Youth Justice TOOLKIT

A Community-Led Restorative Justice Approach













Introduction

We are at a major crossroads in history. The convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on communities of color and the animated cries for racial justice on our streets requires us to meet this moment with bold change and intense community engagement.

This call for action is most urgent in New Jersey's youth justice system.

In New Jersey, a Black child is 21 times more likely to be detained or committed than a white child, even though they commit most offenses at similar rates. Our state has the highest Black to white youth incarceration racial disparity rate in the country. The Garden State also has the fourth-highest Latina/Latino to white youth incarceration disparity rate nationwide. For New Jersey, this means that our youth of color are disproportionately impacted as we see outbreaks of COVID-19 in youth prisons – and this is against the backdrop of an already flawed and failed system that locks up – and often gives up on – our kids, entangling them in a cycle of recidivism.

It is time once and for all to remove young people from an unhealthy prison environment and successfully reintegrate them into their communities. Communities must also work together to create community-based public safety systems that divert young people away from the criminal justice system in the first place, based on restorative and transformative justice practices and a trauma-informed approach.

This toolkit provides ways communities can transform New Jersey's youth justice system during the current public health crisis and beyond.

This toolkit includes the following seven components:

- A description of restorative justice, transformative justice and trauma-informed practices.
- 2. How to create a community-based youth reentry program.
- 3. How to create a community-led restorative justice hub.
- 4. How to form a community accountability council.
- 5. A sample letter, grant proposal and budget.
- 6. How to measure outcomes and impact.
- 7. A resource list.

What are

Restorative Justice, Transformative Justice & Trauma-Informed Practices?

The goal of the 150 Years is Enough campaign – named for the year the Jamesburg prison for boys opened – is to create a community-based restorative and transformative justice system from the ground up. Instead of an over-reliance on punishment to address harms caused by young people, such a system embraces restorative and transformative justice practices that rehabilitate and address wider social concerns. Moreover, the system centers trauma-informed practices to emphasize physical, psychological and emotional safety and healing for youth, their families and communities. Below is a high level description of the practices and tools:

- Restorative Justice Practices focus on resolving conflicts and harms by engaging people who have been harmed, youth who have harmed, and, when possible, family and community members through dialogue and consensual resolution instead of punishment. The practice helps to facilitate collective healing, as well as individual healing, diverts youth away from the criminal justice system and strengthens communities. The tools that are used include peace circles that are used to facilitate restorative conversations, conflict resolution strategies and healing practices.
- Transformative Justice Practices address conflicts and harms at the individual level, community level and broader social structures. Transformative justice works to build alternatives to our current systems and transform the conditions that help create acts of violence or make them possible. Restorative justice and transformative justice offer two different perspectives of justice. Both aim at interpersonal and consensual resolutions whereas transformation justice seeks larger system-level change. The transformative justice tools that are used include the following:
 - Community Conferencing a circle process, which addresses conflicts through a collective group process, consensual resolution and decision-making processes in order to heal and repair harms. Community conferencing works for multiple types of conflicts involving the community, juvenile court diversion, schools and reentry from prison.
 - Community Accountability a process in which a community works together to address several issues, including community peacekeeping, the availability of services and funding, the impact of services and leveraging the support of elected officials in the community.
- Trauma-informed Practices seek to create safe, caring environments to address physical, mental health and substance use conditions and facilitate healing for youth, families and communities that rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

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What is A Community-Based Youth Reentry Program?

The COVID-19 pandemic has hastened the need to remove young people from prisons. Young people must receive timely and comprehensive services upon their release. While this toolkit has been designed as a rapid response tool for those young people being released in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it can also serve as a long-term tool to be utilized for all young people being released from a state youth facility.

Community-based youth reentry programs that use a wraparound service model offer coordinated service delivery to youth and families. Ensuring a seamless transition back to communities helps remove barriers to success. For a list of local youth reentry programs, contact your county Youth Services Commission. Please refer to this toolkit's resource page for the contact information.

What is a Wraparound Service Model?

