Sustaining Juvenile Justice System Reform

A Report to the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

Over the last five years, Louisiana's juvenile justice system has been in the midst of a significant transformation. Reform efforts have occurred in spite of the fiscal, operational, and human challenges posed by the devastating impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Much of the recent work since 2006 has been supported by Louisiana's selection by the MacArthur Foundation to participate in the Models for Change – Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice initiative, which aims to accelerate the pace of juvenile justice reform in targeted states and help them become successful models that can be emulated elsewhere. Importantly, the reforms themselves are a direct result of, and credit to, local and state leaders who are committed to shifting from an adult oriented model to a juvenile justice model premised on rehabilitation.

Although the recent reform efforts have been impressive, there remain key areas for improvement as well as the question of how to sustain – and build upon – the positive work to date. Recognizing the need for a path forward, the Louisiana Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution No. 120 in June 2011, requiring the state's Juvenile Justice Reform Act Implementation Commission (JJIC) to submit a report to the legislature in January 2013 that would assess the current state of the juvenile justice system, evaluate improvements made over the preceding five years, and issue recommendations for a five-year plan for reform. To meet this mandate, the JJIC requested that the Institute for Public Health and Justice (IPHJ), the home of the Louisiana Models for Change effort, initiate and develop the report.

In the fall of 2011, IPHJ reached out to two members of the Models for Change national resource bank, the Vera Institute of Justice and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, for assistance in developing this report, via support from the MacArthur Foundation. Working in collaboration with JJIC members and other state and local officials, it was agreed that the report would focus on four critical areas that have received attention over the past five years (2007 to 2011) and that are key to system-wide change.

Key Decision-Making Points within the Juvenile Justice System, with a focus on:

- Families in Need of Services (Informal FINS) – refers to local responses to status offenders – children who are not committing crimes, but are chronically misbehaving, such as missing school, running away, or acting out to such a degree that their parents cannot control them – outside of the courts and formal justice system.
- Detention – refers to the practice (analogous to jail in the adult context) of holding youth temporarily in a locally-operated secure facility, pending a court hearing or briefly after receiving, or as part of, the court's disposition (sentence).

- Probation and post-dispositional placement – refers to the legal status of being supervised in the community or committed (under state custody) to a non-secure or secure facility after receiving a disposition from the court.

Assessments and Services

- Screening and assessment – looks at Louisiana's efforts locally and statewide to be more informed about a youth's risks and needs in designing appropriate services and supervision, including the implementation of standardized tools and practices.
- Interventions and treatments – refers to interventions and services provided to youth in the juvenile justice system by both government entities and local providers.

Availability and Use of Data

- Looks at the ways in which Louisiana currently and could in the future collect, analyze, and use data to drive policies, inform planning, and determine outcomes at the local and state level.

Act 1225

- Provides a retrospective look at the Act – what was recommended, what was enacted, and what has yet to be done.

Over a 12-month period, the IPHJ team reviewed numerous existing reports and public documents to further understand ongoing work in Louisiana; conducted an extensive review of national research and literature; interviewed 44 state, local, and national officials, practitioners, and policymakers representing a broad range of juvenile justice system players; and gathered, analyzed, and summarized readily available data on youth at different system points. In addition, IPHJ convened three regional consensus meetings across the state in September 2012 to share preliminary findings and proposed recommendations with key juvenile justice administrators, judges, prosecutors, defenders, and other stakeholders. These meetings provided a forum for leaders to discuss the recommendations and collaboratively prioritize key areas to address going forward. Through conversations, it became clear that participants—representing various areas of the juvenile justice system, constituencies that do not always see eye to eye—largely agreed on what areas needed ongoing work and expressed commitment on work on those areas together. Appendix F of the report highlights those areas. Notably, two issues were highlighted consistently across the three meetings—first, the importance of having continued technical assistance to support the state reforms and second, the need for a centralized, juvenile justice data repository to ensure accountability. (These particular topics are covered in Recommendation 3 and 19 of the report.)

