

Juvenile Supervision Center (JSC)

2012 Evaluation Report – Executive Summary

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Revised 4/18/2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Juvenile Supervision Center (JSC) is a program designed to provide early intervention to youth who are picked up in Hennepin County by law enforcement for truancy, curfew violation, and other low-level offenses. The JSC provides supervision and a referral service to adolescents aged 10 to 17, and gives officers a safe place to bring juvenile offenders who do not meet admission criteria to the Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center, in accordance with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), and Mayor R.T. Rybak's Blueprint to Prevent Youth Violence. The Juvenile Supervision Center operates under a Joint Powers Agreement between Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, and Minneapolis Public Schools. This multi-jurisdictional agreement was implemented in 1996 and is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2016.

The JSC is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Youth brought to the Center are screened for juvenile delinquency risk factors, re-connected with their families, and when appropriate, connected to community and government resources to help address youth and family needs through case management or immediate crisis intervention when appropriate. The Center serves approximately 2800 youth annually. The majority of the youth served are between the ages of 15-17 years old, male and African American. The most frequent violations are curfew, truancy, theft, assault, runaway, and disorderly conduct.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the current operations and structure of the JSC, and provide the Workgroup and the Joint Powers Board with recommendations for serving this population beyond 2016. Specifically, Rainbow Research Inc. has been requested to:

- Evaluate the current operational structure and Joint Powers agreement, making recommendations through a strategic planning process for serving this population of youth beyond 2016.
- Evaluate the operational structure of the JSC and to provide recommendations on whether the current model is the most effective way to provide services to youth brought to the Center.
- Determine if a service like JSC is needed within the continuum of youth prevention and intervention services to prevent further and more serious criminal involvement.

Evaluation questions were developed by the Juvenile Supervision Center Workgroup to guide the data collection process.

1. Is there still a demand and need for a 24 hour drop off center for curfew, truancy and low level offenders? How does this work complement or duplicate other initiatives or programs serving this population?
2. The program provides screening, crisis intervention and case management services to youth picked up by law enforcement and dropped off at Center for low level offenses. Based on analysis of best practices and models nationwide for juveniles at-risk of contact with the criminal system, is this model the most effective for serving this population?
3. How can the current operational structure be improved to maximize efficiency and be more responsive to the population served? How should the program be staffed?
4. Is the JSC being properly utilized by Minneapolis Police Department and suburban police? What types of training and information are needed to ensure the Center is being used appropriately?
5. Is there enough youth activity from charter schools, suburban schools and suburban police to request that other jurisdictions support this project financially? What will their involvement look like, and what impact will it have on the program?
6. Is the membership and structure of the Joint Powers Board and work team appropriate to support the JSC operations?
7. What funding mechanisms should be in place and what are the sources of continued funding?

METHODS

Interviews

Thirty- to ninety-minute semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirty-four stakeholders. Unique interview guides were developed for members of law enforcement, Link staff, Workgroup members, Joint Powers Board members, and probation officers.

Content Analysis of 2011 and 2012 Agendas

A content analysis of all available 2011 and 2012 Workgroup and Joint Powers Board agendas was conducted to collect data on meeting topics, number of meetings spent on meeting topics, and meeting attendance rates. Agenda topics were coded and organized by themes.

Analysis of Link Service Data for 2008-2012

Data on JSC attendance from 2008 through 2012, including demographics, offenses, and services received, was analyzed using the software packages EXCEL and SPSS to identify trends in JSC services and interventions over time.

Review of Literature

A review of academic and service industry literature on truancy and curfew reduction was conducted. Literature on similar service models was conducted through on-line searches and telephone inquiries to local and out -of -state agencies.

Content analysis was conducted of the Minneapolis Strategic Plan, the City of Minneapolis Mayor's Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence, and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives to search for congruence with the stated goals and purpose of the Juvenile Supervision Center relative to youth violence and victimization initiatives.

Evaluation Question #1

Is there still a demand and need for a 24 hour drop-off center for curfew, truancy and low level offenders? How does this work complement or duplicate other initiatives or programs serving this population?

Key Findings

- Key stakeholders are clear on the benefits of the JSC.
- The work of the JSC supports the Mayor's Blueprint, Minneapolis School district's strategic plan, and JDAI initiatives.
- Complements rather than duplicates work of county services, schools, probation and youth crisis centers.
- JSC serves youth who prior to JDAI may have been processed in JDC.

Recommendations

- Continue to strengthen relationship with Minneapolis Police Department Diversion and Check and Connect programs.
- Examine ways risk assessment and individual service data can be shared in a timely manner for individual youth with stakeholders like the Check and Connect program and Hennepin County Probation to avoid duplication of services and quantify the assessment and screening data.
- Examine ways that risk assessment and individual service data can be shared with Workgroup members.

Evaluation Question #2

The program provides screening, crisis intervention and case management services to youth picked up by law enforcement and dropped off at Center for low level offenses. Based on analysis of best practices and models nationwide for juveniles at risk for contact with criminal system, is this model the most effective for serving this population?

Key Findings

- The JSC is a strong model but needs more systems integration through data sharing in order to replicate success from other models
- Current space is limiting for co-location of services
- Current staffing limitations present challenges for staff to effectively engage with both youth *and* parents.
- There are possible efficiencies to be gained by focusing case management services on medium to high risk youth (4+ visits).

Recommendations

- Continue identifying ways data can be more systematically shared across sectors.
- Examine more co-location of services (space may be issue) and strengthen relationships with Minneapolis Diversion, Hennepin County Probation, and Minneapolis School District Check and Connect Program.
- Re-structure staff assignments/practices or add additional staff in order to facilitate parent engagement
- Integrate the JSC more fully into the city and county strategies for working with at-risk youth.
- Based on the research, identify characteristics of repeat offenders and offer intensive case management services to them.

