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# MAPS REPORT

Washington D.C. Department of Youth  
Rehabilitation Services

Consulting Team:

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Council of Juvenile  
Justice Administrators

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# Introduction

In August 2023, the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) of Washington D.C. contracted with the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) to provide technical assistance (TA) through the federally funded Mutual Aid Program Services (MAPS) agreement. Consulting services included conducting detailed analyses of agency and facility policies, procedures, and related documents as well as site visits to the New Beginnings and Youth Services Center facilities. The purpose of the engagement was to gather feedback from a nationally recognized organization (CJJA) regarding facility functioning in the areas of security and programming.

An executed Statement of Work (dated August 23, 2023) provided guidance on the areas of focus for the technical assistance (TA) engagement. These areas are:

1. Evaluate Programming Schedule
2. Reintegration Services
3. Review Step Down Process
4. Review Title 16 Process and Placements
5. Review Youth Pending Placements
6. Provide recommendations on moving the committed girls out of YSC and into the treatment program at New Beginnings
7. Stakeholder Communication (i.e., capturing success with recidivism)

It is important to note that the Washington D.C. DYRS currently operates the New Beginnings Youth Development Center (NB) site, the Youth Services Center (YSC), the MLK Achievement Center and the Achievement Center. The New Beginnings site was visited on October 12, 2023 and the Youth Services Center on January 19, 2024. Prior to the site visits, CJJA consultants met virtually with agency and facility leadership to discuss concerns, the support needed, and to clearly define TA goals.

Following the NB site visit the consulting team conducted a detailed review of select policy, procedures, data reports, and documents.

Each facility visit included a meeting with facility leaders, a facility tour, conversations with youth and staff, and a brief review of documents related to daily operations (i.e., programming schedules, unit schedules, school schedules). The purpose of the facility

tours was to gather additional information about the program, identify any operational risks, and determine alignment with best practices in the field of juvenile justice.

The CJJA consultant team members providing the technical assessment and assistance are: Mike Dempsey, Executive Director, Wendi Davis, Assistant Executive Director, Kevin Shepherd, Project Director and Natalie Walker, Director of Administration. Information gathered is summarized in the body of this report. A short description of professional experience for each of the consultants is provided in Consulting Team section of this report.

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# Background

## Washington D.C. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services

The Washington D.C. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services is the juvenile justice agency for the District of Columbia. At the time of the onsite visit, the Department was responsible for the supervision, custody, and care of young people charged with a delinquent act in the District of Columbia in one of the following circumstances:

- Youth who are detained in a DYRS facility while awaiting adjudication.
- Youth who are committed to DYRS by a DC Family Court judge following adjudication.

DYRS is responsible for the care and custody of youth who come into the Youth Services Center (detention), for youth committed to DYRS and for youth who are on aftercare, residing in the community. The department's mission and vision is:

"The mission of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services is to give court-involved youth the opportunity to become more productive citizens by building on the strengths of youths and their families in the least restrictive, most homelike environment consistent with public safety."

"DYRS' vision is to provide the nation's best continuum of care for court-involved youth and their families through a wide range of programs that emphasize individual strengths, personal accountability, public safety, skill development, family involvement and community support."

Washington DC is at the forefront of a national trend in juvenile justice for positive, community-based services and placements for youth. Research shows that the best way to enhance long-term public safety is to provide court-involved youth with the tools they need to successfully transition into adulthood. To help prepare youth to succeed, all aspects of DYRS culture – from staff training to youth programs, to the agency's accountability mechanisms – are infused with the belief that youth can change. Internally, the agency calls this Positive Youth Justice because the emphasis is on personal accountability and skill development.

Using this approach, fewer DYRS youth are being re-arrested, and fewer are being reconvicted. These precedent-setting year-to-year reductions are occurring while the agency is meeting its legal mandate to place youth in the least restrictive, most homelike environment consistent with public safety.

Positive Youth Justice focuses on the following developmental needs of youth involved in the juvenile justice system:



- Work: Work experience, apprenticeships, employment readiness, income and independence
- Education: Literacy, credentials, learning skills, career planning
- Health: Physical activity, diet and nutrition, mental and behavioral health, lifestyle
- Relationships: Communication skills, conflict resolution, family systems, intimacy and support
- Community: Civic engagement, community leadership, services, responsibility
- Creativity: Personal expression, visual arts, performing arts, language arts

The Positive Youth Justice approach was published first by a team of researchers led by Dr. Jeffrey Butts at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City.<sup>1</sup>

The DYRS Headquarters is located at 450 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20001.