Wraparound is an effective service model utilized in 49 states across the country and adopted under New Jersey Children's System of Care – a system of care delivering behavioral health, developmental and intellectual disability and substance use treatment services – to address the needs of multi-system involved youth. It is an effective approach utilizing various formal and informal supports with a plan driven by the family and tailored to meet their specific needs. The supports are a mix of evidence-based, evidence-informed and creative community-based interventions organized around the needs of the family. Here is a typical case scenario: Derrick is released from Jamesburg with an 11th grade level education, behind in child support payments and having issues with his family. A wraparound service model for him would involve education support, family counseling, life skills support services, financial literacy and debt support services and a work program for teen fathers.

Building trust is key, which is why young people and their families should be connected to a youth reentry program prior to release from state facilities. An ideal reentry program plan will establish the service needs through a six-month to one-year period and include the following services:

Physical Health services provide COVID-19 testing and PPE for youth and families, health
checkups to identify or address chronic health conditions and assistance to families transitioning from state health care to Medicaid.

Community-Based Youth Reentry Program, continued

- Mental health services connect youth to licensed outpatient mental health care to address severe depression, anxiety and other conditions at no cost to youth and families. They coordinate with schools to provide onsite services, tele-help and weekly virtual sessions. The program should engage local therapists of color in service delivery and offer cross-cultural competency training for mental health staff.
- Substance abuse/use recovery and treatment is complex. Youth required to participate in substance use treatment will be connected to service providers, while those who are resistant will receive support on sober living and be encouraged to participate in treatment/counseling during enrollment.
- **Education support**, depending on personal development goals, connects youth and families to secondary schools, alternative schools, vocational schools, apprenticeship programs and college. The program should leverage relationships with local community college's admissions and academic support programs and offer workshops that include financial aid planning and information about Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA).
- **Employment services** provide job-readiness skills, proper attire and reliable transportation to job interviews.
- **Housing support** connects youth and families to transitional, subsidized, supportive housing options and housing voucher programs.
- **Financial literacy and debt support services** build awareness and include "know your rights" campaigns for youth and families regarding fines and fees, child support debt and building credit, etc.
- **Life skills support services** connect youth and families to food services, clothing, hygiene amenities and reliable transportation. These services help obtain important documents (e.g., state ID, social security card, birth/marriage certificates and educational credentials), bank accounts and digital access.
- Social support services help youth build relationships with family members and community through credible messengers, counseling, peer mentoring, LGBTQ+ support, disability support, etc.



How toCreate a Community Restorative Justice Hub

Restorative Justice Hubs are a community-led restorative justice approach for resolving local conflicts – before youth touch the youth justice system – and connecting youth and families to a variety of services and programs. Hubs are places where youth can build healthy relationships in the community and provide a trauma-informed approach to rehabilitation and healing. The hub structure outlined in this toolkit is modeled after Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth located in California. Please refer to the resource page for more information on this program. To create a restorative justice hub in your local community, follow the steps below:

- · Assemble a nonprofit Board of Directors.
- Form a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit entity or incorporate the hub under an existing entity.
- · Create nonprofit bylaws if required.
- · Develop a grant proposal and budget (see samples in the toolkit).
- · Secure funding for the hub. If required, identify a financial sponsor.
- · Create practices and processes based on a community's culture and language needs.
- · Identify a location and create a safe space for the hub.
- Hire staff that is representative of the population that they are serving, and train staff on restorative and transformative practices, trauma-informed care practices and culturally competent leadership.
- Build equitable relationships with the Juvenile Justice Commission, county Youth Services Commission, courts, public defenders, prosecutors and law enforcement. Align on rules of engagement between hubs and partner organizations.
- Focus on resolving conflicts and offenses by engaging people who have been harmed, youth
 who have harmed and the community. Resolve conflicts through dialogue instead of punitive
 measures.
- · Advocate for healthy and safe communities.