Evaluation Question #3

How can the current operational structure be improved to maximize efficiency and be most responsive to the population served? How should the program be staffed?

Key Findings

Staffing

- Could use more staff to improve quality of intake and increase timeliness of communication to partners.
- Could benefit from presence of Minneapolis Police Diversion.
- Staff safety is a concern.
- Consider adding space for Minneapolis Police Diversion and Probation.

Structure

- Additional services could be provided with additional space.
- In-kind services are provided by multiple systems. This arrangement proves challenging when day-to-day decisions are needed to be made by JSC staff.

Recommendations

Services

- Discuss ways to more formally integrate the JSC into the city, school and county strategies for working with at-risk youth.
- Focus case management services on medium risk youth (4-6 visits).
- There is a need for police presence and additional safety measures to be incorporated into the JSC (warrants, minimize walk-outs, and increase perception of youth accountability).

Evaluation Question #4

Is the JSC being properly utilized by Minneapolis Police Department and suburban police? What types of training and information are needed to ensure the Center is being properly used?

Key Findings

- JSC not frequently used or supported by suburban municipalities due to travel time
- Proximity to JSC impacts usage of services
- Need better communication about JSC services and policies across systems, particularly with Minneapolis Police Department
- Some conflict on truancy between police department and schools.
- Some Minneapolis and suburban officers take kids home rather than take them to JSC for variety of reasons

Recommendations

- Utilize Joint Powers Board to support communication with stakeholders
- Pursue deeper conversation to inform policy on pick-ups for truancy (sub-committee)
- A sub-committee should be formed, including representatives from the police department and the school district

Evaluation Question #5

Is there enough JSC representation of youth from charter schools, suburban schools and suburban police to request that other jurisdictions support this project financially? What will their involvement look like and what impact will that have on the program?

Key Findings

- Limited interest from suburban municipalities in contributing. Limited interest from Joint Powers Board in pursuing suburban municipality funding.
- Suburban municipalities would rather have own center if seen as valuable. County would be challenged to fund and support additional JSC centers. No ability to enforce a user fee or tax.
- Suburban argument could be strengthened with stronger outcome data
- Significant percentages of Minneapolis JSC youth (from 2008 to 2012) attend charter schools (17%).

Recommendations

- Pursue funding from Minneapolis charter schools
- Continue to refine outcome data to support contribution requests to suburban municipalities.

Evaluation Question #6

Is the membership and structure of the Joint Powers Board and Workgroup appropriate to support the JSC operations?

Findings

Strengths

Interviews with Joint Powers Board and Workgroup members illustrate a shared understanding of purpose of the JSC, as well as a high value for the work that the JSC does. The Board and Workgroup appear to have a good working relationship and task location appears congruent with the original Joint Powers Board agreement with decision making on budgets, operations, Workgroup oversight, contract approval, expenditures, in-kind services, space, and equipment determined by the board. In both groups, decision making is reached by consensus, and both members and Joint Power Board members appear to have realistic expectations of the JSC relative to programmatic outcomes

Concerns

- There was confusion regarding the role of the Workgroup and its members. Some members perceived their roles as focusing on systemic issues, while others preferred on daily operations of JSC
- Expressed desire for the Workgroup and Joint Powers Board members to have deeper and richer conversations supported by data on issues related to truancy, data sharing, JSC entry and services

Recommendations

Operations

- Need to clarify purpose of Workgroup and Workgroup meetings (see Joint Powers Board agreement, article 6, items B and E).
- Discuss attendance challenges and address barriers to attendance.
- Utilize sub-committees on ongoing issues, such as truancy, data-sharing, flow-chart, and perception of disproportionate African-American youth contact.
- Consider fewer agenda items for Workgroup and Joint Powers Board meetings.
- Utilize Joint Powers Board as problem solvers.

Membership

- Consider Minneapolis Police Chief, corrections, Human Services, child protection and probation representatives for Joint Powers Board.
- Consider youth, parent, child protection worker, Minneapolis Building Commission member (as needed), and representative from Mayor's office for Workgroup.

Evaluation Question #7

What funding mechanisms should be in place and sources of continued funding?

Key Findings

- Multiple year budgets could support planning, staff stability and long term goals.
- Further discussion needed on pursuing Foundation funding.

Recommendations

- Pursue Minneapolis charter schools for funding
- Explore multiple year funding with expectation that budgets may change given financial context
- Discuss more in-depth exploration of Foundation funding and challenges of sustainability

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Recommendations for Data Sharing

Collectively, there was a level of frustration expressed by those interviewed regarding data sharing limitations. Although workgroup members and their partners recognize potential benefits to data and information sharing they also understand that legal and system barriers provide additional limitations that may contribute to frustrations expressed by those interviewed. It is the Workgroup members hope to work together to address these barriers.

Interviewees felt that sharing data in a timely manner from Human Services, other County systems, curfew, and school attendance would improve their ability to quickly and more comprehensively meet the needs of the young people they serve. Below are five major types of data needed to promote effective collaborations.

- 1. Human Services data**
 - SSIS and Electronic Case Files (ECF)
 - Name and contact information of social workers working with youth
- 2. County Attorney's system**
 - List of youth enrolled in county attorney's diversion program
- 3. Lack of exchange of curfew information with JSC and schools**
 - Name of youth picked up for curfew to help track school attendance
- 4. School attendance information**
 - Curfew and truancy data
 - Track youth served at JSC and compare outcome data to school attendance
- 5. Police and Juvenile system data**
 - Juvenile warrants- similar JDC access
 - MPD – CAPERS