The final report is divided into five parts, beginning with overarching recommendations that pertain to every aspect of the state's juvenile justice system, then moving to a discussion of the four areas mentioned previously – key system points, focusing on FINS, detention, and probation/post-dispositional placement; assessments and services; the availability and use of data; and a retrospective look at Act 1225. Each of these sections follows a similar structure, starting first with national context about the principles that characterize best practice in each area, followed by a brief overview of the local context (including the legal, governance, and fiscal structure of the key system points), a summary of data (including what data are and are not available related to each topic), reform efforts over the last five years, and recommendations and strategies for ongoing reform. Below is a summary of the relevant data, key reform efforts, and recommendations and strategies in each area.

Clearly, Louisiana is well on its way to creating a more rehabilitative juvenile justice system that is treatment-focused, community-based, and cost-effective. To continue moving in this direction, it is essential that all of the state's key juvenile justice stakeholders come together to implement these recommendations. Making these changes will not be easy but could ultimately result in lasting systems change that is good for all of Louisiana's youth.

PART I: OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the last decade, Louisiana has made important strides in transforming its juvenile justice system. The three recommendations and related strategies presented here provide a foundation for continuing this momentum and propelling reform well into the future. Unlike the recommendations in subsequent chapters, which pertain to specific aspects of Louisiana's juvenile justice system, the recommendations here pertain to *every* aspect of the system and are integral to all of those that follow.

- **Recommendation 1: The state should maintain adequate funding to support and sustain ongoing reform across the different entities that both govern and feed into the juvenile justice system.**

  Since 1999 and in more recent years, Louisiana has taken on numerous reform efforts at various points within the juvenile justice system which are described throughout this report. In many cases, these reforms have helped to fundamentally reshape how Louisiana views and treats young people entering the system. Although some of these efforts have been funded by the state or local parishes (e.g. facility-based reforms for the resolution of the DOJ settlement agreement and some community programs), the funding for many key community based reforms has been jumpstarted with the support of external sources in the past six years. These include the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Initiative, which is scheduled to wrap up in the coming year, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. As noted during the regional consensus meetings, it will be critical for the state and localities to commit

and maintain appropriate levels of funding for current and future reform efforts and promote collaboration to institutionalize this work over the long term.

As part of this recommendation, the state should reinvest cost savings from decreases in placement statewide to support facility reforms and community-based alternative programs and services. As Louisiana explores ways to fund its new vision of juvenile justice, these savings – and any additional savings that may arise – should be reallocated to support facility reforms and community-based alternative programs and services that are proven to be effective in reducing rates of reoffending and keeping youth from cycling back through the system.

- **Recommendation 2: State, local, and legislative leaders should establish the infrastructure needed to support ongoing reform in Louisiana. This infrastructure should be designed to help support the replication of successful local models, provide technical assistance to local and state practitioners and policy-makers, disseminate information about best practices, and promote data sharing.**

  Across the state, different parishes have worked diligently to revamp their approach to serving system-involved youth. To date, however, information about how specific local reforms work in practice and what the results have been has not always led to a concerted effort to replicate these models throughout Louisiana. The IPHJ was created to fill this void, providing a resource for best practices, data sharing, and replication of proven models. As Louisiana continues on its reform path, the state should designate, fund, and support an infrastructure – via an external resource – that can (1) widely disseminate information about promising local models (examples of which are offered throughout this report) and national best practices, 2) provide technical assistance to ensure that reforms are appropriately implemented, replicated, and sustained over the long term, and (3), promote data sharing. All with the goal of ensuring that young people have access to an efficient and effective juvenile justice system.

  This entity could also regularly convene stakeholders across the system – including judges, attorneys, state and local officials, and community-based organizations – to discuss critical areas of need statewide and coordinate a cohesive and collaborative approach.

- **Recommendation 3**: **The JJIC should urge the implementation of the recommendations in this report, monitor that implementation process along with any reforms that fall outside the scope of this document, and provide annual reports on the status of juvenile justice reform statewide.**

  The recommendations in this report and the summary of the consensus meetings, taken together, offer a clear and detailed roadmap for helping the state continue its good work well into the future. Ultimately, however, the recommendations outlined here will

mean nothing unless they are monitored and fully implemented to assure they achieve their intended goals. The state's existing JJIC, which was created by the Louisiana Legislature as part of Act 1225 and discussed in Part V of this report, would be well-suited to take on this role. As part of this work, the JJIC should hold the agencies and entities tasked with specific recommendations accountable by requesting regular, public updates about the status of their implementation efforts. In addition, the JJIC should issue an annual report that helps keep the legislature and the general public informed of juvenile justice reform efforts in the state – efforts that include, but extend beyond, the scope of this report. The external entity designated as part of Recommendation 2 can and should help in this monitoring and reporting process.

