Because many States do not report their Compact activities, AJCA is unable to provide exact figures on how many transfer and supervision cases occur annually. However, it estimates that ICJ is used in 20,000 to 30,000 transfer and supervision cases annually, with the majority of those cases consisting of juveniles on probation or parole who are supervised in a State other than the State where the offense and adjudication occurred. This is particularly common when a juvenile lives near a large city bordering another State. Frequently, the Compact deals with cases in which a juvenile's parents have moved to another State or have separated and one parent has moved out of State, thus creating a situation in which the juvenile is subject to dual-custody issues.

Association of Juvenile Compact Administrators

AJCA is made up of Compact administrators and deputies appointed by each State and other participating jurisdictions. It is responsible for developing and adopting the rules and regulations that currently govern the administration of ICJ. AJCA also plays an active role in:

- ◆ Providing for the uniform, cooperative, interstate supervision of juveniles on probation and parole.
- ◆ Providing for the prompt return (from one State to another) of juveniles who have run away from home and/or escaped from institutions.
- ◆ Promoting education about the Compact and probation and parole practices and providing training to juvenile justice professionals.
- ◆ Providing additional measures to protect juveniles and the public.

The Future of ICJ

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), in cooperation with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Information Center, has conducted a survey of juvenile justice professionals who work with ICJ. The goal of the survey is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current ICJ. The NIC Information Center is analyzing the information received and will document the findings in a report scheduled for release later this year. Once the report is completed, OJJDP, in cooperation with the Council of State Governments, will convene an ICJ advisory board to study the survey results and provide recommendations for the best course of action to address identified deficiencies in the Compact and its implementation.

For Further Information

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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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