The New Beginnings Youth Development Center is located at 8400 River Road, Laurel Maryland 20724.

The Center is operated by a private provider and is a 60-bed facility, the population generally consists of youth who are adjudicated delinquent by the D.C. Superior Court (D.C.S.C) Family Division.

The Youth Services Center is located at 1000 Mount Olive Road NE, Washington DC 20002. YSC is an 88-bed facility for detained male and female youth. The YSC population typically consists of youth who are:

- Part of the Adult Transition Unit, housing Title 16 (adjudicated as adult offenders)
- Awaiting court proceedings (pre-adjudicated) or hearings (overnight)
- Adjudicated and pending court action
- Committed to DYRS

The MLK Achievement Center is located at 2101 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE, Washington DC 20020. It is a non-secure site operated by the division for case management staff for youth residing in Wards 7 and 8. The MLK Achievement Center, opened in 2016, contains a large computer lab (with various classes offered by the University of the District of Columbia), barbershop and cosmetology studio, culinary kitchen and two conference rooms dedicated to the most current programming, all envisioned to help young people and their families build educational skills and obtain professional certifications.

On the day of the onsite visit to New Beginnings, the population was fifty-five male youth. All six living units were operational and housed youth on the day of the visit.

<sup>1</sup> Butts, J.A., Bazemore, G., & Meroe, A.S. (2010). Positive Youth Justice: Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development. Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice.



The facility's operational plan includes an on-site school operated by the Maya Angelou Academy. The plan also includes a long list of therapeutic interventions, including individual and group interventions, vocational training, family engagement efforts, art programming and restorative justice efforts. Additionally, the facility makes great use of credible messengers. The physical plant includes a tremendous level of natural light, plenty of assessable green space, and outdoor recreational opportunities. The facility was very clean and overall, quite impressive. The Horizon Program (Behavior Management System) consists of six levels and a Home Petition (HP) level. As it was understood, all youth are required to petition/advance through the six levels. At or near levels 4 and 5, meetings begin with outside partners to begin planning for release. The HP level allows for furloughs (increasing in length) prior to release to the community.

Both New Beginnings and Youth Services Center currently operate under the guidance of a series of Standard Operating Procedures and local directives as the policies have not been updated in approximately 25 years. Direct care staff in the facility work under the titles of Youth Development Representatives (YDRs). Historically, there has been some confusion on the exact role of the YDRs and more specifically if they should be part of the service delivery process or strictly security/custody. DYRS is currently undertaking efforts, including 'mental health first aid' which includes YDRs in the service delivery process. Care Coordinators serve as the 'case managers' for youth and are also responsible for supervising youth in the community.

All youth are formally assessed upon admission to YSC. A new Orientation Unit has been recently opened at YSC. The Orientation Unit expands the capacity at YSC to 98 beds. Eighteen youth charged as adults (Title 16) were on site at the time of the CJJA visit to YSC. Title 16 youth who enter YSC can remain there for long periods of time, sometimes as long as two to three years or more. A recent policy decision has been made to keep all Title 16 youth at YSC. Additionally, policy has been changed to require Title 16 youth to transfer to an adult system facility at the age of eighteen.

Further assessments take place for youth placed at New Beginnings. However, there is confusion in this area as two different assessment tools are operating on parallel tracks. The Youth Level of Service (YLS) has been operating for over three years. The YLS is a very thorough tool that takes considerable time to complete. The assessment contributes to the youth's Success Plan that individualizes the treatment and programming that youth



receive. The Structured Decision Making Tool (SDM) is also being utilized and its use predates the YLS. Some staff refuse to use the YLS as they find the SDM much easier to complete. The SDM is a simple 10 question tool that does not include interviews (youth, family and service providers) nor youth record review. Upon release, youth are still considered 'committed' to the facility.

The most recent data available (2020), indicates that for youth newly committed to DYRS, the population is 92% male and 8% female.

