

# The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

## AGENCY GUIDE

2024



**pennsylvania**  
JUVENILE COURT JUDGES' COMMISSION

# Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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## Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

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# The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

## About the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) was established by the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1959. The commission is comprised of nine Pennsylvania juvenile court judges. Members of the commission are nominated by the Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and appointed by the governor for three-year terms.

As part of the Pennsylvania Executive Branch, the JCJC is statutorily responsible for:

- Advising juvenile courts concerning the proper care and maintenance of delinquent and dependent children
- Establishing standards governing the administrative practices and judicial procedures used in juvenile courts
- Establishing personnel practices and employment standards used in probation offices
- Collecting and analyzing data to:
  - ◊ Identify trends; determine the effectiveness of programs and practices to ensure the reasonable and efficient administration of the juvenile court system
  - ◊ Make recommendations concerning evidence-based programs and practices to judges and other appropriate entities
- Publishing juvenile court data and related information on the JCJC's publicly accessible internet website
- Administering annual grants to improve county juvenile probation services

The enactment of Act 33 of Special Session No. 1 of 1995 statutorily established Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) as the mission of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. BARJ provides the JCJC with a clear foundation upon which to execute its responsibilities.

**Community Protection:** The public has a right to be and feel safe from crime. Community protection occurs when the juvenile justice system effectively identifies, manages, and minimizes the risk of continued crime and delinquency from known juvenile offenders.

**Accountability:** Youth who commit crimes in Pennsylvania incur obligations to their victims and the communities they harm. The juvenile justice system's role is to provide opportunities for juvenile offenders to be held responsible for repairing the harm caused by their delinquent behavior.

**Competency Development:** The process by which juvenile offenders acquire the knowledge and skills that make it possible for them to become productive, connected, and law-abiding members of their communities. The role of the juvenile justice system is to facilitate efforts and activities that advance youths' competencies so they are less likely to take part in antisocial delinquent behaviors.

# The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

Through a comprehensive reform effort known as the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JSES), the JCJC works in partnership with system stakeholders to enhance the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve its BARJ mission by employing evidence-based practices (EBP) with fidelity at every stage of the juvenile justice process, collecting and analyzing data necessary to measure the results of these efforts, and with this knowledge, striving to continuously improve the quality of our decisions, services, and programs.

## The Center for Juvenile Justice Training & Research

The Center for Juvenile Justice Training & Research (CJJT&R) has been located at Shippensburg University since 1982. The JCJC's Professional Development and Detention Monitoring programs and the Information Technology Division are based at the CJJT&R. The Professional Development program includes the JCJC-sponsored Graduate Education Program, offered in conjunction with Shippensburg University's Criminal Justice Department since 1982, shortly after the CJJT&R's establishment. Additionally, Shippensburg University administers grants supporting the Professional Development and Secure Detention Monitoring programs and the Information Technology Division.

## Juvenile Justice System Partnerships

The JSES's Statement of Purpose declares that Pennsylvania's juvenile justice professionals should dedicate themselves to working in partnership to enhance the capacity of the juvenile justice system to achieve its BARJ mission by:

- Employing EBP with fidelity at every stage of the juvenile justice process
- Collecting and analyzing the data necessary to measure the results of these efforts
- Striving to continuously improve the quality of decisions, services, and programs

The JCJC collaborates with federal, state, and local partners to meet this purpose. These partnerships include, but are not limited to, justice-involved youth and families with lived experience; Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC); Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services; County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania; Office of Children and Families in the Courts; Office of Children, Youth, and Families; Pennsylvania Academic, Career and Technical Training Alliance; Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges; Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (PCCJPO); Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Families; Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and its Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Committee; Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association; and Public Defender Association of Pennsylvania.

# The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

## Agency Program Areas

To meet its legislative mandate, the JCJC functions under 10 agency program areas to provide continued support, research, and training to the juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments in Pennsylvania.

**Commission**

**Legislative &  
Juvenile Court  
Standards**

**Information  
Technology**

**Juvenile Court  
Consultative  
Program**

**Juvenile  
Probation  
Services Grant**

**Professional  
Development**

**Research &  
Analytics**

**JJSES Leadership  
Team**

**Annual  
Conference**

**Annual  
Publications**





Commission

Commission Meetings

# Chapter 1: Commission

## Section 1: Commission Meetings

### About the Commission Meetings

The purpose of the Commission Meetings of the JCJC, and any additional meetings the Commission Chair may deem necessary, is to provide the leadership, advice, training, and support required by the JCJC's enabling legislation.

Commission Meetings are held quarterly and are attended by Commission Members, as well as the Executive Director, Deputy Director, and Director of the CJT&R. Invited guests may include the Administrative Juvenile Court Judge and Supervising Juvenile Court Judge, Allegheny County, and Administrative Juvenile Court Judge and Supervising Juvenile Court Judge, Philadelphia County (if these judges are not already Commission Members); President, Juvenile Court Section, Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges; President, Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers; Deputy General Counsel, Office of General Counsel; Director, Office of Children & Families in the Courts; and other dignitaries and/or Subject Matter Experts as requested. The Chair, with support from the Executive Director, leads the Commission Meetings via an agenda. This agenda includes standing items and ad hoc items based on coexisting events and/or needs.

The Commission Meetings and the accompanying agendas are structured to satisfy the JCJC's enabling legislation and its mission. The mission of the JCJC is to provide the leadership, advice, training, and support to enable Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve its goals related to community protection, offender accountability, restoration of crime victims, and youth competency development. In addition, the leadership and advice given by the Commission Members during the Commission Meetings guide the JCJC staff's day-to-day activities.

### Timeline

Commission Meetings are held annually in February, May, July, and November. The February and July Commission Meetings are held in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges, while the May Commission Meeting is held in conjunction with graduate commencement at Shippensburg University, and the November Commission Meeting is held in conjunction with the annual James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice. The preparation for each Commission Meeting begins immediately upon conclusion of the previous meeting. Preparations include the development of the agenda;

memoranda for each agenda item; creation of the meeting minutes; communications with the Commission Chair, other Commission Members, and other invited guests; and logistics. Two weeks prior to the meeting, a Commission Meeting book is sent to the Commission Members and other invited guests. The book includes the agenda, memoranda, and any supplemental materials.

## Quality Assurance

The Executive Director evaluates the effectiveness of every Commission Meeting with the Commission's Officers and the leadership team of the JCJC staff. Adjustments are made to the Commission Meeting's agenda, its memoranda and supplemental materials, and its presentation based on feedback received from these parties.

## Measuring Success

Commission Meetings are successful when five members of the commission constitute a quorum at the meetings and official business is conducted.

## Glossary

**Commission Member:** A juvenile court judge appointed to the JCJC pursuant to section 6372(b) of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act (relating to the JCJC).



Legislative &  
Juvenile  
Court  
Standards

Legislative  
& Juvenile Court  
Standards

## Chapter 2: Legislative & Juvenile Court Standards

### Section 1: Legislative & Juvenile Court Standards

#### About Legislative & Juvenile Court Standards

Legislative and juvenile court standards analysis clearly and concisely describes the important features of proposed or enacted juvenile justice-specific legislation and juvenile court standards. A legislative analysis is conducted using a tool or technique to assess various aspects of proposed or enacted legislation. The legislative analysis includes a summary of the legislation's sponsor(s), description, substantive amendments, commentary, last action, recommendations, and the Commission's feedback and/or position taken, when appropriate. The legislative analysis allows the Commission Members and system partners to take an informed position regarding proposed legislation and be knowledgeable about the implementation of enacted legislation and juvenile court standards. A similar analysis is used to develop and amend juvenile court standards, including the 25 existing standards.

Juvenile justice-specific legislation formalizes how the JCJC advises juvenile courts, as well as establishing standards in juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments. Analyzing and understanding proposed and enacted legislation, informing the Commission Members and system partners about that same legislation, and proposing juvenile court standards in support of legislation is imperative.

Any proposed or enacted juvenile justice-specific legislation and juvenile court standards impact the juvenile justice system, and the legislation and standards affect the juvenile probation departments, juvenile courts statewide, youth and families, service providers, and other juvenile justice system stakeholders.

#### Timeline

Juvenile justice-specific legislation is analyzed by the Director of Policy and Program Development upon receipt of proposed or enacted legislation from the Pennsylvania General Assembly or the United States Congress. In addition, the Director of Policy and Program Development analyzes and proposes juvenile court standards and revisions to existing standards as needed. Both the legislative analysis and the juvenile court standards analysis, in full or in part, are generally included in a memorandum to the Commission Members and/or a report to a system partner(s).

## **Quality Assurance**

Reviews of the legislative and juvenile court standards analysis process are periodically conducted to determine if each analysis was effective and useful to the JCJC and system partners. Changes to the legislative and juvenile court standards analysis process are made as needed based on these reviews.

## **Measuring Success**

A successful legislative or juvenile court standards analysis provides recipients with clear, concise, and useful background information, strengths and weaknesses, and recommended actions regarding the proposed, amended, or enacted legislation or juvenile court standard(s).



Information  
Technology

Help Desk &  
PaJCMS Training

Report  
Writing

PaJCMS

JEMS

iDashboards

## Chapter 3: Information Technology

### Section 1: Help Desk & PaJCMS Training

#### About Help Desk & PaJCMS Training

The Help Desk staff answers calls and emails regarding the use of the JCJC applications, their functionality, issues with performance, and data integrity. The staff also helps coordinate requests for enhancements, bug fixes, and new reports with the developers and the report writers. In addition to answering requests, the Help Desk is often responsible for reaching out to counties to request fixes for issues found with data needed for the *Juvenile Court Annual Report*, as well as many ad hoc data integrity issues.

Members of the Help Desk staff author the materials used to train new juvenile probation personnel on the use of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System (PaJCMS), as well as training juvenile probation personnel on new features that are released within the application. Help Desk trainings can be held in person or via a virtual classroom setting. Having trainings conducted by the Help Desk staff helps ensure that the information trainees receive is accurate and complete and, in turn, aids in the integrity of the data entered into PaJCMS.

It is important that changes and enhancements to PaJCMS are conveyed accurately to juvenile probation departments because those changes are often being made to support new legislation. In addition, when juvenile probation departments have questions regarding the proper way to enter data for unusual circumstances, these requests are elevated to the data analysts to evaluate how to best enter the data to most accurately represent what happened in each case. Providing these two services to the county juvenile probation departments helps the JCJC meet its legislative requirements by increasing the quality of the data entered for the usage of research, identifying trends, and improving the processes of the juvenile probation departments.

#### Timeline

When a request is made to the Help Desk via phone or email, it is evaluated and, if possible, resolved in one interaction. If a JCJC application is not functioning, every effort is made to resolve the issue immediately to minimize downtime. For application bugs, the development team evaluates the issue to determine a resolution and timeframe, and the Help Desk provides the requester with a timeline for the fix.

Sometimes the interaction between a county and the Help Desk is initiated

by Help Desk personnel, such as when data needs to be fixed for reports or research. Counties can also request training for new employees or learn about new features. Once a training request is made, the Help Desk evaluates the needs, formulates a training plan, determines a schedule, and coordinates with the county. With the availability of virtual classrooms, training typically occurs within a week of the request.

## **Quality Assurance**

The Help Desk staff works closely with supervisors, developers, data analysts, and each other to make sure that the answers and fixes are as accurate as possible. Any time a new issue arises, it is entered into a knowledge base that is used by the Help Desk. This helps to ensure that if the same issue arises from more than one county, the Help Desk gives the same response. It is important to give consistent training and solutions across the state so that PaJCMS data is comparable from county to county. When developing training materials, the content is often reviewed for content accuracy by other JCJC staff. Also, when conducting a training class, two trainers often teach together so that both trainers can give input when participants ask questions.

## **Measuring Success**

Help Desk success is measured by a number of factors, including whether or not the question or request was fulfilled in a timely manner, whether the customer felt respected and satisfied by the end of the transaction, and whether the issue was resolved quickly and smoothly.

A successful training session is one where the user is left with the confidence to use PaJCMS accurately and in a way that will enable them to successfully complete their work.

# Chapter 3: Information Technology

## Section 2: Report Writing

### About Report Writing

The JCJC's report writers create county-level reports that help juvenile probation departments make informed decisions regarding the treatment and supervision of juveniles. These reports also provide county juvenile probation staff with information regarding probation-related court matters, case notes, dispositions, and supervision information about their juveniles. The report writers develop reports that present statewide information used by Subject Matter Experts to review trends occurring throughout the state to make needed changes to court and probation procedures. Finally, many reports are used within the JCJC and by their staff to help with data integrity checks and to evaluate policies that may need updating.

The criteria for a report can come from county juvenile probation departments, juvenile probation committees, and from within the JCJC. Reports are populated with data that has been entered into PaJCMS by county juvenile probation departments. County-level reports that have been requested by a county juvenile probation department always contain only data from the requesting county. County data is never disseminated to any county other than the one which owns that data. Statewide data provided on reports to juvenile probation committees is never provided without the express written permission of the counties whose data is being presented. Finally, the JCJC does have access to statewide data which is often reported on to see trends, to quantify data being used for research, and to help with data integrity and quality assurance.

These reports benefit juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments in a variety of ways. Statewide reports help the JCJC make informed decisions on procedural changes and quality assurance, as well as on possible changes to the Juvenile Act. Statewide data is also used by juvenile probation committees when proposing changes or additions to the PaJCMS application. County-level reports assist county juvenile probation departments with managing caseloads, courtroom activity, court schedules, and trends within their own county. Finally, reporting on scores from evaluation tools such as the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory™ (YLS) risk/needs assessment, Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI), Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument - Version 2 (MAYSI-2), and other screening tools helps probation officers make decisions on supervision levels and treatment needed for juveniles.

### Timeline

First, a report request is made from within the JCJC, from a committee, or from a juvenile probation department. The request is then evaluated by the supervisor and report writers to make sure it is feasible. Based on the level of difficulty for each report, an estimated time of completion is determined, and the report is then prioritized within the workload of the writers.

Next, the first draft of a report is completed and given to the requester to see if the requested needs have been met. After considering any suggested changes, the report is finalized and approved. Many reports need final approval from either the report writer's supervisor or higher-level management. If a county-level report is completed, it then gets deployed to PaJCMS and/or to that county's custom report section. Reports that pertain to all 67 counties are deployed in the standard reports section. Statewide reports are not deployed, but the resulting data is supplied to the requester.

## Quality Assurance

The report writers verify and validate that the data being presented is displaying the relevant population of juveniles and verify that the scope of the data is correct. During the development cycle of the report, these criteria are also reviewed by an additional report writer as a quality assurance practice and then again by the supervisor. Often, reports presenting extremely sensitive or time-critical data are also approved by higher-level management, especially reports that present statewide data.

## Measuring Success

The report writing process is considered successful if the report is developed, approved, and deployed within the necessary timeframe and accurately represents what was requested in a clear and concise manner. In addition, a successful report leaves the end user satisfied that their request was met by the report that was developed for them.

## Glossary

**Statewide Reports:** Reports which include data from all 67 counties or a subset of those counties' data, as requested by the JCJC or by a committee.

**County-Level Reports:** Reports which are run from within a county and which would only display data pertaining to that county. Reports that can be run from within a county never display another county's data.



# Chapter 3: Information Technology

## Section 3: PaJCMS

### About PaJCMS

The PaJCMS is a tool used by juvenile probation departments in all 67 counties to track juvenile case information, including but not limited to demographics, offense and court status, scheduled contacts/appointments, services, and outcomes. This information can then be used to produce reports, improve practices, and make informed decisions throughout the court process.

PaJCMS facilitates the collection and analysis of information related to juveniles, victims, and outcomes using a design that reflects the established standards for administrative practices, judicial procedures, and personnel practices. The information gathered in PaJCMS informs and supports the JCJC's publication of court data on the website and other platforms using the Pennsylvania *Juvenile Court Annual Report* as both a standalone report and as a report dashboard to provide an overview of juvenile court allegations and dispositions. Juvenile justice data is also submitted annually to the National Center for Juvenile Justice for inclusion in their National Juvenile Court Data Archive. Information from PaJCMS is used to respond to data requests on demand and to generate infographics and reports as needed.

PaJCMS supports the juvenile probation departments in each county, allowing them to document the whole process of the juvenile's progression through the justice system from intake to case closure. PaJCMS provides a means to track allegation and court information and then link it to treatment, services, and outcomes.

PaJCMS also serves as a platform for conducting and/or tracking multiple assessments to support data-driven decisions: The YLS, PaDRAI, MAYSI-2, and the Child/Caregiver Trauma Screening. Juvenile probation departments use PaJCMS as part of their quality assurance practices, which vary by county but may include responding to built-in alerts, analyzing reports, or reviewing case notes with their supervisors. After supervision has ended, PaJCMS provides a means of determining whether treatment was successful using outcome measures. Victim Advocates also use PaJCMS to track information regarding the victims of juvenile offenders and ensure victims are notified after certain events in a juvenile's case.

### Timeline

Projects, reported issues, and enhancement requests are collected as tickets on an ongoing basis and may result from county communications to Help Desk; meetings with user groups, committees, and workgroups; and technology, security, and legal requirements identified within the JCJC. Tickets are reviewed once a month to determine which ones are ready for development.

Completed work is released quarterly. The work is approved for inclusion one month prior to the

scheduled release, and a proposed release version and tentative changelog are shared internally. In the weeks leading up to release, Help Desk participates in beta testing the release, and developers document minor issues and fix any major issues that would prevent a release's success.

One week before the release, users are notified about the change, and developers make final preparations to the code and data for deployment in the release environment. The afternoon of the release, Help Desk hosts a live support session over Zoom. Short-term releases and hotfixes between quarterly releases are planned on a case-by-case basis.

## Quality Assurance

PaJCMS is supported by security scans, code reviews during development, beta testing prior to each scheduled release, ongoing data analysis and reporting, county feedback, and Help Desk support.

## Measuring Success

The success of individual PaJCMS projects is gauged by county feedback, data analysis, and committee meetings. The JCJC also measures the downtime of PaJCMS, the reliability of the data while producing reports, and which projects and requests have been completed.

## Glossary

**Application:** Refers to the screens used by PaJCMS and their behavior on the website.

**Beta Testing:** Process for verifying that the changes made to PaJCMS work as expected and do not introduce new errors.

**Changelog:** A technical document detailing changes made in the new version of PaJCMS.

**Deployment:** Process for moving completed code, screen, and data changes onto the live website.

**Downtime:** Periods of time when the program cannot be used. May be unplanned due to errors or planned to allow changes to be made during a release.

**Enhancement:** Requested feature to add to or improve functionality of the program.

**Hotfix:** A short-term, unscheduled release to address a high priority issue or missing functionality.

# Chapter 3: Information Technology

## Section 4: JEMS

### About JEMS

The JCJC Event Management System (JEMS) is a custom-developed web application that is used by the 67 juvenile probation departments and other stakeholders to track training history and provide a list of available trainings. JEMS offers training curriculums for chiefs, juvenile probation officers, supervisors, and other key stakeholders in the matters of crucial practices for providing care and maintenance to juveniles.

Juvenile probation officers are required to complete a certain number of job-related training hours to maintain the knowledge and skills required in executing juvenile justice practices. The data collected through JEMS allows for determining trends in training curriculums and identifying gaps in stakeholder training.

In addition, the JEMS application is used for registration for the annual James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice.

### Timeline

Enhancements and requests are evaluated on an as-needed basis to determine the priority. Once this work is approved, the analysis phase begins in order to determine requirements. Development follows, and when completed, testing can begin. During beta testing, a deployment release date is determined, and juvenile probation departments are notified.

### Quality Assurance

JEMS is supported by security scans, code reviews during development, beta testing prior to each scheduled release, ongoing data analysis and reporting, county feedback, and Help Desk support. In addition, the tracked data needed for the Juvenile Probation Personnel Report and Training Expenditures Report is validated by an annual review.

### Measuring Success

The success of JEMS can be measured by evaluations, meetings, enrollment numbers, agency contact, and Professional Development Advisory Committee feedback and guidance, in addition to tracking the downtime of JEMS and determining the reliability of the data through reports.

## Glossary

**Juvenile Probation Personnel Report:** A report for key stakeholders that summarizes crucial findings in employment and education in juvenile probation offices.

**Training Expenditures Report:** Details annual training activities, total training hours completed by each juvenile probation officer, and associated training allocation expenditures.

# Chapter 3: Information Technology

## Section 5: iDashboards

### About iDashboards

TruOI Dashboard is a third-party application that helps users monitor and analyze important information in real time through data visualization. This data can be pulled from many different data sources, including PaJCMS, JEMS, Excel workbooks, and other common sources for storing records. Through the use of dashboard designers, the JCJC provides internal and external stakeholders with dashboards that help users visualize data and trends state- and county-wide.

These dashboards are used to help show live trends in out-of-home services according to placement numbers and length of stay, along with county diversion, allegations, dispositions, and other key data points. The JCJC also has a Juvenile Court Annual Report Dashboard, available to the public on the JCJC website, which shows yearly trends in juvenile demographics, out-of-home services, allegations, dispositions, and detentions. Other relevant dashboards are made available to certain licensed users to show county-specific information.

### Timeline

At any given time, dashboards may be requested by chief juvenile probation officers, JCJC directors, and other key external stakeholders. User requests for dashboards are initiated, typically with a topic in mind (e.g., PaDRAI, MAYSI-2, Disposition), and a category is created. Within this category, multiple dashboard pages are built, each displaying charts or graphics of similar data. The requesting user defines the data criteria to be charted, such as data exclusions, parameter selections, date ranges, and the drill-down detail level of the data.

From this information, data queries are created which are analyzed for proper content, data clean up, and accuracy. Those queries are then adapted for use in the charts within the iDashboard application. Each chart is formatted per user specifications, including chart titles, text narratives, chart type (bar chart, pie chart, tabular chart, etc.), legends, color ranges, and display format (numbers or percentages). Multiple stages of building, review, feedback, and changes occur until final approval is reached for release of the dashboard for access either internally within the JCJC or for public access.

### Quality Assurance

Dashboards trends are validated through comparison to the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* or other published report numbers, as well as internal validation scripts and quality assurance testers.

## Measuring Success

The success of the dashboards is measured by the daily logins to the application, as well as application uptime.

## Glossary

**Data Source:** The location from which the data is taken.



Juvenile  
Court  
Consultative  
Program

Juvenile Court  
Consulting  
Services

# Chapter 4: Juvenile Court Consultative Program

## Section 1: Juvenile Court Consulting Services

### About Juvenile Court Consulting Services

Through its Juvenile Court Consultative Program, the JCJC provides in-county support and technical assistance to juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments in all 67 counties in the Commonwealth. Each juvenile court consultant is assigned to 16 or 17 regionally organized counties. Their direct consultation enables the JCJC to provide consistent and real-time advice, support, and technical assistance on the proper care and maintenance of delinquent and dependent children, as well as the standards for administrative practices, personnel practices, and judicial procedures used in juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments; the analysis of data to ensure program effectiveness and plan for service improvement; and the activities related to compliance with grant requirements, including plans to correct noncompliance.

Court consultative visits are the hallmark of the JCJC's Juvenile Court Consultative Program and currently occur multiple times a year. During visits, consultants meet with chiefs and juvenile probation staff to discuss JJSES implementation progress, along with current and key juvenile justice issues. Consultants also observe juvenile court proceedings and meet with juvenile court judges. These visits are not audits, but are instead a venue to engage in open dialogue.

In addition to the visits, court consultants are available for ad hoc projects, including assistance at regional meetings, stakeholder meetings and trainings, discussion of issues and challenges, and assistance with planning. Court consultants act as a direct contact or liaison between juvenile probation departments, courts, and the JCJC. A juvenile probation department or court can reach out to their consultant for direction and clarification regarding questions or concerns.

### Timeline

Throughout the course of the year, consultants are encouraged to present possible topics of discussion for the following year's visits. This is done through periodic individual and team check-ins with the supervisor. Many moving parts (personnel, data, schedules) require visits to be planned months in advance. Ideally, topics of conversation and possible data points are finalized prior to the visit date. This allows for data collection, analysis, and training of the consultants prior to the visit. County visits and court observations occur multiple times a year.

Visits focus on rapport building with chiefs, judges, and counties, as well as completion of county information and face sheets, and a juvenile court directory review. Before, during, and after each visit, the court consultant focuses on JJSES implementation and sustainability by reviewing the county's JJSES plans for the year, possible reduction of survey questions, and examination of where plans may be stagnating and would require support. YLS policy adherence (using data), case planning implementation, and graduated responses (education, standards, and mentoring/support) are ongoing conversations. Additional visits consist of activities such as a check in on responses to the previous year's consultative visits, including the use of diversion, expungement, and racial and ethnic disparities. A county-level recidivism discussion is spearheaded using a data packet and interview guide. Consultants review county-level recidivism by disposition, YLS score, change in YLS score, time to recidivate, etc. Consultants also assist counties by facilitating a financial statement conversation, interviews related to compliance with the standards required for participation in the Juvenile Probation Services Grant (JPSG) program, and ad hoc/individual county issues and support.

## **Quality Assurance**

On an ongoing basis, consultants conduct quality control checks of court observations to allow for consistent, quality reporting. This is necessary so that a year-end comprehensive report will provide for accurate data. Frequent conversations among consultants, leadership, and research analysts are required in the event recording errors present themselves. Throughout the year, consultants are encouraged to utilize a shared document with thoughts, ideas for improvement, and questions to enhance future years' consultative services.

## **Measuring Success**

County-specific reports are completed to provide judges and juvenile probation departments with a summary of the consultant's observations. This allows juvenile probation departments to address areas of need and plan for future activities. Additionally, ongoing feedback from juvenile probation departments regarding the benefit of frequent consultative services helps measure success. As this is a new model for judges, county officials, and the JCJC, the need to modify the delivery of services is always a consideration.

In the future, court consultants will play a role in monitoring additional requirements for participation in the JPSG program, which includes plans to correct any noncompliance issues. County compliance with implementation and fidelity requirements provides a basis for measuring the overall health of the JJSES.





## Juvenile Probation Services Grant

### Grant and Aid

### Training Allocations

# Chapter 5: Juvenile Probation Services Grant

## Section 1: Grant and Aid

### About Grant and Aid

The JCJC enabling legislation provides the JCJC shall have the power, and its duty shall be, to make annual grants to political subdivisions for the development and improvement of probation services for juveniles. Through the JPSG program, the JCJC offers direct financial support to all 67 juvenile probation departments by offsetting the salary costs of county juvenile probation staff and by offering impact grants designed to advance juvenile probation services statewide.

The JCJC administers the JPSG to county juvenile probation departments, funded by annual legislative appropriations, for the improvement of juvenile probation services. Funding eligibility is based on each county's compliance with mandatory Juvenile Court Standards and Conditions developed by the JCJC and listed below:

1. As a condition of participation in the JPSG program, juvenile probation departments must annually submit JJSES Implementation Plans for approval to JCJC juvenile court consultants that address:
  - The implementation of the YLS
  - The development of recommendations to the court based upon the YLS results, including the identified risks and needs of each juvenile
  - The development and implementation of standardized case plans based upon the YLS results which target the identified risks and needs of each juvenile
2. In addition, funding eligibility is conditioned based on each county's compliance with the mandatory Juvenile Court Standards, including:
  - The Operation of a Juvenile Probation Merit System
  - Juvenile Court Intake
  - The Use of Secure Detention Under the Juvenile Act
  - Hearings and Administrative Reviews for Children Held in Secure Detention
3. Each county is also statutorily required to participate in the JCJC's statewide juvenile court statistical program, outcome measures reporting program, and detention monitoring and reporting program.

Funds from the JPSG support juvenile probation departments by offsetting salary costs of county juvenile probation staff, as well as providing impact grants designed to advance juvenile probation services statewide, as follows:

1. Implementation and sustainability of the JJSES
2. Expansion of paid juvenile probation services
3. Increase and maintenance of salaries for juvenile probation officers to enable a juvenile court to hold and recruit qualified juvenile probation officers
4. Support of training programs for juvenile probation personnel as provided or approved by the JCJC
5. Support of drug and alcohol testing programs in county juvenile probation departments
6. Support for JCJC-sponsored graduate education programs for juvenile probation officers
7. Continuation of the JCJC-approved services, as applicable, supported during the county's past grant year

## Timeline

The JPSG is a year-long program that is completed in three phases. Phase One begins each March with the distribution of the annual JJSES Implementation Survey, which is then completed by all 67 juvenile probation departments. Phase Two begins after the passing of the state budget with the distribution of required financial documents to the juvenile probation departments. Following the completion and submission of the financial documents, Phase Three takes place, and payment to the juvenile probation departments is processed.

### March - June

The JPSG kick-off day occurs in March, on the Monday following the General Membership Meeting of the PCCJPO. JJSES Implementation Survey instructions and survey access are sent to chief juvenile probation officers in each county. From then until June, as each chief completes the survey, JJSES Implementation Plans are developed from the survey results and distributed to the corresponding chiefs and juvenile court consultants for review. The consultants approve the plans and notify the corresponding chiefs, along with the Director of Administration and Grant Programs.

### June - July

From June through July, the Juvenile Probation Services Grant Agreement template is developed and submitted to the Office of General Counsel for review and approval, followed by submission to the Office of Attorney General for form pre-approval. The county-specific JPSG financial documents are prepared for distribution, additional required JPSG paperwork is completed, and Funds Commitments are created for the county JPSG allocations. During the Commission Meeting in late July, Commission Members approve the county JPSG allocations, after which, and after the state budget has passed, the county-specific financial documents are emailed to the chiefs of juvenile probation departments with approved JJSES implementation plans for completion.

## August - March

In the final phase of the process, which takes place from August to the following March, county JPSG document submissions are reviewed, and following approval, invoiced and processed for payment. Completed grants are uploaded to the treasury website; the JSES Implementation Report is prepared, reviewed, and following approval from the Executive Director, published on the JCJC website. The JSES Implementation Survey, JPSG Tutorials, and JPSG Resource Guide are updated in preparation for the upcoming fiscal year. The upcoming fiscal year's JSES Implementation Survey is tested, and the email to the chiefs is prepared and scheduled in preparation for the upcoming kick-off day.

## Quality Assurance

Annually, each juvenile probation department completes the following reporting requirements prior to their receipt of allocated JPSG funds, which are reviewed for compliance and accuracy by JCJC staff:

1. Personnel Transaction Report
2. Schedule of Staff Salaries
3. Expenditure Report
4. JSES Implementation Survey
5. JSES Implementation Plan
6. Proposed Budget
7. Financial Statement
8. Equitable Compensation
9. Grant Agreement
10. Commonwealth Worker Protection and Investment Certification Form
11. Award Notification/Invoice

A county's decision to not complete each of the reporting requirements above results in the county opting out of participation during the current grant term.

Separate accountability for the receipt and expenditure of grant funds is required to be maintained in the county's accounting system. The county is required to maintain all expenditure records according to generally accepted accounting principles and standards. All detailed records to document expenditures, including invoices, receiving records, correspondence, and the like, shall be properly executed and approved and shall be made available to representatives of the JCJC, the Auditor General of the Commonwealth, and other authorized state and federal personnel for examination and audit.

The staff at the JCJC, specifically the Director of Administration and Grant Programs, is responsible for monitoring all compliance objectives for each of the 67 juvenile probation departments. Additionally, the JCJC staff provide on-site consultant and technical assistance services to juvenile court judges and chief juvenile probation officers in all 67 juvenile probation departments in the Commonwealth. Court service visits to each of the juvenile probation departments are conducted on a regular basis. These interactions allow the JCJC numerous opportunities to provide information regarding and to monitor compliance objectives for the JPSG.

## Measuring Success

Success is measured by overall engagement of all 67 county juvenile probation departments in the JPSG and adherence to the use of the funds per policy.

While county juvenile probation departments have discretion over the pace at which they choose to implement the various JJSES activities, a complete and sustained implementation would be most consistent with the success of the JPSG. The annual JJSES Implementation Report, published by the JCJC, is developed by analyzing implementation and sustainability data captured through the JJSES Implementation Survey. This report illustrates statewide implementation and sustainability data and shows trends in the progressions of the activities of the JJSES. Through this analysis and report, the JCJC is able to measure the successful implementation and sustainability of the JJSES throughout the Commonwealth.

## Glossary

**Award Notification/Invoice:** Serves as the invoice for payment of the JPSG funds and details the amount of funds awarded to the juvenile probation department with the approval of county officials, as well as the JCJC.

**Commonwealth Worker Protection and Investment Certification Form:** Signed by grantees receiving state funds as required by The Worker Protection and Investment Executive Order.

**Equitable Compensation:** Confirms that compensation, including salaries, salary increases, employee benefits, bonuses, and any other compensation provided to the county's juvenile probation personnel is equitable with the same compensation provided to other county and court employees in accordance with subsection 200.1003 (a) of Title 37 of the Pennsylvania Code, 37 Pa. Code § 200.1003 (a).

**Financial Statement:** Details how the county expended the JPSG funds from the previous grant term, in compliance with policy.

**Grant Agreement:** The legal agreement for the JPSG entered into by and between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the JCJC, the Office of General Counsel, and the individual juvenile probation departments, confirming the requirements and responsibilities of all parties. The Grant Agreement is approved as to form and legality by the Office of General Counsel and the Office of Attorney General. The Grant Agreement is also approved as to fiscal responsibility, budgetary appropriateness, and availability of funds by the Office of Comptroller Operations.

**JJSES Implementation Plan:** Guides the juvenile probation department in developing a strategic plan incorporating JJSES-related objectives and activities anticipated during the grant term.

**JJSES Implementation Survey:** Captures needed data for the JCJC to assess the rate of implementation and sustainability of the various activities within the JJSES reform initiative.

**Personnel Transaction Report:** Provides personnel information for and confirms each juvenile probation officer hired in Pennsylvania has obtained the minimum educational requirement for employment pursuant to the required standard governing the operation of a Juvenile Probation Merit System.

**Proposed Budget:** Details how the juvenile probation department will expend the JPSG funds in the current grant term, in compliance with policy.

**Schedule of Staff Salaries:** Details the number of vacant positions, starting salaries, average hours worked per week, and number of positions classified as juvenile probation officers, as well as staff demographics, salaries, employment dates, and education level for juvenile probation departments in Pennsylvania.

# Chapter 5: Juvenile Probation Services Grant

## Section 2: Training Allocations

### About Training Allocations

The JCJC enabling legislation ([The Juvenile Act - 42 Pa. C.S. §6374](#)) states that the JCJC “shall have the power, and its duty shall be to make annual grants to political subdivisions for the development and improvement of probation services for juveniles.”

These grants are provided to each county in the form of training allocations to support professional development opportunities for juvenile probation departments in order to help them achieve the mandated 40 training hours per year.

The training allocation serves three main purposes:

- Supports training programs and professional development for juvenile probation personnel
- Continues the advancement of Pennsylvania’s BARJ mission
- Furthers the implementation and sustainability of the JJSES

### Timeline

Training allocations are calculated annually in the first quarter of the year based on information gathered from the Annual Training Expenditures Report and Schedule of Staff Salaries Report. A Staff Training Hours Report is available in JEMS and can be accessed at any time throughout the year. This report assists in the monitoring of training activities for all staff (juvenile probation officers, supervisors/deputies, and chiefs) who are subject to annual compliance with the 40-hour training requirement.

#### September

At the end of September, the JCJC calculates training reports for each juvenile probation department to determine the number of training hours each juvenile probation officer has completed to date.

#### October - December

On the first business day in October, each chief juvenile probation officer and administrative juvenile court judge is sent an email with the Anticipated Training Hours Report for their respective county and a reminder of when Training Expenditure Reports and Schedule of Staff Salaries Reports are due. Training Expenditure Reports are due by December 31.

## January

Counties are required to complete the Schedule of Staff Salaries module in JEMS by January 1. The schedule contains various statistical information related to juvenile probation departments and is a snapshot of how each department looked as of December 31. Staff Salaries Reports are due by January 15.

Upon receipt of the Training Expenditure Report and Schedule of Staff Salaries Report, the JCJC reviews the submitted materials. These reports must be approved prior to a county receiving the subsequent training allocation. Chiefs will be asked to confirm the allocation calculation prior to the distribution of funds to the county. Each county then receives a single payment containing their annual training allocation.

## February - March

In February and March, submissions are reviewed internally for hours and expenditures and, if applicable, for the written justifications as to why the required number of training hours were not completed. This information is compiled along with the Schedule of Staff Salaries Report and, once both are finalized, the Training Allocation processes may begin.

## Quality Assurance

Quality assurance helps to ensure the timely completion and receipt of every county's Annual Training Expenditures Report and Schedule of Staff Salaries Report by the end of the year and first day of the next year, respectively. Juvenile probation departments are encouraged to periodically enter data into the reports throughout the year, and the JCJC sends a reminder to the juvenile probation departments in October as well.

The training allocation process is continuously improved through the efforts of the juvenile court consultants, who assist juvenile probation departments with their completion of the Annual Training Expenditures Report and Schedule of Staff Salaries Report and who remind the counties of the requirement to complete their responsibilities by the due dates.

## Measuring Success

Training allocations are considered successful when all juvenile probation departments submit their Training Expenditure and Schedule of Staff Salaries reports; when juvenile probation officers complete the mandated 40 hours of training or the justification for not completing 40 hours of training; and when training allocations are calculated, confirmed, distributed, and expended according to the policy.

## Glossary

**Annual Training Expenditure Report:** A report used to track the training hours juvenile probation officers receive throughout each year, as well as how the training allocation is spent and any county or grant funding that the department has received.





Professional  
Development

Sponsored  
Trainings

Graduate  
Education

# Chapter 6: Professional Development

## Section 1: Sponsored Trainings

### About Sponsored Trainings

The JCJC coordinates and presents in-person, virtual, and online trainings each year to juvenile probation officers, juvenile court judges, and staff from both private and public residential facilities. Workshops are designed to enhance participants' skills in working with juvenile offenders and in the administration of services. Professionals from juvenile justice, youth service, education, and/or related fields are all welcome to attend the sponsored workshops. These workshops provide professional development opportunities for juvenile justice professionals to enhance their skills and competencies to effectively advance the juvenile justice system.

Pursuant to the JCJC's Standards Governing the Operation of a Juvenile Probation Merit System ([Juvenile Court Standard - Operation of a Juvenile Probation Merit System](#)): The minimum annual training requirement for continuing employment as a juvenile probation officer, supervisor/deputy, or chief juvenile probation officer shall be the successful completion of 40 hours of approved training per year. The JCJC's hosting of sponsored trainings supports juvenile probation officers in obtaining the required 40 training hours each year.

### Timeline

Sponsored trainings are held at various times throughout the year. The release of the Staff Development Calendar traditionally occurs at the beginning of the calendar year. Planning for the following year's calendar begins in June.

January

The Staff Development Calendar is released to all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

June

Planning begins for the following year's Staff Development Calendar.

## Quality Assurance

Registration information is available in a standardized format and used to track attendance and participation in all workshops consistently. Once a sponsored workshop is complete, attendance is entered into JEMS, and the participants receive an email to complete a survey. Survey responses are compiled and can be accessed to review. Additionally, the staff development calendar is reviewed prior to finalizing and releasing it to the counties.

Working with quality training facilitators and educators ensures high-quality workshops that will benefit the juvenile justice system in Pennsylvania. Networking and grouping counties together allows participants to attend workshops that they may not otherwise have the ability to attend due to pricing and/or location.

Finally, an annual review and approval of the Training Expenditure Report is conducted to track and confirm that juvenile probation officers are obtaining the required 40 training hours or to provide a brief explanation as to why the 40 hours were not obtained.

## Measuring Success

The success of sponsored trainings is determined by certain statistical measures, including the number of sponsored workshops, the attendance numbers, and the validation of which staff from which county attended each workshop.

Surveying the attendees of each workshop ensures that our target audience has a platform to communicate their thoughts on the specifics of a workshop, along with various other instances throughout the year when we solicit feedback and ideas for upcoming workshops and trainers.

## Glossary

**Virtual Workshop/Webinar:** A process where employees can complete job training activities online rather than in person in a physical location.

# Chapter 6: Professional Development

## Section 2: Graduate Education

### About Graduate Education

One of the core values of Shippensburg University is to inspire and guide students to become successful leaders in their professions and their communities. The JCJC-sponsored Graduate Education Program, which has been facilitated by the criminal justice faculty at Shippensburg University since 1982, elevates juvenile probation officers' knowledge and skills by providing a quality graduate education program that promotes advanced inquiry and application of new knowledge. The program aims to serve juvenile justice educational and research needs in Pennsylvania and helps to ensure that graduates will be better qualified to participate in the juvenile justice profession as research-oriented students of juvenile crime and delinquency.

The Graduate Education Program serves students who are currently full-time juvenile probation officers in one of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, who have been endorsed by the JCJC, and who meet the standards for admission. The program is a 33-credit hybrid of online and in-person instruction and is expected to be completed within two academic years for full-time students. Program courses are offered during the mornings and afternoons on designated Saturdays and Sundays or online during the academic year. Classes run for the entire 15 weeks each fall and spring semester. During the shorter summer terms, all coursework is completed online. At the completion of the two-year graduate program, students receive a Master of Science in Administration of Juvenile Justice.

Students in the Graduate Education Program proceed through all courses as part of a cohort. The cohort structure is a fundamental strength of the program, and the experience is central to the advancement of a statewide perspective in juvenile justice, leadership development, networking, and the establishment of long-term working relationships.

By sponsoring tuition scholarships that cover the costs of the Graduate Education Program, the JCJC provides a tool to help county juvenile probation departments recruit and retain quality probation officers, increase their level of expertise and effectiveness, and create a professional climate conducive to creativity and research. The program also creates a networking system in which the juvenile probation officers meet colleagues from all over the state.

### Timeline

The application process is facilitated online through Shippensburg University. Interested applicants must follow application procedures for both the JCJC and the university.

## November - April

Applications are accepted from early November until April 1 for the upcoming fall semester.

## April

Prospective students are required to participate in an endorsement interview, which takes place at the end of April.

## May

At the May Commission Meeting, Commission Members endorse candidates. The JCJC also hosts a commencement reception for the graduating cohort, their families, and others who have been involved throughout the process. Following the reception, the graduates participate in Shippensburg University's commencement ceremony.

## August

Prospective students receive endorsement letters from the JCJC and a welcome packet from the Shippensburg University Criminal Justice Department. Each student is required to participate in a new student orientation which is held during the first two weeks of August.

## Quality Assurance

Students are asked to complete a midpoint survey after their first summer semester to evaluate their first year of the program, and upon graduation, graduates are asked to complete an exit survey. The aggregated results of these surveys are used to provide an update to the JCJC leadership and Commission Members, along with Shippensburg University administration and faculty. This feedback is critical in assessing the program, as it can help guide programmatic changes, if warranted.

## Measuring Success

Success of the program is measured by having a pool of applicants, being able to endorse at least 10 students each cohort, and the students' successful completion of the program by graduating and obtaining their Administration of Juvenile Justice master's degree.

## Glossary

**Cohort:** The group or class with which students completed all courses. Students remain in the same cohort class until graduation.



## Research & Analytics

### Data Requests

### Validation Studies

### Original Research

# Chapter 7: Research & Analytics

## Section 1: Data Requests

### About Data Requests

The JCJC maintains a unique statewide information management system known as PaJCMS, which is utilized by all 67 juvenile probation departments in the Commonwealth. The PaJCMS allows for departments to collect historical information on important measures, such as demographics, offenses committed, dispositional outcomes, risk assessment instruments, and services received. The PaJCMS is appealing to juvenile justice researchers due to its depth, breadth, and cleanliness. Because of this, the JCJC routinely receives requests from third-party researchers to access the data collected within PaJCMS for ad hoc research purposes. These requests are designed to further explore emerging issues in the field and to determine what works (i.e., the effectiveness and impact of policies and programs). In the past, the JCJC has partnered with researchers from universities (e.g., Penn State University, Temple University, Fordham University), government agencies (e.g., the National Institute of Justice), and non-government organizations (e.g., the Council of State Governments).

### Timeline

Each research request from an external stakeholder is different, depending on the complexity of the project. Some projects require a one-time data pull, whereas others occur over multiple years and require multiple data pulls.

#### Month 1

The external researcher completes and submits a JCJC Data Request. The Research and Analytics Unit reviews the request and supplemental supporting materials and ultimately approves or denies the request.

#### Month 2

If judicial and/or juvenile probation authorization is required, the Director of Research and Analytics develops and executes the necessary paperwork. Once these authorizations have been secured, data sharing agreements are executed to ensure proper data governance.

## Month 3

After the necessary authorizations and agreements are secured, the Research and Analytics Unit staff works with the external researcher and the CJJT&R IT staff on the development of specifications for the project. The data is pulled and verified via the established protocols of the CJJT&R. Data is shared with the external researcher for analysis.

### Quality Assurance

Most data collected for research studies is retrieved from PaJCMS, which is subject to the rigorous quality assurance (QA) and continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes in place at the CJJT&R, such as statistical evaluation reports and the thorough review that occurs as part of the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* process. In addition, the IT staff's supervisor reviews code and syntax to ensure the correct data fields are used and logic is applied.

### Measuring Success

The success of data requests can be measured by the report completion turnaround time, the number of report and infographic downloads, the number of presentations/deliverables using the requested data, and the number of journal articles citing the data.

# Chapter 7: Research & Analytics

## Section 2: Validation Studies

### About Validation Studies

In Pennsylvania, several evidence-based, structured decision-making tools are utilized with the goal of securing the efficient administration of the juvenile justice system. Validation studies are necessary to ensure the actual effectiveness and validity of these tools. In other words, validation studies guarantee that the identified tool is performing the way it is intended and that the ultimate outcome is being achieved. For example, the PaDRAI revalidation study was conducted to ensure that the tool was appropriately identifying those youth who could be safely released to the community or to an Alternative to Detention (ATD) without committing a new offense or failing to appear at their first court hearing.

The results of validation studies are published on the JCJC's website; through full reports, infographics and other data visualizations; and via data dashboards.

### Timeline

The completion of a validation study takes several months and will vary by the scope of the study and the number of staff assigned to the project. As such, the timeline for validation studies is not driven by a calendar year, but rather identified by phases of work. These phases include: project preparation, data preparation, data analysis, report development, and dissemination of findings. The following information outlines when it is generally expected that each phase of work would occur.

#### Month 1

The need for a validation study is identified and communicated to or anticipated by the JCJC's Research and Analytics Unit. An advisory committee is established. The Research and Analytics Unit staff and/or contributors conduct a literature review to identify research questions, population, and methodology, which are proposed to and reviewed by the Advisory Committee. Depending on the researcher's affiliation, agreements must be executed to ensure proper data governance.

#### Month 2

The Research and Analytics Unit staff drafts the data request, incorporating contributor input, and submits it to the CJJT&R IT staff, who then pulls the data needed to complete the validation study. The Research and Analytics Unit staff and/or contributors use statistical software, such as Stata, to restructure the data as needed for analysis.

### Month 3

The Research and Analytics Unit staff and/or contributors draft the report narrative and create charts and graphs.

### Month 4

The content is reviewed by the assigned contributors. After the content is finalized, the report is proofed by the assigned staff. Any infographics or other data visualizations are developed and proofed. The report is then approved by the assigned personnel.

### Month 5

The report and supporting documents are released and made available on the website and sent to other stakeholders (typically via email notification). A newsletter article is developed announcing the release.

## Quality Assurance

The majority of data collected for validation studies is retrieved from PaJCMS, which is subject to the rigorous QA and CQI processes in place at the CJJT&R, such as statistical evaluation reports and the thorough review that occurs as part of the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* process.

The CJJT&R IT staff supervisor reviews code/syntax to verify that the correct data fields are being pulled. Once the report is written, the Director of Research and Analytics completes a review of the data analysis and content to ensure accuracy.

## Measuring Success

Success of the validation studies is measured by report completion turnaround time, the number of report and infographic downloads, the number of presentations/deliverables created using data from the validation study, and the number of journal articles citing the study.

## Glossary

**Validated:** Sufficient research evidence exists that the tool predicts what it was intended to predict.



# Chapter 7: Research & Analytics

## Section 3: Original Research

### About Original Research

In addition to the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* and other standing projects/reports, the JCJC also routinely completes additional original research in an effort to further explore trends and determine the effectiveness and impact of policies and programs. This work is typically conducted on an ad hoc basis based on emerging issues in the juvenile justice field. Original research completed by the Research and Analytics Unit helps guide juvenile probation and court practice and policy in a variety of ways. For example, the completed research assists in the identification of issues or gaps within a jurisdiction, whether in practice, policy, or procedure. This research also serves to offer insight into what works for the successful administration of juvenile justice in Pennsylvania. Finally, this research assists in the planning for policy and practice changes and the impact of such changes on jurisdictions. Research findings are posted on the JCJC's website in the form of full reports, infographics and other data visualizations, and data dashboards.

### Timeline

First, the need for a research study is identified by the JCJC's Research and Analytics Unit. The Research and Analytics Unit staff identifies research questions, population, data variables, and project methodology and then drafts the data request, incorporating contributor input, before submitting it to the report writer. The report writer pulls the data needed to complete the study.

The Research and Analytics Unit staff and/or contributors then use statistical software, such as Stata, to restructure and analyze the data before drafting the report narrative and creating charts and graphs.

Next, the content is reviewed and finalized by the assigned contributors, and the report is proofed by the assigned personnel. Any infographics or other data visualizations are developed and proofed at this time as well. The report is then approved and, along with its supporting documents, is released and made available on the website. The report is also sent to other stakeholders (typically via email notification), and a newsletter article is developed announcing its release.

### Quality Assurance

Most of the data collected for research studies is retrieved from PaJCMS, which is subject to the rigorous QA and CQI processes in place at the CJJT&R, such as statistical evaluation reports and the thorough review that occurs as part of the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* process. In addition, the CJJT&R IT staff supervisor reviews their code/syntax to verify that the correct data fields are being pulled. Once each report is written, a completed review of the data analysis and content is conducted to ensure accuracy.

## Measuring Success

The success of this original research is measured in several ways, including the report completion turnaround time and number of report and infographic downloads, as well as the number of journal articles, presentations, and/or deliverables citing the study.



JJSES  
Leadership  
Team

JJSES  
Implementation  
& Sustainability

## Chapter 8: JJSES Leadership Team

### Section 1: JJSES Implementation & Sustainability

#### About JJSES Implementation & Sustainability

In 2010, the JCJC, the Executive Committee of the PCCJPO, and the PCCD developed a new JJSES, a comprehensive reform effort designed to support the implementation of EBP and aid in the achievement of the BARJ mission.

In 2011, a JJSES Framework was created to serve as a blueprint for implementing EBP throughout Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system, and a JJSES monograph was written to describe each element of the JJSES Framework for juvenile justice professionals in Pennsylvania. In 2015, an accompanying BARJ Monograph was written to describe BARJ's foundational role in the JJSES. Consequently, the statewide implementation and sustainability of the JJSES is supported by the JJSES Leadership Team, including grant management to fund county and state JJSES activities and initiatives.

The JJSES Statement of Purpose declares that juvenile justice system stakeholders work in partnership to enhance the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve its balanced and restorative justice mission by employing EBP, with fidelity, at every stage of the juvenile justice process; collecting and analyzing the data necessary to measure the results of these efforts; and striving to continuously improve the quality of their decisions, services, and programs.

JJSES implementation and sustainability involves all juvenile courts, including their juvenile probation departments, and promotes their ongoing commitment to embracing the JJSES and its activities and initiatives for the benefit of justice-involved youth, their families, and their communities. The JJSES Leadership Team strives to meet all juvenile courts, including their juvenile probation departments, where they are engaged along the stages of the JJSES, and to encourage the implementation of further JJSES initiatives and the sustainability of previously implemented JJSES initiatives. These initiatives are grounded in EBP. The implementation and sustainability of JJSES initiatives often requires additional resources which may be purchasable through grants, including, but not limited to, a JJSES grant and the JPSG.

#### Timeline

The JJSES Leadership Team meets approximately nine times a year. The meeting agendas include standing items (i.e., grant management report, PCCD report, and stage updates), ad hoc items (i.e., new and/or validated research, coexisting

events, and any associated needs), and recommendations to the JCJC regarding Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system that are discussed, reviewed, and/or approved by the JJSES Leadership Team.

Additionally, juvenile probation departments are required to complete and submit the annual JJSES Implementation Survey by June 1 to support the development of a JJSES Implementation Plan. The Plan provides documentation of specific activities that support the implementation of the JJSES, including, but not limited to, the utilization of the YLS; how the results of the YLS are incorporated into dispositional recommendations, including those to the Court; and how the YLS results are used to support the development of a standardized case plan as per established county policy.

## Quality Assurance

General guidance and oversight are provided by the JJSES Leadership Team, while its stage committees offer more specific guidance and oversight to their respective JJSES activities. The stage committees are comprised of JCJC team members, chief juvenile probation officers and deputy chief juvenile probation officers, PCCD staff, and other juvenile justice system stakeholders.

The JJSES Implementation Survey supports the development of a JJSES Implementation Plan, which includes CQI as a building block of the JJSES Framework. Finally, training and technical assistance, another building block of the JJSES Framework, is an opportunity for juvenile courts, including their juvenile probation departments, to develop their knowledge and skills regarding JJSES implementation and sustainability.

## Measuring Success

JJSES implementation and sustainability is successful when juvenile courts statewide, including their juvenile probation departments, apply and maintain JJSES initiatives appropriately with fidelity as indicated by their respective JJSES Implementation Surveys. Additionally, per the JJSES Monograph (2012, p. 4), JJSES is the framework within which EBP became a reality in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. Therefore, data reflecting EBP is collected and analyzed annually, and outputs and outcomes are reported.

## Glossary

**Evidence-Based Practices:** Defined in the JJSES Monograph (2012, p. 5) as: "applying what we know in terms of research to what we do in our work with youth, their families, and the communities in which we live. It is the progressive, organizational use of direct, current scientific evidence to guide and inform efficient and effective services. It is through the use of research evidence and the demonstration of outcomes that Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system can achieve and confirm the effectiveness of its BARJ mission."

**JJSES Leadership Team:** Leads decision making and the implementation and sustainability of JJSES activities, as coordinated by the Deputy Director of the JCJC.



Annual  
Conference

Conference  
Planning

Awards  
Programming

Judges & H.O.  
Training

## Chapter 9: Annual Conference

### Section 1: Conference Planning

#### About the James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice

The James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice is a statewide event offered to juvenile court judges, juvenile probation officers, service providers, and other system stakeholders. It affords attendees the opportunity to learn more about the proper care and maintenance of delinquent and dependent youth, the standards governing administrative practices and procedures of juvenile court, and probation practices.

At the conference, attendees are invited to join various workshop sessions, plenary speakers, award banquets, caucuses, and other forums. These events help them stay up to date on system initiatives, standards, and data-driven practices so that they may continue to provide effective services to youth in the juvenile justice system and to achieve system goals.

The annual conference is a partnership event sponsored by the JCJC, the PCCJPO, the PCCD, and the Juvenile Court Section of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges.

#### Timeline

The conference is traditionally held the first week of November. Planning for the conference is a year-round process with several supporting activities with varying timelines.

##### January - March

Generally, conference planning starts at the beginning of each year. At this time, the conference planning workgroup takes feedback and suggestions from the previous year and begins to brainstorm changes for the upcoming conference.

##### April - August

Throughout the spring and summer months, the workgroup engages with various stakeholder groups to begin the development of workshop topics and presenters, plenary sessions, and other conference events. Registration then officially opens to all conference attendees in August.

## September - December

Between September and October, the JCJC staff works hard to finalize preparations for the conference, which takes place in the first week of November. After the event, the conference planning workgroup reconvenes in December for a debrief session to review the success of the conference and possible improvements for the following year.

### Quality Assurance

The conference planning workgroup meets frequently throughout the year to ensure the planning process is actively ongoing and is meeting corresponding deadlines. After the conference, the workgroup convenes to have a debrief meeting to discuss its success, review attendee survey results, and discuss possible improvements for the next conference.

### Measuring Success

The success of the annual conference is measured by the number of registered attendees, the complete execution of the conference events, and feedback collected from participants in the conference survey.

# Chapter 9: Annual Conference

## Section 2: Awards Programming

### About Awards Programming

During the annual James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice, the awards programming honors exemplary juvenile justice professionals and justice-involved youth for their accomplishments. For many conference attendees, the awards programming is the highlight of the three-day event.

Recipients receive recognition of their accomplishments at the conference, which:

- Inspires stakeholders, improves system performance, and enhances services provided
- Fosters positive work environments
- Improves the well-being and mental health of stakeholders

Similarly, when the accomplishments of justice-involved youth are recognized, they:

- Gain confidence and motivation to continue making positive life changes
- Meet and interact with the featured youth award program speaker
- Make positive connections with prosocial role models
- Receive a certificate to commemorate their accomplishments

The JCJC Awards Committee is tasked with selecting the winners of the JCJC Youth and Professional Awards. The committee reviews and updates the award nomination forms and selects the annual Creative Expression Contest theme for the Youth Awards Program, as well as recommending the James E. Anderson Youth Scholarship Award winners to the Juvenile Court Section of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges.

The idea to develop an awards program to recognize system professionals originated in 1980 when the first Annual Awards Program was created and held at the annual conference. A Youth Awards segment was incorporated into the Annual Awards Program in 1986 and then expanded to be its own event in 1988 by the JCJC Awards Committee. The expansion of the Youth Awards segment extended the annual conference by a full day.

In addition to the Creative Expression Contest and Outstanding Achievement Award, the James E. Anderson Juvenile Justice Youth Scholarship Award was created by the Juvenile Court Section of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges and added to the Youth Awards Program. Since then, the JCJC, PCCJPO, and the Juvenile Court Section have recognized over 600 award winners across Pennsylvania.

The success of the Youth and Professional Award Programs is dependent on the continued year-round planning and work of the JCJC Awards Program Liaisons, who are responsible for the development, management, and coordination of the awards process.

## Timeline

To ensure the success of the Youth and Professional Award Programs, year-round planning and preparation is necessary.

### January

The JCJC Awards Committee convenes in January to review feedback from the previous year's award programs, update award nomination forms, and select the Youth Awards theme for the upcoming year.

### March - May

The nomination form for the James E. Anderson Juvenile Justice Youth Scholarship award is released via email and on the JCJC website, and in May, the remaining youth and professional award categories are released to system stakeholders. All nomination forms are then available on the JCJC website.

### June - July

The nomination deadline for the James E. Anderson Juvenile Justice Youth Scholarship award is in June. All scholarship nominations are then reviewed by the JCJC Awards Committee in July, and winner recommendations are sent to the Juvenile Court Section of the PA Conference of State Trial Judges for approval.

### August - September

All nomination deadlines for the remaining youth and professional award categories are in August. The JCJC Awards Liaisons then prepare all award materials in preparation for the JCJC Awards Committee meeting in September. At the September committee meeting, winners for the youth and professional awards are selected.

### September - October

Between September and October, all winners are notified and work with the JCJC Awards Liaisons to finalize details for their attendance at the Youth and Professional Award Programs at the James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice in November.

## Quality Assurance

The following quality assurance measures ensure that the awards programming process is successful:

- The use of scoring matrices in the award winner selection process, which allows for the selection process to remain fair and equitable
- Committee member term limits, which facilitates a continuous cycle of new ideas and viewpoints as new members rotate into the committee
- The annual January committee meeting to review the previous year's awards process and possible changes for the upcoming year



## Measuring Success

The success of the awards programming is measured by the overall number of submissions received per category for both the youth and professional awards categories, the number of banquet attendees and award winners, and the awards programming feedback and ranking from the conference survey.

## Award Categories

**Chief Juvenile Probation Officer of the Year:** An individual who supervises a juvenile probation department within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as of the date of the nomination email submission.

**Community-Based Program of the Year:** Any public or private sector program, not operated by the court, which provides community-based, non-residential services to alleged and/or adjudicated delinquent youth including, but not limited to, day treatment programs, in-home services, Boys and Girls Clubs, education services, and outpatient services.

**Court-Operated Program of the Year:** Any program operated by court employees which serves alleged and/or adjudicated delinquent youth.

**Creative Expression Contest:** Youth are to submit an original creative expression project using the year's youth award theme in one of the following three categories: Poster, Written, or Mixed Media.

**James E. Anderson Juvenile Justice Youth Scholarship Award:** Scholarship presented to a person who is currently, or was at some point in the past, involved in the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system, has demonstrated remarkable resiliency and exceptional accomplishments, and is currently attending college or a post-secondary institution of higher learning, or who will be enrolled for the semester.

**Juvenile Court Support Service Award:** Those persons who provide clerical, secretarial, fiscal specialist, management, information technology, quality assurance, or other support services to the juvenile court. This includes receptionists, secretaries, clerk/typists, information technology specialists, quality assurance specialists, office managers, and others functioning in a similar support capacity.

**Juvenile Probation Officer of the Year:** An individual who is employed as a juvenile probation officer, but who is not a chief juvenile probation officer, deputy chief, or juvenile probation supervisor as of the date of the nomination email submission.

**Juvenile Probation Supervisor of the Year:** An individual who supervises juvenile probation officers, but who is not a chief juvenile probation officer, as of the date of the nomination email submission. This category includes deputy chiefs, assistant directors, supervisors, coordinators, and other positions functioning in a similar capacity who supervise juvenile probation officers.

**Meritorious Service Award:** A person committed to furthering the development of at-risk, alleged and/or delinquent youth, or to advancing the mission of the juvenile justice system. (Examples of volunteer work may include, but are not limited to, youth aid panels, youth commissions, anti-violence

programs, school-based programs, diversionary programs, mentoring programs, faith-based programs, community centers, or similar programming.)

**Outstanding Achievement Award:** Recognizes a youth's outstanding qualities of community service, victim reparation, academic accomplishments, school attendance, citizenship, attitude, extracurricular activities, peer relationships, significant life experience, and positive changes in behavior.

**Residential Program of the Year:** Any public or private sector program serving alleged and/or adjudicated delinquent youth in a residential setting. This includes foster homes, group homes, residential treatment programs, general childcare facilities, shelter care facilities, detention centers, independent living programs, and other programs providing out-of-home, overnight care to children.

**Victim Advocate Award:** An individual who works on behalf of crime victims in a district attorney's office, juvenile probation department, or community-based agency.

# Chapter 9: Annual Conference

## Section 3: Judges & Hearing Officers Training

### About Judges & Hearing Officers Training

The judges and hearing officers training is intended to develop knowledge, skills, and traits, regardless of the participant's level of experience and/or expertise. Judges and hearing officers training is available via in-person and virtual workshops and online courses. For example, an annual judges and hearing officers training is presented at the James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice. Following this workshop, the training also includes an opportunity for judges and hearing officers to gather in regional groups and engage in a facilitated discussion. These Juvenile Delinquency Roundtable discussions, led by juvenile court judges, focus on issues facing each region, sharing strategies proven successful in the local jurisdictions, and talking about shared matters of interest in general. Chief juvenile probation officers are also invited to join in these regional discussions.

This training fosters well-rounded judges and hearing officers as they work with juvenile probation departments, other juvenile justice professionals, and justice-involved youth to provide “care and rehabilitation which provide balanced attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed and the development of competencies to enable children to become responsible and productive members of the community” (Juvenile Act, 42 Pa.C.S. § 6301). Judges and hearing officers earn Continuing Judicial Education (CJE) credits and Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits, respectively, for approved in-person and virtual workshops. Judges and hearing officers may request online courses hosted by the JCJC. New hearing officers may earn CLE credits for their respective online courses.

Ongoing professional development for judges and hearing officers builds their knowledge, skills, and traits concerning how best to provide proper care and maintenance for delinquent and dependent children. This also elevates the overall quality of the juvenile court. In addition, judges and hearing officers who engage in professional development set a positive example for other juvenile justice professionals by continuing their education.

### Timeline

An in-person judges and hearing officers training is presented annually at the James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice. The training is scheduled for approximately three and a half hours on Wednesday afternoon during the conference. Also, the Juvenile Court Judges Academy is a two- to three-day event hosted biannually by the JCJC in conjunction with the AOPC. Additional in-person and virtual judges and hearing officers trainings are scheduled on an as-needed basis each year. Online courses are available to judges and hearing officers upon receipt of an online training request available via the JCJC website.

## Quality Assurance

In-person and virtual workshops, including the trainers and training topics, are routinely assessed for their effectiveness following the workshops. Online courses are periodically reassessed for their accuracy, efficacy, relevance, and usefulness. Also, a feedback survey is collected for the in-person workshop at the James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice and for each online course. Finally, general feedback is gathered regarding the Juvenile Court Judges Academy.

## Measuring Success

A successful in-person or virtual workshop is determined by the effective facilitation of the judges and hearing officers training at the James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice and other ad hoc workshops, and positive feedback from the conference survey and workshop survey, respectively. A successful Juvenile Court Judges Academy is determined based on feedback from the event, while the success of an online course is determined by the participant's certificate of completion and their positive feedback from the course survey.

## Glossary

**Continuing Judicial Education (CJE):** Program adopted to ensure that judges continue their education to have and maintain the requisite knowledge and skill to fulfill their judicial responsibilities. To satisfy this requirement, judges must participate in continuing judicial education programs or activities that reinforce and enhance their judicial practice.

**Continuing Legal Education (CLE):** Program adopted to ensure that attorneys continue their education to have and maintain the requisite knowledge and skill to fulfill their legal responsibilities. To satisfy this requirement, attorneys must participate in continuing legal education programs or activities that reinforce and enhance their legal practice.

**Juvenile Court Hearing Officer:** An attorney with delegated authority to preside over and make recommendations for delinquency matters. Juvenile court hearing officer has the same meaning as master as used pursuant to 42 Pa.C.S. § 6301 *et seq.*



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# Chapter 10: Annual Publications

## Section 1: Juvenile Court Annual Report

### About the Juvenile Court Annual Report

The *Juvenile Court Annual Report* assists in advising juvenile courts with regard to the maintenance of delinquent and dependent children. This report helps juvenile courts in establishing administrative practices and judicial procedures, as well as identifying trends and establishing the effectiveness of the programs and practices involved. The report supports juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments by comparing specific data points that assist them in determining what is working well and where improvements can be made.

Each calendar year, the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* compiles all of the data collected from the juvenile courts in Pennsylvania's 67 counties, including juvenile allegations, court hearings and case processing, dispositions, detentions, placements, and demographics.

The *Juvenile Court Annual Report* is published on the JCJC website and is distributed to all Commission Members, juvenile court judges and hearing officers, chief juvenile probation officers, and other select partners via email.

### Timeline

The *Juvenile Court Annual Report* is developed over the course of a six-month time period that occurs at the beginning of every calendar year.

#### January

County codes are verified to ensure that the PaJCMS database tables and Excel chart tables reflect the most current codes. Year-end Statistical Evaluation (Stat Eval) reports are run and sent to counties for review and data cleanup, and the Help Desk works with county juvenile probation departments to make corrections in PaJCMS that were identified in those reports. Additionally, the QA staff runs data integrity dashboard reports at the end of each quarter, sends them to their assigned counties, and works with each county to make the necessary corrections.

## February

Verification letter contacts are updated, and data checks are run against live data to identify any issues or questions prior to the database being pulled and delivered for the report.

## March

The Help Desk re-runs the Stat Eval reports to validate county corrections and sends any additional flagged items to counties for final data cleanup. With data cleanup complete, backups are made, and a data check report is run. Verification letters are sent to counties; any questions are answered, and data is edited as needed.

## April - June

Report data is compiled in Excel in April, and the various report charts, tables, and maps are created. In May, everything is proofread and reviewed before being sent to the JCJC's Administrative Office in Harrisburg, PA for a separate review. Corrections are made as needed, and the finalized report is sent back for a data integrity review. When this process is completed, the final version of the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* is published on the JCJC website and distributed via email.

## Quality Assurance

The *Juvenile Court Annual Report* is reviewed and proofed by quality assurance assistants and other members of the JCJC staff to ensure the data has been entered into PaJCMS accurately. Statistical Evaluation and Hearing reports, as well as Data Integrity Dashboard error reports, are sent to the counties each quarter to resolve any data errors in order to ensure accuracy prior to compiling the data for the *Juvenile Court Annual Report*. In addition, multiple user group meetings are conducted throughout the year to address the most frequent data entry errors and to explain any new updates to the Procedures Manual for Reporting Juvenile Court Dispositions. Finally, features are added or removed within PaJCMS to better assist with data collection.

## Measuring Success

In addition to assisting juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments, data from the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* is utilized by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, Governor's Office, and Legislature when considering juvenile court procedural rules, new legislation, and in making public policy decisions. The data is also provided annually to the National Center for Juvenile Justice for inclusion in the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, as well as being published in the National Juvenile Court Statistics Report.

The *Juvenile Court Annual Report* grows each year with added enhancements. As a result of the report's success, other states have contacted the JCJC to request more information about PaJCMS and the extensive amount of data being collected.

## Juvenile Court Annual Report Definitions

**Advanced Communication Technology:** Any communication equipment that is used as a link between parties in physically separate locations and includes, but is not limited to, systems providing for two-way simultaneous audio-video communications, closed circuit television, telephone and facsimile equipment, and electronic mail.

**Delinquency Allegation:** Document completed by a law enforcement officer or other person that is necessary to allege a juvenile has committed an act of delinquency. It is synonymous with a “court referral,” though written allegation is the preferred language.

**Dependency Allegation:** Document alleging that a child is without proper parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law, or other care or control necessary for their physical, mental, or emotional health.

**Detention:** A secure holding facility utilized to detain a juvenile temporarily. The term detention, when used in this report, does not include shelter care.

**Disposition:** The action/decision implemented, or treatment plan decided upon, by a juvenile court in response to a delinquency allegation. This is similar to the sentence imposed in criminal court.

**Disposition Review Hearing:** Hearing that must occur every six months for juveniles under court supervision for the purpose of ensuring that the juvenile is receiving necessary treatment and services and that the terms and conditions of the disposition are being met. In this report, disposition review hearings involving out-of-home placement are referred to as placement review hearings (see definition below).

**Juvenile:** A person who has attained ten years of age and is not yet twenty-one years of age who is alleged to have, upon or after the juvenile’s tenth birthday, committed a delinquent act before reaching eighteen years of age or who is alleged to have violated the terms of juvenile probation prior to termination of juvenile court supervision.

**Out-of-Home Placement (or Placement):** An out-of-home program utilized as a juvenile court disposition. Included in this definition are placements into group homes, general residential programs, secure residential care, foster care, drug and alcohol programs, residential treatment facilities, Youth Development Centers, and Youth Forestry Camps.

**Placement Review Hearing:** Hearing that must occur every six months for juveniles residing in out-of-home placement for the purpose of ensuring that the juvenile is receiving necessary treatment and services and that the terms and conditions of the placement disposition are being met.

**School-Related Offenses:** Any offense committed in the school setting including the school, on the school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school. Failure to comply offenses are not included.

**Substantiated Offense:** Any petitioned offense the court finds the juvenile committed.

# Chapter 10: Annual Publications

## Section 2: Recidivism Report

### About the Recidivism Report

Each year, the JCJC publishes a recidivism report that details the outcomes of youth whose cases were closed by a juvenile probation department in the Commonwealth. The report, which defines recidivism as a subsequent adjudication of delinquency or conviction in criminal court for a felony or misdemeanor offense within two years of case closure, presents detailed information related to demographic variables; offense variables; out-of-home service variables; and serious, violent, and/or chronic offenders. The last three recidivism reports have included additional analyses of the relationship between juveniles' assigned risk level on the YLS and recidivism.

This report allows juvenile probation departments and juvenile courts to examine the juvenile justice system's performance and achievement of its long-term outcome of reducing a youth's likelihood to reoffend. The report is one of many metrics used to determine the effectiveness of the system on youth outcomes. It is also integral in determining which programs and interventions are most effective in reducing recidivism.

*The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Recidivism Report* is one of the most comprehensive recidivism reports in the nation because it tracks all youth who were under the supervision of a juvenile probation department and it tracks these youth into adulthood. To date, 13 cohorts of more than 220,000 youth released from juvenile probation supervision have been tracked two years post-case closure.

### Timeline

The annual development of *The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Recidivism Report* traditionally begins after the completion of the most recent *Juvenile Court Annual Report* and after all data has been validated. Generally, this work occurs over a period of six months and includes activities such as data preparation, content development, review, and release.

#### Month 1

The base population of youth closed for services in the cohort year is identified. Several additional static variables (e.g., demographics) are compiled at this time as well.

#### Month 2

The remaining data needed for this report is compiled from PaJCMS. Criminal conviction information is compiled in conjunction with the AOPC.



### Months 3 - 5

Data merging, cleaning, transformation, and analysis is completed. Report narrative is drafted.

### Months 5 - 6

The report is proofread and reviewed. Research Briefs, infographics, and other data visualizations are developed.

### Month 7

The report and accompanying/supporting documents (e.g., Research Brief, infographics) are released and posted online.

## Quality Assurance

Because the bulk of the data that is part of this report is retrieved from PaJCMS, it is subject to the rigorous QA and CQI processes in place at the CJJT&R, such as statistical evaluation reports and the thorough review that occurs as part of the *Juvenile Court Annual Report* process.

Beyond that, this project has been completed over ten times. Each time the process is completed, the report writer considers ways to refine the process. The Report Writer's supervisor also reviews the code/syntax to ensure the correct data fields are being pulled.

Once the report is written, the Director of Research and Analytics completes a review of the data analysis and content to ensure accuracy.

## Measuring Success

The success of *The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Recidivism Report* is measured by the report completion turnaround time; the number of times the report, research brief, and infographics are downloaded; and the number of presentations and deliverables that utilize the report's figures.

## Glossary

**Cohort:** This term is used to describe the population of youth whose cases were closed from a Pennsylvania juvenile probation department in the recidivism study year and were included in the sample for analysis.

**Recidivism:** Within two years of case closure, a subsequent adjudication of delinquency or conviction in criminal court for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

# Chapter 10: Annual Publications

## Section 3: Outcome Measures Report

### About the Outcome Measures Report

The *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System Statewide Outcome Measures Report* is an aggregate annual report of outcomes of juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania. This report reflects outcomes of juvenile offenders who ended (i.e., “closed”) a period of supervision from a county juvenile probation department during the report period, which is one calendar year. Outcomes of the JCJC’s BARJ mission, including community protection, accountability, and competency development, are highlighted in the report, as well as additional data regarding goals related to the implementation of the JJSES, such as the use of the YLS risk/needs assessment. In addition, this report provides historical data, typically 10 years’ worth, that is used to identify areas of strength, as well as those areas where improvement may be needed.

The Stage 4 Committee’s Outcome Measures workgroup meets monthly to review current measures, identify new measures, and ensure data integrity, including by updating the data entry manual, which is posted on the JCJC website. Any proposed changes are presented to the Leadership Team and Executive Committee. In addition, an internal committee meets monthly to improve the report’s readability and design.

### Timeline

Throughout the year, counties enter data into the PaJCMS Outcome Measures module when youth end supervision. The JJSES Stage 4 Committee’s Outcome Measures workgroup and an internal advisory committee meet monthly. The development of the Outcome Measures Report traditionally occurs towards the beginning of each year.

#### January

The JCJC notifies counties of the outcome measures due date.

#### March

Data for the report period is pulled and validated.

#### April

The report’s narrative, tables, and charts are updated with the report period’s figures.

May

The report is posted on the JCJC website. Infographics containing outcome measures data (i.e., Financial Obligations and Outcome Measures) are updated, edited, and posted on the JCJC website.

## Quality Assurance

The outcome measures data is validated by the quality assurance team, after which the report is created and then reviewed by an internal advisory committee. Once approved by the Executive Director, it is released to the counties and on the JCJC website as a public report. On an on-going basis, the JJSES Stage 4 Committee's Outcome Measures workgroup reviews the report and proposes changes to ensure its accuracy and data integrity.

## Measuring Success

The success of the *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System Statewide Outcome Measures Report* is determined by the quality of data provided, as well as whether the targeted public release time frame of the beginning of the second quarter is reached. The number of times the report and infographics are downloaded are also measures of success.

# Chapter 10: Annual Publications

## Section 4: Newsletter

### About the Newsletter

The JCJC's *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice* newsletter disseminates information monthly to juvenile probation departments statewide and to other stakeholders in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. The newsletter is published on the JCJC's publicly accessible website and distributed statewide to juvenile probation departments and other stakeholders via email.

The newsletter contains standard articles, including "County Spotlight," "Staff Development Highlights," "Technology Corner," and "National Juvenile Justice Announcements," and ad hoc articles, including award winners, research reports and other data, personnel changes, and statutory or rule changes that are useful to the readership. Additionally, it supplies up-to-date information to Pennsylvania's juvenile probation departments and other stakeholders and provides a means to reach a wide audience regarding national, state, and local topics related to juvenile justice.

### Timeline

The newsletter is released on the first day of the month when that day is a workday (i.e., January's newsletter is published on February 1). Otherwise, the newsletter is released on the last workday prior to the first day of the next month (i.e., January's newsletter is published on January 31 if February 1 is a Saturday, and it is published on January 30 if February 1 is a Sunday). A preparation meeting that includes members of the participating staff is held on the third Monday of every month for that month's newsletter.

### Quality Assurance

Quality assurance ensures the newsletter's completion, including timely publishing, quality articles, and clean formatting to the satisfaction of the JCJC's Executive Director and Deputy Director. The content of the newsletter is continuously improved by comparing the quality, quantity, and variety of articles in the current month's newsletter to all previous months' newsletters and the prevailing interests of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system.

### Measuring Success

A successful newsletter is published on the JCJC's publicly accessible website and distributed statewide to juvenile probation departments and other stakeholders via email according to the aforementioned timeline.