

HAPPENING NOW

Jailed Youth Decreases, Forum Finding Ways to Reduce Recidivism

By Jenna Gant | November 19, 2016

Ohio court staff and state representatives attended a two-day conference in Austin, Texas to talk about ways to reduce the likelihood of previously jailed teens and young adults from being rearrested and ending up in the adult criminal justice system.

About 300 representatives from all 50 states last week gathered at the forum, "Improving Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System," to develop plans to improve outcomes in the juvenile justice system. Data released this month by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention showed 47 states had reduced the number of youth jailed from 1997 to 2013.

Ohio had a nearly 55 percent reduction rate for jailed juveniles in the 16-year study, and Ohio's Department of Youth Services (DYS) population has decreased from an average of 730 youth in facilities in 2011 to under 500 youth today. But the study also showed that while incarcerated youth decreased, they were less likely to stay crime-free, achieve academically, and receive jobs after they left prison.

Ohio Supreme Court Children and Families Section Manager Stephanie Graubner Nelson, Franklin County Juvenile Court Judge Elizabeth Gill, DYS Director Harvey Reed, Holmes County Probation Officer David Williams, State Rep. Dorothy Pelanda, and Assistant Policy Director Deborah Herubin from the governor's office attended the conference.

Judge Gill said the Franklin County Juvenile Court is dedicated to continuing its efforts to reduce recidivism.

"We are committed to assist youth involved in the juvenile court system to grow to be healthy productive members of our society," Judge Gill said. "The court will continue to collect and analyze data in an effort to better understand what each child and family needs to give them the best chance of not returning to the juvenile court or entering into the adult correctional system."

A comprehensive plan will be created as the team continues to meet and identify additional partners to work with who can help reduce the likelihood that youth will be rearrested.



Back row left: Dave Williams, Chief Probation Officer, Holmes County Juvenile Court; Judge Elizabeth Gill, Franklin County Juvenile Court; Rep. Dorothy Pelanda, District 86, Marysville; Gabriella Celeste, Policy Director, Case Western Reserve University's Schubert Center for Child Studies (presenter); Thomas Stickrath, Superintendent Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, Ohio Attorney General (CSG Board).
Front row, left: Stephanie Graubner Nelson, Manager, Children and Families Section; Harvey Reed, Director, Department of Youth Services; Deborah Herubin, Assistant Policy Director - Corrections, Public Safety, Veteran Services, and Adjutant General Office of Ohio Governor John R. Kasich.

“Our team is taking a careful look at how we can do a better job ensuring that youth are released from facilities and community supervision positioned to succeed by staying crime-free, achieving academically, and getting and keeping jobs,” Pelanda said.

Team members will apply for grants available through the [Council of State Governments](#) Justice Center (CSG) as well as collaborate with Ohio’s employers, schools, and other community organizations.

“We want the very best for the youth that we serve,” Reed said. “I am thankful for the support and opportunity to unite with this inter-branch team. By working together, we can improve outcomes for youth in our juvenile justice system and ultimately make for a safer Ohio.”

Judge Gill said the court is in its seventh year working with the Anne Casey Foundation Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) to better understand data involving these youth.

“Understanding that more harm than good may be accomplished by placing low-risk offenders into detention or deeper into the system, the court has initiated diversion programs including Community Restorative Justice Circles; the Reception Center, where youth that are charged who are assessed to be low-risk are diverted from the detention center and given immediate access to necessary services; and Domestic Violence Respite care,” Judge Gill said.

Seven other Ohio counties: Cuyahoga, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Montgomery, Summit, and Trumbull are also participating in JDAI.

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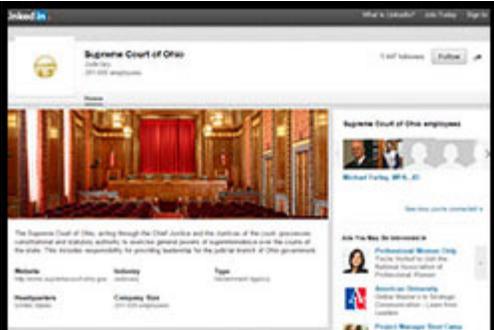
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