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# Agency/Facility Strengths

The following are some of the strengths noted through conversations and observations by the technical assistance team during the onsite visits. Some of these strengths also reflect themes that were extracted from the comprehensive review of agency and program documents. It is important to note that this is not an all-inclusive list but rather, a list of select strengths intended to illuminate the solid foundation on which DYRS may build. Some of the agency and facility strengths include:

- Agency and facility leaders are committed to identifying and implementing best practices in DYRS. The new Director, Sam Abed, is adding to the leadership team and has a clear vision of the future of DYRS. This includes devoting the resources necessary (i.e., funding allocated to remedy physical plant issues; shortening the length of stay for youth awaiting placement; additional staff trainings; streamlining the hiring process, etc.) to ensure success.
  - Current front lobby entrance construction project at YSC to create a welcoming atmosphere for youth's families and the public. The project includes creating an area for community partners to improve connection to resources.
- As evidenced by the recent policy changes, the administration team is determined to address current issues and make changes to better serve the youth population.
- Overall, the facility culture appears to be healthy and positive. This was evidenced by staff generally reporting they feel supported by their supervisors; they get along with and are supported by their co-workers; and they enjoy their work; etc.
- Youth consistently reported they feel safe at NB, staff genuinely care about them and staff are committed to helping them succeed while in the program.
- The use of credible messengers at both sites is a tremendous asset. Credible messengers are mentors who have past justice involvement and sustainably transformed their lives. They are able to connect with youth and be an example of hope and opportunity for life changes.
- The NB facility is an impressive and well maintained campus, including:
  - Clean, neat, hallways and interior spaces
  - The Maya Angelou Academy includes a clearly structured classroom time (7:55am – 2:55pm) that mimics an educational experience in the community
  - Large amounts of amount of natural light including the impressive cafeteria area

- Ample green space between living units inside the perimeter
- Multiple, large, outside recreation areas
- The YSC is a clean facility, restricted by its physical plant. The hallways and interior spaces are brightly painted to help make it look less institutional.
- Youth living units at NB are spacious and clean. The common areas have natural lighting, an outside recreation area and are colorful and interactive for the youth.
  - Living units also contain instructions, signs, reminders, activity calendars etc., in easy view for all youth to review and/or use as a reference.
- The outdoor 'Oasis Reserve' site/experience has limitless potential.
- Increase in youth and staff voice opportunities.

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# Summary and Recommendations

The technical assistance team provides an array of recommendations based on a review of agency policies, facility procedures, and other documents, as well as observations and conversations with staff and youth during the onsite visit. These suggestions for improvement are offered with the understanding that DYRS agency leaders will need to determine the priorities that will have the biggest impact.

## Evaluate Programming Schedule

- Undertake a complete review of the program delivery process and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities (determine who [by position] is responsible for what services).
  - Identify specific roles of the Program Deputy and Chief of Programming (x 2).
  - Mental Health (MH) staff appear to spend much of their time responding to crisis rather than preventing a crisis. This is not to say MH staff are not doing their job, however, a more proactive philosophy (de-escalation, identifying triggers and red flags, etc.) will create a safer atmosphere where valuable programming and activities can take place.
- Determine the role of the YDR as it pertains to programming delivery. There are many curricula that YDSs can deliver (CBT, Thinking Errors, Life Skills) as well as structured programming activities.
- Train JJIC staff to conduct groups effectively.
- Research indicates that therapeutic approaches contribute to lower levels of recidivism.
  - Primary Factors that Characterize Effective Interventions with Juvenile Offenders: A Meta-Analytic Overview | Office of Justice Programs (ojp.gov).
- Increase the evening and weekend program schedule focusing on reducing youth idleness with meaningful programs and activities. Charge MH staff with conducting groups on weekday evenings. Include non-traditional staff to deliver programming and activities on evenings and weekends (examples: nurses to facilitate wellness groups, health eating habits, hygiene). Train and empower YDRs to not only facilitate identified groups but to lead structured activities.
- Implement CARE teams throughout the agency. CARE teams are crisis awareness response teams that are deployed to de-escalate situations and reduce the need for use of force. CARE team members can be from all positions in the facility, including administrative staff, support staff (maintenance, kitchen, etc.) and direct care staff.
- Discontinue use of the Structured Decision Making Tool (SDM). Require all staff to use the YLS Matrix as trained and designed.

- Create a quality assurance process, including dedicated staff, to review fidelity of programming, compliance with facility/unit schedule, and assessment tools.
- Expand the incentives offered beyond food-based options. Additionally, provide daily and weekly incentives.

## **Reintegration Services/Review Step Down Process/Review Youth Pending Placements**

- Prioritize youth who are approved for release and have been pending placement for the longest time. Create a triage list and review it with the Placement Review Committee (PRC) weekly, with expected outcomes and timeframes until all youth are placed.
- Consider who is the best person to sign off on the Release Memo. Is this the current Deputy Director position the most appropriate person to make these decisions? Does the responsibility require a full-time position?
- Care Coordinators need to be involved beginning the first day of commitment in working with the family to locate and recommend placement. Include Care Coordinators in the Team Decision Making meetings. Create a quality assurance review process to ensure Success Plans are being written to individual youth needs and with quality.
- Involve community service providers in the placement process earlier in the youth's program (prior to level 4 or 5).
- Require Care Coordinators to maintain a minimum number of contacts with the youth's family while the youth is incarcerated.
- Consider establishing a regular working relationship with Child Welfare Agencies as a means to solicit assistance placing youth who are dually involved in both systems.
- Empower Care Coordinators to seek out and investigate 'non-traditional' placements (i.e., friends of family, family of girlfriends/boyfriends, coaches etc.).
- Provide training to Care Coordinators commensurate with their job duties, such as critical thinking. Explore additional trainings that may assist in finding viable placements and support, such as Family Finding ([www.familyfinding.org](http://www.familyfinding.org)), which is a program aimed at re-establishing family connections.

## **Review Title 16 Process and Placements**

- Since the first visit, DYRS has made the decision to house Title 16 youth at YSC.
  - Additionally, a decision has been made that once Title 16 youth turn eighteen years of age, they will be transferred to an adult facility.
- Create a partnership with the Bureau of Prisons to prepare these youth for what they can expect after transfer.
- Consider ways to identify services in the Federal system that could possibly begin, or complete, prior to transfer (vocational training, general college courses).
- Consider creating a credit recovery or an accelerated educational program for youth who can complete their HS diploma or GED prior to transfer.
- Title 16 youth may linger in the court process. DYRS shared that Title 16 youth length of stay was about 500 days and in some instances over 1000 days. Share the data. Collaborate with courts to identify.

## **Provide recommendations on moving the committed girls out of YSC and into the treatment program at New Beginnings**

- Since the first visit, DYRS has made a policy decision to keep all female youth (committed, Title 16 and detention) at YSC.
- Based on the above decision and the few number of committed girls (less than 10), DYRS should explore the ability to contract for girls' beds.
  - This will make a unit at YSC available that typically houses a small number of girls.
  - It will also allow the committed girls to participate in more normalized activities (attend school, increased family involvement, furlough opportunities, etc.) similar to the committed boys' units at NB.
- Train staff who will work on the female unit on gender specific issues (hygiene, trauma, programs, activities, vocations, hair care, etc.).

## **Stakeholder Communication (i.e., capturing success with recidivism)**

- Recommend (pursuing grant funding?) an upgrade to the data collection system. The current state is several different systems that do not interact with one another (education system, case management system, BH information).

- It is imperative to include system partners in the data improvement process. Access to data that speaks to recidivism and allows recidivism analysis will greatly assist with decision making and further allow the leadership team to target areas for improvement.
- Settle on a definition for recidivism and share it with stakeholders.
- Create Positive Youth Outcome measures to include recidivism data (i.e., # of HS diplomas earned; # of GEDs earned; certificate completing; days without an incident by unit; new Camp program; bird sanctuary). Don't limit conversations with Stakeholders to recidivism, share your story and vision (what you are doing well, what the youth enjoy, what you want to do).
- Create a community stakeholder group. Invite them into the facilities. Attend community forums and share information.
- Specifically, to recidivism, re-examine the need for youth who are unsuccessful in the community (including those who have no placement) to complete the entire six-level Horizon program, plus the HP level. Is there potential for an abbreviated program that targets the criminogenic need leading to the youth's return (substance abuse relapse, anger management, etc.)?

## **General Recommendations**

- Recommend a complete review and re-write of all policies. Ensure that policies reflects the agency/facility procedures, align with the agency vision/mission and best practices, and are reviewed on an annual basis. As this will likely take years, prioritize policies that are most integral to affecting the desired changes. Advise creating committees to review and revise policies to include diverse staff in the process. If possible, include youth and their families in the policy development, especially pertaining to behavior management/motivation system.
- Review the Table of Organization and determine if the alignment of staff is best suited for delivering treatment, programming, and activities, to include a review of position descriptions and job responsibilities.



- Improve data collection to include credentialed researcher position(s).
  - It is imperative to be able to collect reliable intake data.
  - Collect critical outcome data measures on where and when incidents occur and explore potential reasons (shift, non-camera areas, holiday, etc.).
  - Data clarification. Example: incidents of youth insubordination included with youth fights.
- Provide training for middle management staff that reinforces the importance of quality supervision of staff. Allow middle managers to hold staff accountable.
- Recommend conducting job shadowing prior to offer of employment (may need to have applicant sign liability waiver) and developing video to show applicants the “day in the life” of a YDR to ensure applicant understands the position/job expectations, agency mission and a good fit to work with youth.
- Create an On-the-Job training process for all new hires. Include On-the-Job training manuals for all direct care staff and supervisors. The On-the-Job training manuals should include oversight and sign-off requirements to indicate staff have had an opportunity to be instructed on all tasks of their position, had an opportunity to observe the completion all tasks for their position and had an opportunity to demonstrate all tasks for their position.
- Create an office that is part of the Administrative Team that is responsible for making sure processes are occurring as designed by policy (i.e. Quality Assurance). This office should create audit tools for all levels of supervision. Empower staff to monitor their direct reports and hold them accountable, if necessary.
- As politically as can be achieved, share information that some relief can be found to the high population if Judicial vacancies can be filled, which would allow youth to move through the system at a quicker pace.
- Consider implementing a unit management system that includes Supervisor Youth Development Representatives (SYDR) who are permanently assigned to their units.
  - Such a system would allow SYDRs to establish a higher level of rapport with youth and create an environment that specifically addresses the population.
- Review staff deemed “unavailable” (light duty, FMLA, etc.) to improve shift coverage and ability to conduct programming and activities. Leadership is actively recruiting a Return-to-Work coordinator. The individual will assess the issue, review department policy and coordinate with Human Resources to develop plans to address issues.

## ***Limitations***

It is important to acknowledge two main limitations of the consulting engagement and TA support provided. First, not all requested documents were able to be submitted to CJJA prior to the site visit. The majority of program documents were reviewed after the site visit. These time constraints and timing may have produced a less than “in-depth” analysis of existing policies and procedures.

The second limitation is that only a one-day visit to each facility, New Beginnings and Youth Services Center, occurred. This limited amount of time may have constrained the consultant team’s ability to gather additional information regarding DYRS’ operations, safety and security, and programming. However, since this was not an audit the consultants were able to gather valuable information through the facility tour, conversations with program leadership, and interviews with youth and direct care staff. The observations and subsequent recommendations are detailed in this findings report.

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# Consulting Team

The CJJA consulting team included the Michael Dempsey, CJJA Executive Director, Wendi Davis, CJJA Assistant Executive Director, Kevin Shepherd, CJJA Project Manager, and Natalie Walker, CJJA Director of Administration. A brief explanation of professional background is provided below for reference.

## **Michael Dempsey, CJJA Executive Director**

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Mike previously served as Executive Director of the Indiana Department of Corrections, Division of Youth Services from 2009 to 2015. He began his work with the Indiana Department of Corrections as Superintendent of the Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility in June 2006. Prior to moving to Indiana, he served as the Superintendent of the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex for approximately two and a half years. He began his career in corrections with the Missouri Department of Corrections, starting as a Corrections Officer at the Missouri State Penitentiary in 1985. Since that time, Mike has held positions as a Correctional Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain and Major. He has also held positions as Correctional Training Officer, Internal Affairs Investigator, Assistant Superintendent and Associate Superintendent.

He has extensive experience with CJJA and Performance-based Standards (PbS). He served as president of the CJJA Board of Directors for two years (2012-2014), and on the PbS Board of Directors for four years, two of those years as president. Mike was an active member of CJJA while he was director of Indiana DYS. Mike has over 30 years of experience working in both adult and juvenile correctional and detention facility settings and continues to be committed to assisting juvenile justice systems on improving conditions of confinement, reforming systems, and improving long-term outcomes for youth.

Mike holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Administration and Criminal Justice and has been actively involved with the American Correctional Association (ACA) as a member and certified auditor. He mostly served as the President/COO of Youth Opportunity Investments and brings a unique experience and perspective in both the public and private sectors in the juvenile justice field.

## **Wendi Davis, CJJA Assistant Executive Director**

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Prior to joining CJJA, Wendi Davis was the Deputy Director of the Division of Facility Support for the Ohio Department of Youth Services. She was responsible for security, operations, and treatment within DYS facilities. The Division also included Medical and Mental Health Services and the Buckeye United School District. Serving as a trusting advisor, Wendi served as a mentor to those who worked under her leadership.

With over 26 years of experience in criminal and juvenile justice, Wendi has served on numerous national and statewide policy committees and councils. During her career, she has presented to various audiences on a wide range of criminal justice topics. Her breadth and scope of the criminal justice field, specifically correctional administration, makes her not only a leader, but also a subject matter expert.

