

## Enough is Known for Action Series

### Supporting the Educational and Career Success of Justice-Involved Youth under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

*This technical assistance document is part of a series of resources the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education (Departments) developed to provide strategies and examples of State and local partnerships that facilitate the reengagement of out-of-school youth. Other technical assistance documents address strategies for serving out-of-school English language learners, and current and former foster youth. More information can be found here: [https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/01/29/22/51/Enough\\_Is\\_Known\\_for\\_Action\\_Youth\\_Webinar\\_Series](https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/01/29/22/51/Enough_Is_Known_for_Action_Youth_Webinar_Series).*

Focusing on youth involved with the juvenile justice system, this document builds on the preceding WIOA technical assistance document that outlines ways workforce development boards (WDBs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and community agencies, such as the State Vocational Rehabilitation agency can collaboratively reengage at-risk and out-of-school youth. There is growing recognition that justice-involved youth represent one of the most vulnerable populations in the United States (U.S.) and, unfortunately, generally have poor transition outcomes related to re-integration and recidivism.<sup>1</sup> Incarcerated youth are 38 times more likely to reoffend as adults compared to individuals with similar backgrounds who did not have contact with the justice system. Even limited contact with the justice system, such as arrest, can decrease the odds of graduating high school by 70 percent.<sup>2</sup>

In response, the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) targeted juvenile justice education program, under title I, part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, provides formula grants for State educational agencies (SEAs) to provide supplementary education services for youth in State-run juvenile justice institutions. Additionally, in December 2014, ED released correctional education guidance that outlined five key principles for improving the quality of education for incarcerated youth.<sup>3</sup> Under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), authorized in title II of WIOA, States can use up to 20 percent of available AEFLA funds for correctional education, including career pathways, re-entry initiatives, and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Similarly, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) houses the Re-entry Employment Opportunities (REO) program, which administers grant projects providing pre- and post-release services to eligible formerly-incarcerated youth and adult populations. REO is designed to strengthen communities through projects that incorporate mentoring, job training, education, legal aid services, and other comprehensive transitional services. In July 2014, ETA released a Training And Employment Notice (TEN) 1-14, which provides examples of strategies for programs serving justice-involved youth and youth at-risk of offending. TEN 1-14 offers points to keep in mind when designing and operating programs for this population.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Improving Transition Outcomes for Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System: Practical Considerations, National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, Issue 25, March 2010, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-25>

<sup>2</sup> J. McLeod. Strategies For Improving Outcomes for Justice-Involved Youth, Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, June 15, 2015, <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2015/StrategiesForImprovingOutcomes.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/index.html?utm\\_source=Youth.gov&utm\\_medium=Announcements&utm\\_campaign=Reports-and-Resources](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/index.html?utm_source=Youth.gov&utm_medium=Announcements&utm_campaign=Reports-and-Resources)

<sup>4</sup> [https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN1-14\\_Acc.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN1-14_Acc.pdf)

To build on these technical assistance packages and to encourage and expand potential cross-agency collaboration, this document provides examples of practices that have been shown in research and in the field to positively have an impact on the education, employment, and general welfare of justice-involved youth.<sup>5</sup>

**i. Create accessible Resources and Remove Barriers in Order to Help Youth and Their Families Navigate the Juvenile Justice System**

Navigating the juvenile justice system can be daunting for youth and their families who may be unfamiliar with the court process. Evidence suggests that providing families with social support and education may reduce the number of youth entering the system and contribute to better outcomes for justice-involved youth. Youth and their families would benefit from having accessible resources that are easy to use and can assist in guiding them from initial contact with the system to re-entry into the community.

**Example: East Lansing, Michigan**

The Michigan State University Adolescent Program (MSUAP) is a community strength-based intervention strategy designed to decrease delinquency while helping juveniles to develop their competencies. This diversion program for arrested youth is an alternative to formal processing in the juvenile justice system. MSUAP uses a multi-faceted, community strength based intervention strategy to assess the youth's strength and unmet needs and to implement strategies for accessing resources to support and/or enhance their strengths and fulfill their unmet needs. During the program, case workers (student volunteers) work each week with youth in their homes and communities on skills related to education, employment, and family relationships. After 40 years of implementation, evaluations show significantly lower rates of official delinquency and lower rates of recidivism.

