

Appendix 4

Juvenile Justice Systems Improvement

Core Values and Principles of IJJC

The IJJC core values and principles were created to ensure a fair and effective juvenile justice system which fosters positive outcomes for youth and strengthens Illinois' families and communities.

While states utilize a variety of administrative structures and strategies to govern their juvenile justice systems, which provide services and supervision to youth in conflict with the law, all fair and effective juvenile justice systems embrace and pursue implementation of fundamental values and characteristics throughout all elements of that system. To produce positive outcomes for youth and communities – and to maximize use of taxpayer resources – each facet of Illinois' juvenile justice system should be evidence-based, data-driven and grounded in policies and practices which promote these core values and characteristics. These guiding principles guide the implementation of the IJJC's [strategies and activities](#)*.

I. Fundamental Fairness

All system participants deserve fair, equitable treatment. Factors correlated with the disproportionate contact and incarceration of youth of color are identified and addressed.

II. Youth are different

An effective juvenile justice system acknowledges the fundamental developmental differences between youth and adults. An effective juvenile justice system recognizes the needs, characteristics and assets of youth rather than relying upon adult criminal justice approaches.

III. Individual Differences

Juvenile justice decision makers must respond to young peoples' differences from one another in terms of development, culture, gender, needs and strengths. Interventions and services must be tailored to the needs and assets of individual youth and focused on facilitating positive outcomes.

IV. Youth Potential

Youth have strengths and are capable of positive growth. An effective juvenile justice system uses evidence-based approaches to build on the capacities of youth to learn, change, grow and become contributing members of our communities.

V. Family Engagement

Families care about their youth and know their needs and strengths. An effective juvenile justice system respects families, acknowledges their perspectives and expertise and fully engages families as partners in positive youth outcomes.

VI. Community Engagement

Community-based collaboration, decision-making and services reduce recidivism more effectively and at lower costs than punitive and incarceration-based strategies. An effective juvenile justice system engages communities as partners and builds the capacity of communities to foster positive youth outcomes.

VII. Community Safety

Adults and youth deserve to be and to feel safe in their communities. A key measure of community safety is reduced recidivism among youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

VIII. Accountability

Just as youth must be encouraged to accept responsibility for their actions, communities also have obligations to youth to safeguard their welfare, support them when in need and help them to become healthy adults. The juvenile justice system must reflect society's collective responsibility to our youth and must be accountable for the outcomes it produces.

IX. Cost Effectiveness

An effective juvenile justice system invests resources in proven, cost-effective strategies which reduce reoffending and re-incarceration and produce positive outcomes for youth and communities. Corrections research consistently demonstrates that evidence-based, data-driven, community-based responses to youth crime reduce recidivism and are more cost-effective than other strategies – including, but not limited to incarceration-based strategies – which are costly, intrusive and often ineffective.

*Many of these principles form the basis of the Models for Change Initiative. See www.modelsforchange.net/about/Background-and-principles/Principles.html