PART II: A FOCUS ON THREE DECISION-MAKING POINTS IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Point 1: Families in Need of Services (Informal FINS)

In Louisiana, young people who have allegedly committed status offenses and their families are commonly referred to as Families in Need of Services (FINS). According to the Louisiana Children's Code, FINS cases may either be diverted from formal court processing, known as Informal FINS, or be referred to court for a formal proceeding, known as Formal FINS. Currently, in Louisiana, these two paths are quite distinct and fragmented. There is no one unified or cohesive FINS "system" or entity that oversees all aspects of FINS responses or services. For this reason, this section of the report focuses exclusively on Informal FINS.

Data Summary: Where are the Youth?

- In 2010, there were a total of 11,269 Informal FINS referrals, or complaints, statewide.
- Schools accounted for the wide majority of referrals – 68 percent – with families following at 11 percent.

A Quick Overview of Demographic and Juvenile Arrest Trends in Louisiana

Below are some key data on demographics and arrests to frame the discussion of Louisiana's juvenile justice system.
(More detailed information, statewide and by the five regions, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, and Metro, can be found in Appendix A.)

- In 2011, youth between the ages of 10 and 17 comprised approximately 11 percent of the statewide population. Thirty-nine percent were African-American and three percent were Hispanic.
- In 2010, approximately one in five of all people in Louisiana lived below the national poverty level, with a median income of just $42,510.
- Since 2000, juvenile arrests have declined in all five regions of the state, ranging from drops of seven percent (in the Northwest region) to 32 percent (in the Southwest region).

Source: National Center on Juvenile Justice, Demographic Characteristics for Louisiana and by Region.

- Nearly 14 of every 1,000 youth between the ages of 10-17 in Louisiana received an Informal FINS referral in 2010.
- On average, Informal FINS cases remain open for 196 days, roughly six and half months, much longer than the recommended (per national best practice) length of one to three months. Cases stemming from truancy have the longest average lengths of Informal FINS involvement, at 203 days, with referrals in response to violations of school rules closely following at 196 days.
- Twenty-five parishes accounted for 89 percent of the Informal FINS referrals statewide.
- Two parishes – Rapides and Calcasieu – have worked hard to decrease the number of informal FINS referrals.
- Between 2007 and 2011, Rapides reduced referrals by 55 percent, largely due to a dramatic (79 percent) reduction in school referrals. Over the last five years (2007-2011), Calcasieu has sent, on average, less than four percent of Informal FINS referrals to court. In 2011 alone, less than one percent of referrals resulted in a court petition.
- Currently, there are no consistently defined or reported outcome measures for determining how effective the Informal FINS process is in successfully diverting cases from formal court involvement.