6

- ii. Provide Necessary Services and Implement Effective Practices for Youth During Entry and Residency**
- a. Encourage the Necessary Behavioral and Support Services to Address Youth's Individual Needs**

In order to be successful in education or employment, it is essential for justice-involved youth to receive behavioral and support services that address their individual needs. Developing a continuum of academic and behavioral supports and services can promote long-term educational outcomes for justice-involved youth by providing conditions conducive to learning. According to the Neglected or Delinquent Technical Assistance Center (NDTAC), justice-involved youth should feel both physically and

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<sup>5</sup> These resource materials are provided for the user's convenience. The inclusion of these materials is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials.

<sup>6</sup> Adolescent Diversion Project (Michigan State University), <https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=332>

emotionally safe, feel connected to their teachers and learning setting, be able to manage their emotions and relationships positively, and be actively engaged in learning and developing skills for reaching positive life goals.<sup>7</sup> Prioritizing these basic needs of justice-involved youth will pave a path for them to effectively learn and succeed after reentry.

**Example: Marion County, Indiana**

Indiana Choices serves children with behavioral disorders and serious emotional disturbances who have been referred by the child welfare or juvenile court systems. Coordinators, case managers, probation officers, teachers, and other team members work together to provide community-centered support in many ways, including accessing resources outside of the state-approved service standards and expanding access to flexible funding for basic needs. The goal of Indiana Choices is for the youth to be equipped with a plan of care so that he/she can return home with sustainable support and be guided by a long-term plan to prevent future system involvement.

8

**b. Deliver Comprehensive and Coordinated Wraparound Services to Youth**

Historically, transition services for juvenile offenders have been fragmented, inefficient, and disconnected. A coordinated system of care must be developed so that justice-involved youth can receive the wraparound services they need. Such services should focus on the strengths of the youth and his or her family, be individualized, and encompass all aspects of the youth's life. It is crucial for youth to have access to a number of different services during their stay at juvenile justice facilities that follow them upon reentry into the community to aid in their rehabilitation, such as physical and mental health treatment, and to help them meet basic needs, such as housing and transportation. It is imperative that these services are not only holistic, but also developmentally appropriate to suit the individual needs of justice-involved youth and support successful re-entry.

**Example: Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

Wraparound Milwaukee is a multi-service approach to meeting youth's needs through the mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems using pooled funding. Its services for youth and their families range from mental health therapy to crisis intervention, and include medication management, among others. About 44 percent of the youth served have been justice-involved. Wraparound Milwaukee also offers services to youth in juvenile correctional facilities. With an emphasis on family involvement, Wraparound Milwaukee offers an array of supports for justice-involved youth and their families to ensure strength-based, individualized care.

9

<sup>7</sup> Osher, David, Sidana, Anju, and Kelly, Patrick, NDTAC Issue Brief: Improving Conditions for Learning for Youth Who Are Neglected or Delinquent, November 19, 2013, <http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/sites/default/files/ImprovingConditionsforLearningforYouthWhoAreNeglectedorDelinquent.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Indiana Choices, Accessed November 16, 2016, <http://www.choicesccs.org/our-partners/indiana>

<sup>9</sup> Wraparound Milwaukee, Accessed November 16, 2016, <http://wraparoundmke.com/>

### **c. Provide Pre-Release Training in Social, Independent Living, and Workforce Skills**

Evidence shows that youth who receive training in social skills and career exploration are more likely to succeed after release from juvenile correctional facilities. Justice-involved youth may also benefit from career and technical education (CTE) as a means of receiving appropriate training in life and career skills that will ensure they are well-prepared for release. All youth may benefit from career preparation and work-based learning experiences, but it is especially important for justice-involved youth who may face challenges re-entering their schools and communities to receive guidance and training so they can have access to well-paying careers in the future.

