

# ALASKA JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March  
2018

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Recommendations	2-4
JJDP Act Update	5-6
FY17 Grant Awards	7
Committee Members	8

## Special Points of Interest:

- Behavioral Health
- FASD
- Marijuana Possession for Underage Youth
- Compliance with Federal Regulations

## ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR

The Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (AJJAC) is pleased to present the 2017 Annual Report to the Governor.

Members of AJJAC are appointed by the Governor (Administrative Order 137) and are tasked with advising the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) on compliance with the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act.

The JJDP Act is a landmark reform measure designed to improve the nation's juvenile justice system and to reduce juvenile delinquency and the unsafe incarceration of youth.

AJJAC is comprised of dedicated volunteers from around the state who provide input to DJJ on activities funded through the JJDP Act, gather feedback from youth involved in Alaska's juvenile justice system, and provide juvenile justice recommendations annually to the Governor.

This report includes an update on the State of Alaska's compliance with the core mandates of the JJDP Act and recommendations focused on maintaining DJJ's rural offices and programs.



**Moosehide Blanket Toss, Nondalton**  
Youth Development and Culture  
Program  
RurAL CAP, 2017

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings Fellow Alaskans,

On behalf of the Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (AJJAC), it is my pleasure to submit to you the 2017 AJJAC Annual Report. Alaska is rich in resources and among those are our kids, who deserve the best we have. Especially young persons who are in the care of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). We owe them our very best efforts in helping them through to adulthood and to an Alaskan life full of potential and productivity. The AJJAC focuses on these best efforts by supporting DJJ to treat, protect, and monitor youth in their care, and by monitoring the four federal mandates set forth in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act.

This year's report addresses behavioral health services provided to youth while in the care of DJJ, both in our seven youth facilities and those under probation supervision living in their communities. The AJJAC recommends continued funding, resources and support for DJJ to continue to deliver, and even expand, evidence-based programming proven to make a difference in the lives of DJJ youth and their families.

This annual report is respectfully submitted during the 25th year of the AJJAC, and goes to all Alaskans so that they may learn more about DJJ services and the needs of one of our state's most vulnerable—and most important—populations. We, as Alaskans, share the responsibility to do our best to support our young people.

**Ray Michaelson**  
AJJAC Chair

**AJJAC**  
our kids • our state • our future



## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR

### Support Behavioral Health Programs

Kids often bring with them to Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) a complex set of behavioral health needs. These needs often fall into the realms of mental health and substance use. Most often these problems are further exacerbated by delays in more normal emotional adolescent development. Given these complexities it becomes essential that DJJ have the tools, knowledge, and training to help kids better understand these issues and develop ways to cope and eventually live healthy, young lives. During recent years, DJJ has used adolescent brain research as a basis for educating their staff about youth development and how delayed development and behavioral health issues can effect a young person's overall ability to function in society. A few recommendations and statements of support below are important for AJJAC to convey in our role as advisors to DJJ programs and services

*“Given these complexities it becomes essential that DJJ have the tools, knowledge and training to help kids better understand these issues and develop ways to cope and eventually live health young lives.”*

#### Role of the DJJ Mental Health Clinician (MHC):

MHCs offer a variety of behavioral health services in three distinct areas of DJJ services: detention, treatment, and probation. In these settings, services to youth include those of crisis intervention, screenings/assessments, treatment planning, clinical support, and clinical group and individual therapies. It is critical that we maintain these services in support for all DJJ youth as the needs of our youth become more complex. Equally as critical is the expertise, training, and consultation these clinicians can offer to non-clinical DJJ staff within the division helping them to more effectively treat and support youth in their development. MHCs also can work to increase family engagement as part of a youth's treatment plan, which is beneficial on multiple levels. Worth considering as well is the support for specialized training for clinicians and staff who treat and support those young offenders who have committed capital crimes. Recent data would suggest an increase in more serious crime categories committed by younger offenders, supporting the need for specialized interventions and therapies for those youth.

#### Evidence-Based Practices (EBP):

To treat Alaskan youth effectively, the intervention methods mentioned above must have a basis for their use. Intervention and therapeutic programs for youth are carefully selected by DJJ for their use with this population. AJJAC supports the use of these researched-based programs that give our youth the best chance at developing skills to live crime free lives in our communities.