Reform Efforts in Last Five Years

- Rapides and Calcasieu Parishes have created local status offender models in line with national best practice, with an emphasis on the following elements: (1) clear eligibility criteria; (2) immediate response, expedited triage, and use of validated screening tools; (3) effective community and regional partnerships, and (4) data-driven decision-making.
- There has been a significant increase in education about national and local status offender best practice and the need for statewide Informal FINS reform, culminating in the creation of a statewide FINS Commission.
- The FINS Commission issued 19 recommendations for statewide reform, most of which focused on the Informal FINS system.
- Senate Bill 467 passed in the 2012 legislative session, requiring a number of actions be taken to respond to youth and family needs prior to the filing of a FINS complaint and/or court petition.
- House Concurrent Resolution 129 also passed in the 2012 session, urging the Supreme Court to enact the FINS Commission's recommendations and requiring the Children's Cabinet and FINSAP to submit a report to the legislature on the status of these recommendations by March 1, 2013.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 4:** Louisiana should create a statewide FINS system that is in line with national best practice and offers a coherent and unified vision and plan for how status offenders and their families should be treated and served.
  - Strategy 4-1: Louisiana should appoint and adequately fund a lead state agency—or a collaboration of agencies—to develop, manage and oversee the FINS system and work to implement the remaining strategies in this area.
  - Strategy 4-2: Louisiana (ideally, the lead agency/ies arising from strategy 4-1) should create and monitor statewide standards for responding to and serving FINS youth and their families.
  - Strategy 4-3: The state should develop and implement clearer eligibility criteria and protocols to determine whether a referred child is eligible for Informal FINS services.
  - Strategy 4-4*: Informal FINS eligibility criteria should require schools, and other referring entities, to take (and document) all appropriate steps and exhaust all other options prior to entering an Informal FINS complaint.
  - Strategy 4-5*: Youth currently on child welfare or probation caseloads generally should not be referred to, or be eligible for, concurrent FINS services.
  - Strategy 4-6: Local intake and triage processes should be provided by a service outside of the court system, with youth entering court only when all else fails and the referring behavior continues or worsens.
  - Strategy 4-7: The state should require that intake and screening be available within 72 hours of a FINS complaint.
  - Strategy 4-8: The state should adopt a common, objective, and validated screening instrument and a validated assessment tool for Informal FINS.
  - Strategy 4-9: The state (ideally, the lead agency/ies arising from strategy 4-1) and parishes should work together to map resources currently available to Informal FINS cases, and should ensure that there are immediate triage, short-term crisis responses, and respite and evidence-based interventions available—and funded—in all regions of the state (looking at one region at a time and drawing on what has been demonstrated locally).

**Note: Although strategies 4-4 and 4-5 were passed through legislation, they are not being implemented by many jurisdictions.*

Point 2: Detention

In Louisiana, juvenile detention is a local function. Parish governments pay for any time spent in a detention center; the centers are administered by parish boards and commissions,

consolidated government agencies, juvenile courts, non-profit organizations, or law enforcement departments.

Data Summary: Where are the Youth?

- There has been a general declining trend in the use of detention in five of the most populous parishes in the state: East Baton Rouge, Caddo, Calcasieu, Jefferson, and Rapides.
  - Between 2007 and 2011, the average daily populations fell by 24, 33, and 45 percent in Calcasieu, Jefferson, and Caddo Parishes, respectively. East Baton Rouge saw a decrease of 14 percent from 2008 and 2011; and Rapides Parish experienced a 23 percent drop between 2007 and 2010.
  - Between 2007 and 2011, admissions fell from anywhere between 14 percent in East Baton Rouge to 29 percent in Caddo.
- The total number of African American youth admitted to detention decreased in Jefferson, East Baton Rouge, Calcasieu, and Rapides parishes from 2007 to 2011.
  - However, while the number of African American youth admitted to detention declined in these four parishes during the applicable periods, the proportion of African American youth detained has remained essentially unchanged.
- The average length of stay in detention, which measures the time a youth spends in a facility, decreased in Caddo and Calcasieu parishes; remained flat in Jefferson parish; and increased in East Baton Rouge and Rapides parishes between 2007 and 2011.

Reform Efforts in Last Five Years

- Juvenile justice leaders in Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Orleans, Jefferson, and Rapides parishes credit decreases in their detention utilization to:
  - A change in philosophy and culture among local leaders and a shared agreement on the purpose of detention;
  - The development and implementation of detention risk screening instruments to guide decisions about who should, and should not, be detained; and
  - The development and launch of alternative-to-detention programs in jurisdictions that have a detention center dedicated to their juvenile court, including five jurisdictions in Louisiana that are participating in the nationally recognized Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.
- Louisiana enacted statewide juvenile detention standards to protect the health, safety, and well-being of youth placed in detention facilities and implementation of these standards is moving forward.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 5:** Reform efforts, such as the use of detention screening instruments, represent best practices and should be mandated on a statewide basis.
- **Recommendation 6:** The state should work collaboratively with local leaders to plan and explore funding options to create alternatives to detention in jurisdictions where those services do not currently exist, drawing on successful models in other areas of the state.
- **Recommendation 7:** State, regional, and local leaders should ensure that the mandates in the detention standards are fully implemented and funded accordingly.
  - Strategy 7-1: The Louisiana Juvenile Detention Association (LJDA) should draft a detailed plan for ongoing and long-term training of detention facility administrators and staff, as well as evaluators within the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
  - Strategy 7-2: The local facility data required via the detention standards should be collected and reported on a regular basis to the appropriate local agencies, the LJDA, DCFS, and actively used to inform local and state policy planning.
  - Strategy 7-3: The LJDA and DCFS should provide an annual status report to the JJIC on the implementation and oversight of the standards, including summaries of the newly collected local and statewide data. Additionally, the JJIC should consider commissioning a follow up study on the overall use of detention in Louisiana, with yearly status reports of implementation and licensure.
  - Strategy 7-4: Local and state leaders should begin to closely examine race and ethnicity data to ascertain whether disparities exist in the way that youth of color enter detention and in their lengths of stay.
- **Recommendation 8:** The state should enact legislation that disallows or limits FINS youth from being placed in detention and specifically requires the development of alternatives to detention for this population.