FormA Community Accountability Council

Community Accountability Councils (CACs) are an additional opportunity for community members to become engaged in the systems that serve our youth. CACs develop community-based strategies to address public safety, verify availability of investments and resources, and ensure the accountability of elected officials and public servants. CACs are community-led and differ from county Youth Services Commissions (YSCs), which are state-mandated committees represented by state and local stakeholders that plan, monitor and implement programs and services for youth involved in the youth justice system. The following characteristics define CACs:

- CACs are boards that can be created using this toolkit or integrated into existing city or neighborhood advisory boards.
- A CAC member should become a voting board member of your county YSC and participate in prevention and reentry multidisciplinary teams. Membership on the YSC can be obtained by request or appointment by your county Commissioner.
- A member of the CAC should also be involved in a court-sponsored Juvenile Conference Committee – a six to nine-member citizen volunteer panel that decides matters involving youth.
- The CAC should have a member dedicated to youth workforce development. New Jersey has
 workforce development boards and one-stop career centers in all twenty-one counties. The
 CAC member should participate on that board to ensure the equitable funding of youth employment programs.

Additional responsibilities of the CAC include the following

- Identifying what budgets exist in the community and holding elected officials accountable for the implementation of youth-focused programming.
- Hosting in-person or virtual candidate forums in order to make civic engagement accessible to the entire community.
- · Staying involved and connecting with your city/county's restorative justice hub, if one exists.
- · Attending city council meetings, school board and budget meetings/hearings.
- · Evaluating and reprioritizing investments and resources.

If you opt to develop a new **CAC** instead of mobilizing an existing board, key things to remember are the following:

- Create bylaws to determine how the CAC will operate and be transparent about duties and responsibilities.
- It may be helpful to recruit council members who already hold some of the positions on the committees or boards previously listed.

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Sample Letter

Requesting Support for Restorative Justice Hubs & Community Conferencing

Below is a sample letter that can be used to introduce the concept of restorative justice hubs and community conferencing to Youth Services Commissions, judiciary members, public defenders, prosecutors and law enforcement.

Dear xxx,

We are at a major crossroads in history. Today, a Black child is 21 times more likely to be detained or committed in our state than a white child is, even though they both commit most offenses at similar rates. Shamefully, New Jersey has the highest Black to white youth incarceration racial disparity rate in the country. The Garden State also has the fourth-highest Latina/Latino to white youth incarceration disparity rate nationwide.

The state's recidivism rates are exceptionally high. Of the 377 young people released from commitment in state youth facilities in 2014, 76.9% had a new court filing or arrest, 58.9% had a new adjudication or conviction and 23.9% were recommitted within three years of release.

With this devastating data at hand, our communities are actively seeking a different approach to our youth justice system. We are asking that the City of xxx support community-based public safety solutions in the form of restorative justice hubs for our city's youth.

The restorative justice hub's goal is to reduce harm in our community in a restorative rather than punitive way. This means addressing the issues that drove our youth to committing a harmful act and, of course, prioritizing the needs of those who were harmed.

A restorative justice hub would be an incredible addition to our public safety model because it allows our youth an opportunity to repair harm and resolve conflicts before touching the youth justice system. It also reduces the recidivism rates for justice-involved youth by enabling them to take responsibility for their actions and make strides towards repairing the harm they caused instead of paying restitution by confinement.

This model also creates the opportunity to establish a community and peer network that would extend far beyond a youth's initial involvement with the hub, which increases the support youth need to form positive community interactions.

The central component of restorative justice hubs is community conferencing, which allows for constructive dialogue between the youth who have harmed and the party that was harmed. With collaboration with our judiciary, public defenders, prosecutors and law enforcement officers, the program can be especially successful.

We would rely on these relationships to refer youth to the restorative justice hub before an arrest or charge. This model's implementation will transform our youth and their relationships with their peers and their community, and reduce the burden on our youth justice system.

Finally, although evidence proving effectiveness is limited, a 2017 meta-analysis reported promising findings for restorative justice practices regarding youth delinquency outcomes.

We would be happy to discuss your participation in the implementation of restorative justice hubs in our city. We will follow up this letter with a phone call. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please reach out by emailing or calling (insert your email, phone number). Thank you in advance for your commitment to our city's youth.