Wendi is a strong advocate of system reform, which includes encouraging systems to develop innovative and effective educational opportunities for youth. To fulfill this passion, she has served on the boards of two charter schools: Columbus Preparatory Academy and Columbus Arts and Technology Academy. Wendi was also a member of the Executive Committee for Buckeye Charter School Boards, which is charged with strengthening charter school boards throughout the state of Ohio.

Wendi earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a master's degree in Business Administration from Franklin University (Ohio) with a concentration in Leadership.

## **Kevin Shepherd, CJJA Project Manager**

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Kevin retired from the Ohio Department of Youth Services in 2020, where he spent nearly 28 years serving in a variety of positions. He has worked for more than 30 years in the juvenile justice arena.

Most recently, Kevin served as the Bureau Chief of Unit Management where he oversaw nearly all interaction on the living units to include programming, youth incentives, youth discipline, visitation, recreation, property, sanitation, etc.

Kevin previously served as the Deputy Director of Release, Parole, and Reentry, having responsibility for the Release Authority, Bureau of Parole, Office of Reentry, and Office of Victim Services. As the Chief of Parole, he was instrumental in reshaping the bureau to partner with other child-serving agencies and to function as an empirically driven, family-friendly entity.

Kevin has presented on numerous juvenile justice issues at national, state, and local levels. He has a tremendous passion to create, improve, and streamline juvenile justice efforts to do everything possible to ensure youth leave the system at a far better level than when they entered.

Kevin received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kent State University, with a minor in Sociology.

### **Natalie Walker, CJJA Director of Administration**

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Prior to joining CJJA, Natalie spent over 20 years with the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC). Natalie started her career with IDOC as a correctional officer. The last four years of her tenure was spent serving as Assistant Director for IDOC Division of Youth Services. In that role, she aided in overseeing operations, treatment and re-entry at Indiana DYS facilities. Natalie oversaw the implementation of evidence-based programming, monitored compliance with Division's policies, and provided support to facility and agency heads. During her career, Natalie participated as a panelist for presentations regarding juvenile justice practices.

Natalie has experience with Performance-based Standards (PbS) as a Site Coordinator and State Coordinator. Indiana PbS sites consists of DYS facilities, three detention centers and one community-based program. Natalie supported the sites with the PbS cycle of data collection, reviewing reports and development of facility improvement plans.

Natalie holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from DePauw University, Indiana.

# CJJA Overview

The Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) is committed to improving outcomes for youth and their families engaged in the juvenile justice system. We work with all juvenile justice leaders to provide them with education, resources, training, leadership development, research, and best practice opportunities to help them improve their systems, cultures, programs and services they provide to the youth entrusted to their care. We believe in working to ensure that only those youth posing a true and significant public safety risk should be placed in secure facilities and that, when necessary, those facilities should be focused on providing the right type of educational, vocational, and treatment programs in a therapeutic and trauma-informed care environment.

The Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) is a national non-profit organization, formed in 1994 to improve local juvenile justice services, programs and practices so youth within the systems succeed when they return to the community. The CJJA mission is “To provide opportunities to connect, develop and support juvenile justice leaders to strengthen their abilities to implement and sustain transformational practices that will improve outcomes for youth, families, and communities.” Our underlying belief is that every youth should leave a juvenile justice program in a better place than when he or she came into the program and/or system.

CJJA provides national leadership and leadership development for the individuals responsible for the juvenile justice systems. CJJA represents the juvenile justice CEOs in 50 states and major metropolitan counties. We fulfil the organization’s mission through educational activities and programs as well as research and technical assistance projects. These education activities include up to three annual meetings free for all directors offering sessions on best practices and evidence-based approaches.

Additional areas of involvement include working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation on various projects, including the annual Leadership Institute meeting wherein leaders from all CJJA participating jurisdictions are invited to attend a two-day leadership training and networking opportunity focusing on relevant topics for system improvement and reform, such as developing Trauma Informed Care environments. CJJA’s work also involves partnering with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center to develop and implement its comprehensive Juvenile Justice Project as well as assisting Pew Charitable

Trusts (Pew) in the educational work of their state centered Public Safety Performance Project (PSPP). CJJA's national level involvement includes developing national standards for reentry and providing technical assistance to a variety of jurisdictions throughout the country on various topics in juvenile justice. CJJA focuses on improving conditions of confinement, reducing incidents of violence, and improving long-term outcomes for youth and families. In addition, CJJA aims to improve the quality and wellness of staff supervising and providing treatment to youth.

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