Point 3: Probation and Post-Dispositional Placement

Probation

In Louisiana, probation refers to youth who remain under the custody of his or her parent/guardian in the community, provided they meet certain conditions and restrictions imposed by the court. In all 64 parishes, Louisiana's Office of Juvenile Justice funds and oversees juvenile probation programs, providing probation services to adjudicated FINS and delinquent youth. Additionally, five parishes – Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson and Rapides – also operate and fund their own juvenile probation departments, and provide the bulk of probation supervision within these five jurisdictions.

Data Summary: Where are the Youth?

State Probation

- The average daily population of youth under probation with the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) due to delinquency matters decreased by 50 percent between 2000 and 2011 (from 4,135 to 2,048), with a 24 percent decrease between 2006 and 2011.
- The average daily population of youth on FINS probation decreased by 28 percent between 2000 and 2011, with an 18 percent decrease between 2006 and 2011 alone.
- The rate at which youth entered OJJ probation on delinquency matters decreased statewide, and in each of the five regions, between 2000 and 2011.
- The average daily FINS probation rate decreased statewide (by 17 percent) and in three of the five regions (the Metro, Southeast, and Southwest regions, by 83 percent, 25 percent, and 16 percent, respectively). The Northwest and Northeast regions, on the other hand, experienced 24 percent and 156 percent increases, respectively.

Local Probation (Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, and Rapides)

- There has been a general declining trend in the number of youth placed on local probation for delinquent acts in these parishes.
- There has been a significant decrease in the number of youth placed on probation for formal FINS across these reporting parishes, with Calcasieu Parish experiencing the most dramatic decrease (85 percent).

Reform Efforts in Last Five Years

- State and local probation offices adopted a validated risk and needs assessment tool, the SAVRY, for assessing youth. The tool has helped departments develop improved case plans, better manage caseloads and allocate supervision time.
- Several local probation departments are doing a better job at collaborating with local planning boards and other agencies to advocate for and facilitate access to services, using data from the SAVRY.
- Some local departments have developed graduated response grids for technical violations of probation to decrease the use of institutional placement.
- Calcasieu Parish became the first probation department to separate FINS youth from delinquency probation caseloads – providing, instead, case management services tailored for status offending youth and their families.
- Jefferson Parish and the OJJ regional office use “joint staffing” prior to revocation for youth on probation.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 9:** Local and State Probation Offices should further improve their capacity to match youth with appropriate services and provide individualized interventions aimed at reducing recidivism and limiting use of out-of-home placement.
  - Strategy 9-1: State and local probation departments should build and encourage collaboration with local planning boards that are functional to aid in the development of appropriate services for youth under supervision. In jurisdictions where Children and Youth Planning Boards do not exist, state regional offices should collaborate with their fellow state and regional agencies.
  - Strategy 9-2: The state should ensure that juvenile justice "systems" – at the state and local level – fully utilize the SAVRY to guide dispositions, case plans, case management, and treatment throughout supervision.
  - Strategy 9-3: When a youth is failing local probation, the locality should jointly "staff" the case with OJJ and evaluate if more intensive services may be needed and are available via OJJ before revocation is considered.
  - Strategy 9-4: The length of probation should be driven by the progress of the youth; re-assessment of the young person should take place on a regular basis.
  - Strategy 9-5: Graduated response policies and practices for technical violations of probation should be developed and used statewide.
  - Strategy 9-6: State and local probation departments should develop and allow the use of individualized terms and conditions of probation that are tailored to a youth's particular risk, needs, and circumstances.
- **Recommendation 10:** Adjudicated ("Formal") FINS should be placed outside of the traditional delinquency probation system, with a plan to appropriately meet the unique needs of status offending youth and their families.