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Respectfully,

Sample Grant Proposal

For Restorative Justice Hubs

Below is a sample grant proposal, which includes a cover letter, a summary description and the financial support needed from a funder.

Cover Sheet Template

Date of application:

Name of organization to which grant would be paid. Please list exact legal name:

Purpose of grant (one sentence): For example – Funding to be used for the creation of restorative justice hubs as a community-based alternative to youth incarceration

Address of organization:

Telephone number:

Fax:

E-mail:

Executive Director:

Contact person and title (if not executive director):

Is your organization a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit? Yes or No

If no, please explain:

Grant request: \$

Check one (based on the organization's priorities and the funder's guidelines):

General support

Project support

Total organizational budget (for current year): \$

Dates covered by this budget (month/day/year):

Total project budget (if requesting project support): \$

Dates covered by project budget (month/day/year):

Project name (if applicable):

Sample Proposal, continued

I. SAMPLE PROPOSAL SUMMARY:

What's Wrong?

New Jersey's youth justice system is broken and in need of a transformative overhaul.

Our state has the largest Black to white youth incarceration disparity rate in the nation. To-day, a Black child is 21 times more likely to be detained than a white child – even though research shows that they commit most offenses at similar rates. The Garden State also has the fourth-highest Latina/Latino to white youth incarceration disparity rate nationwide.

The state's recidivism rates are exceptionally high. Of the 377 young people released from commitment in state youth facilities in 2014, 76.9% had a new court filing or arrest, 58.9% had a new adjudication or conviction and 23.9% were recommitted within three years of release.

These facts highlight a systemic problem that affects communities of color in urban areas across the state. In 2018, former Governor Chris Christie announced plans to close Jamesburg, the largest youth prison in the state, and Hayes, a youth prison for girls. They remain open today.

This is our moment to move away from ineffective punitive systems and towards restorative systems of justice. Taking children away from their families and their communities and forcing them into the state's broken criminal justice system with its high recidivism rates has a proven track record of failure. Our communities cannot allow this to continue. In the name of harm reduction, we plan to launch an alternative.

How to fix it

We are applying for funding to operate a restorative justice hub to serve as a brick-and-mortar or a virtual community space that will help break cycles of poverty, crime and incarceration that plague our urban communities following decades of marginalization. The restorative justice hub's goal is to reduce harm in our community in a restorative rather than punitive way. This means addressing the issues that drive our youth to commit harmful acts and prioritizing the needs of those who are harmed. Through our restorative justice hub, we plan to do the following:

- · Hire and train local staff on restorative and transformative justice practices.
- Build equitable relationships with the Juvenile Justice Commission, county Youth Services Commission, courts, public defenders, prosecutors and law enforcement.
- Facilitate peace circles and community conferencing sessions that focus on resolving conflicts and offenses with the victims, the responsible party and the community. Engage all parties through dialogue instead of punitive measures.

Sample Proposal, continued

How to fix it, continued:

- · Engage a mental health professional to provide trauma-informed services.
- · Help youth build healthy relationships with family members and their communities.
- · Advocate for healthy and safe communities.

Please summarize in a short paragraph the purpose of your agency. Briefly explain why your agency is requesting this grant, what outcomes you hope to achieve and how you will spend the funds if a grant is made.

II. NARRATIVE— Usually, no more than four to five pages maximum.

A. Background— Describe the work of your agency, addressing each of the following:

- 1. A brief description of its history and mission.
- 2. The need or problem that your organization works to address, and the population that your agency serves, including geographic location, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability and language.
- 3. Current programs and accomplishments. Please emphasize the recent past achieve ments of the and include the number of paid full-time staff, including your paid part-time staff and volunteers.
- 4. Your organization's relationships both formal and informal with other organizations working to meet the same needs or providing similar services. Please explain how you differ from these other agencies.