#### **Example: Pennsylvania**

The mission of Pennsylvania Academic and Career/Technical Training Alliance (PACTT) is to facilitate the success of justice-involved youth in the community by improving the education and job training they receive in juvenile justice facilities. As a result, PACTT-affiliated facilities have revised their education programs to help youth further their education and employment upon release. These facilities provide CTE training and testing for entry level certifications that are recognized in their respective industries. PACTT has also developed an employability and soft skills manual to standardize the expectations for 27 key competencies, such as resume writing and conflict resolution. By providing subsidized employment inside juvenile justice facilities, PACTT allows youth to practice their soft and technical skills so that they can develop their expertise and confidence to apply for jobs. In the first four years of operation, (2008-2012), PACTT paved the way for CTE training facilities to grow from approximately 25 programs in 8 facilities to 73 programs in 26 facilities.

10

#### **Example: El Centro, California**

The Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program, through its Project Éxito (Success), works closely with both the Imperial County Probation Department and its local workforce development system to serve young adults ages 16-24 involved in the juvenile justice system. The Project found that in helping youth complete training that can lead to industry-recognized credentials, many participants were challenged to meet the pre-requisites of obtaining a high school diploma or equivalency. With referrals from the Probation Department in place, Project Éxito has utilized its direct linkages and interactions with their local One Stop/American Job Centers, the Imperial County Workforce Development Office, employers, advisory councils, and other partner agencies to provide specific employment and industry related services to help youth meet their employment and educational goals. This holistic approach is resulting in increasing numbers of participants completing training leading to industry-recognized credentials offered through a CTE program and various Imperial Valley College credentialing programs.

11

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<sup>10</sup>Innovation Brief: Learn to Earn: PACTT Helps Delinquent Youths Gain Academic and Job Skills, Models for Change, November 30, 2012, <http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/354>

**d. Provide Specific, Focused Support for Transition and Reentry Planning**

The transition from the juvenile justice system is one of the most commonly ignored components of correctional education programs, and the transition experiences and outcomes of youth are often disheartening. A formal process for transitions should be in place for justice-involved youth to receive the proper support immediately upon entry into a juvenile justice facility, prior to release, and upon reintegration. A careful and consistent transition planning process, curricula to support transition planning, databases to track and monitor student progress, and a planned sequence of services after release are the key ingredients for a successful transition.<sup>12</sup>

**Example: Maricopa County, Arizona**

The Maricopa County Regional School District implements an Internal Transition Program, consisting of a six-week curriculum designed to assist youth to transition from the justice system to their communities and educational settings. The Merging Two Worlds Curriculum instructs students in career development, resiliency, and social skills so that they can meet high academic standards. Upon entry into the Transition program, each student is required to complete a Student Exit Plan that assists with planning so they ultimately make a successful transition to the next stage of life. In the district’s External Transition Program, a facilitator works with students while they are still detained and focuses on positive affiliations in the student’s education, career, recreation, and family realms of life. Taken together, both programs help to ensure a smooth transition for justice-involved youth after release.

13

**i. Ensure College and Career Preparation and Readiness Upon Release from Juvenile Justice Facilities**

**a. Create Linkages with Community, Business, and Professional Organizations**

Many youth released from correctional settings do not receive adequate CTE training or other supports necessary to succeed in the community. Cooperative contractual agreements among local agencies that provide transition services can be established to maintain a seamless continuum of care. Such linkages result in increased post-release education and training options for youth, opportunities to enter career pathways, and improved outcomes. An integrated approach facilitates more efficient use of resources in order to reduce recidivism and improve workforce development.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Imperial Valley, Regional Occupational Program, Project Éxito, <http://www.ivrop.org/career-seekers/training/exito/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/guiding-principles.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Maricopa County, Regional School District, <http://www.mcrrsd.org/domain/26>

<sup>14</sup> Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies:

Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness , The Council of State Governments Justice Center, [http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Employment-Overview-Post-WhitePaper.Sep\\_Updatev.7.pdf](http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Employment-Overview-Post-WhitePaper.Sep_Updatev.7.pdf)

**Example: Cambria County, Pennsylvania**

Through its Learn to Work project, Cambria County strives to improve aftercare by focusing on job readiness and employment for re-entering youth ages 13-18. Learn to Work is a collaboration between the county and Goodwill Industries to create an assessment, job readiness, skill building, and employment opportunity program. Youth are referred by the Juvenile Probation Office or Children & Youth Services to receive classroom instruction that is complemented with paid work experiences so youth can attain job skills. The success of this program inspired a neighboring county to replicate Learn to Work.