Post-Dispositional Placement and Parole

In Louisiana, adjudicated youth may be placed in a facility under the custody of OJJ. Youth may be sent to either a non-secure facility, which lack the kind of secure hardware that would be present in a more restrictive setting, or a secure facility, which have perimeter fences, locked units, and high security. When youth are released from non-secure or secure facilities, the court may decide to continue them on to probation and parole, respectively, depending on the time left to be served on their disposition. OJJ has 16 contracts with different group homes and residential and foster care providers across the state for non-secure services; it also funds and operates three secure facilities for males and contracts with one facility to provide secure care for girls, with a total capacity of 403 beds.

Data Summary: Where are the Youth?

- The average daily population of youth in secure state custody decreased by 73 percent between 2000 and 2011. The sharp decline occurred largely between 2000 and 2006 (the year that the state was released from the DOJ lawsuit).
- Statewide, the secure custody rate decreased by 68 percent, while each of the five regions (as defined in the sidebar noted earlier) experienced a decrease of 60 percent or larger between 2000 and 2011.
- The non-secure average daily population for youth adjudicated on delinquency offenses decreased by 57 percent between 2000 and 2011; the non-secure average daily population for FINS cases dropped by 62 percent during that same period.
- Non-secure custody FINS rates, at both the state and regional levels, decreased between 2000 and 2011.
- Youth placed on non-secure custody status solely due to a FINS matter have historically experienced the longest average lengths of stay – upwards of nine to ten months or longer – compared to delinquent youth placed on secure or non-secure status.
- The average daily population of youth on parole supervision decreased by 58 percent between 2000 and 2011, with a nine percent decrease between 2006 and 2011.
- Substantial declines (between 2000 and 2011) in parole rates across the state are evident. The rate of delinquency parole per 1,000 youth ages 10-17 decreased by 51 percent statewide, 61 percent in the Metro region, 45 percent in the Northeast region, 35 percent in the Northwest region, 51 percent in the Southeast region, and 49 percent in the Southwest region.
- Interestingly, OJJ data also reveal that approximately 50 percent of youth are discharged directly from OJJ secure custody without any period on parole/community supervision.
- Between fiscal years (FY) 2008 to 2010, one-year recidivism rates hovered around 18-19 percent for youth discharged from secure care and 20-21 percent for youth discharged from non-secure. Three-year recidivism rates for youth discharged in FY 2008 range from 54 percent for secure care discharges to 31 percent for youth discharged from probation supervision.
    - OJJ defines recidivism as when a youth is subsequently re-adjudicated for any delinquent offense and again placed in the custody or supervision of OJJ, or convicted in Adult Criminal Court and sentenced to the custody or supervision of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

Reform Efforts in Last Five Years

- Improved case conferencing has increased collaboration and cooperation among the important parties working on a youth's case.

- The OJJ service coordination model has allowed youth to have one probation officer/caseworker throughout their time in the system to ensure a more seamless case management process.
- OJJ uses the SAVRY to help inform services provided to youth that are placed on parole (and ideally to inform time of release from placement, but this practice is still emerging).
- OJJ is in the process of implementing a new Louisiana model of care in secure placement facilities, modeled after the regional therapeutic facilities used in Missouri, which is nationally-acclaimed for its approach with youth in residential care.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 11:** In an effort to support an effective probation system and to ensure that only those youth who pose a significant risk to public safety are placed out of the home, the state and local jurisdictions should examine the availability of (and if needed, develop new) graduated, community-based, alternative-to-placement systems and services, with a particular focus on keeping status offenders and low-risk youth at home and in their communities.
- **Recommendation 12:** Examine and report on the status of implementing the Louisiana Model of Care in OJJ's placement facilities.
- **Recommendation 13:** Study the juvenile parole system and collaboratively develop a juvenile-centered aftercare model that is about services and support as well as supervision. This aftercare model should include a gradual and well-planned "step-down" process that will enable youth to be released from secure care in a timely manner to varying levels of structured therapeutic programs available across the state.