B. Funding Request— Describe the program for which you seek funding.

- 1. If applying for general operating support, briefly describe how this grant would be used.
- 2. If your request is for a specific project, please explain the project including:
 - · A statement of its primary purpose and the need or problem that you are seeking to address.
 - The population that you plan to serve and how this population will benefit from the project.
 - · Strategies that you will employ to implement your project.
 - The proposed staffing pattern for the project, and the names and titles of the individuals who will direct the project.
 - · Anticipated length of the project.
 - · How the project contributes to your organization's overall mission.
- C. Evaluation Explain how you will measure the effectiveness of your activities. Describe your criteria for a successful program and the results you expect to have achieved by the end of the funding period.

Sample Proposal, continued

III. ATTACHMENTS— Label all attachments to correspond to the bold-faced, capitalized items below.

- A. Financial Information—provides the dates that each document covers.
 - Include the organization's most recent financial statement, audited if available.
 This statement should reflect actual expenditures and funds received during your most recent fiscal year. If you are a new organization, you may need to seek a financial sponsor.
 - 2. Aligned side by side on the same page, a list of foundation and corporate supporters and all other sources of income, with amounts, for your current and most recent fiscal year.
 - 3. List the foundations, corporations, and other sources that you are soliciting for funding and, to the best of your knowledge, your proposal's status with each.
 - 4. If project funding is requested:
 - a. A PROGRAM EXPENSE BUDGET (see sample). List each staff line separately and include the percentage of time spent on the project. Indicate the specific uses of the requested grant, if possible.
 - b. A list of all sources of income toward the project, actual and prospective with amounts.

B. Other Supporting Materials

- 1. A list of your Board of Directors, with their affiliations.
- 2. A copy of your most recent IRS letter indicating your agency's tax-exempt status, or, if not available, an explanation.
- 3. One-paragraph biography of key staff, including qualifications relevant to the specific request.
- 4. Your most recent annual report, if available.
- 5. No more than three examples of recent articles about, or evaluations of, your organization, if available.



Sample Program Expense Budget

The sample Program Expense Budget on the following page was drawn from the Wallace Foundation Resources for Nonprofit Financial Management.

Position or Expense Category	% of full	D	Restorative	Other		Europhysik i	T
	time	Budget	Justice Hub	Programs	Administration	Fundraising	Total
Personnel							
ersonner							
Full Time							
Enter Fringe Rate for FT Staff Here:	28.0%						
3			%	%	%	%	
Ex. Dir. Of Restorative Justice Hub	100%		20%	0%	10%	70%	100%
Facilitator (1)	100%	\$ -	80%	0%	10%	10%	100%
Case Mgr. connect youth to services	100%	\$ -	80%	0%	10%	10%	100%
Office Mgr.	100%	\$ -	10%	0%	60%	30%	100%
Human Resource Mgr.	100%	\$ -	10%	0%	60%	30%	100%
	100%	\$ -					0%
Total Full Time Salaries/Wages		\$ -	- \$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Total Full Time Fringe		\$ -	- \$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Part Time	10.00/						
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Facilitator	100%	\$ -	95%	0%	5%	0%	0%
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TOTAL PERSONNEL COSTS		\$	- \$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
# of Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)			2.95	0.00	1.55	1.50	6.00
% of all FTEs			49%	0.00	26%	25%	100%
76 OI AII I ILS			4376	0 70	20 /0	2370	100 /6
Non-Personnel / OTPS							
Specific Expenses							
Mental Health Professional consultant		\$ -	\$ -				0%
Peace Circle training for staff		\$ -	\$ -				0%
Community Conferencing training for sta	itt .	\$ -	\$ -				0%
Mental Health training for staff		\$ -	\$ -				
			0				0%
Wraparound Services training for staff		\$ -	\$ -				0% 0%
Stipends for Volunteers		\$ -	\$ -				0%
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Measuring Outcomes and Impact

In the grant proposal, include an outline of how the team will examine the impact of this restorative justice approach and concentrate on the outcomes related to positive youth development, reduction in harmful behavior and community engagement. For example, the measures below were drawn from qualitative retrospective analysis similar to Chicago's Kaleidoscope Program (Cumblad, 1996) that provided a qualitative analysis of wraparound youth programming in Chicago.

