



## POSITION STATEMENT

*Adopted by NPJS Board of Directors ~ February 5, 2015*

# Service Delivery and Fiscal Responsibility

### STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Juvenile service delivery has a long tradition of private and not-for-profit agency contracting. Whether services are delivered through private or public organizations, the provision of quality care remains as a core value of the National Partnership for Juvenile Services. Therefore, the NPJS offers this position statement to clarify the expectation of high quality service provided in an efficient manner, regardless whether the service is offered through public or private programming.

### NATURE OF THE ISSUE

- Privatization of juvenile facilities introduces for-profit business motives to traditionally government-operated programs.
- A failure to balance fiscal responsibility with quality programming results in inadequacies in staff safety, public safety and quality of life for residents.
- County/State agencies are responsible for ensuring programs are effectively operated, consistent with professional standards and practices. Provider agencies must provide contracting entities with evidence that support the costs of operations and outcomes associated with the identified needs of the youth in care. The largest proportion of the budget of a juvenile facility is for personnel costs. Yet the critical element in operational success is directly related to sufficient numbers of staff, staff experience, commitment, and competency. Non-competitive rates of compensation and benefits result in higher rates of turnover, higher costs associated with worker's compensation claims, and lower levels of professionalism.
- Cost cutting measures are often undertaken without careful study to determine potential impact on child outcomes and other possible unintended consequences.
- Economic influences are more likely to impact private provider service delivery, reducing the number and types of programs available on the continuum of care. This limits the placing agency's ability to find the most appropriate placement for the juvenile.
- Government is legally responsible to provide juvenile justice services. Privatization of those services does not relieve government from legal liability when standards of care are violated.

### POSITION STATEMENT

The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) advocates the highest level of professionalism in the provision of custody, care and supportive services to youth regardless of whether those services are delivered by a public or private entity. Juvenile service providers must provide quality services to youth and assure fiscal responsibility when expending taxpayer dollars.

NPJS supports policies that mandate all service providers adhere to accepted professional standards of care and custody. Further, NPJS recommends that monitoring for compliance with such standards be rigorously enforced in order to ensure safe and healthy conditions of confinement.