

Overview

In Minnesota, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) provides oversight of the federally mandated requirements that accompany participation in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). Among other responsibilities, JJAC allocates funds appropriated to Minnesota under the JJDP and reports on the state's compliance with the four core requirements of the JJDP. Members of JJAC, who are appointed by the governor, represent all eight congressional districts, all major cultural and national groups in the state, and a mix of urban, suburban and rural communities.

It has been a perennial struggle for Minnesota to allocate juvenile justice funds in the same equitable manner reflected in the JJAC membership. This challenge has become even more acute as federal investment in juvenile justice has declined. Nationally, federal investments in the prevention and reduction of juvenile delinquency have decreased by 50 percent since 2002, while spending on policing, prosecution and incarceration has increased by 60 percent.ⁱ *As a result of the decline in federal funding, Minnesota's funding awards have decreased from 15-20 grants per cycle to just five grants statewide.*

Minnesota has scored some notable successes, such as producing a gradual *decrease in the juvenile percentage of total arrests from 26 percent in 2000 to 21 percent in 2010*, yet significant issues remain.ⁱⁱ One such issue is disproportionate minority contact (DMC). While youth from communities of color accounted for 23 percent of juvenile arrests in the state in 1997, in 2010 they accounted for 44 percent of juvenile arrests. Further decreases in federal support pose a clear threat to the state's ability to retool their juvenile justice system to address DMC, and to equitably and adequately serve all families who come into contact with that system.

State Summary

Total FY2011 Federal Investment (JABG, Title II and Title V):
\$1,441,803

FY2010 Federal Investment:
\$1,814,245

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

The Title II Formula Grants Program and the Title V Local Delinquency Prevention Program

The federal investment in *Title II in Minnesota in 2011 was \$769,114, down from \$934,000 (-18%)* from the previous fiscal year. *Title V, funded at \$84,945 in 2010, was reduced to \$50,000 (-42%)*. For these programs, JJAC's approach has been to increase community resources that provide alternatives to youth system involvement. One consistent concern has been that resources tend to be directed toward funding programs in urban areas, where juvenile delinquency numbers are higher, at the expense of developing approaches and funding programs in rural areas. Nonetheless, with a combination of Title II and Title V dollars, JJAC has facilitated many positive outcomes, including those achieved by the following programs:

The Children's Health Care, Runaway Assistance Project screened more than 200 and enrolled 80 girls in need of services over the course of the FY2011 grant cycle. The overwhelming demand for their services resulted in enrollment levels which exceeded those specified in the work plan by 425%. The goal of the Runaway Assistance Project is to identify and address the needs of young girls in St. Paul, who have run away from home and who have been sexually abused or exploited, and reduce the traumatic response to victimization, and improve their health and protective factors. The average age of the girls participating in the program was 14-years old and one-third of them disclosed sexual assault or exploitation.

Six months after entering the program, 72% reported lower levels of running away. All of the teens involved in prostitution report that they are no longer being sexually exploited. After six months, 53 percent reported improved affection, support and trust from their mothers. *Forty-five percent of teens experienced reduced rates of binge drinking episodes and 83 percent reduced the number of types of substances used.* Less emotional distress was charted in the girls at three, six and 12 months. At six months, 82 percent report higher self esteem. There was a significant reduction in sexual behavior (77 percent reported fewer or no sexual partners at three months, and 73 percent at six months).

The Little Earth Residents' Association received a grant to strengthen its Teen Center for Native-American youth by enabling the center to offer extended hours, more space for programming and homework and a faster Internet connection, among other resources.

Similar outreach and services to Native-American youth was provided through the **Minneapolis American Indian Center**, another grantee. This agency focuses on bringing positive and cultural programming to Native-American youth in an inner-city neighborhood, including collaboration with health agencies to provide youth with exercise and nutrition education.

The Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program (JABG)

In Minnesota, JJAC also serves as the JABG State Advisory Board and allocates the state's JABG discretionary funds. In 2011, awards were made to programs across the state that utilize a variety of approaches including diversion, system-improvement projects and restorative justice. Notable examples include:

Hennepin County received funding to study the local decision-making process of law enforcement and the county attorney's office. The goal of the study is to determine if similarly situated youth of different races and ethnicities are equitably treated by law enforcement and prosecutors and, if not, whether their disparate treatment is based on race or ethnicity.

Leech Lake Tribal Court received funding to formalize and expand already established judicial collaborations between the Leech Lake Tribal Court and surrounding district courts in the state's Ninth Judicial District. In 2007 and 2008, the tribal court and judicial district entered into a Joint Powers Agreement to address the drug and alcohol epidemic on the Leech Lake Reservation. That agreement -- the first of its kind in the nation -- provided a foundation for the tribal court and judicial district to pilot a bold new approach to addressing the disproportionate contact of Native-American youth in their region with the juvenile justice system. Among the goals of the new program are to provide alternatives to adjudication for Native-American youth that emphasize culturally appropriate restorative justice approaches, and to reduce the number of Native-American youth in secure detention facilities by at least 30 percent.

For a complete listing of the programs and outcomes funded by Minnesota's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC), contact Marie Williams at williams@juvjustice.org, or 202-467-0864, ext. 113.

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ⁱ Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2011). *Safeguarding Our Future: Strategic Investments to Secure the Safety of America's Youth, Families and Communities*. http://juvjustice.org/media/resources/public/resource_617.pdf

ⁱⁱ Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (2011). *Annual Report and Recommendations to Governor Mark Dayton and the Minnesota State Legislature*. https://dps.mn.gov/entity/jjac/Documents/2011_JJAC_Report.pdf.