PART III: ASSESSMENTS AND SERVICES

In recent years, an array of risk and needs screening and assessment instruments, as well as different evidence-based programs and services, have been introduced to support juvenile justice reform in Louisiana.

Data Summary: Where are the Youth?

- Data on Louisiana students show they endorse higher rates on key indicators of delinquency and antisocial behavior than do students across the nation.
- The limited local data which has been collected on informal FINS youth, suggests they are frequently at high risk in areas of anger (17 percent), suicide ideation (15 percent), thought disturbances (18 percent), depression and anxiety (10 percent).

- Preliminary statewide SAVRY data show youth on probation have greatest need for services addressing disruptive behavior (76 percent), mental health (69 percent), and peer associations (86 percent).
- A study of detained and incarcerated youth in Louisiana's detention and secure care facilities found that they have high rates of mental health disorders (any diagnosable 74 percent) that are higher than other states, including substance abuse (53 percent). Many of these youth have disorders that are considered severe and debilitating (37 percent) and/or have multiple mental health disorders (62 percent).
- Louisiana providers reported a 16 percent increase in the use of valid, research driven screening and assessment instruments from 2007 to 2011. Additionally, juvenile justice involved youth had greater access to an evidence-based service in 2011 compared to 2007.
- According to national statistics, Louisiana now ranks second in the nation per capita for growth during the past five years in the use of two evidence based practices, Functional Family Therapy & Multisystemic Therapy.

Reform Efforts in Last Five Years

- Several evidence-based programs and practices, including Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), and Motivational Interviewing (MI), have been adopted on a wider scale throughout the state.
- The 4th Judicial District and the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) have implemented a substance abuse assessment model to more effectively screen, assess, and treat youth in the juvenile drug court.
- The 16th Judicial District and Rapides Parish have developed effective partnerships between the juvenile justice system and local schools, which have improved linkages to needed services without formal court or system involvement.
- Beginning in 2010, both OJJ and Jefferson Parish began to emphasize a preference for evidence-based programs through its RFP process, leading to an increase in research-driven interventions.
- There has been increased training to support the understanding and use of new evidence-based programs and practices statewide.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 14:** All entities tasked with screening and/or assessment in the juvenile justice system (FINS, diversion, probation, specialty courts, detention, secure care, and re-entry providers) should be mandated to use best practice decision-making tools.
- **Recommendation 15:** Ensure that effective linkages are made to appropriate services for youth following the screening and assessment process.
- **Recommendation 16:** Local and state juvenile justice officials should work closely with the Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership and Office of Juvenile Justice to map

available services, inform the development of new services, and work to address barriers to accessing.

PART IV: AVAILABILITY AND USE OF DATA

Many local and state juvenile justice agencies across the country have come to recognize that having consistent and reliable data are essential for measuring and tracking system impact and performance. Yet, despite this recognition and some important improvements, there continues to be tremendous variability across the country in the quality and quantity of juvenile justice data, and how those data are used (or not used) to gauge impact and performance. Ultimately, having good data will enable juvenile justice agencies to show that what they do makes real, tangible differences in the lives of young people and their communities.