AJJAC understands that three specific DJJ programs are within this category of research-supported, EBP interventions. These programs are implemented by trained staff and are available to DJJ youth in the treatment programs in four of our facilities. We very much support the “Seven Challenges” drug and alcohol program, which should include family therapy when possible, the “Transitional Services”

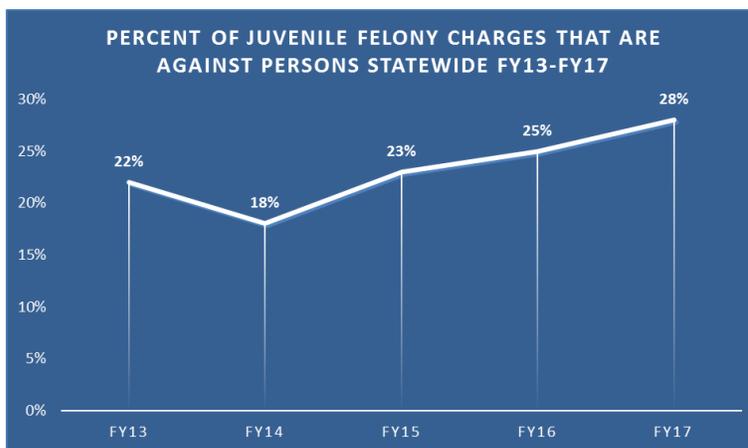
# RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED..

program, which prepares youth for re-entry into the community, and the Aggression Replacement Training (ART) program as a cognitive-behavioral approach to intervention with delinquent youth.

## Trauma-Informed Care:

In recent years DJJ has developed along the path of becoming a more trauma-informed agency. Treating a population of youth where many have experienced severe childhood trauma requires much in the form of staff training, administrative support, and policy shift to realize the benefits to kids, families, and programs. AJJAC supports the continued efforts DJJ has embarked upon in this area of service to try to learn as much as possible to understand what adverse experiences our youth have had that will inform the individual treatment of these youth. AJJAC further applauds and supports embedding specific Trauma Informed Care programs within DJJ and the practice changes needed to fully implement trauma informed strategies. This type of program development is basic to the mission of DJJ.

In addition to the above recommendations for programming, AJJAC supports and recommends additional specialized training for clinical staff who periodically work with younger youth charged with extremely serious crimes including arson and murder.



*There has been a proportional increase in juvenile felony violent crimes committed against people over the past three fiscal years. Felony violent crimes against persons are considered to be the most serious crimes. Felony Against Person charges are mainly murder/ manslaughter, robbery, and assaults, which includes sexual assaults. In FY17, the Division of Juvenile Justice received 1,088 juvenile felony offenses and of those 302 (28%) were felony crimes against persons.*

*“AJJAC further applauds and supports embedding specific Trauma-Informed Care programs within DJJ and the practice changes needed to fully implement trauma informed strategies.”*

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Along with the recommendation to the Governor to support behavioral health programs in DJJ, the Committee strongly supports the following recommendations:

1. AJJAC recommends that the State of Alaska continue to provide support to at-risk youth who are affected by a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). With appropriate supports from trained staff and community members, these youth can lead healthy and productive lives.
2. AJJAC recommends that the Governor and the Alaska Legislature address criminal offenses for Alaskans under the age of 21 by creating new, non-criminal underage violations related to marijuana possession and use, including:
  - ◇ Creating an incentive system of reduced fines and penalties for underage marijuana violations through voluntary participation in Youth Courts, treatment, education, or community diversion programs;
  - ◇ Creating a mechanism for juvenile citations to become confidential in district court after case closure;
  - ◇ Providing funding and support for Youth Courts and community diversion programs to help address juvenile marijuana citations;
  - ◇ Providing funding and support for DJJ’s delinquency prevention programs to prevent and reduce underage marijuana use;
  - ◇ Changing the criminal classification for youth under the age of eighteen who possess marijuana on school grounds to a misdemeanor offense, while keeping any age distribution charge a felony level offense.

*“AJJAC recommends that the State of Alaska continue to provide support to at-risk youth who are affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.”*



**Cooperative Team Building, Kiana Youth Development and Culture Program**

RurAL CAP, 2017

# JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT-FOUR CORE MANDATES

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention awards federal juvenile justice formula grant funds annually to states that comply with the JJDP Act. Funding is contingent upon compliance with the four core mandates of the act.

