

*Juvenile Justice GPS (Geography, Policy, Practice, Statistics) is a project to develop an online repository providing state policy makers and system stakeholders with a clear understanding of the juvenile justice landscape in the states. The site layers the most relevant national and state level statistics with information on state laws and practice and charts juvenile justice system change. In a landscape that is highly decentralized and ever-shifting, JJGPS provides an invaluable resource for those wanting to improve the juvenile justice system. We hope that the information will be used as a platform for inspiring change and finding solutions that have been applied in other places.*

## Statewide Risk Assessment in Juvenile Probation

Research on the use of validated risk/needs assessments in juvenile justice, herein referred to as risk assessments, has grown significantly in the last decade, improving the ability to accurately assess the static and dynamic risk factors (criminogenic needs) of youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. Risk assessment tools gauge the likelihood that an individual will reoffend and guide intervention planning by identifying and prioritizing criminogenic needs. These assessments can be used at different decision points in the juvenile justice system and the results should be used to guide these decisions. For example, a risk assessment administered at intake can help determine whether the youth is appropriate for diversion opportunities; while a risk assessment used at detention can guide pretrial detention decisions.

Risk assessments are often described as the foundation of evidence-based practices, enhancing efforts to treat offenders, reduce recidivism, and ultimately increase public safety. A recent publication, [\*Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation\*](#), highlights these and other elements of risk assessment selection and implementation and serves as a comprehensive guide for those interested in risk assessments in juvenile justice. Until now, there has not been a thorough systematic scan

of the U.S. to determine the extent to which these tools have been adopted across the country.

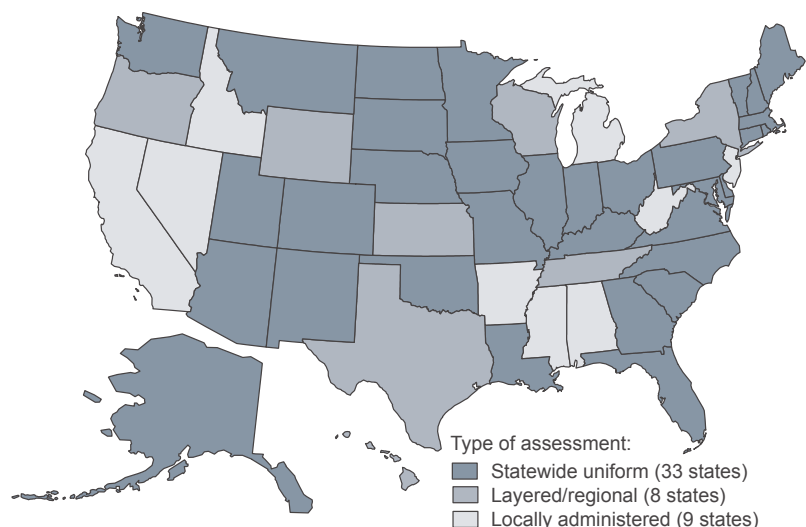
### Statewide Uniform Assessment

A majority of states in the U.S. have incorporated the practice of risk assessment by adopting a single assessment tool statewide in juvenile probation. There are currently 33 states (see Risk Assessment in Juvenile Probation table p.2) that have adopted a risk assessment at the state level, indicating all traditional juvenile probation departments have access to a single risk assessment tool that has been required or encouraged by the state. This includes states such as

Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts that have adopted the practice at the state level but are still in the process of implementation. For example, in Ohio, 80 of the 88 counties have adopted the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) as of 2013, while 66 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties have adopted the YLS/CMI as of November 2013.

