

Overview

In 2011, Wisconsin received just over \$1.5 million from the Title II State Formula Grants and Title V Local Delinquency Prevention Programs of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) and the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG). Coupled with state, local and private monies, these federal investments are essential to sustain the development and implementation of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention systems and practices across the state. *Since FY 2002, the federal investment in the prevention and reduction of juvenile delinquency has decreased by 50 percent nationwide, while spending on policing, prosecution and incarceration has increased by 60 percent.*ⁱ In Wisconsin, the state advisory group (SAG) statutorily required by the JJDP is the Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission. The Commission funds and awards grants to counties and local service providers to improve the lives of Wisconsin's children and families. In 2011, the Commission awarded \$812,520 to develop and sustain local delinquency prevention efforts, specifically aimed to:

- Ensure a fair and impartial juvenile justice system;
- Advance juvenile justice improvement; and
- Maintain compliance with the JJDP.

The following is a sampling of the activities and outcomes that the state was able to accomplish with federal support. Although these accomplishments are considerable, they represent a small portion of what the state might accomplish if its programs and approaches are brought to appropriate scale. When surveyed by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) in 2008, *89 percent of 35 states reported that due to federal cuts, fewer youth and families will have access to critical services designed to keep youth from offending, re-offending and becoming further entangled in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.*

State Summary

Total FY2011 Federal Investment (JABG, Title II and Title V):
\$1,506,070

FY2010 Federal Investment:
\$1,885,145

The current funding levels for juvenile justice in Wisconsin represent a **20% decrease** from the previous FY funding level.

The Title II State Formula Grants Program

The following are some of the outcomes supported in part with an FY2011 federal investment of \$816,000.

The Commission has consistently prioritized evidence-based practices as a core strategy to improve outcomes for children and youth. To further this goal, the state provides three-day trainings on evidence-based programming to state and county leaders in juvenile justice, to assist them in learning about approaches that produce positive outcomes and in developing plans to meet local needs. The state also provides a one-day stakeholder training for judges, district attorneys, public defenders and other groups interested in learning about evidence-based practices.

Substance Abuse & Behavioral Health

Village of Somerset: Provided substance-abuse counseling in several school districts through a partnership with the Youth Services Bureau, a community-based organization. Part of the effort was to increase community awareness of youth substance abuse. Community leaders were surveyed in the third year of the grant and **74 percent reported a decreased tolerance for use of alcohol and other drugs.** The program

served 152 youth in 2011. In 2008, the year before the grant started, nine jurisdictions reported 705 citations for alcohol and drug abuse. That number declined to 534 in 2010. **91.6 percent of participants have not had further involvement in the juvenile justice system.**

Medical College of Wisconsin: this nonprofit partner created a unique program, delivering substance-abuse services in a county detention center. The program provided counseling to 382

Program Highlights

Truancy Intervention

- Habitual truancy reduced by 76.3% in first year of Truancy Court.
- Intervention specialists improved attendance by 95% among students served in Green Bay.
- 95% of youth served report improved attitude toward school.

Substance Abuse & Behavioral Health

- 75% reduction in use of out-of-home placements in Pierce County.
- 50% in use of secure detention in Pierce County.
- Established juvenile drug court in St. Croix County.

Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders

- Reduced DSO violations by more than 50% in Milwaukee County.
- Oneida County Truancy Court interventions reduced secure care budget by 73%.

youth. *Of the youth receiving counseling, 96 percent decreased use of marijuana and 45 percent abstained; 85 percent of the alcohol users abstained.*

Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO)

Racine County: Launched a Truancy Abatement Project to respond to the high use of secure detention for truants. The program is housed at Safe Haven, a community-based organization that works closely with law enforcement, schools and families. Safe Haven provides case-management services for youth, connecting them to services and supports to stay engaged in school. *Prior to the program, there were more than 100 admissions to secure detention of youth charged with violating valid court orders (VCOs) related to truancy. In 2011, the second full year of the program, there were none.*