## 1. Deinstitutionalization of Status

**Offenders:** States must ensure that youth who are charged with status offenses are not placed in locked detention or correctional facilities. Status offenses are behaviors that are not criminal when committed by adults such as drinking, violating curfew, running away, and truancy.

**2. Sight and Sound Separation of Juvenile and Adult Offenders:** States must ensure that youth who are temporarily confined in adult jails or lockups do not have sight or sound contact with adult inmates.

**3. Removal of Juveniles from Adult Jails and Lockups:** States must ensure that youth who are accused of delinquent acts are held in adult jails and lockups for processing for no more than 6 hours before their first court appearance and for no more than 6 hours after court.

**4. Disproportionate Minority Contact in the Juvenile Justice System:** States must assess, identify, and work towards eliminating any overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system to ensure a fair system for all Alaskan youth.



## JJDP ACT COMPLIANCE UPDATE

### Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO)

Since Alaska's passage of legislation in 2004 prohibiting the placement of status offenders in a jail or secure facility, the incidences of DSO violations have decreased. Data on Alaska's juvenile holds have been collected since 1987 and in that time DJJ has dramatically decreased the number of juvenile hold violations.

### Sight and Sound Separation

Alaska has a history of maintaining compliance for the separation of juveniles and adults. Reductions in noncompliance have been continually achieved through education, training, and relationship building as well as adherence to State legislation directly impacting compliance. Facilities who hold youth are aware of federal mandates and make best efforts to maintain sight and sound separation between juveniles and adults.

### Jail Removal

Alaska's jail removal violation rates have continually decreased from previous years. Law enforcement officers in rural Alaska face ongoing issues due to lack of resources, and alternatives to detaining youth. DJJ continues to work toward elimination of noncompliant incidents through enforcement of State law and education of staff.

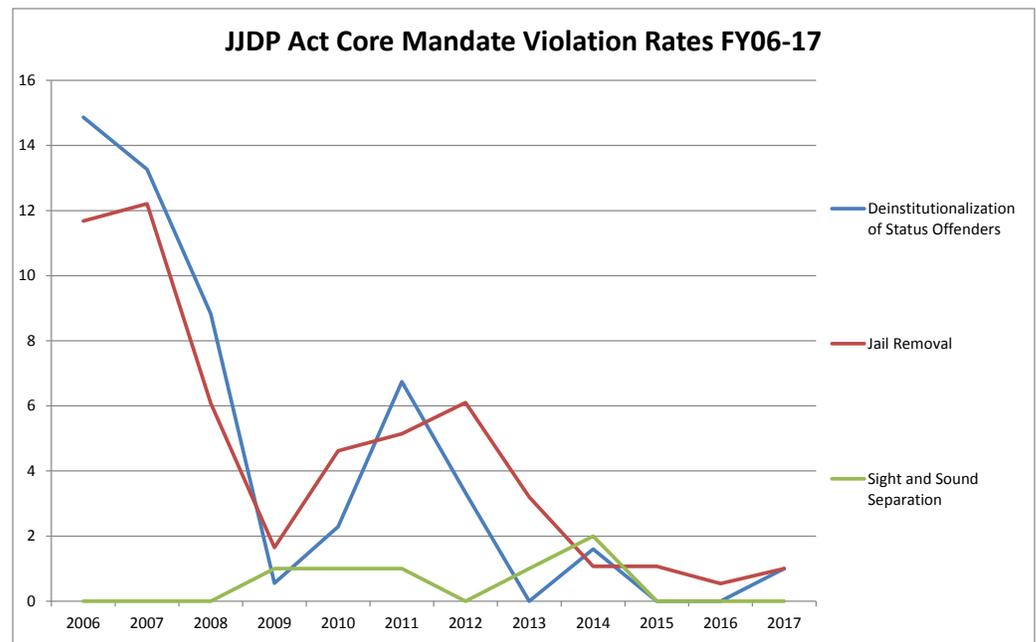
*“The State of Alaska was recently found in compliance by OJJDP for the federal core mandates of the deinstitutionalization of status offenders, sight and sound separation of juveniles and adults, and jail removal.”*

*“Alaska has a history of maintaining compliance for the separation of juveniles and adults. Reductions in noncompliance have been continually achieved through education, training, and relationship building...”*

**Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)**

DMC exists when minority youth have a rate of contact with the juvenile justice system that is significantly higher than the rate of contact for caucasian youth. The JJDP Act mandates Alaska to monitor and assess DMC rates and create specific interventions to reduce DMC within the DJJ system.