Most states that have adopted a statewide risk assessment tool tend to have juvenile probation services that are administered by a state agency, such as a state juvenile justice authority or state courts, or have an oversight agency for states with locally administered probation services. Of the 33 states with a risk assessment tool implemented statewide, more than

### A majority of states have Statewide Uniform Assessment



# Risk Assessment in Juvenile Probation

State	Probation Administration		Authority			Risk Assessment Tool	Statewide Implementation
	■=State/Mostly State	□=Local/Mostly Local	State Statute	Probation Agency Policy	State Agency Recommended		
<b>Statewide Uniform Assessment</b>							
Alaska	■			■		YLS/CMI	■
Arizona	□		■			Arizona Youth Assessment System	■
Colorado	□			■		Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment Pre-Screen and Full Assessment	■
Connecticut	■		■	■		Brief Risk Assessment Tool and Juvenile Assessment Generic	■
Delaware	■			■		PACT	■
Florida	■		■	■		PACT	■
Georgia	■		■	■		Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment	■
Illinois	□		■	■		YASI	■
Indiana	□			■		Indiana Youth Assessment System	■
Iowa	■			■		Iowa Delinquency Assessment	■
Kentucky	■			■		YLS/CMI	■
Louisiana	■			■		SAVRY	■
Maine	■			■		YLS/CMI	■
Maryland	■			■		Maryland Comprehensive Assessment and Service Planning RiskScreen/Needs Assessment	■
Massachusetts	■			■		Ohio Youth Assessment System	■
Minnesota	□			■		YLS/CMI	■
Missouri	■		■			Missouri Juvenile Offender Risk Needs Assessment and Classification System	■
Montana	■		■	■		Back on Track Pre-Screen and Full Screen	■
Nebraska	■		■	■		YLS/CMI	■
New Hampshire	■			■		SAVRY	■
New Mexico	■			■		Structured Decision Making Tool	■
North Carolina	■		■	■		North Carolina Assessment of Juvenile Risk of Future Offending, North Carolina Assessment of Juvenile Needs	■
North Dakota	■			■		YASI	■
Ohio	□				■	Ohio Youth Assessment System	■
Oklahoma	■		■			YLS/CMI	■
Pennsylvania	□			■		YLS/CMI	■
Rhode Island	■			■		Probation Risk Needs Assessment	■
South Carolina	■			■		Child Assessment & Evaluation along with a separate Risk Assessment	■
South Dakota	■				■	YLS/CMI	■
Utah	■			■		■ Pre-Screen Risk Assessment and Protective and Risk Assessment	■
Vermont	■		■	■		YASI	■
Virginia	■			■		YASI	■
Washington	□		■			PACT	■
<b>Layered/Regional Assessment</b>							
Hawaii	■			■		Hawaii Juvenile Risk Needs Classification System & YLS/CMI	■
Kansas	□			■	■	YLS/CMI	■
New York	□			■		YASI & YLS/CMI	■
Oregon	□		■	■	■	Oregon JCP Risk Screen and Assessment & Risk Needs Assessment (RNA)	■
Tennessee	■			■		YLS/CMI	■
Texas	□		■			Juv. Probation Risk & Needs Assessment & other approved assessments	■
Wisconsin	□				■	COMPAS Risk & Need Assessment System	■
Wyoming	■			■	■	PACT	■
<b>Locally Administered Assessment</b>							
Alabama	■				■		■
Arkansas	□				■		■
California	□				■		■
Idaho	□				■		■
Michigan	□				■		■
Mississippi	■				■		■
Nevada	□				■		■
New Jersey	■				■		■
West Virginia	□				■		■

Source: Juvenile Justice GPS (Geography Policy Practice Statistics) website: [www.jigps.org](http://www.jigps.org), NCJJ 2014.

two-thirds (25 states) have juvenile probation services that are all or mostly state administered. This feature often provides the structure, authority, and reach necessary to enact statewide practices, such as establishing risk assessment statewide.

The authority to implement a risk assessment statewide often comes from a variety of sources, including state statutes, state agency or probation administrative policies, or local jurisdiction policies. Sometimes, though rare, the authority comes in the form of a state recommendation, often accompanied by funding and training. The vast majority of states with Statewide Uniform Assessment rely on statutes or administrative policies, or a combination of both to support the implementation of statewide risk assessment tools. State statutes are often in place in states that lack state administered probation and subsequently lack the authority afforded to centralized agencies that administer probation. For example, Oklahoma passed a statute of this nature in the fall of 2013 to bring consistency across a state with both state and county operated juvenile probation services. Two states, Ohio and South Dakota, have adopted risk assessment practices statewide with a recommendation rather than a formal statute or policy.