Oneida County: Created an afterschool program targeting chronically truant youth to reduce the Truancy Court's over-reliance on secure detention. *The county saved thousands of public dollars, reducing the budget for secure care from \$74,000 to \$20,000 during the first year. From 2009 to 2011, 73 percent of the students in the program increased their GPAs, and 87 percent had fewer unexcused absences in the three months after their court appearances as compared with prior to their court appearances.*

The Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program (JABG)

With the support of a federal investment in FY2011 of \$640,000, the state produced the following outcomes:

Truancy Intervention

Fond du Lac County: Implementing the Strengthening Families Program (SPF), an evidence-based family skills training program, which has been found to significantly reduce problem behaviors, delinquency, and alcohol and drug abuse in children, and to improve social competencies and school performance. Fond du Lac County is implementing SPF in middle schools. The grant supports funds for curriculum and training, and has allowed the County to sustain the program beyond the duration of the grant. *Of the 80 youth served over three years, only two reoffended. Youth completing the program had improved school and community behaviors and parents report a better relationship with their children and more consistent limit setting and discipline.*

Portage County: Established a Truancy Court to address high truancy rate and to divert children from entering human services. *The baseline data revealed that there were 716 habitual truants in*

this rural county. After the first year, the truancy rate was substantially reduced to 169 habitual truants.

Green Bay: The city created new positions, attendance intervention specialists, to serve high school youth who are chronic truants. The intervention specialists provide mentoring, advocacy, family support and referrals to services for students. Through this process the specialists identify the reasons students are not attending school and develop plans to address the issues. The intervention specialists administer federally recognized pre- and post surveys to evaluate the program and *found that among last year's cohort of 205 youth, 95 percent improved attendance and 95 percent improved attitudes toward school.*

Substance Abuse & Behavioral Health

Kenosha County: Created a community-service program, contracting community providers including the Spanish Center, the Boys and Girls Club and the Urban League. *During the first six months of the current grant cycle, the program provided 89 youth with an alternative to secure detention. As a result, 95 percent of the youth served during this time have not reoffended.*

Milwaukee County: Established an Intensive Monitoring Program for youth with gun charges. The county contracts with a community-based organization, Running Rebels, to provide intensive supervision to deter youth from using weapons. The program served 96 youth during the first nine months of the current grant cycle.

Outagamie County: Established a community-based truancy and runaway assessment center to decrease use of secure care for status offenders. Law enforcement now takes truants or runaways to the center, which provides community-based programming to youth and families. 140 youth were served through this public/private partnership in six months. *Sixty-six percent of the youth improved their attendance by 15 percent in a 90-day period following services.*

Racine County: Created community panels for first-time offender referrals. The process includes a conference between the victim and offender, and planning for an agreement for sanctions. The program served 103 youth in the first six months of the current grant cycle. *Seventy-five percent of the youth completed their agreement. In 2010, 72 percent of the youth that completed their agreement did not reoffend within a year of completing the program.*

Rock County: The county uses JABG funds for electronic monitoring as an alternative to secure detention, including for youth with technical violations. *During the first six months of the current grant cycle, 97 youth were diverted from secure care and 76 percent did not reoffend.*

The Title V Local Delinquency Prevention Program

In FY2011, Wisconsin received \$50,000 in federal funding to support local delinquency prevention programs. Because of the relatively small sum, the Commission made the strategic decision to apply those funds entirely to truancy prevention. Truancy is a problem area that, if left unaddressed, can result in increasingly serious youth involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

For a complete listing of the programs and outcomes funded by the Wisconsin Governor's Commission on Juvenile Justice, contact Marie Williams at williams@juvjustice.org, or 202-467-0864, ext. 113.

ⁱ Coalition for Juvenile Justice, *Safeguarding Our Future: Strategic Investments to Secure the Safety of America's Youth, Families and Communities*, Washington DC (2011).