Data should be collected in pre/post format from all program participants. Qualitative data should be collected to contextualize findings, improve programming and enable the development of a case study. Finally, outcomes should be reported quarterly, with qualitative data collected after the second and fourth quarters of the year.

Outcome Measure	Annual benchmark	Impact Measurement tool(s)
Youth Reentry Program Outcome 1: Increase program participation rate for youth and families in community-based programming.	 100% of participants receive a strength and needs assessment. 100% of participants receive a current risk assessment. 100% of participants engaging in wraparound services and support will develop an individualized service plan (ISP). 	Participant impact survey. Focus groups. Recorded audio and visual journaling. Structured Interviews and record reviews.
Youth Reentry Program Outcome 2: Increase participation in education and vocational programming and employment.	 100% of participants offered academic support. 70% of participants requiring school enrollment enrolled. 90% of participants seeking employment linked to vocational or job readiness training. 80% of participants seeking employment will be working at least part-time at program completion. 100% of partner-providers trained in evidence-based/evidence-informed practices. 	Participant impact survey. Focus groups. Analysis of employment, educational and housing data to see if programing provided positive outcomes. Alumni employment.

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Measuring Outcomes and Impact, continued

Outcome Measure	Annual benchmark	Impact Measurement tool(s)
Youth Reentry Program Outcome 3: Increase participating in mental health and well-being programming.	 100% of participants in need of mental health services linked with a service provider. 100% of participants requiring substance use treatment linked with a service provider and engaged in sober living support. 100% of participants provided information to secure a primary care physician and dentist. 100% of participants connected to positive social and recreational outlets to support well-being and community engagement. 	Participant impact survey. Focus groups. Create instrument to examine emotional and behavioral functioning and substance abuse/use.
Youth Reentry Program Outcome 4: Decrease incidents of harmful and unlawful behavior.	70% of enrolled participants comply with their probation/parole plan.60% of youth who successfully complete the program will not reoffend within one year of program enrollment.	Participant impact survey. Focus groups. Create instrument to examine wrong doings and peacemaking efforts.
Restorative Justice Outcome 5: Increase program participation rate in restorative and transformative justice practices.	# of established restorative justice hubs. 100% of facilitators trained in restorative and transformative justice practices. 80% of participants complete of peacemaking circle and community conferencing conferences. # of established Community Accountability Councils.	Participant impact survey. Focus groups. Community impact survey. Victim impact survey.

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Resources

If you would like to learn more about the practices and resources presented in this toolkit, please visit the links listed below:

- 1. What is Restorative Justice?, https://rjdtoolkit.impactjustice.org/establish-a-foundation/restor ative-justice/.
- 2. Transformative Justice, https://transformharm.org/transformative-justice/.
- 3. Effectiveness of Restorative Justice Principles in Juvenile Justice: A Meta-Analysis, https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/grants/250872.pdf.
- 4. Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, https://rjoyoakland.org/.
- 5. County Youth Services Commissions, https://njacysca.org/about-us/nj-counties/.
- 6. New Jersey Courts, Juvenile Conference Commissions, https://www.njcourts.gov/public/volunteer/program/jcc.html.
- 7. New Jersey Department of Labor & Workforce Development, https://www.nj.gov/labor/lwdhome/press/2019/20190409_syepp.shtml.
- 8. Virtual candidate forum toolkit, https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/709/attachments/original/1588188783/Virtual_Candidate_Forum_Toolkit_FINAL.pdf?1588188783.
- 9. How to start a 5013c nonprofit, https://www.501c3.org/how-to-start-a-501c3-nonprofit/.
- 10. Wallace Foundation Resources for Nonprofit Financial Management, https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/resources-for-financial-management/pages/program-based-budget-template.aspx.
- 11. New Jersey One-Stop Career Centers, https://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/plan/support/njccsites/one_stop_career_centers.shtml.
- 12. For questions about creating a restorative justice hub, send email to Info@sandsj.org.

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