States with Statewide Uniform Assessment have the greatest capacity to aggregate statewide data and use it to assist probation administration and organizational planning. Aggregate data can be used to support local validity testing of a risk assessment tool and inform on-going probation policy research.

### **Layered/Regional Assessment**

A small group of states (8) differs from the Statewide Uniform Assessment because they do not achieve statewide implementation with a single risk assessment tool for a variety of reasons. Most of these states use more than one risk assessment tool because probation services are layered; the state and local jurisdictions each administer a layer of probation. Often the state and local

layers of probation govern the use of risk assessment tools differently. For example, Kansas, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Wyoming all administer probation services in a variety of state and local formats. The Kansas Department of Corrections and the Tennessee Division of Juvenile Justice both require the use of the YLS/CMI for those youth served by state probation, while local probation departments in both states are not required by the state to adopt similar practices. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections has adopted the COMPAS Risk and Needs Assessment System, however a variety of tools are in use across the state in local jurisdictions. In Wyoming, the Department of Family Services adopted the PACT for youth on state probation in over half the jurisdictions in the state, though local probation services are not required to.

Other states use two or more separate risk assessments, varying by region rather than by probation administration. For example, Hawaii uses the Hawaii Juvenile Risk Needs Classification System in the most populous island of Oahu and the YLS/CMI in the remaining islands while New York uses the YASI in every county except New York City, where the YLS/CMI is used. In Oregon, probation departments can choose between the Risk Needs Assessment (RNA) or the Oregon Juvenile Crime Prevention Risk

Screen and Assessment (JCP). Lastly, Texas uses the Juvenile Probation Risk and Needs Assessment in most of the state but local jurisdictions are able to choose from other validated tools approved by the state.

Similar to the Statewide Uniform Assessment category, the majority of states in the Layered/Regional Assessment category rely on probation administrative policies to govern risk assessment practices, however; state statutes and local policies are also in use in Oregon, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming due to multiple levels in probation administration.

### **Locally Administered Assessment**

The remaining nine states lack a state level requirement to implement a risk assessment, relying on local jurisdictions to govern the use of risk assessment tools. These states currently do not have an assessment tool in place statewide, however a large number of jurisdictions within these states have adopted assessment tools locally. The majority of these states have locally or mostly locally administered probation services. This is in direct contrast to the Statewide Uniform Assessment states which have mostly state administered probation services. Localized assessment can provide needed flexibility to address

The National Youth Screening & Assessment Project (NYSAP) is a technical assistance and research center focused on juvenile justice and mental health services. It is located at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, with support by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. NYSAP has provided technical assistance around the implementation of risk assessment tools in juvenile justice settings, both locally and at the state level, and is the author of the previously mentioned [Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation](#).

NYSAP's work across the country is evidence that many state and local jurisdictions are currently in the process of adopting new or improving current assessment practices. NYSAP was instrumental in assisting Louisiana and Pennsylvania with the adoption of statewide risk assessment practices. They are currently assisting New Hampshire and Mississippi in adopting risk screening practices statewide and consulting with the Oregon Youth Authority to refine their risk assessment tool and programming. Finally, they are partnering with a research team in DuPage County to validate a similar tool in multiple jurisdictions, which was specifically designed for assessing youth who engage in domestic battery on a parent.

structures or capacities at the local level and may also support unique or innovative practices.

## Assessment Tools Vary in Design

There are many different risk assessment tools in use across the U.S. Currently there are over 20 different tools being used across the country that have been implemented statewide. The landscape of risk assessment tools in use continues to change as the research supporting their use continues to grow. This was evident by (1) the handful of states that were in the process of changing or upgrading their risk assessment tool as this scan was being conducted and (2) states that were trying to take stock of county practices in locally administered probation systems (e.g., Michigan and Wisconsin).