Reform Efforts in Last Five Years

- The development of the OJJ data warehouse represents one of the most important signs of progress in Louisiana.
- Over the past five years, there has been an unprecedented level of collaborative juvenile justice data analysis, data sharing, and technical assistance, with much of this tied to the MacArthur Foundation's Louisiana Models for Change initiative.
- Through Louisiana Models for Change, a juvenile justice data warehouse was created at the University of New Orleans to house, organize and analyze key data aligned with the initiative.
- A number of local juvenile justice agencies have significantly improved their data capabilities, including:
    - The Calcasieu Parish Office of Juvenile Justice Services (OJJS)has enhanced its JCMS data system and expanded detention, probation, and workload analysis;
    - The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court is using its AS400 "Legacy System" to track a considerable amount of court and probation data;
    - The juvenile unit of the Rapides Parish District Attorney's Office is using the IJJIS prosecution component to build its data capacities;
    - The Louisiana Supreme Court's Drug Court Office recently implemented an improved version of the Drug Court Case Management (DCCM) system; and
    - The Louisiana Children's Cabinet recently opened its "Louisiana Kids Dashboard" which presents important juvenile justice and other data not readily available five years ago.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 17:** Further improve local and state capacity to collect and analyze juvenile justice data.
    - Strategy 17-1: Appropriate steps should be taken to improve the reporting of juvenile arrest data in Louisiana.
    - Strategy 17-2: Appropriate steps should be taken to improve the availability and consistency of diversion data.
    - Strategy 17-3: OJJ should continue to expand its use of the JETS data warehouse and should take appropriate steps to share important data that this system can produce.
    - Strategy 17-4: OJJ should continue to work with courts that commit youth to its custody to find appropriate ways to improve the breadth and quality of data provided to OJJ upon commitment.
    - Strategy 17-5: The state should improve its capacity to maintain, report, and actively use comprehensive data on Informal FINS populations, system practices, and outcomes; and should establish timeliness and quality outcome thresholds for all FINS services.
    - Strategy 17-6: The Louisiana Juvenile Detention Association (LJDA) should receive appropriate and continued technical assistance through the proposed Louisiana Juvenile Justice Data Repository and Analysis Center (see Recommendation 18).
    - Strategy 17-7: The Louisiana Supreme Court's Judicial Administration Office (LAJAO) should receive appropriate technical support to help it implement initial quality assurance steps for the court filing data it receives on an annual basis.
    - Strategy 17-8: OJJ and local probation departments should come to an agreement on a common (and achievable) definition and measurement of recidivism, and ensure that consistent information about youth re-offending or deeper re-involvement in the juvenile justice system is shared across parishes and between parishes and the state.
    - Strategy 17-9: Local and state juvenile justice agencies should more regularly and consistently define and monitor additional youth outcomes (not limited to recidivism).
- **Recommendation 18:** Louisiana should strongly consider developing a statewide "Juvenile Justice Data Repository and Analysis Center" based on best practice national models.

PART V: A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT ACT 1225

In 2003, the state legislature passed Act 1225 (also known as the Juvenile Justice Reform Act), which was widely considered to be one of Louisiana's most significant pieces of juvenile justice legislation. The table below summarizes the key provisions and outlines the status of these efforts.

Summary of Provision	Status
Close the secure facility in Tallulah, LA	The facility in Tallulah was closed in late 2003.
Create a single state entity to recommend uniform standards and licensing procedures for local detention facilities;	The single child serving state entity was never established and detention standards were not developed. In 2010, Act 863 was passed by the legislature, which called for the creation of the Task Force on Juvenile Detention Standards and Licensing and eventually led to the release of new standards.
Develop a comprehensive strategy for fostering interagency agreements and cooperation regarding data sharing on system-involved youth and families among several state agencies	Although the original provisions in Act 1225 were later repealed by Act 119, this act also enacted articles of the Children's Code relative to information sharing among agencies involved in the juvenile justice system.
Establish a collaboration between the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Planning and Coordination Board to formulate, develop and recommend a model master plan for improving behavior and discipline within schools	According to different stakeholders, the model master plan was never developed, and the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Planning and Coordination Board was repealed by Act 780 in 2008.
Created the Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission (JJIC), a five-member body charged with overseeing the implementation of Act 1225's recommendations and the continued reform of Louisiana's juvenile justice system	The JJIC was formed and has been committed to juvenile justice reform, although it was not provided with funding to carry out its duties or monitor subsequent reform efforts.
Re-authorized the Children's Cabinet until 2008 to help streamline the myriad state and local departments, offices, and agencies that currently fund and provide juvenile justice services; Established both a Children's Cabinet Research Council to identify research	Many of the responsibilities given to the Children's Cabinet under Act 1225 were repealed by Act 780 in 2008. Both the Children's Cabinet Research Council and the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Planning and Coordination Board provisions were also

Summary of Provision	Status
needs in child welfare and juvenile justice and the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Planning and Coordination Board	repealed in Act 780.
Established the Louisiana Children, Youth and Families Investment Fund to promote investment in services and programs for children and families; Develop community- and school-based systems of progressive sanctions and programs for juvenile delinquents in different regions	The provisions that created the fund were later repealed by Act 834 passed during the 2012 regular session. According to stakeholders, the grant program outlined here only exists in law and was never created

Recommendation

- **Recommendation 19:** The JJIC should monitor the effective implementation of any remaining provisions in Act 1225, particularly those related to detention, education, and data-sharing, to promote ongoing reform.