15

**Example: Federal Bonding Program (FBP)**

The Federal Bonding Program (FBP), administered by the Department of Labor, allows employers to receive bond insurances free-of-charge as an incentive to hire hard-to-place job applicants, such as ex-offenders, including anyone with a record of arrest, conviction or imprisonment, and anyone who has ever been on probation or parole. The FBP bond insurance is designed to reimburse the employer for any loss due to employee theft of money or property.

16

**b. Continue Post-release Services to Maintain Youth’s Engagement in the Community**

It is vital to continue providing services, support, and supervision after justice-involved youth are released into the community to ensure ongoing, positive development. Research suggests that community-based supervision and after-care services contribute to both reducing recidivism and increasing the likelihood of youth attending school and entering the labor market.<sup>17</sup> Such services should be put in place with the goal of encouraging educational progress and the pursuit of job training and/or stable employment so that youth remain positively engaged in the community.

**Example: Chautauqua County, New York**

With the aim of preventing future youth involvement in the juvenile justice system, Chautauqua Tapestry system of care (SOC) wraparound services focus on youth engagement, especially in the school setting. In partnership with the county juvenile and family court judge, youth, and their families, the staff strive to maintain the youth in the community and continually improve engagement and connection. This is especially pertinent when youth return from placement, so the SOC initiative deeply focuses on reintegrating these youth into school and the community. As a result of Tapestry’s preventive work with the local school districts, very few youth are placed in the State juvenile justice system. This model has included support and training for schools’ implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports.

18

<sup>15</sup> Goodwill Industries of the Conemaugh Valley, <http://www.gicv.org/who-we-serve/youth/>

<sup>16</sup> The Federal Bonding Program, U.S. Department of Labor, <http://bonds4jobs.com/>

<sup>17</sup> Juvenile Justice Information Exchange, Re-entry: Key Issues, Accessed November 16, 2016, <http://jjie.org/hub/reentry/key-issues/>

<sup>18</sup> Chautauqua Tapestry, Accessed November 16, 2016, <http://www.chautauquatapestry.org/index.php?page=Home>

**c. Have Youth Offenders Participate in Service Projects to Give Back to their Community**

The Department of Labor’s Civic Justice Corps and Training and Service-Learning grants provided justice-involved youth ages 18-24 the opportunity to participate in service projects as a way of giving back to their community and being accountable for their actions. Through this approach, local communities benefited from service-learning projects such as tree planting, weatherizing homes, replacing sidewalks, clearing trails, and building homes for low-income families with non-profit organizations. Participants also receive stipends, remedial education, and job placement. Through this program, young offenders began to see themselves as contributing positively to their communities. Examples of grantee organizations include The Corps Network, YouthBuild USA, and YouthBuild Newark. Local WIOA programs could similarly partner with other agencies to fund slots in local service and conservation corps for justice-involved youth.

**Example: Corps Networks**

Corps Networks offer comprehensive youth development programming to thousands of youth each year, many of which are currently enrolled in or are eligible for U.S. Department of Labor Youth-funded activities, including the WIOA Youth program. *Snapshot: Youth Corps and Workforce Partnerships*, released in July 2015, helps Corps and workforce systems see each other as assets in the shared mission to reconnect millions of disconnected youth. It also provides examples of partnering at the local level.

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*DOL and ED are working diligently to ensure that states, local areas, other grantees, and stakeholders are prepared for the implementation of WIOA. If you have questions regarding this WIOA guidance, please contact the Departments by emailing DOL at [DOL.WIOA@dol.gov](mailto:DOL.WIOA@dol.gov) and ED at [AskAEFLA@ed.gov](mailto:AskAEFLA@ed.gov).*

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<sup>19</sup> Snapshot: Youth Corps and Workforce Partnerships, The Corps Network, National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), and U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, July 14, 2015, [https://www.corpsnetwork.org/sites/default/images/pdfs/Resource%20Library/Snapshot\\_Youth%20Corps%20and%20Workforce%20Partnerships\\_2.pdf](https://www.corpsnetwork.org/sites/default/images/pdfs/Resource%20Library/Snapshot_Youth%20Corps%20and%20Workforce%20Partnerships_2.pdf)