Risk assessment tools take one of a few different formats, though they all generally seek to accomplish the same goals. Most of the states with a statewide assessment tool in place use a single tool, such as the YLS/CMI or the YASI to identify both the risk and criminogenic needs of youth being assessed. However, a few states including North Carolina and South Carolina use separate tools, one to identify a youth's risk level and one to identify youths' treatment needs (which are not necessarily all criminogenic). Some states, including Colorado, Connecticut, and Montana, screen all youth at intake with a brief risk assessment followed by a more comprehensive risk/needs assessment on those youth who meet predetermined eligibility criteria. Additionally, a few states, including Arizona, Indiana, Ohio, and Massachusetts, use state-specific modifications of the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS), which is a set of different risk assessment tools (some brief and some comprehensive) to be used at various decision points in the system, including diversion, detention, disposition, residential, and reentry and are meant to be used in succession. The comprehensive tools in this group (e.g., those used for disposition and reentry) all combine risk and criminogenic needs.

Another important distinction among risk assessment tools is the difference between state-developed assessments and those that are licensed and purchased from a vendor. Roughly half (17) of the states with Statewide Uniform Assessment, including Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, and North Carolina have opted to develop their own risk assessment tool or make state specific modifications to an existing tool as in the case of Arizona and Massachusetts. The remaining 16 states purchased a risk assessment tool such as the YASI, YLS/CMI, PACT, and SAVRY which are proprietary.

## Additional Information

The JJGPS website ([www.jjgps.org](http://www.jjgps.org)) will offer additional information on this topic including detailed state level summaries with details on how risk assessment results are applied to case level decisions and the ability to aggregate assessment data for a variety of purposes. Furthermore, the website will highlight policies and statistical indicators on a broad range of reform topics including juvenile indigent defense, dual status youth, racial and ethnic fairness, jurisdictional boundaries, status offenders, and juvenile justice best practices.

### Risk Assessment Glossary

#### Back on Track Assessment Tool

[http://www.assessments.com/catalog/BOT\\_41\\_Full\\_Assessment.htm](http://www.assessments.com/catalog/BOT_41_Full_Assessment.htm)

#### PACT - Positive Achievement Change Tool

[http://www.assessments.com/catalog/PACT\\_Pre\\_Screen.htm](http://www.assessments.com/catalog/PACT_Pre_Screen.htm)

#### SAVRY - Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth

<http://www4.parinc.com/Products/Product.aspx?ProductID=SAVRY>

#### YASI - Youth Assessment & Screening Instrument

<http://www.orbispartners.com/assessment/yasi>

#### YLS/CMI - Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory

<http://www.mhs.com/product.aspx?gr=saf&id=overview&prod=yls-cmi>

## Methodology

NCJJ scanned all 50 states and the District of Columbia\* to determine if risk/needs assessment tools have been adopted statewide in juvenile probation. The scan focused on traditional juvenile probation and did not include specialized or aftercare (parole) supervision. Risk/needs assessment tools can be used at many different decision points in juvenile justice systems; however NCJJ chose to focus on probation as risk/needs assessment tools have their greatest impact at this stage for disposition and case planning. Furthermore, most of the research on risk assessments has focused on this type of use. NCJJ contacted state level probation professionals and surveyed them regarding the use of any risk/needs assessment tools in their state. If necessary, local contacts were utilized in states lacking a centralized juvenile probation system. NCJJ did not attempt to determine whether all jurisdictions within a state were actually routinely using the risk assessment tool that the state put in place. NCJJ created three categories based on survey responses. Statewide Uniform Assessment was created based on states that had answered "yes" to the questions "Does the state encourage or require (statute, policy, recommendation) the use of a risk/needs assessment in juvenile probation" and "Is the instrument applied statewide". Those states that answered "yes" to the first question, but had more than one assessment tool in use across the state (for a variety of reasons), were labeled as Layered/Regional Assessment states. Finally, those states that answered "no" to the first question, indicating no requirement at the state level, were categorized as Locally Administered Assessment.

\*District of Columbia did not respond.

The National Center for Juvenile Justice is a non-profit organization that conducts research on a broad range of juvenile justice topics and provides technical assistance to the field. NCJJ is the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

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