

MAY 2007

CALIFORNIA
**JUVENILE JUSTICE
REENTRY** PARTNERSHIP

A Privately Funded Initiative for Policy and Practice Reforms to Improve Release Outcomes for Youth

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- COMMONWEAL
- CENTER ON JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
- NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
- YOUTH LAW CENTER

FUNDED BY THE HAIGH-SCATENA FOUNDATION

A prime goal of the California juvenile justice system is the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders.

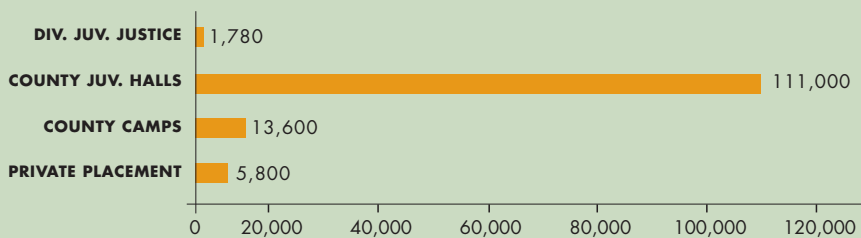
Youth who commit crimes may be incarcerated for public safety reasons, but during and after their confinement they are supposed to receive treatment and services suited to their needs.

Unfortunately, the juvenile justice system in California has achieved limited success in meeting the goal of rehabilitation. The re-offense rate for youth released from the state youth correctional system (the Division of Juvenile Justice) is approximately 70 percent – meaning that more than two thirds of state delinquent wards are rearrested within two years of release. The results for county-run facilities, while not as well documented, indicate that more than a third of those leaving local facilities for delinquents are rearrested within one to two years.

Rearrests are not the only measures of youth success and failure. Youth released from custody also have high rates of school dropout, substance abuse, mental disorders and other problems. Incarceration may also worsen a youth's problems, based on well documented reports of abuse and violence in some institutions, particularly those operated by the state Division of Juvenile Justice (formerly, the California Youth Authority).

CALIFORNIA JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITIES

Releases by facility type in 2005
Total Releases = 132,000 Juveniles



Each year in California, about 130,000 children and youth are released from a period of confinement in a juvenile justice or probation facility. Most (about 110,000) go home from juvenile halls where they have spent only a short time in custody. Another 20,000 serve longer periods (ave. 9-12 months) in county probation facilities and group homes. Another 1,700 return home from state youth prisons (the former CYA) after an average three years of confinement under highly stressful and turbulent conditions. By the time they are released, most of these state custody youth are 19 or older and are no longer eligible for the child care systems that might have helped them at an earlier stage.

When they reenter the community after serving their time, these adolescents need support—to re-enroll in school, to access health and mental health care, to develop job skills and to avoid the lure of gangs and other negative pressures. In short, they need what juvenile justice stakeholders call “aftercare”. But in California, aftercare services are in short supply.

California needs to reinvest in strategies to help youth succeed when they are released from secure youth institutions. The good news is that policymakers need not look far to find successful models of juvenile justice aftercare, particularly in the areas of risk/needs assessments, pre-release planning, step down and step back housing, peer tracking models and new models of probation and court supervision. The challenge is to deploy these aftercare models where they are missing at the local level. An additional challenge is to test new aftercare models, particularly for specialized populations such as female juvenile offenders or those with mental health disorders.

Aftercare should not be an afterthought. The California Juvenile Justice Reentry Partnership will help California meet the need to create, test and implement new and effective juvenile justice service and supervision models. Reentry policy and practice reforms will not only produce better outcomes for youth, but will lead to safer communities for all.

KEY FACTS

- Each week in California, nearly 500 juvenile offenders are sent home from a place of commitment ordered by the Juvenile Court, such as a state youth facility (DJJ), a county probation camp, a juvenile hall commitment program or a group home.
- Recidivism (repeat crime) rates for juveniles released from confinement remain high—for example, according to the California Division of Juvenile Justice, 70% of state-committed youth are re-arrested within two years of release.
- For youth coming out of state correctional facilities: 70% have mental health treatment needs and 80% have histories of substance abuse.
- Upon release, older youth (those over 18) lose their entitlement to children's services and face significant barriers to employment and education. If rearrested, they are prosecuted as adults and may be sent to state prison.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

Launched in May 2007, the California Juvenile Justice Reentry Partnership (CJJRP) is an innovative, collaborative effort to improve outcomes for juvenile offenders who are released from confinement. The Haigh-Scatena Foundation has funded the initiative with \$780,000 – representing the final grant of the foundation’s 40-year history of supporting social change initiatives for California’s children, youth and families.

The Partnership consists of four nonprofit organizations with long and successful track records in the juvenile justice field. The partners are Commonweal, the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJJC), the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) and the Youth Law Center. Over an 18 month period, the Partnership will focus on the statewide development of policies and programs in identified areas of need.