Since 1994, AJJAC has reviewed and analyzed data and worked to reduce DMC in Alaska. Detailed DMC data can be found on DJJ’s website at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/Pages/Programs/DMC.aspx>



**State Compliance with the JJDP Act**

The State of Alaska was recently found in compliance by OJJDP with the first three federal core mandates of the deinstitutionalization of status offenders, sight and sound separation of juveniles and adults, and jail removal. The State of Alaska was found “not out of compliance” for the disproportionate minority contact core mandate. This means that OJJDP will continue to provide technical assistance and support to Alaska to address minority overrepresentation at key decision points in the juvenile justice system.

OJJDP also conducted a review of Alaska's compliance monitoring process in FY16 and found that Alaska has appropriate internal controls in place for compliance monitoring. AJJAC will continue to advise DJJ on compliance for these federal core mandates in FY18.

Alaska’s dedication and diligence in the pursuit of full compliance with the four core mandates of the JJDP Act are continued with collaboration with AJJAC, the Department of Public Safety, the Division of Behavioral Health, Alaska Native Corporations, DJJ probation and facility staff, and a multitude of local and community partners.

# FY17 JUVENILE JUSTICE GRANT AWARDS

Ongoing compliance with the federal core mandates results in Alaska being eligible to receive federal dollars from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to strengthen juvenile justice activities statewide.

Grant programs made possible by federal funding in FY17 include:

### Formula Non-Secure Attendant Care Shelter Grants in Alaska

Covenant House Alaska	Anchorage	\$28,271
Juneau Youth Services	Juneau	\$11,951
Presbyterian Hospitality House	Fairbanks	\$18,479
Residential Youth Care	Ketchikan	\$9,500
Youth Advocates of Sitka	Sitka	\$15,172

### Delinquency Prevention and Indian Tribal Program

Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP) Statewide \$150,000

The Youth Development and Culture program is a partnership between DJJ and RurAL CAP to reduce the disproportionate contact Alaska Native youth have with the juvenile justice system and to improve communications with Alaska Native youth, their families and communities. Communities and Tribes receiving funding in FY17 include:

- City of Hooper Bay
- Akiak Native Community
- Native Village of Kiana
- Chignik Bay Tribal Council
- Native Village of Port Heiden
- Cheesh'na Tribal Council (Chistochina)
- Nondalton Tribal Council
- Rampart Village Council
- Native Village of Tetlin
- Village of Grayling
- Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government

## DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE STAFF

Tracy Dompeling, Director

(907) 465-2112

Barbara Murray, Deputy Director of Programming and Administration

(907) 465-2339

Ellen Hackenmueller, Juvenile Justice Specialist and AJJAC Liaison

(907) 465-1389



The State of Alaska’s Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is the division within the Department of Health and Social Services that is responsible for all probation, detention, and institutional treatment services for delinquent youth in Alaska. The mission of the DJJ is to hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior, promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities, and assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent future crime.

# ALASKA JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Ray Michaelson**, Chair  
Elected Official, Palmer

**Amy Gorn**, Vice Chair  
Public, Wasilla

**Stormi Backus**, Secretary  
Juvenile Under 24 \*, Kenai

**Connor Barry**  
Public, Soldotna

**Thomas Begich**  
Public Member, Anchorage

**Jackson Blackwell**  
Juvenile Under 24\*, Soldotna

**Mark Cook**  
Juvenile Under 24\*, Anchorage

**Bob Froehle**  
Public, Nome

**Michael Jeffery**  
Public, Utqiagvik

**Laura Ogan**  
Public, Anchorage

**Michelle Overstreet**  
Public, Wasilla

**Trevor Shaw**  
Juvenile Under 24\*, Ward Cove

**Charline Skultka**  
Juvenile Under 24\*, Anchorage

**Austin Stevenson**  
Public, Soldotna

**Bernina Venua**  
At-Large Member, Dillingham

**Karen Zeman**  
Public Member, Anchorage

\*- denotes age when first appointed



Funds for printing this report were provided through a federal grant (Grant #-2016-JF-FX-0030) from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in accordance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended.

The points of view or opinions in this document do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention or the U. S. Department of Justice.