



LEGISLATIVE & PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM STATEMENT

*Adopted by NPJS Board of Directors ~
March 18, 2020*

The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS/the Partnership) is a national, nonprofit, non-partisan association focused on improving outcomes for justice-involved youth by supporting the administrators, staff, educators, trainers, and behavioral health providers of juvenile correctional, detention, and detention alternative programs across the United States of America.

Mission: The NPJS provides professional development and technical assistance to promote best practices and standards to the field of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention with the goal of positively impacting youth, families and communities.

To this end, the Partnership endorses legislation, programs and policies that are supportive of our Mission and provide guidance whenever possible through position statements, research articles and technical assistance to improve understanding about issues and initiatives that impact the field of juvenile justice service delivery and system reform.

The Partnership's legislative and regulatory agenda is based on the resolutions adopted by the general membership at the Annual Symposium. These resolutions, taken as a body, are incorporated into this NPJS Platform. The responsibility for developing and implementing strategies falls to the Partnership's Board of Directors, standing committees, special committees, and staff, with engagement and support of the general membership.

Two overarching themes of the Partnership's legislative and regulatory agenda are:

- (1) To promote the utilization of evidence-informed decision-making processes and practices within the field of Juvenile Justice that lead to reduced victimization and improved outcomes for youth and communities.
- (2) To support legislation and policy that allows for greater flexibility for locally run programs to address local needs whenever possible, consistent with federal, state, county, and local oversight.

The Partnership may support legislation that creates directives or mandates for juvenile justice services provided that such legislation meets two important criteria. First, the legislation must be based on a rationale which is supported by best practice theory and research and is therefore expected to benefit youth involved in the justice system. . Second, the legislation must also be vested with sufficient fiscal and structural resources to permit members to administer the directive or mandate and therefore does not dictate programming without providing adequate resources to enact it.

In order to support the mission identified above, be it resolved that:

- A. The Partnership supports legislative and administrative requirements that are developed within the context of the regulatory and legislative process and which include the input of the field experts (NPJS and stakeholders) who must implement them.
- B. The Partnership supports a long-term funding solution for services targeting justice-involved youth that incentivizes the adoption of evidence-informed practices. Specifically, the Partnership opposes legislative initiatives in juvenile justice that impose increasing the responsibility of local governments for delivering services without the support of adequate funding.
- C. The Partnership supports enactment of appropriate legislative remedies to ensure access to funding for behavioral and physical health care services provided to justice-involved youth.

- D. The Partnership supports efforts to maintain access to services and programs that can address the needs of youth across the continuum of care from the least restrictive in-home to secure based upon the identified risk and needs of youth.
- E. The Partnership supports funding for the development and ongoing administration of training programs which support a comprehensive approach inclusive of organizational leadership and operational oversight, as well as of skills for front line staff to address the multiple and complex needs of justice-involved youth.
- F. The Partnership supports educational programming for youth as a critical component of comprehensive rehabilitative juvenile justice systems. This standard includes year-round academic engagement and pro-social development programming for youth in the juvenile justice system.
- G. The Partnership supports efforts to create and maintain data that informs quality assurance systems that then guide operational and policy decision-making.
- H. The Partnership supports efforts to increase access to programs and services within the community and that engage those support systems that youth rely on to become independent and productive citizens. These programs and services may be engaged from point of system entry through to the transition away system involvement.
- I. The Partnership supports funding and technical assistance access for juvenile justice service providers to improve their ability to provide an approach which balances needs for community protection, competency development, and victim restoration for justice-involved youth.
- J. The Partnership supports efforts to enhance juvenile justice career opportunities, workforce development, and staff retention and well-being.
- K. The Partnership supports efforts to place youth in developmentally appropriate settings designed to meet their individualized needs. The Partnership promotes corrective interventions that recognize, respect, and preserve the individuality and dignity of each youth.
- L. While ensuring the safety of society at large remains a duty and an important priority, the Partnership supports placements out of a youth's home or community only when necessary and for the length of time required to assure community safety.
- M. The Partnership supports initiatives that improve connections between families and local resources.
- N. The Partnership supports efforts that address ecological forces contributing to juvenile crime, including but not limited to socioeconomic oppression, implicit racism, and historical trauma.
- O. The Partnership supports progressive initiatives that depart from conventional practices if they are backed by significant scientific research to improve outcomes and reduce recidivism or are part of a practice-based, evidence-informed program.
- P. The Partnership supports efforts to separate juveniles from adults in all circumstances.
- Q. The Partnership supports efforts to separate children who are not culpable for their delinquent acts from those who may benefit from programs designed to address accountability.
- R. The Partnership supports funding and continued efforts to decrease the disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system and ensure equal access to culturally appropriate interventions for youth of color.
- S. The Partnership supports the creation and implementation of policies and programs that prevent or reduce threats of physical and psychological harm to youth in the facilities and community-based programs.