PARTNERSHIP GOALS

- Augment state and local resources for after care programs
- Develop specialized reentry programs for girls in the juvenile justice system
- Improve assessments and pre-release planning for confined juveniles
- Remove barriers to reentry employment, education, health & mental health care
- Develop local citizen and community support networks
- Sponsor a web-based resource and information center on youth reentry

CHARACTERISTICS OF JUVENILES AND YOUNG ADULTS RELEASED FROM CALIFORNIA JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITIES (2006)

CHARACTERISTIC	YOUTH RELEASED FROM STATE YOUTH CORRECTIONS FACILITIES (DIV. OF JUVENILE JUSTICE)	YOUTH RELEASED FROM COUNTY FACILITIES UNDER PROBATION SUPERVISION
AVERAGE AGE	19	16
GENDER	94% Male, 6% Female	84% Male, 16% Female
RACE/ETHNICITY	White 13%, Hispanic 52%, Black 26%, Asian/Other 9%.	Varies by county; no statewide data available
COMMITMENT OFFENSE	Almost all felony, 60% with felonies involving violence	Two thirds felony; One third misdemeanor
GANG AFFILIATION	Most	Many
GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL?	Very few	Very few (most under 18 and still subject to compulsory education)
NEED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES?	Est. 70%	Est. 35-60%
RECIDIVISM RATE (RE ARREST WITHIN TWO YEARS)	70%	Statewide data not available

Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Research Division; Corrections Standards Authority; California Department of Social Services.

“Most kids released from confinement fall into a void back home. Schools don’t want them, families can’t control them, and probation officers can’t offer much help. The juvenile justice system is not doing its job at this critical stage. Our partnership will promote a restructuring of aftercare for these high risk and often vulnerable youth.”

– Commonweal

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

COMMONWEAL

Commonweal is a nonprofit health and environmental research and policy organization founded in 1976, with headquarters in Marin County. For over 25 years, the Commonweal Juvenile Justice program has been a leading voice for innovation and change in the California juvenile justice system. Commonweal has helped California policymakers generate a range of programs and revenue streams supporting youth crime prevention and pre- and post-custody services for youth. Commonweal also produces reports on a range of subjects including violence prevention, mental health and juvenile justice, detention risk assessment and California legislation.

For the Partnership, Commonweal will coordinate the overall effort and specifically focus on the development of state policies and programs for the reentry population and on the replication of reentry best practice models for juvenile offenders.

CENTER ON JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ) is a California nonprofit organization with headquarters in San Francisco, California, established in 1985. The mission of CJCJ is "to reduce society's use of incarceration as a solution to social problems". CJCJ pursues this mission by conducting research on juvenile corrections and alternatives, by advocating alternatives to incarceration, and by developing disposition plans for youth under court jurisdiction.

For the Partnership, CJCJ will host a web-based Juvenile Justice Reentry Resource Center, where information on reentry policies, programs and best practices will be made available to policymakers, stakeholders and media. In addition, CJCJ will test specific reentry models in one or more Northern California counties.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), founded in 1907, is a nonprofit organization which promotes effective, humane, fair and economically sound solutions in the juvenile and criminal justice fields. NCCD works with individuals, public and private organizations and the media to prevent and reduce crime and delinquency. NCCD has produced highly-regarded reports on subjects including youth corrections alternatives, juvenile detention, disproportionate minority confinement, and youth risk-needs assessment.

For the Partnership, NCCD will focus on the development of reentry models for girls in the juvenile justice system.

YOUTH LAW CENTER

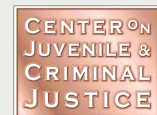
Youth Law Center (YLC) is a nonprofit legal advocacy group protecting the rights of children in the nation's child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Since 1978, the San Francisco based YLC has worked to protect children in the nation's foster care and justice systems from abuse and neglect and to guarantee their access to legal rights, treatment and services they need to become healthy and productive adults.

For the Partnership, YLC will work to reduce multiple barriers to youth reentry in the areas of education, employment and access to health care. In addition, YLC will sponsor a faith-based model of community support and advocacy for incarcerated and released youth.

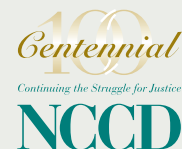
THE HAIGH-SCATENA FOUNDATION is a private grantmaker based in Davis, CA. Its primary interest is to promote positive social change for disadvantaged children, youth, and families. Improving California's juvenile justice system has been a central focus for almost forty years. The Foundation is spending-out and will close by late 2007. It targeted juvenile offender reentry reform for its final initiative. **CONTACT:** Ron Clement, *CEO*, (530) 758-5327, hsf-rwc@ncal.net



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