

# ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE 2011

Submitted by the  
Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

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



2011 Annual Report

ALASKA NATIVE YOUTH  
RECIDIVISM IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

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The Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (AJJAC) is pleased to present AJJAC's 2011 Annual Report to the Governor, and the Alaska Legislature. Members of AJJAC are appointed by the Governor (Administrative Order 137) and are tasked with providing input into how the Division spends Title II federal dollars. AJJAC also reports on Alaska's compliance with the four core requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). The annual report is a requirement of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has provided funding information and data for this report.

### **The Four Core Requirements of the JJDP Act**

**De-institutionalization 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.

**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.

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

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

### **Alaska Native Youth Recidivism**

In this report, AJJAC would like to focus on the high rate of recidivism of Alaska Native Youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system. The high recidivism rate of Alaska Native Youth is generally related to the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) problem where minority youth (Alaska Native Youth in this case) are more likely to be detained and petitioned than white youth. AJJAC noted this as a problem in its 2010 Annual Report. Not surprisingly, the recidivism rate for native youth is also higher than white youth.

The Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has done excellent work in tracking DMC and recidivism rates. Data, however, does not always answer the "why" and certainly doesn't

provide the “solution”. Despite conflicting opinions as to the “why,” it is clear to AJJAC that the issue of recidivism and DMC needs bold initiatives rather than just a rehashing of the problem. AJJAC believes that creative solutions are needed to address native youth recidivism and DMC in Alaska.

As a preface to our recommendations, AJJAC would like to make it clear that we are not assigning blame. Scores of professionals, consultants, and lay people, in Alaska and nation-wide, have wrestled with the problem of “what to do next”. AJJAC believes that as part of the next step, some system changes need to take place. Current practices need to be thoroughly reviewed and possibly changed. The “status quo” seems to have little chance of changing the data.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) **AJJAC and the Division of Juvenile Justice should partner with an Alaska Native youth justice group as a means for working collaboratively with respected Alaska Native Elders, leaders, parents, youth, and communities.** This partnership would provide the means for DJJ and Alaska Natives to work together to design and implement strategies for preventing delinquency and developing culturally appropriate interventions for Alaska Native youth.
- 2) **Title II Formula money, as well as other federal money currently under DJJ control, should be maximally targeted to be spent in rural areas to prevent Alaska Native youth from entering the juvenile justice system and to provide intervention programs for youth who are in the system or at risk of coming back into the system.** Currently, Alaska is one of the only two states in the United States granted a waiver so that our state does not need to “pass through” 66% of this federal money to local communities for prevention programs for juveniles. AJJAC supported this waiver in the past. AJJAC is reconsidering this position and may support elimination of the waiver to allow these federal funds to reach local communities to enhance their ability to provide services locally to juveniles. Such funds could be targeted to support programs in rural communities.
- 3) **DJJ and the State system as a whole re-align its efforts and systems to promote delinquency prevention efforts by rural communities.** Funding and grant mechanisms must be simplified and streamlined so rural delinquency prevention efforts can focus on creating and supporting programs that serve youth. Administrative requirements should be minimized and should be designed in partnership with an Alaska Native youth justice group.
- 4) **AJJAC recommends that as part of this realignment of services, the DJJ improve the opportunities for juveniles to obtain effective alcohol/substance abuse treatment in both a community setting and in the DJJ institutions.** AJJAC also supports on-going training efforts for DJJ staff so that they can provide meaningful services to juveniles with cognitive impairments from causes like fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and traumatic brain injuries. This support

recognizes the prevalence of alcohol/substance abuse and cognitive impairments (especially from FASD) among juveniles served by DJJ.

- 5) **The Departments of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and DJJ, along with an Alaska Native youth justice group, should carefully review the intervention and treatment efforts currently being delivered to Alaska Native youth.** AJJAC supports DJJ’s efforts to address treatment programming for youth with mental health issues and native youth within the juvenile system. Our recommendation, in many ways, mirrors what they are reviewing, but we encourage them to incorporate “Alaska native” input into treatment programming for native youth. One of the challenges for DJJ is the relatively low number of native staff given the percentage of native youth within the juvenile justice system. