

**VISION 2008 & BEYOND: JEFFERSON PARISH  
CHILDREN & YOUTH PLANNING BOARD  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**SUBMITTED OCTOBER 8, 2007 TO THE  
LOUISIANA OFFICE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
AND  
THE LOUISIANA CHILDREN'S CABINET**

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2004, to further promote the intent of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003 and during the Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the provisions of Act 555 were passed. The statute, known as the "Children and Youth Planning Boards Act", mandated local jurisdictions create children and youth planning boards (CYPB's) whose purpose is to assist in the assessment, alignment, coordination, prioritization, and measurement of all available services and programs that address the needs of children and youth.

The Children and Youth Planning Boards Act further authorized local CYPB's to assist in the development, implementation, and operation of services which encourage positive development, diversion of children and youth from the criminal justice and foster care systems, reduction in the commitments of youth to state institutions, and provision of community responses to the growing rate of juvenile delinquency. The coordination and implementation of services are mandated to include, but are not limited to, prevention, early intervention, diversion, and alternatives to home displacement, alternatives to incarceration and treatment services.

By further mandate of Act 555, the CYPB members were required to actively participate in the formulation of a comprehensive plan for the development, implementation, and operation of services for children and youth. In its formulation of the comprehensive plan, the local CYPB shall do all of the following:

- (1) Identify all resources available to meet the needs of children and youth;
- (2) Assess the needs of children and youth in the local community, incorporating reliable data sources;
- (3) Develop and select the appropriate evidence-based strategies or programs to meet those needs and include measurable goals and objectives which should be evaluated annually to ensure its effectiveness;

- (4) Ensure effective delivery of prevention programs in the community through training, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure effective outcomes are achieved;
- (5) Collaborate with multiple youth serving agencies and organizations;
- (6) Report the results of such assessment annually by October first to the Office of Youth Development (OYD) and the Louisiana Children's Cabinet. Performance indicators and benchmarks from the reports will be used for planning at both the state and community levels.

Pursuant to this mandate, the Jefferson Parish CYPB was established by Jefferson Parish Ordinance No. 22308 as adopted by the Jefferson Parish Council on August 25, 2004. The Jefferson Parish CYPB convened its first meeting in October, 2004. The Jefferson Parish CYPB established a governance structure that assured that these tasks activities could be completed on an annual basis. With oversight from an Executive Committee, the CYPB formed the following committees and subcommittees:

- Interagency Coordination & Training
- Prevention & Early Intervention
- Continuum of Care
- Evaluation & Monitoring
- *Models for Change* Subcommittees
  - Evidence-Based Practices
  - Alternatives to Formal Processing
  - Disproportionate Minority Contact
- Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative: Screening & Alternatives to Detention

The Jefferson Parish CYPB committees have made substantial gains in developing historical and current information and compiling data that will inform changes in policies, practices, resources, and result in commitments to the use of evidence-based programs and services. As part of a five year plan, the Jefferson Parish CYPB has built a foundation for the future and demonstrated its commitment to the foundational principles of Act 555.

This Jefferson Parish CYPB comprehensive plan is entitled *Vision 2008 & Beyond: Jefferson Parish Children & Youth Planning Board Comprehensive Plan*. This report contains numerous background sections that reflect Jefferson Parish's unique historical and physical

information, census characteristics, educational demographics, assets and liabilities, economic indicators, current initiatives, and a comprehensive community profile. The report contains a detailed depiction of the history and key decision points within the juvenile justice system as well as a comprehensive data picture of the children and youth populating the juvenile justice, child welfare, educational, mental health and status-offender systems. Additionally, the Jefferson Parish CYPB conducted a rigorous resource and needs assessment that yielded a detailed understanding of the current gaps in services and programs facing our youth and families and youth-serving organizations and providers. The work also provided a snapshot of currently utilized screening and assessment tools and the use of evidence-based programs and services. All of these data and informational sections were of significant utility to the CYPB Executive Committee as final priority recommendations were formulated for the report.

This significant effort provided a list of service needs organized in eight key domains (i.e., juvenile justice, child welfare, family, community, education, at-risk behaviors, substance abuse, and peers). The Jefferson Parish CYPB Executive Committee prioritized these areas of need utilizing the data picture, resource assessment, and their considerable professional expertise. The following list identifies the priorities of the Executive Committee:

- a) Community-The CYPB will pursue alternative programs for teens that are unemployed, have dropped out of formal education and are not enrolled in an education setting and will also identify and implement other, more broadly focused community-strengthening programs.
- b) Education-The group elected to focus on nursery/pre-kindergarten care for the 38% of Louisiana's children between three and five years of age in Jefferson Parish who are in need of nursery care.
- c) Family-The committee deemed as salient the enhancement of services that improve the health and economic status of non-traditional families including, but not limited to, preventative health and planned pregnancy. Data showed roughly 50% of families involved with the juvenile justice system consisting of single mothers.
- d) Peers-Emphasis will be placed on providing services that teach social skills to children and youth at all ages to decrease aggressive conflicts and reduce crime resulting from conflicts.

- e) Individual-Attention will be devoted to offering services that provide mental *illness* diagnosis and mental *health* treatment for adolescents to decrease the proportion of underserved juveniles in need of mental health treatment. Also, offender-prevention services will be offered targeting 12-14 year-olds to increase the average age of first offense thereby reducing future recidivism risk.

On October 2, 2007, the Jefferson Parish CYPB Comprehensive Plan and its list of priority recommendations were submitted by the Executive Committee to the full membership of the Jefferson Parish CYPB for approval and endorsement.

The many agencies, community groups and individual citizens involved in this endeavor will strive diligently to carry this plan to full fruition, starting with those most in need. This unique collaboration will succeed, guided by the common, unifying goal of improving the lives of all children and youth in the Parish of Jefferson.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the 2003 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the provisions of Act 1225 were passed setting the foundation for substantial changes in implementing juvenile justice in Louisiana. The statute, known as the "Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003", was submitted upon recommendation of the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Commission and provided for comprehensive reform of the Louisiana juvenile justice system. As a result of its enactment, the declared policy of the State of Louisiana became, "to assist in the development and establishment of a community-based, school-based, and regionally-based [juvenile justice] system." Among other critically important standards, the statute further condemned large correctional facilities recognizing the critical importance of community-based treatment for juvenile offenders.

In 2004, to further promote the intent of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003 and during the Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the provisions of Act 555 were passed. The statute, known as the "Children and Youth Planning Boards Act", mandated local jurisdictions create children and youth planning boards (CYPB's) whose purpose is to assist in the assessment, alignment, coordination, prioritization, and measurement of all available services and programs that address the needs of children and youth. The mandate includes children and youth at risk for, or identified with, social, emotional, or developmental problems, including, but not limited to educational failure, abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, juvenile or parental mental illness, juvenile or parental substance abuse, poverty, developmental disabilities and delinquency. The boards are intended to encourage collaborative efforts among local stakeholders for assessing the physical, social, behavioral and educational needs of children and youth and for assisting in the development of comprehensive plans to address such needs. The infrastructure for planning is intended to be data-driven in order to select appropriate evidence-based programs which will maximize available resources within each local jurisdiction.

The Children and Youth Planning Boards Act further authorized local CYPB's to assist in the development, implementation, and operation of services which encourage positive development, diversion of children and youth from the criminal justice and foster care systems, reduction in the commitments of youth to state institutions, and provision of community

responses to the growing rate of juvenile delinquency. The coordination and implementation of services are mandated to include, but are not limited to, prevention, early intervention, diversion, alternatives to home displacement, alternatives to incarceration and treatment services. Through the establishment and implementation of such boards and their activities, Louisiana intended to foster and promote a continuum of community-based services and systems reflecting service integration at the state and community and/or local levels.

Pursuant to this mandate, the Jefferson Parish CYPB was established by Jefferson Parish Ordinance No. 22308 as adopted by the Jefferson Parish Council on August 25, 2004. The Jefferson Parish CYPB convened its first meeting in October, 2004. State-wide, Children and Youth Planning Boards receive oversight from the Louisiana Children's Cabinet, which is responsible for coordinating services for Louisiana's children and youth and for making recommendations regarding the Louisiana's Children's Budget.

In accordance with §1941.8 of Act 555, each CYPB is mandated to consist of a minimum of eleven, but not more than twenty-five members. The parish governing authority is required to make membership appointments for a period of two years. The CYPB is required to ensure that the board is representative of the community in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and geography, as well as knowledge and expertise. The CYPB is directed to promulgate and implement rules concerning attendance of members at board meetings. The members may also elect their own officers. Those appointed shall include the following, if available and willing to serve, but need not be limited to:

- (1) Members of the education community that are representative of and knowledgeable about early childhood, elementary, secondary, and special education;
- (2) Members of the criminal justice community that are representative of and knowledgeable about law enforcement, prosecution, public defense, and the judiciary and, wherever possible, a member of the judiciary elected to the juvenile court bench should be included;
- (3) Members of the health care community that are representative of and knowledgeable about physical health, mental health, and early childhood substance abuse prevention and treatment services;



- (4) Members of the social services community that are representative of and knowledgeable about services for children in need of care, foster parenting, and child and family support programs;
- (5) Members of the faith-based communities;
- (6) Members of the business and labor communities;
- (7) Members of parenting and youth organizations.

The Jefferson Parish CYPB as currently constituted meets the requirements of §1941.8 of Act 555 (see Appendix A for CYPB Membership Roster).

By further mandate of Act 555, the CYPB members are required to actively participate in the formulation of a comprehensive plan for the development, implementation, and operation of services for children and youth and to make formal recommendations to the parish governing authority or joint parish governing authorities at least annually concerning the comprehensive plan and its implementation during the ensuing year. In its formulation of the comprehensive plan, which adheres to the mandates of Act 555, the CYPB is in the process of pursuing and implementing the following:

- (1) Identify all resources available to meet the needs of children and youth by comprehensively examining resources and services that target children and youth. These services may include, but are not limited to, prevention, early intervention, education, and treatment. For nearly three years, Jefferson Parish has been compiling an exhaustive list of federal, state, parish, municipal, community-based, faith-based and private-sector service providers and treatment providers that was compiled into a directory of providers.
- (2) Assess the needs of children and youth in the local community, incorporating reliable data sources. To achieve this, Jefferson Parish's Continuum of Care Committee developed a matrix of needs based on analyses of state-wide mental health and drug abuse reports and also analyzed the results of previously completed surveys detailing risk factors facing Jefferson Parish children and youth such as the Louisiana Caring Communities Survey and the Kids Count survey.
- (3) Develop and select the appropriate evidence-based strategies or programs to meet those needs identified by soliciting community input and developing a strategic plan to best address the needs of children and youth in the respective community. This

strategic plan should have measurable goals and objectives and should be evaluated annually to ensure its effectiveness. Two surveys have been conducted relating to availability of evidence-based practices and a needs analysis has been conducted. Cross referencing needs with available programs revealed unmet needs and corresponding evidence-based programs to be implemented.

- (4) Collaborate with schools, law enforcement agencies, judicial system, health care providers, and others to ensure that goals and treatment needs are being met. Collaboration among such Jefferson Parish agencies has been evolving for more than a decade. It began with interagency agreements and strategic procedural and policy changes that spawned the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Justice Task Force and later, the Community Justice Agency (CJA). Because of its ground-breaking track-record of interagency collaboration between system stakeholders, the CJA easily accepted the responsibilities required by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act 1225 and the CYPB Act 555, and was soon recognized by two national foundations.
- (5) Ensure effective delivery of prevention programs in the community through training, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure effective outcomes are achieved. In this regard, we are currently creating an inventory of such programs and have implemented measures to evaluate outcomes, including contracting with a program evaluator to monitor and evaluate programs provided to children and youth in the juvenile justice system.
- (6) Report the results of such assessment annually by October first to the Office of Youth Services (OYS) and the Louisiana Children's Cabinet. Performance indicators and benchmarks from the reports will be used for planning at both the state and community levels. This Jefferson Parish CYPB comprehensive plan, entitled *Vision 2008 & Beyond: Jefferson Parish Children & Youth Planning Board Comprehensive Plan*, is prepared in compliance with the articulated provisions of the Children and Youth Planning Boards Act of 2004 (Act 555) identified in this section of the document.

## BACKGROUND

Over a decade ago, the Juvenile Justice Interagency Task Force was created to address a rising tide of juvenile crime. The primary target was to build a juvenile justice system that focused on chronic, violent, and serious juvenile offenders. From this effort, agency representatives put aside their differences and agreed to support programming that addressed both first-time offenders and serious offenders. Through interagency agreements and strategic procedural and policy changes, the juvenile justice system became increasingly responsive to the needs of these youth. These efforts also provided system stakeholders with an increased fund of knowledge regarding risk and responsivity of juvenile offender programming.

In 1996, after a consultant study of the Jefferson Parish criminal justice system was completed and pursuant to the recommendations of the consultants, the Community Justice Agency (CJA) was established by Jefferson Parish Ordinance No. 23308. The CJA serves as the primary criminal justice planning and coordinating arm of the parish to consolidate, coordinate, and operate juvenile and adult criminal justice programs in Jefferson Parish. The mission of the CJA is to provide leadership, support, and services in the development and operation of criminal justice programs, criminal justice system coordination and management, and the administration of criminal justice budgets and funding requests. The agency and its director have direct administrative supervision over Adult Supervision and Corrections, Administration & Planning Services, and juvenile justice functions within Jefferson Parish Government. The CJA is guided by an Advisory Board consisting of the Parish President, Council Chairman, Sheriff, District Attorney, Chief Judge of the 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Chief Judge of the Juvenile Court, Clerk of Court, a judge representing both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Parish Courts of Jefferson Parish, the Coroner, a Chief of Police representing the Eastbank municipalities and a Chief of Police representing the Westbank municipalities.

The CJA is also the District 7 Headquarters for the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement serving Jefferson and nine neighboring parishes in seeking, managing and monitoring more than \$7 million per year in federal and state grant monies used to operate a broad range of programs to make the community safer, guide youth away from criminal activity and assist victims of crime. Through the coordination efforts initiated, promoted and sustained by the CJA, the juvenile justice system has greater capacity to respond to the needs of Jefferson Parish youth.

With each subsequent enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act and the Children & Youth Planning Board Act, Jefferson Parish not only embraced state-wide philosophical changes, but was on the leading edge of implementing these changes. Developed through years of careful attention to both the needs of youth involved in both juvenile justice and the needs of the community as a whole, the Jefferson Parish CYPB maintains unity through the common goal of improving the lives of all youth in the parish. Its mission is to collaboratively promote and administer effective prevention and treatment programs to children and youth in a timely and appropriate manner with dignity and respect for the welfare of all children and their families resulting in healthier children and youth for a strong, vibrant community.

Initially developed in large part by a previously commissioned juvenile justice master plan initiative in 2004, the Jefferson Parish CYPB established several distinct sub-committees targeting traditional barriers to the common welfare of children and youth. With oversight from the Executive Committee, the board consists of the following committees and subcommittees, which are presented in graphic organizational charts in Appendices B and C:

- Interagency Coordination & Training
- Prevention & Early Intervention
- Continuum of Care
- Evaluation & Monitoring
- *Models for Change* Subcommittees
  - Evidence-Based Practices
  - Alternatives to Formal Processing
  - Disproportionate Minority Contact
- Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative: Screening & Alternatives to Detention

In October 2006, Louisiana was selected to be part of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation *Models for Change* initiative. The *Models for Change* initiative is an effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice system reform through targeted investments in key states. With long-term funding and technical support, *Models for Change* seeks to accelerate progress toward a more rational, fair, effective and developmentally appropriate juvenile justice system. The Foundation awarded a grant to the Louisiana Board of Regents in partnership with the Louisiana State University System to serve as the lead entity coordinating the initiative's activities in the state.

With juvenile justice reform a top priority for the state’s political leadership, Louisiana is rethinking and restructuring its system from top to bottom, and has already managed a significant shift in emphasis from a primarily correctional orientation to one centered on the treatment and rehabilitation of youth. It has dramatically reduced its traditional reliance on secure incarceration of juveniles in state-run facilities. It has emerged from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita with a new sense of urgency and a willingness to innovate that have created the potential for significant and lasting reform.

*Models for Change*-supported reform efforts in Louisiana will focus primarily on bringing about change in three areas: expanding alternatives to formal processing and incarceration; increasing access to evidence-based services; and reducing disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system. Local jurisdictions were selected following a process that evaluated a number of criteria, including districts' commitment to juvenile justice reform, their track records of collaborative relationships in seeking policy change and improvement, the likelihood of achieving the goals of the initiative, and their potential as a bellwether for other areas. Local jurisdictions that were awarded *Models for Change* grants in April 2007 were:

- Rapides Parish                                      Lead Agency: Ninth Judicial District Court
- Jefferson Parish                                    Lead Agency: Community Justice Agency
- 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District                            Lead Agency: District Attorney's Office
- Caddo Parish                                        Lead Agency: Caddo Parish Juvenile Services
- Calcasieu Parish                                    Lead Agency: Office of Juvenile Justice Services

**PROFILE**

**Physical Description**

Physical characteristics of Jefferson Parish were shaped largely by historical and geographical influences. As a result of colonization by both the French and Spanish in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Jefferson Parish was populated by land grants predominantly used for farming. Large portions of Orleans Parish, currently known as the Garden District and Carrollton, were initially part of Jefferson Parish. However, as the city of New Orleans grew, these areas were annexed by the city. Comprising 306 square miles of land and 337 square miles of water, the parish’s current boundaries were established in 1874. The northern boundary is Lake

Pontchartrain and the southern boundary is the Gulf of Mexico. The eastern boundary is shared with both Orleans and Plaquemine parishes. This boundary extends from the Metairie Canal, eastward across the Mississippi River and, southward near the Holmes Avenue Canal and follows the Intercoastal Waterway to the Gulf of Mexico. The western boundary extends from Lake Pontchartrain southward along the Duncan Canal across the Mississippi River southward along the Waggaman Canal and through Lake Cataouatche, Lake Salvador and several smaller bodies of Louisiana marshland to the Gulf of Mexico. This boundary is shared with St. Charles and Lafourche parishes.

Geologically, the northernmost portion of the parish consists of alluvial farmland predominantly used as suburban residential neighborhoods. The southern part of the parish consists of marshlands that support the fishing, maritime and tourism industries. Throughout the parish there are various interconnected waterways creating an enduring and essential maritime industry. By comparison to the infamous “hot summer nights”, the average annual temperature of 68.8 degrees seems mild. The average annual rainfall is 64 inches furthering the moist, humid climate and fertile soil. Most citizens reside in the northernmost part of the parish, which lies directly adjacent to Orleans Parish, creating a unique blend of urban and suburban cultural influences.

The parish’s largest community is Metairie, an unincorporated area that comprises almost all of East Jefferson. Smaller unincorporated areas include River Ridge and Jefferson. West Jefferson is the second largest community and consists of several unincorporated areas including Terrytown, Harvey, Marrero, Avondale, Waggaman, and parts of Westwego. Jefferson Parish is divided by the Mississippi River into the West Bank and East Bank areas. East Jefferson cities include Kenner and Harahan, while Gretna, Westwego, Lafitte and Grand Isle are in West Jefferson.

### **Census Characteristics**

Culturally, Jefferson Parish residents share a dynamic cultural history of mixed ancestry. Surrounding pockets of Spanish Isleños, Cajun French, rural Blacks, and native Houma indigenous peoples combined to create a vibrant cultural gumbo in the parish. This cultural heritage has historically been complimented by New Orleans’ position as a major global port city that has been the point of entry for thousands of European and Latin American

immigrants. Rooted in colonial French and Spanish culture, Catholicism is the predominant religion.

Accounting for the population impact caused by Hurricane Katrina, Jefferson Parish remains the second largest parish in the state (second only to East Baton Rouge), with a population estimated to be 431,361 (2006 U.S. Census Estimates). Demographics show that 52% are female and 48% male with a racial/ethnic makeup of 66% Caucasian, 23% Black, 7% Hispanic/Latino, and 3% Asian (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003). Also, out of 172,000 housing units, 61% were owner occupied and 39% were renter occupied (American Community Survey Profile, 2003). Sixty-four percent of the Jefferson Parish households were families (American Community Survey Profile, 2003). Educationally, 29% of the population achieved their high school diploma only, 24% had some college with no degree, 18% had no high school diploma, 17% had Bachelors degrees, 6% had Associates degrees, and 6% had graduate or professional degrees (American Community Survey Profile, 2003). Regarding children and youth, it is estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau that 24% of the population, or 103,526 persons, were under the age of 18. Nine percent of the population is between 12 and 17 years old.

**Educational Demographics**

In the 2006-2007 school year, there were 42,902 (65%) children in 86 public schools and 23,005 (35%) children in 55 non-public schools (Louisiana Department of Education, 2007) for a total of 65,907 children enrolled in elementary, middle, or high school. Only sixty-two percent of children between three and five years of age were enrolled in nursery school.

Utilizing data collected through our disproportionate minority contact initiative, the following enrollment breakdown by race/ethnicity provides a snapshot of students enrolled in the district’s public schools compared with the state average. The data showed that the parish has a slightly higher percentage of black students, higher percentages of Hispanic/Latino and Asian students, and a lower percentage of white students.

<u>J.P. Public Schools (JPPSS)</u>	<u>State Average</u>
Black 51.9%	Black 47.6%
White 33.8%	White 48.4%
Hispanic/Latino 9.1%	Hispanic/Latino 2.0%
Asian 4.5%	Asian 1.4%
Other 0.7%	Other 0.6%

When compared to the state as a whole, Jefferson Parish produced moderately below-average reading and math proficiency scores despite meeting the average core spending per student. Where students with special needs are concerned, Jefferson Parish enrolls an average percentage of economically disadvantaged students and an average percentage of students with disabilities when compared to the state average. However, the percentage of special-needs students classified as English Language Learners is more than four times the state average. Student performance, core spending, and percent of special needs students of JPPSS compared to the state average are shown below:

<u>Student Performance (2005)</u>	<u>JPPSS</u>	<u>State Average</u>
Reading and Math Proficiency	53.6%	60.1%
Reading Proficiency	55.4%	60.6%
Math Proficiency	51.8%	59.5%
<u>Spending (2003)</u>		
Core Spending (Per Student)	\$6,017	\$6,076
<u>Enrollment of Special Needs Students (2005)</u>		
Economically Disadvantaged	64.5%	61.5%
English Language Learners	4.3%	1.0%
Students with Disabilities	13.1%	13.5%

At 60.1%, the proportion of students in Jefferson Parish public schools completing high school is lower than both the state average of 64.3% and the national average of 68.7%. Reflecting similar patterns of lagging commitment to school, in 2004-2005 the average high school dropout rate for each grade level was 9.8%. Overall, nearly 50% of those that began high school dropped out before completing their senior year.

**Economic Indicators**

Due to both the geographical proximity to major waterways and the rich cultural heritage, the parish economy centers on tourism and infrastructure support. The economic profile of the parish shows major employment industries from greatest to least were retail trade; health care and social assistance; accommodation and food services; and manufacturing. According to the 2003 American Community Survey Profile, the most common occupations were management, professional, and related occupations (33%); sales and office occupations (32%); service occupations (13%); production, transportation, and material moving (11%); and



construction, extraction, and maintenance (10%). Of these, 75% were employed by private agencies, 15% were federal, state, or local government employees and 8.5% were self-employed. Regarding employment rates, 94.8% of parish residents were employed as of June of 2005 with the unemployment at 5.2%. As of the second quarter of 2006, the average weekly wage was \$727.00.

The community and home environments in which children are reared play a crucial role in each student’s educational growth, academic achievement, and personal development. With this in mind, community demographic indicators are provided below:

<u>Community Profile (2005)</u>	<u>Jefferson Parish</u>	<u>State Average</u>
Median Household Income	\$65,874	\$56,599
Adults with a Bachelor’s Degree	25.8%	21.4%
Single-Parent Households w/Children	11.8%	15.8%

A lack of both residences and retailers in Orleans Parish caused by Hurricane Katrina has created an increased need for housing and increased retail sales in Jefferson Parish. Effects of the increased need for housing are reflected in rising costs associated with housing (e.g., home costs, rental costs) and difficulty finding affordable housing. Increased retail sales, while providing strong financial stability for tax-based services, exposed a shortfall of available workers.

**Assets & Liabilities**

A cornerstone asset for Jefferson Parish is its leadership. Local government, law enforcement, private business, and faith-based organizations have unified their efforts to enhance the quality of life in the parish. Collaborative efforts have grown in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and organizations are recognizing the need to join their efforts to achieve positive outcomes. Similarly, the initiation of state-wide support for reform in the ways we serve children and youth has been another asset. State-wide mandates have joined with local efforts to provide unprecedented opportunities to enhance the children and youth service system. Jefferson Parish has a long-standing history of collaboration and teamwork among agencies serving children and youth. Initiated through addressing a continuum of services for chronic juvenile offenders, a core group of committed leaders maintains and expands this momentum by addressing the needs of *all* children in the parish. This Children & Youth

Planning Board (CYPB) continues to grow in its accomplishments and goals. Currently, the Jefferson Parish CYPB, on behalf of Jefferson Parish child and youth serving agencies, is involved with the Annie E. Casey Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's *Models for Change* initiative, which will be discussed in greater detail below. Both of these nationally respected foundations have targeted Jefferson Parish as a result of its commitment to improve the quality of lives for children and youth.

Current liabilities for the parish center on restoring population stability offset by the recent natural disaster. Many families are still returning home and many more have not yet repaired their homes. Like their Orleans Parish neighbors, many Jefferson Parish residents continue to feel destabilized by the impact of the storm. Neighborhoods have been affected as well by increased numbers of transient households looking for safe and/or affordable residences. Contrary to previous years, employers are having difficulty locating suitable staff to effectively run businesses and agencies. Particularly, the local healthcare system is experiencing shortfalls in nurses, physicians, and support staff. The mental health system has also received national attention noting its inability to provide a fraction of the services needed to address a growing population of citizens with mental illnesses, not to mention those with prodromal indicators of mental distress.

In 2003, 14% of Parish residents were in poverty and 29% of the households were receiving Social Security benefits of some sort. Thirty-one percent of female-headed families in Jefferson Parish received child support. The Louisiana Office for Addictive Disorders reported 39,038 adults and adolescents in Jefferson Parish were in need of substance abuse treatment. However, 2006 statistics showed that the Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority served less than four percent (1,338 cases) of those in need of substance abuse treatment.

Liabilities for children and youth follow suit. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, 42% of children lived in families where no parent had full-time year-round employment. Twenty-one percent of children younger than 18 years old were below the poverty level. Family indicators showed 46% of households were married-couple families in 2003. As mentioned above, educational shortcomings are also a high liability for the parish. For example, large percentages of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders fell below state averages in basic math, reading, science, and

writing. Graduation Exit Exam results showed 29% unsatisfactory in English, 33% unsatisfactory in Math, and 25% unsatisfactory in Science for those who took the exam. According to the 2004 Louisiana Caring Communities Survey, middle-school students also reported greater overall risk in schools, families, communities, and violent behaviors than their state-wide peers. This demonstrates their perceptions of the challenges they face.

While empirical evidence shows that children and youth in Jefferson Parish face substantial risk factors, parish leadership has historically responded to such challenges with focused collaboration and cooperation.

### **Initiatives**

Prior to the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2004, the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Justice Interagency Task Force (JJITF), a precursor of the CYPB, undertook a monumental challenge – to develop a master plan for juvenile justice. Through collaboration between parish-wide juvenile justice stakeholders and an external consultant, the JJITF established future goals for juvenile justice. Simultaneously, the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Commission was engaged in a similar fact finding process on a state-wide basis. Both efforts, not surprisingly, developed similar objectives and goals. Also not surprising is that through the JJITF, Jefferson Parish established the core philosophy and collaborative approach that now serves as the backbone of today's CYPB. The added emphasis of inclusion of *all* children and youth came with the Children and Youth Planning Board Act, although key issues discussed by the JJITF focused on the challenges of implementing both prevention and intervention programming.

In November 2006, Jefferson Parish was selected by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as one of its *Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice* sites to serve as an incubator for broader reforms across the State of Louisiana. *Models for Change* (MfC) promotes a juvenile justice system that is rational, effective and developmentally sound by creating reform models to hold young offenders accountable for their actions, provide for their rehabilitation, protect them from harm, increase their life chances and manage the risk they pose to themselves and to public safety. The initiative seeks to develop and support replicable, system-wide change that can serve as a model for other parishes within the state of Louisiana as well as other states across the country. The

Community Justice Agency serves as the lead agency for this project and is guided by the CYPB in this effort.

As previously noted, committees serving under the CYPB's direction include: Interagency Coordination and Training; Prevention & Early Intervention; Continuum of Care; Evaluation & Monitoring; Evidence-Based Practices; Alternatives to Formal Processing; Disproportionate Minority Contact and; Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. The Jefferson Parish CYPB has worked diligently to develop a comprehensive plan for Jefferson Parish's children and youth that strives to ensure a better delivery of services to build safer communities, makes the justice system more accountable, and strengthens families and children. Our investments in these promising options should have the effects of maximizing the impact of money spent on improving juvenile justice while simultaneously increasing the quality of life in Jefferson Parish.

The MacArthur Foundation awarded Louisiana \$10 million over six years to continue its juvenile justice reform. Three initiatives were targeted for Jefferson Parish, namely Alternatives to Formal Processing, Evidence-Based Practices, and Disproportionate Minority Contact. Each of these became separate committees under the CYPB umbrella. The Annie E. Casey Foundation awarded several Louisiana parishes with funds and technical assistance with the focus on Juvenile Detention Alternatives and, specifically, development of alternatives to detention and a risk assessment instrument. Committees were created and subsumed under the existing CYPB structure. The combined impact created by the simultaneous focus on goals of the CYPB, *Models for Change*, and Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiatives have propelled Jefferson Parish children and youth service agencies toward more aggressive planning, substantial increases in funds of knowledge and strengthened focus on goal attainment.

Another initiative emanating from efforts of the CYPB is the initiation of outcome-based service acquisition. The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) joined ranks with the local mental health authority and public school system in providing evidence-based services. The Department of Juvenile Services initiated outcome-based contracting for the provision of services to adjudicated youth and their families. This effort blended with the *Models for Change* initiative to implement evidence-based practices. Results from these efforts were a two-day community-based education seminar on evidence-based practices, increased funding available for providers to receive training and provide evidence-based or promising

approaches, and a broader scope of treatment services available for adjudicated youth through DJS. In addition, the department established criteria regarding which outcomes are to be sought, an examination of the risk and protective factors that impact positive outcomes, the development of a measurement and evaluation system to document achievement, and hiring a program evaluator to evaluate effectiveness of standardized programs on juvenile offenders. As an example, the following is a list of primary desired outcomes for children and youth:

Long-Term Outcomes:

- Reduction in recidivism,
- Reduction in youth violence,
- Reduction in substance abuse,
- Reduction in out-of-home placements,
- Academic success,
- Improved family functioning.

Intermediate Outcomes:

- Elimination or reduction in frequency of drug usage,
- Graduation from high school (or other specifically identified educational benchmarks, e.g., school attendance, academic performance),
- Employment/workforce training,
- Improved parenting skills/pro-social community/neighborhood attachment,
- Improved interpersonal and social skills,
- Improved methods to manage anger,
- Reduction in teen pregnancy,
- Decreased involvement with delinquent peers,
- Increased involvement with pro-social peers,
- Reduced incidence and severity of delinquency and criminal activity.

This effort will subsequently carry Jefferson Parish as a whole toward more routine reliance on evidence-based practices, programs and services for its children, youth and families and compliance with the spirit and letter of the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003 and Act 555.

**Children & Youth in the System**

Accounting for the dismal data describing Jefferson Parish children and youth in general, data describing children and youth involved in the “system” are more revealing. Children and youth that have come into contact with the system have entered at various points in the continuum of programs. Initial contact with the system is often made by children who are victims of neglect or abuse. In 2005, there were 147 Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases filed. By comparison, however, in 2006 there were 298 CINC filings in Jefferson Parish indicating a 103% increase in the number of children brought into the system as a result of neglect and/or abuse. The number of parents whose parental rights were terminated increased from 31 in 2004 to 53 in 2006, a 71% increase in just two years. Further, there has been an increase in the number of children entering the system under one year of age. In 2004, 30 children in this age range entered the system. In 2006, this number skyrocketed to 61 showing a 103% increase in just two years.

Another event propelling children past the attention threshold is truancy. The Truancy and Assessment Service Center (TASC), which targets elementary-age students between kindergarten and fifth grade, received 1,848 referrals during the 2006-2007 school year with 1,308 successfully closed, 75 unsuccessfully closed, and subsequently referred to the Family in Need of Services (FINS) process, 229 cases relocating to other districts, six receiving in-home schooling, and 339 remaining in the program.

The most common source of involvement by children and youth in the service system is status offenses. Status offenses that are referred to the FINS process included referrals from the community (schools, walk-ins, etc.), the District Attorney and TASC. There were approximately 1400 referrals to the FINS process in 2006. There were 125 successful terminations from FINS. The district attorney was asked to petition 93 cases for formal processing. Other cases were disposed of due to inability to contact the family, the juvenile moved from Jefferson Parish, or there was no basis for court intervention. Other dispositions were due to the juvenile aged out of the system. The remainder had active delinquent cases.

Arrest for delinquent behaviors is another primary avenue of initiation into the system. Delinquency data showed the total number of juveniles arrested by the Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Office for 2006 was 4,538. These arrests included 5,874 charges received by the District Attorney’s Office from January to December 2006. Of these, 3,122 charges were

refused, 2,161 were accepted, 333 were sent to the Juvenile Diversion Program and 56 were sent through the Families in Need of Services (FINS) process. When looking at the number of juveniles, 1,034 actual juveniles were screened by the District Attorney's Office. Of these, 811 were accepted for petition for delinquency hearings, 190 were sent to Juvenile Diversion and 33 were sent to the FINS process. There were a combined 595 juveniles placed on either Parish or State probation. Jefferson Parish led the state in number of juveniles in secure confinement in 2006 with 49 in secure care.

Although this data presents the CYPB with valid concerns for the welfare of our children, much of our current data has not yet reflected the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the dynamic forces that impact our children and youth.

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM PROFILE**

### **History**

Although Act 555 requires local planning boards to focus on all children and youth, the central focus for change has been on children and youth involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. This was due in part to the high exposure of juvenile crime in the media and also in part due to zealous and focused efforts by those who provide services and programs targeted to juvenile offenders. When looking at juvenile justice from a continuum of care perspective, the lines between at-risk children and youth and juvenile delinquents become increasingly faded.

For almost 50 years, Jefferson Parish has recognized the unique needs of children and youth. Historically, children and youth have either been regarded as miniature adults or as children incapable of calculating the impact of delinquent behavior. Jefferson Parish sought to develop a justice system capable of recognizing the developmental needs of children while providing a mechanism to hold them accountable.

The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court was established by the Louisiana Legislature in 1958. The first judge of the newly created Juvenile Court for Jefferson Parish was Leo McCune. Upon Judge McCune's retirement in 1972, Sol Gothard was elected and served as judge of Section A until 1988 at which time the current judge, Ann Murry Keller, was elected. Thomas P. McGee was elected as the inaugural judge of a second section, Section B, in 1974, and served as judge until his retirement in 1996. Shortly thereafter, currently presiding judge,

Andrea Price Janzen, was elected for that section. Section C, the third and last section, was created in 1980 and was presided over by Nancy Amato Konrad, who continues to serve in that section today. Each of these pioneering officials has contributed greatly to the maturity of today's Juvenile Court and to the child service system as a whole. Over several decades, the efforts of the Jefferson Parish juvenile judiciary have greatly enhanced many facets of child welfare and juvenile delinquency treatment locally and state-wide.

Juvenile Court has jurisdiction over children and youth within the 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, which encompasses Jefferson Parish. In general, the Court presides over matters of juvenile delinquency, Families in Need of Services, Children in Need of Care, adoption, juvenile traffic violations, criminal neglect of family and child support, and certain special proceedings. This jurisdiction and these types of proceedings are statutorily established by the Louisiana Children's Code.

Originally housed in the same building as the 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, the Juvenile Court moved into its own facility in 1990. The number of staff and services has continued to grow in response to the growing needs of Jefferson Parish children and youth. Currently, there are six supplemental court programs that are comprised of both the Court's employees and employees from other agencies demonstrating the collaboration between child and youth service agencies. These programs include: Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), Truancy Assessment and Service Center (TASC), Families in Need of Services (FINS), Juvenile Drug Treatment Court, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and the Juvenile Court Mediation Program.

The JAC is a combination of financial, personnel, and planning resources provided conjointly by the Department of Juvenile Services, Juvenile Court, Sheriff's Office, Public School System and District Attorney's Office. Resources are centrally located to overcome traditional barriers during juvenile arrest intake and to facilitate the process of information flow between and among child serving agencies in the parish. The JAC screens juvenile offenders at the time of arrest. Case managers assess for a variety of juvenile risk and protective factors. Once needs are identified, case managers develop a list of community-based referrals to address those factors.

TASC is a cooperative endeavor among the Community Justice Agency (Lead Agent), Juvenile Court (Fiscal Agent), Public School System, Human Services Authority, District



Attorney's Office and the Sheriff's Office, to combat truancy-related problems from kindergarten through fifth grades. TASC personnel are designated as FINS intake officers by the court to establish informal family service plans.

FINS is an intervention process aimed at preventing formal juvenile court involvement, therein reducing the number of children and youth involved in the formal court system. Within the FINS program are three hearing officers (two of whom also handle all child support cases for the court), who develop informal family service plans, manage case compliance and determine case disposition.

The Juvenile Drug Treatment Court is designed to help juveniles receive treatment to end their substance abuse, to improve their family relationships and functioning, and to stop criminal activity through intensive treatment and court supervision. The program is targeted specifically for juvenile probationers who have exhibited persistent drug abuse while under standard probation guidelines.

The CASA organization was founded to combat a chronic problem whereby judges did not have all the information needed to make the right decision for children involved in abuse and neglect cases. To ensure the long-term welfare of each child, most of whom are victims of abuse or neglect, CASA recruits and trains community volunteers to step into the courtroom on behalf of the children. These volunteers act as advocates for children who otherwise would not have a voice in the judicial process.

The Juvenile Court Mediation Program was established to help children reach their ultimate goal of permanently living with a custodial guardian as efficiently and effectively as possible. Mediation is a private and confidential process to help resolve issues with the assistance of a neutral, trained mediator utilizing principles and techniques based on restorative justice. Any case may be referred to mediation where there is a need for creative thinking, discussion and problem-solving. This program provides an alternative to formal processing and results in improved outcomes for all parties involved.

Each of these programs target specific segments of juvenile welfare and juvenile offenders. They share common links to other child and youth service agencies making the Juvenile Court a critical part of how Jefferson Parish leadership impacts children and youth throughout the parish. In fact, as a central part of the juvenile justice system, the Juvenile

Court was the springboard for the development of the Juvenile Justice Interagency Task Force, which has now evolved into the CYPB.

### **Setting the Stage for Change**

Several goals of Act 555 indicate the need to implement improvements in the system of care as a whole. In compliance with these goals, Jefferson Parish has leveraged its involvement with the *Models for Change* initiative to begin the process of system-wide change. In accord with Act 555, the CYPB has started the process of mapping how decisions are made at critical points in the juvenile justice system as an initial step to implementing system improvements. This process is being conducted in partnership with the Department of Psychology at the University of New Orleans (UNO).

The content of the mapping process was designed to clearly document the most common and important decisions that are made for youth who come in contact with the juvenile justice system. Specifically, the mapping process highlights how decisions are made at various points in the juvenile justice system and the mechanisms for funding that influence these decisions. It also documents how the data that are obtained, stored, and shared relate to these decisions. Initial surveys were sent to five key decision points in the Jefferson Parish juvenile justice system and included the Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, Juvenile Court, FINS Program and Rivarde Detention Home. Data retrieved from this survey will enable the juvenile justice system to recognize areas of improvement and to implement best practices that include graduated sanctions, evidence-based practices and a comprehensive continuum of care, as stipulated by Act 555.

### **COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The Children & Youth Planning Board is comprised of four core committees, three *Models for Change* (MfC) committees and one Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative sub-committee (see Appendix C). The initial structure of the CYPB, as previously noted, was established largely as a result of a juvenile justice master planning process in 2004. Committee structure, composition, and objectives were modified somewhat with the enactment of Act 555, however, the overall structure was maintained from the original Juvenile Justice Interagency Task Force. The MfC initiative utilized the core CYPB structure as a springboard for three

additional initiatives. As a result of a similar focus, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative required another sub-committee that was subsumed under the MfC Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee. These committees are governed by an Executive Committee that is comprised of each of the committee chairs, the CYPB Chairman and community representatives (see Appendix B). A description of committee visions, goals and tasks can be found in Appendix D.

In their current form, the Jefferson Parish CYPB committees have made substantial gains in setting the stage for implementing long-term changes in the child and youth service system. As part of a five-year plan, the CYPB is building a foundation for future changes in policies, practices, resources and programs and demonstrating its commitment to making lasting changes consistent with the foundational principles of Act 555. Core committee, MfC committee and JDAI committee accomplishments are discussed in greater detail below.

### **Interagency Coordination & Training**

Initially comprised of four sub-committees, the Interagency Coordination & Training Committee is charged with exploring and recommending system-wide changes relating to interagency finances, coordination of agency training, integration of technological advancements and interagency operating policies and procedures.

Recent accomplishments include setting the stage for a system-wide information-sharing agreement. This committee has worked diligently on developing a universal consent form, including educating stakeholders about federal and state laws affecting release of confidential information. This seminal effort has led to the MfC consultants' provision of technical assistance to Jefferson Parish for the development of an information-sharing agreement. MfC has enabled consultants with vast experience in information-sharing agreements from the Juvenile Law Center and Child Welfare League of America to assist the Interagency Coordination & Training Committee in the development of a system-wide information-sharing agreement among system stakeholders. This technical assistance sets the stage for implementation of a state-wide information-sharing agreement. Also, this effort is aligned with the Louisiana Supreme Court's effort to implement a state-wide data system known as the Interactive Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS). This endeavor is critical to achieving service coordination that results in improved outcomes for children and youth.

One major milestone has already been reached in this area. Proposals have been submitted by local IT contractors to migrate the Rivarde Detention Home “Q&A”- platform data and the court’s AS400-platform data to a common Windows-based platform. This would enable the judges, the district attorneys, the detention home staff and all relevant staff to interface with each other *and* with the Supreme Court’s state-wide IJIS system. The proposals are under review and studies are currently underway to identify funding.

### **Prevention & Early Intervention**

The Prevention & Early Intervention Committee was established in response to the need for preventive services and for early intervention in the lives of at-risk youth. This committee has provided much-needed focus on cultivation of a broad scope of services for children and youth beyond the traditional limits of juvenile justice and child welfare. This committee has been highly involved with obtaining program information from a variety of programs representing all facets of child and youth services. More recently, this committee has collaborated with the Jefferson Parish Chamber of Commerce to submit a grant to the Workforce Investment Board for workforce development. Reflecting back to the goals of Act 555, this committee is building an infrastructure that is both collaborative and comprehensive in its focus.

### **Continuum of Care**

The Continuum of Care Committee is responsible for investigating the continuum of services. The committee seeks gaps in services and subsequently offers recommendations to the CYPB about needed services and programs. Initial accomplishments by this committee include the development of a program survey that represented over 300 local programs. This survey also served as a model for a second survey developed by the LSU Health Sciences Center consulting for the MfC. Results of the Jefferson Parish survey were used to develop a web-based service directory that allows for searching programs and services by specific search criteria.

The most recent accomplishment by this committee was identification of gaps in services in Jefferson Parish. Through a process utilizing data from several federal, state, and local surveys, this committee compared identified needs with available programs to establish

priorities for programs and services. Following the process, the Evidence-Based Practices Committee used the identified needs to assist in contracting with local providers of juvenile offender treatment. In addition, this resource assessment, which is presented below, enhanced data collection by LSU Health Sciences Center. These efforts contributed greatly to setting a foundation for further work in the continuum of care and are aligned with both Act 555 and the efforts of MfC.

### **Evaluation & Monitoring**

Initially branching from requirements contained in Act 555, the Evaluation & Monitoring Committee is charged with ensuring compliance to outcome-based service provision. The CYPB recognized the need to implement evidence-based services and to ensure compliance and fidelity to proven models. In addition, the CYPB determined that program evaluation and outcome tracking are necessary components of ensuring consistently effective programs and services. Through the efforts of this committee, performance indicators were established that make program evaluation part of the provision of contract services for the Department of Juvenile Services. This committee also was responsible for locating and contracting with a program evaluator, whose job is to evaluate contract services over the next year.

### **Evidence-Based Practices**

The Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) Committee is responsible for implementing evidence-based and/or promising approaches, and for implementing valid and standardized screening and assessment tools. In concert with technical assistance from MfC, this committee has set the foundation for evidence-based and/or promising approaches in Jefferson Parish. Initial steps in the process began with a two-day training to educate community providers about evidence-based practices. Following the training, a request for proposals was developed and advertised, which resulted in 14 providers being selected by the parish government to provide evidence-based and/or promising services. As part of a continuum of care in coordination with community providers, the EBP Committee is currently involved in contracting with these providers for services to juvenile offenders and their families. The Department of Juvenile Services has supported this effort by increasing the funds available for implementing evidence-

based services. Increased funding by the Department of Juvenile Services highlights their commitment to evidence-based services and serves as a model for other agencies to emulate. Consistent with Act 555, this committee is building the structure needed to implement evidence-based contracts on a larger scale.

With regard to standardized screening and assessment tools, this committee has worked with the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project to review current screening practices and to develop a tool kit for implementing valid screening and assessment tools in Jefferson Parish. From a wider perspective, this committee builds connections between implementation of valid screening and assessment tools and the state-wide proposed IJJIS case management system.

### **Alternatives to Formal Processing**

Along with the EBP Committee and the Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee, the Alternatives to Formal Processing Committee form the structure that supports the MfC initiatives. The Alternatives to Formal Processing Committee is tasked with exploring and implementing appropriate alternatives to formal judicial processing. Under the umbrella of the MfC initiative, this committee is setting the stage for the development and/or enhancement of alternative programs that divert children and youth from the formal juvenile justice system.

### **Disproportionate Minority Contact**

The final committee that falls under the MfC umbrella is the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Committee. This committee shares its mission with state-wide efforts to identify sources of disproportionate minority contact and to recommend policy and procedural changes that impact DMC. Data from the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Assessment Center over the past four years has highlighted the inverse proportions of African-Americans and Caucasians in the general population versus the juvenile justice population. Armed with this information, the DMC committee has broadened its scope to develop standards for data collection from law enforcement through the juvenile court.

To further the efforts of this committee, the Jefferson Parish Department of Juvenile Services received funds through the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (LCLE) to hire a full time DMC Coordinator. The duties of the DMC Coordinator dovetail with the

shared goals of both MfC and LCLE as they begin the process of obtaining and tracking DMC data.

### **Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative**

As a subcommittee of the DMC Committee, the function of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Committee is two-fold. First, this committee is responsible for developing an objective detention screening instrument, known as a Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI). The committee developed the instrument, conducted a pilot study of the instrument using 78 cases resulting in revisions to the RAI. The committee identified and implemented specific procedural changes needed to properly utilize detention space. The second function is to develop alternatives to detention. This objective provides law enforcement and the juvenile court with options other than outright release or relinquishing custody to parents/guardians of arrested juveniles.

Showing major advancements in the development and testing of the RAI, this subcommittee is currently poised to begin validity testing of the RAI using modified judicial review procedures and 300 actual cases. Data derived from this phase will be used to solidify the RAI for daily use. It is anticipated that this process of RAI development and testing will serve as a model for future, state-wide RAI development, thereby impacting detention utilization across the state.

### **RESOURCE ASSESSMENT**

The resource assessment is an ongoing process that began nearly three years ago as a result of the newly commissioned CYPB. Initially formulated to be a survey of gaps in programs, the CYPB expanded the survey to include programmatic service data (that is, location, gender served, contact information, etc.). Utilizing this data, the planning board constructed a directory of services making broader use of returned surveys. Data was then organized according to specific services, and programs were listed in accordance with the types of services they provide. Results compared with needs derived from previously completed surveys showed gaps in programs and services.

## Needs Assessment

As noted previously, the CYPB, through the Continuum of Care Committee, began the first step in the process of determining what resources exist for children and youth in Jefferson Parish. In concert with the requirements of Act 555, this was a logical step in determining what gaps in services and programs exist. Data was collected from previously completed surveys detailing risk factors affecting children and youth in Jefferson Parish. For example, Kids Count, Louisiana Caring Communities Survey, and state-wide drug abuse and mental health reports were used to identify risk factors facing Jefferson Parish children and youth. As a follow up, a MfC consultant and the LSU Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC), embarked on a similar process through a computer-based survey. The LSUHSC survey, which was web-based, included evidence-based practices and standardized assessment tools as additional information. The survey was sent to over 100 community providers representing 300 programs and resulted in 62 providers responding as of this writing. Once completed, results from the LSUHSC survey will compliment the existing needs assessment by providing information across the continuum of juvenile justice involvement. In addition, it will provide a snapshot of currently utilized screening and assessment tools and use of evidence-based programs and services in Jefferson Parish. (For additional information see Appendix E.)

Below is a list of needs derived from secondary data sources arranged according to domains.

### Education:

- a) Alternative disciplinary methods for elementary, middle and high school students.
- b) Every 3-5 year-old needs access to pre-kindergarten or nursery care.
- c) Tutoring at all grades to increase academic achievement.
- d) Programming to build commitment to school (including increasing value of an education, cultural values about education, etc.).
- e) Develop opportunities and rewards for pro-social involvement (extra-curricular activities).
- f) Drop-out prevention throughout middle and high schools (explore root causes of dropping out and address appropriately).
- g) Assessment of root causes of lack of academic achievement.



Substance Abuse:

- a) Change attitudes supporting drug use for 6<sup>th</sup> graders.
- b) Educate middle school students about dangers of alcohol and drug use (especially for 6<sup>th</sup> graders).
- c) Increase alcohol and other drug treatment access for youth throughout the parish.

Family:

- a) Broad scope of family-strengthening programs to access families at all levels (pre-birth through parenthood) including family management, family conflict, pro-social behaviors, family cohesion, spirituality, morality, marriage and need for employment.

Community:

- a) Community strengthening programs.
- b) Develop opportunities and rewards for pro-social involvement.

Juvenile Justice:

- a) Research and identify root causes of disproportionate minority contact.
- b) Offender prevention programming at younger ages (12-14 year-olds).
- c) Identification of reasons for initial referrals for status offenders and programming to address identified reasons (e.g., if predominantly truancy, what are root causes and how can they be fixed?).
- d) Research and identification of rites of passage into adulthood (i.e., what constitutes passage into adulthood?).
- e) Sex education and respect for your body for 12 year-olds.
- f) Greater access to mental health treatment for both diagnosable disorders and pre-clinical dysfunctional behaviors.

At-Risk Behaviors:

- a) Increase pro-social awareness and acceptance (e.g., cause no harm to others, resolving differences, etc.).

- b) Research and identify cultural values to develop universal understanding of ethnic groups' behaviors.
- c) Educate high school students about harming others.
- d) Social skills training.
- e) Education on aggression versus assertiveness for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Peers:

- a) Positive peer opportunities.
- b) Values development at middle and high school levels.

Child Welfare:

- a) Research motivation for change among welfare recipients.
- b) Pregnancy and family planning programs for males and females.
- c) Increased public awareness about LaCHIP/LaMom.
- d) Alternative programming for teens not in school and not working.
- e) More opportunities for physical training, exercise, and/or recreation.
- f) Programming to provide effective parenting for children and youth.
- g) Access to resources for parents who abuse their children.

**Programs & Services Assessment**

Data from surveys was detailed in a matrix to easily identify the number of programs providing specific services for a specific age, gender, race, and legal status. A comparison of data-driven needs to the number of programs providing specific services provided a strong first-step in identifying gaps in services and programs. One caveat to identifying gaps in services is that the mere presence of several programs that address a specific need does not equate to adequate programming to address that need. Further information is needed on programs' impacts on identified needs and this is where the work of the Evaluation & Monitoring and Evidence-Based Practices committees dovetails with the resource assessment.

## Gaps in Programs & Services

Consistent with the intent of Act 555 to encompass programs and services for *all* youth, the CYPB believes strongly in maintaining focus on both prevention and intervention. As a logical step to identifying gaps in services, the Continuum of Care Sub-Committee focused on determining need. There is a natural connection between determining the needs of children and youth and determining the gaps in services. Gaps cannot be determined without knowing what children's needs are. Information collected by comparing data-driven need-ascertainments with available programs and services highlights areas where programs and services are needed. Results showed additional programs and services are lacking for the following needs organized by risk domains (not ranked in any order).

### Family:

- a) Services for parents who abuse their children for the increased number of children involved in Child in Need of Care cases and to decrease the number of valid child abuse allegations;
- b) Services to increase awareness about LaCHIP and LaMom for the high percentage of uninsured children and infants whose parents do not know about LaCHIP or LaMom;
- c) Pregnancy and family planning services for that half of families involved with the juvenile justice system which consists of single-mothers, 31% of female-headed households receiving child support, and 22% of families state-wide being low income.

### Education:

- d) Alternative disciplinary methods for school students to decrease the high number of suspensions;
- e) Nursery/pre-kindergarten care for that 38% of children between three and five years of age in Jefferson Parish who are in need of nursery care;
- f) Tutoring for academic failure of 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, to combat low Graduate Exit Exam scores, and to improve basic scores on school-wide achievement tests;
- g) Services to raise commitment to school to decrease widespread low attachment to school, particularly in middle and high schools;
- h) School drop-out prevention services that address the high school drop out rate which exceeds 50% from freshman year to graduation.

Peers:

- i) Services that increase pro-social awareness and acceptance of others to combat both attitudes that are favorable towards violence in middle and high schools and early initiation to anti-social behaviors;
- j) Services to provide rewards and opportunities for pro-social involvement to impact belief in moral order and improve social development;
- k) Services that educate high school students about harming others to decrease violent incidents and to reduce students' favorable attitudes toward violent behaviors;
- l) Services that teach social skills to children and youth at all ages to decrease aggressive conflicts and reduce crime resulting from conflicts.

Community:

- m) Services to prevent alcohol and drug use largely targeted for 6<sup>th</sup> graders, but also for all other middle and high school students to increase the age of initiation into drug use, to decrease the number of juveniles' whose attitudes are favorable towards drug use, and to impact the number of juveniles needing substance abuse treatment;
- n) Community strengthening services to increase attachment to communities, build stronger home environments and develop employment opportunities;
- o) Alternative programs for teens that are unemployed and not in school that provide gainful employment for students who have dropped out of formal education.

Individual:

- p) Substance abuse treatment services for adolescents to decrease number of juveniles needing substance abuse treatment;
- q) Offender prevention services targeting 12-14 year-olds to increase the age of first delinquent behavior thereby reducing future legal involvement and recidivism risk;
- r) Sex education and self-respect programming to decrease the high percentage of single-parent families, to decrease the number of single parents on child support, and to decrease the number of children in need of care.

- s) Services that provide mental *illness* diagnosis and mental *health* treatment for adolescents to improve access to treatment for juveniles in need of mental health treatment who are not receiving such treatment;
- t) Aggression and assertiveness training services for 6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders to decrease conflicts, to reduce suspensions, and to improve attitudes toward non-violence;
- u) Values development for middle and high school students to enhance their belief in moral order, to reverse attitudes favorable towards rebelliousness, and to increase family attachment.

Data showed a lack of programs aimed at building family strengths from birth to adolescence. Strong families are the foundations on which children learn social skills, aggression management, respect for others, family planning, appropriate relationships, commitment to education and gainful employment, values clarification, among other qualities. Another gap in the continuum is the absence of information that shows the impact of current programs on needs. Aggregate data showed deeply-rooted needs for children and adolescents. Current programs and services should also have the capacity to demonstrate the impact of their services on identified needs. Although some programs exist to address these issues, the mere presence of a program does not necessarily equate to measurable changes in needs. What is missing is the ability to implement these programs in a manner that has broader impact on parish-wide children and youth. Broader impact may be attained by either increasing the capacities of existing programs or by building additional programs that target identified needs.

### **SUMMARY OF PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

In summary, the Jefferson Parish CYPB has not only embraced the philosophy and intent of Act 555, but it has also established itself at the forefront of reform in the way children and youth are served. Through the efforts of a committee structure designed to tackle multiple policy and procedural challenges, the CYPB has demonstrated multi-agency collaboration, collaborative funding, linkages with external resources and an across-the-board commitment to lasting changes for the improvement of the lives of children and youth. This commitment to real and lasting change began with changing our institution--a very tangible, visible and necessary initial outcome. We recognize the critical impact services have on improving our

future and that we cannot, and must not, fail. The result of failure to raise healthy children and youth is the unraveling of the fabric of our unique culture.

Every accomplishment to date has been consistent with the foundations of Act 555. Each committee and every endeavor has guided us closer to understanding our system and making our processes stronger. To recap, our accomplishments include: development of a multi-agency collaborative with self-monitoring and self-correcting processes aimed at several initial targeted areas of improvement that can later be targeted at other issues; initial development and testing of a juvenile detention Risk Assessment Instrument; development of a web-based directory of services; greater knowledge of requirements for parish-wide (and later, state-wide) information-sharing; disproportionate minority contact data collection; development of plans to connect to a state-wide case management system; collaborating with a local business organization in producing a workforce development proposal; identification of needs, resources, and gaps in services; building a process for implementing evidence-based contracts; and contracting with a program evaluator to evaluate best practices for juvenile offenders.

From these initial steps and short-term accomplishments, along with the subsequent self-examination and self-correction of our processes, the CYPB identified both immediate and long-term priorities. First, through a deliberative decision-making process, the CYPB identified a list of the seven most immediate priorities:

- (1) Building an infrastructure to support interagency collaboration and information sharing;
- (2) Identification of gaps in evidence-based and/or promising programs and services;
- (3) Building mechanisms to reduce disproportionate minority contact;
- (4) Develop an objective Risk Assessment Instrument;
- (5) Develop mechanisms for sustained funding of evidence-based practices;
- (6) Develop understanding of policies affecting alternatives to formal processing;
- (7) Utilize blended and coordinated funding for needed projects and services;

Second, after careful quantitative analyses were conducted to specifically detect gaps in services, the CYPB Executive Committee engaged in a spirited yet productive, qualitatively rich discussion of these gaps through which seven long-term priorities emerged.

Concerning community, the committee was nearly evenly divided on selecting a single most salient priority. It was agreed that the CYPB will pursue alternative programs for teens that are unemployed, have dropped out of formal education and are not enrolled in a formal education setting. This risk area will be covered by the Jefferson Chamber's Workforce Development grants. The Chamber has been awarded an Options III restructuring grant and a Multiple Pathways grant. Both grants will work with students at risk of dropping out of school and students who have dropped out of school. The programs will provide labor skills and employability training. In addition, the Chamber has applied for a mentoring grant to provide hands-on training for certain job areas. A second priority pertaining to community was also deemed salient: community-strengthening services to increase attachment to communities and build stronger home environments and employment development.

In the education domain, the group elected to focus on nursery/pre-kindergarten care for the 38% of children between three and five years of age in Jefferson Parish who are in need of nursery care. There was clear consensus among the group regarding the importance of preventive programs that target early childhood development. The community resource assessment identified scarce resources that target this critical population. Regarding the family, the committee deemed as salient the enhancement of pregnancy and family planning services. Data analysis showed roughly 50% of families involved with the juvenile justice system consist of single mothers and 31% of female-headed families parish-wide receive child support. These data highlight family risk factors associated with at-risk youth. CYPB efforts will focus on family strengthening.

With respect to the individual, attention will be devoted to providing services that provide mental *illness* diagnosis and mental *health* treatment for adolescents to decrease the proportion of juveniles in need of mental health treatment who are not receiving such treatment. Finally, on the subject of peers, emphasis will be placed on providing services that teach social skills to children and youth at all ages to decrease aggressive conflicts and reduce crime resulting from conflicts. To begin addressing the peer priority, the Jefferson Parish Public School System has implemented several evidence-based peer development programs, namely Botvin's Lifeskills©, Get Real About Violence©, Social Responsibility Training© for all 6<sup>th</sup> graders, Olweus Bullying Program© and Positive Behavior Support for kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade to provide peer development for youth in the public school system.

**Summary Statement**

Jefferson Parish child and youth service agencies have demonstrated a commitment to the governance structure of the CYPB, and its Executive Committee, core committees and sub-committees to implement reform consistent with Act 555. Across multiple initiatives, we have demonstrated commitment to exploring, collecting and updating data, have developed survey instruments and mechanisms to assess resources, and have collaborated with multiple agencies from multiple disciplines to analyze processes and information. We have also established immediate and long-term priorities through a deliberative assessment process. Ongoing work shared by the CYPB, the *Models for Change* initiative and JDAI will focus on a collaborative effort regarding various facets of children and youth services ranging from child welfare to juvenile justice. As a direct result of its progressive activities and enthusiastic leadership, Jefferson Parish was selected by *two* national foundations to serve as a platform for building a model site for both juvenile detention reform and juvenile justice reform. Combined with existing efforts by the CYPB, Jefferson Parish has become a leader in reforming the children and youth service system.

These activities serve as the primary accomplishments on which we developed this comprehensive plan and are consistent with the philosophy and intent of Act 555. As we look forward to 2008, we anticipate these endeavors will continue to yield unprecedented and vast amounts of information about potential areas of improvement and will guide us into further system-wide enhancements. This valuable information will serve as the cornerstone of further development as we look toward the bright future ahead.

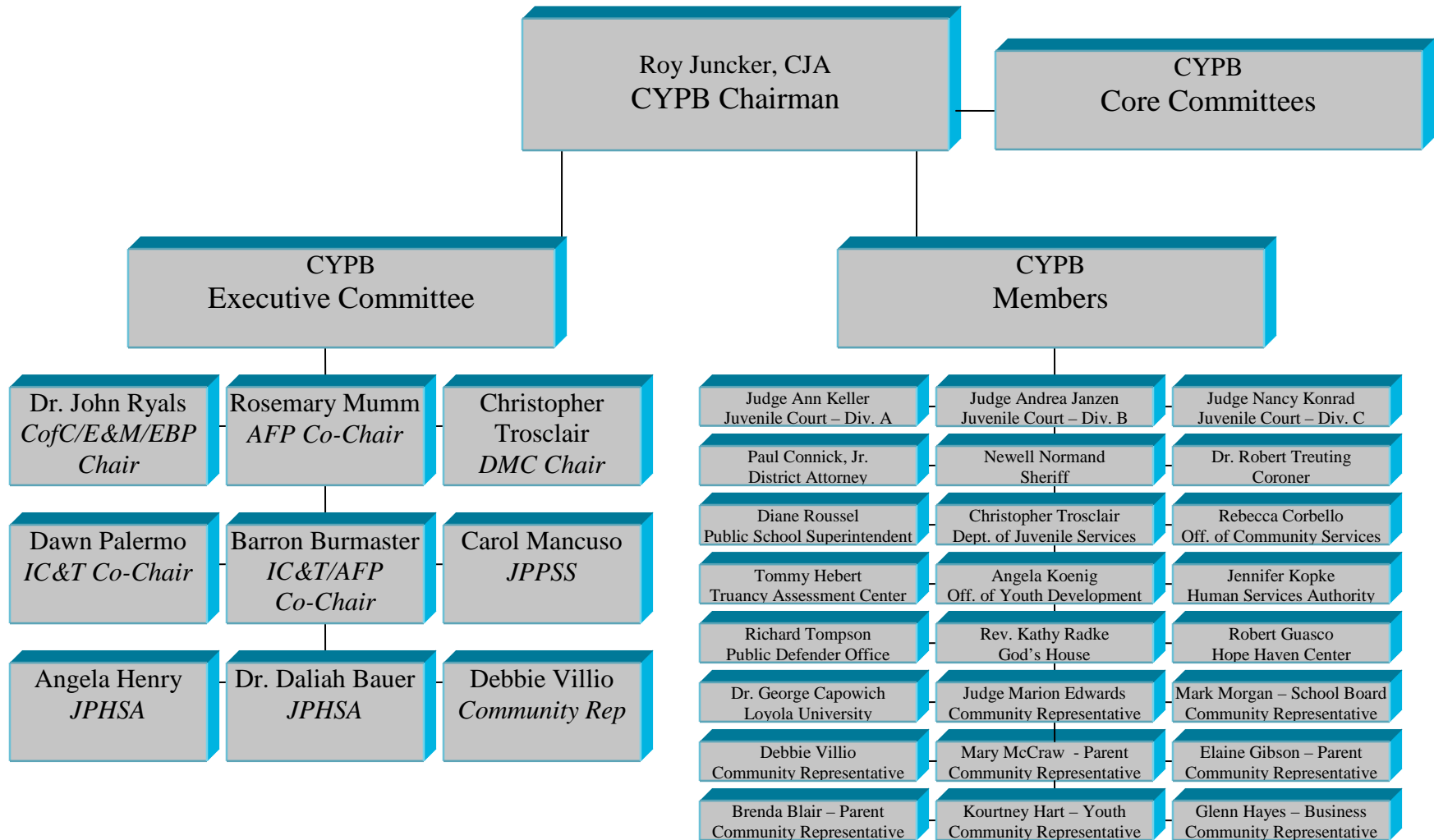


**APPENDIX A**

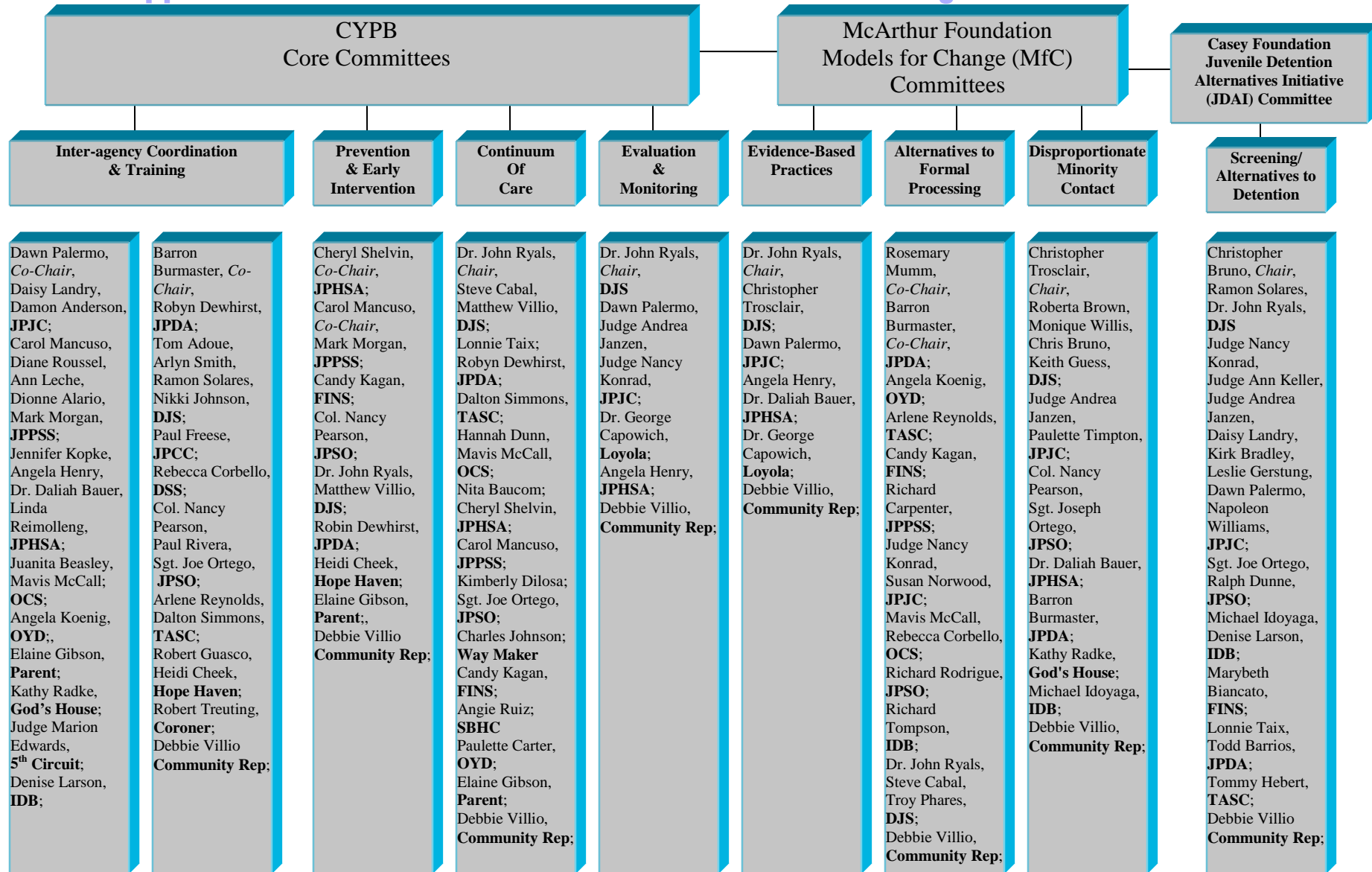
The Jefferson Parish Children & Youth and Planning Board shall consist of not less than eleven and not more than twenty-five members and shall include the following:

- 1) CJA Director, who shall be the chairman of the Board;
- 2) Sheriff, or his designee;
- 3) Chief Judge of Juvenile Court, or her designee;
- 4) District Attorney, or his designee;
- 5) Coroner, or his designee;
- 6) Superintendent of the Jefferson Parish Public School System, or her designee;
- 7) Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority Director;
- 8) Department of Juvenile Services Director;
- 9) District Public Defender, or his designee;
- 10) Regional Director of the Office of Community Services;
- 11) Regional Director of the Office of Youth Development;
- 12) Truancy Assessment and Services Center Coordinator;
- 13) A representative of a local non-profit organization providing services to children and youth, nominated by the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court and approved by resolution of the Council;
- 14) A representative of the faith-based community, nominated by the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court and approved by resolution of the Council;
- 15) A representative of a local university, nominated by the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court and approved by resolution of the Council;
- 16) Such other members as may be broadly representative of the community nominated by the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court and approved by resolution of the Council.

# Appendix B: Jefferson Parish Children & Youth Planning Board



# Appendix C: Jefferson Parish Children & Youth Planning Board



## APPENDIX D

### CYPB Committee Visions, Goals, Tasks

#### **Interagency Coordination & Training**

**Vision:** To develop community partnerships to expand the working knowledge of available services for children and youth in Jefferson Parish and to cooperate as one multi-agency entity in developing a community-based network of assurances for juvenile justice.

#### **Goals:**

- (1) Survey staff to determine training needs. (Frontline)
- (2) Educate agency staff on initiatives. (Frontline)
- (3) Coordinate trainings to implement initiatives (engage outside speakers). (Frontline)
- (4) Become repository for all funding proposals. (Financial)
- (5) Monitor efforts to ensure that no duplication in services exists. (Financial)
- (6) Review financial opportunities regularly and notify appropriate parties. (Financial)
- (7) Identify relationships in the system/service matrix. (Interagency Operations)
- (8) To fearlessly identify and reduce barriers that inhibit effective relationships. (Interagency Operations)
- (9) Develop formal interagency agreements. (Interagency Operations)
- (10) Increase service awareness between and among agency partners. (Interagency Operations)
- (11) Advise applicants on funding structure of various programs and assist in deficit management. (Financial)
- (12) Review results of program evaluations to determine future feasibility of funding. (Financial)

#### **Tasks:**

- (1) Identify barriers to interagency communication including development of interagency information-sharing agreement and universal consent form.
- (2) Identify opportunities for sustained funding of evidence-based services for children and youth and for system-wide information-sharing enhancements.

- (3) Provide education and training to child and youth service agencies on best practices, information sharing, coordination of services and other areas affecting provision of quality services for children and youth.
- (4) Investigate, document and recommend improvements to data collection methods used by various local and state agencies.
- (5) After the master plan is developed, the Interagency Training and Coordination Committee will educate the frontline staff of all agencies involved about the plan, Act 555 and the research findings. Continuous training will be offered as the master plan is implemented. Staff will be educated on best practices.

### **Prevention & Early Intervention**

**Vision:** To improve the welfare of children and youth in Jefferson Parish by ameliorating the effects of risk factors that heighten the likelihood that youth will encounter social, personal and educational problems and by strengthening resiliency factors, which increase the probability of successful, healthy lives.

#### **Goals:**

- (1) Identify, develop and implement programs that provide social and medical support for families and children prior to and immediately after birth.
- (2) Identify, develop and implement appropriate early interventions for children (ages 4-12) who exhibit documented risk factors for future delinquency.
- (3) Identify, develop and implement appropriate interventions for chronic/serious delinquents (ages 13-17) who exhibit documented risk factors for future delinquency. Serious violent offences include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault and kidnapping.

#### **Tasks:**

- (1) Identify risk factors applicable for early interventions.
- (2) Identify resilience factors applicable for early interventions.
- (3) Identify existing early intervention programs that address risk factors.
- (4) Identify existing early intervention programs that strengthen resilience factors
- (5) Identify gaps in providing early interventions.

### **Continuum of Care**

**Vision:** The vision of the Continuum of Care Sub-Committee is to build connections between the needs of youth and productive services by creating mechanisms to identify unmet needs and recommending investments in programs that fill those needs. The Continuum of Care Sub-Committee strives to be all-inclusive in its composition and influence upon at-risk youth to ensure children in Jefferson Parish have services available to improve the quality of their lives.

### **Goals:**

- (1) Review existing services for at-risk youth, including accessibility, availability and appropriateness of services.
- (2) Develop an incremental structure that connects needs of at-risk children and child-specific services and providing a mechanism for child-serving agencies to access and utilize the structure.
- (3) Review effectiveness of services by developing and implementing outcome measurements to shift focus from processes to outcomes.
- (4) Plan for developing programs to fill gaps in services by using existing resources and by exploiting unused resources.

### **Tasks:**

- (1) Review existing services for at-risk youth, including accessibility, availability and appropriateness of services.
- (2) Develop an incremental structure that connects needs of at-risk children and child-specific services and providing a mechanism for child-serving agencies to access the structure.
- (3) Review effectiveness of services by developing and implementing outcome measurements to shift focus from processes to outcomes.
- (4) Plan for the development of programs to fill gaps in services by using existing resources and by exploiting unused resources.

### **Evaluation & Monitoring**

**Vision:** It is the vision of the Evaluation & Monitoring Committee to ensure quality and consistency of services and programs for the youth of Jefferson Parish. Through vigilance and

objective measures, this committee endeavors to provide children and youth service agencies with information on effectiveness of programs and services. This committee also will educate the community about evidence-based practices.

**Goals:**

- (1) To assist the Evidence-Based Practices Committee in educating service providers about evidence-based practices.
- (2) To implement policies and practices that provide objective measurements for system-wide services and programs.
- (3) To provide consultation to programs and agencies regarding implementation of evidence-based practices.

**Tasks:**

- (1) To assist in the development of standards for program evaluation services.
- (2) To review program evaluation and outcome data collection practices for child and youth service agencies.
- (3) To review and provide feedback on future development of service outcomes among child and youth-service agencies.

**Evidence-Based Practices**

**Vision:** The vision of the Evidence-Based Practices Committee is to ensure the provision of evidence-based practices for at-risk youth and families, including mental health treatment services. These practices will be supported by a broadened pool of trained providers and continuously evaluated for effectiveness.

**Goals:**

- (1) Inventory and analyze existing providers/services as well as gaps in services through data collection.
- (2) Review existing screening and assessment processes and development and/or expansion of processes to ensure that standardized, scientifically sound screening and assessment

tools that are utilized at appropriate points of juvenile justice processing (emphasizing early points of contact).

- (3) Review evidence-based practices according to identified needs, and expand the range of services along the continuum. This includes expansion of provider base and development of linkages to existing provider networks.

**Tasks:**

- (1) Work with MfC National Resource Bank (NRB) and local university partners to inventory and analyze existing providers/services as well as gaps in services to be achieved through data collection.
- (2) Work with MfC NRB and local university partners to review existing screening and assessment processes and develop and/or expand processes to ensure that they utilize standardized, scientifically sound screening and assessment tools.
- (3) Work with MfC NRB and local university partners to review evidence-based practices according to identified needs.
- (4) Expand range of evidence-based services along the continuum.
- (5) Work with MfC NRB and local university partners to ensure that the standardized, scientifically sound screening and assessment processes are in place at appropriate points of juvenile justice processing, with an emphasis on earlier points of contact within the juvenile justice system.
- (6) Develop policy and infrastructure to administratively support and politically sustain the use of EBP's in Jefferson Parish.
- (7) Expansion of provider base through identification, training, etc., of new and existing provider networks.
- (8) Continued development of data collection and evaluation of providers/services.
- (9) Analyze data, report initial findings, and assist MfC partners as a site resource for replication in other services. Use initial findings to project outcomes from EBP's, including both juvenile justice system youth benefits and Jefferson Parish system cost benefits.



### **Alternatives to Formal Processing**

**Vision:** The vision of the Alternatives to Formal Processing (AFP) committee is to prevent Jefferson Parish youth from entering or more deeply penetrating the juvenile justice system by expanding and improving access to appropriate alternatives to formal processing across all critical decision points of the juvenile justice system, including pre-petition, pre-adjudication and dispositional stages.

### **Goals:**

- (1) Utilize resources of the Children & Youth Planning Board to facilitate communication between local and state agencies regarding alternatives to formal processing strategies.
- (2) Collaborate with parish agencies to ensure that the needs of youth who are or can be diverted through alternatives to formal processing are properly addressed through appropriate channels and processes.
- (3) Utilize available data to identify current processes, gaps in current processes, policies, and funding, and to provide direction for efforts to explore new ways to effectively divert youth into alternative services.
- (4) Through process exploration, revise and/or develop new policies reflecting amended criteria for eligibility to alternative processing, including guidelines for determining eligibility for AFP options and developing objective criteria for inclusion in AFP.
- (5) Develop strategies to maintain AFP review as an on-going process within the Children & Youth Planning Board.

### **Tasks:**

- (1) Survey current case processing points from FINS to delinquency disposition, including review of current screens and tools related to decision-making and statutes governing decision options.
- (2) Analyze results and develop a report to the planning board that identifies gaps in AFP.
- (3) Develop the initial plan for case processing reforms that enhance and/or expand Jefferson Parish alternatives to formal processing, including administrative and legislative changes, ensuring that the goals of the subcommittees for Evidenced-Based Practices and the Disproportionate Minority Contact are addressed in these reforms.

- (4) Make recommendations to the Children & Youth Planning Board regarding development of collaborative relationships and policies affecting AFP programming.
- (5) Collaborate with the Children & Youth Planning Board to identify funding streams to support programming reforms.
- (6) Provide oversight and direction in the implementation of AFP reforms.

### **Disproportionate Minority Contact**

**Vision:** The vision of the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) sub committee is to ensure that minority youth receive fair treatment at each point of contact within the juvenile justice system, regardless of their race or ethnicity, and that all interactions would be handled in an unbiased manner. The DMC sub committee will advocate for *all* juveniles to have equal access to community-based services and would seek, wherever possible, to prevent juveniles' entry or limit their penetration into the juvenile justice system.

### **Goals:**

- (1) Explore policies and procedures that affect current DMC.
- (2) Develop the capacity to regularly collect and analyze DMC data, including socio-economic data, at the state and local level.
- (3) Use DMC data analyses and other research to identify, implement and monitor appropriate interventions to reduce disparate treatment and limit unnecessary penetration of youth of color into the juvenile justice system.
- (4) Provide training and education to stakeholders and their representatives regarding the underlying causes of DMC.
- (5) Inform the general public regarding legal rights, policies and procedures in the juvenile justice system and legal and social services available.

### **Tasks:**

- (1) Identify questions to ask and data elements to collect at key decisions points.
- (2) Map juvenile justice process in the parish to identify key decisions points, starting with truanancies, suspensions and expulsions extending to release from secure confinement.

- (3) Assess stakeholders' capacity to collect data and identify resources needed to fill gaps in data collection.
- (4) Match *Models for Change* resources and parish needs in data collection.
- (5) Collect data specifically relating to disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system.
- (6) Collection and analysis of data through file review.
- (7) Planning to build parish-wide capacity to regularly collect and analyze data.
- (8) Identify and engage other stakeholders through the CYPB.
- (9) Explore policies and procedures that affect current DMC.

### **Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative**

**Vision:** The vision of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Committee is to ensure that the appropriate juveniles are detained for appropriate reasons utilizing strategic planning, policy revisions and the use of an objective detention screening instrument and alternatives to detention.

### **Goals:**

- (1) To develop an objective detention risk assessment instrument.
- (2) To establish and maintain consistent and meaningful data collection related to juvenile detention utilization.
- (3) To utilize national and local resources to educate juvenile justice agencies about disproportionate minority confinement.
- (4) To utilize data sources from the detention center and from law enforcement agencies to develop and implement alternatives to detention.

### **Tasks:**

- (1) To develop a Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) that provides objective measurement of juvenile risk to the community and risk of failing to appear for court hearings.
- (2) To integrate current data collection practices into data that demonstrates effective detention utilization, disproportionate minority confinement and inappropriate use of detention space.

- (3) To explore need and feasibility of alternative programs or services to detention (that is, for violations of probation and inability to release to responsible adult).
- (4) To strengthen stakeholder participation in JDAI project.
- (5) To seek technical assistance for data collection and interpretation.
- (6) To begin a system and policy-level mapping of the processes that place juveniles in detention.

## APPENDIX E

### LOUISIANA *MODELS FOR CHANGE* JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM PROVIDER PRACTICE INVENTORY

#### **Introduction**

The *Models for Change* (MfC) initiative is an effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice system reform through targeted investments in key states. With funding and support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, *Models for Change* seeks to accelerate progress toward a more rational, fair, effective and developmentally appropriate juvenile justice system. In June 2005, Louisiana was selected to be part of the *Models for Change* initiative.

*Models for Change* partners with selected states to advance reforms that effectively hold young people accountable for their actions, provide for their rehabilitation, protect them from harm, increase their life chances and manage the risk they pose to themselves and to public safety. *Models for Change* has grown out of years of juvenile-justice-focused grant-making, including considerable investment in research that has expanded knowledge regarding adolescent development and delinquent behavior, and laid the groundwork for significant changes in law, policy and practice. Now, *Models for Change* seeks to advance juvenile justice reform in line with this new knowledge by developing models of successful system-wide reform that can be replicated elsewhere.

In each *Models for Change* site, the initiative focuses its reform work on a few key target issues. While important in themselves, these are also leverage points. Change in these key areas is expected to radiate change throughout the system. These key issues are called targeted areas of improvement. In Louisiana there are three specific targeted areas of improvement, which are listed below.

- **Alternatives to Formal Processing and Incarceration:** The goal is to improve access to effective programs and services that can serve as alternatives to formal processing in the juvenile justice system, especially for youths needing mental health and other specialized treatment and for minor or low-risk offenders.

- **Evidence-based Community Services:** The goal is to increase the availability of community services that reflect current knowledge about what works for youths who come in contact with the juvenile justice system.
- **Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC):** The goal is to improve data collection where needed, develop the capacity to analyze data regularly at the state and parish levels, and use data analyses and other research to identify and implement appropriate interventions.

As a first step for the Evidence-Based Practices Targeted Area of Improvement (TAI), a survey was developed to assess the current state of affairs within Louisiana parishes with respect to: (a) the extent and methods of identifying the needs of youth who come in contact with the juvenile justice system, and; (b) the extent to which evidence-based and promising practices are used to address those needs. The service provider survey will provide a foundation for strategic planning and assessment of change as the work in the Louisiana *Models for Change* sites progresses. In addition, it is anticipated that the survey will also help advance the work under the other two Targeted Areas of Improvement.

### **Survey Methods**

Juvenile justice system provider practices in Jefferson Parish were surveyed via a web-based instrument delivered to targeted participants identified by the Jefferson Parish Children & Youth Planning Board Executive Committee. The instrument, the “Juvenile Justice System Screening, Assessment & Treatment Services Inventory,” was developed by the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-School of Public Health and the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice under funding by the MacArthur Foundation and with item development input from the Jefferson Parish Children & Youth Planning Board, University of New Orleans, and the MacArthur Foundation’s *Models for Change* in Juvenile Justice National Resource Bank. The goal of the survey was to provide the planning board with an inventory of the screening and assessment procedures and existing services and programs available in order to then develop a plan for the adoption and expansion of evidence-based practices in the area’s juvenile justice system.

This project served as the initial pilot implementation of the instrument. Survey activities in Jefferson Parish were launched in August 2007 and are anticipated to be concluded by October 10, 2007. The pilot project was administered in phases, with an initial administration of the survey to a group of ten providers in August/September. Lessons learned from that administration led to edits to the web-based program. As a result, the revised survey was administered to the same group of providers and a large group of additional providers that were not part of the initial pilot. The second administration was completed in September 2007. Telephone, fax, and personalized email requests are currently underway to gather missing provider input.

The instrument was divided into two sections. Section I was an inventory of screening and assessment. Section 2 was an inventory of programs and services. The survey was distributed to a range of stakeholders, identified by the area's Child Youth Planning Board as serving in some capacity a function of the wide range of services offered as part of the continuum of juvenile justice services in Jefferson Parish. Professional services and agency functions vary widely in the juvenile justice system. The survey was designed so that not all respondents were required to answer every question in each section. Therefore, the data will be presented at the individual item summary level. Response rates and percentages will be based upon the number of providers answering a question applicable to their particular area of service.