Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Task Force

Rules for Today’s Virtual Meeting

- Please keep your line muted if you are not speaking.
- We encourage Task Force members to ask questions or make comments directly during today’s meeting, though please also feel free to use the chat box.
Agenda

• Welcome (Co-chairs) – 5 minutes
• Review of Task Force findings (Co-chairs) – 10 minutes
• Discussion of takeaways from public testimony, questionnaires, and stakeholder roundtables (Task Force) – 45 minutes
• Public testimony – 45 minutes
• Next steps (Co-chairs) – 15 minutes

Review of Key Data Findings

• Most youth enter the juvenile justice system for misdemeanor and/or nonperson offenses and score as low risk to reoffend, but a majority are not diverted from court
  – Diversion from formal court processing is more than 80% successful
  – But 54% of misdemeanor written allegations against youth with no priors do not lead to it

• Many youth who enter the system with low-level cases are sent to the deepest stages of the juvenile justice system
  – 43% of youth who go straight to probation are at low risk to reoffend
  – Among youth sent to out-of-home placement in 2018, a majority:
    • did not commit a felony or a person offense;
    • had either no prior written allegations (39%) or one (23%); and
    • did not score high or very high risk to commit another offense
Review of Key Data Findings

- The share of cases assessed financial obligations nearly doubled over ten years to just under 60%, averaging under $250 per youth in 16 counties—but over $1,000 in five others

- Youth are kept under court supervision—and in out-of-home placement—for years
  - Youth average 17 months under overall court supervision even when probation is the first and only response (no diversion and no escalation)
  - Youth with placement dispositions:
    - average six out-of-home placements over the course of their case
    - cumulatively stay 16 months out of home, on average, (one-in-five stay over two years); and
    - average more than three years under overall court supervision

Review of Key Data Findings

- The vast majority of Pennsylvania’s spending on delinquency services is focused on out-of-home placement—totaling at least $280,000,000 in FY19
  - State-run facilities cost at least $192,720 per youth per year, on average
  - Privately-run placements cost at least $107,468 per youth per year, on average, up 54% since FY15

- Just 20% of Pennsylvania’s spending on delinquency services is allocated to services for youth living at home
Review of Key Data Findings

• Among youth charged as adults because they are statutorily excluded for juvenile court:
  – half are charged with robbery or aggravated assault; murder makes up only 6% of charges

• Among youth whom a juvenile court judge decided must be tried as an adult:
  – the most common charges are drug- or theft-related, accounting for 44%

Review of Key Data Findings

• There are few statewide criteria in statute or court rule guiding decision-making by offense, prior history, or risk

• There is wide variation in the likelihood a youth in one county will receive the same response as similarly situated youth in another county for:
  – diversion, consent decree, probation, placement, imposition of fees/fines, prosecution in criminal court, among other decision points

• Youth of color—especially boys—are more likely to be:
  – removed from home, even for identical offenses as other youth;
  – kept longer on probation and under the overall court supervision; and
  – prosecuted as adults
Findings from Stakeholder Input

• Task Force members have hosted 24 roundtables attended by 368 individuals, including at least 45 young people (ongoing)
• Task Force members heard testimony from 14 individuals, including nine young people (ongoing)
• 771 judges, juvenile probation officers, and district attorneys completed questionnaires distributed by Task Force members

Questions for Discussion

➢ What key takeaways did you hear from stakeholders?
➢ In what ways did input from stakeholders align with data findings?
Next Steps

- Next Task Force meeting:
  - Wednesday, January 13, 2020
- Roundtables:
  - youth in BJJS facilities
  - northeastern Pennsylvania stakeholders
- Policy development subgroups

Contact Information

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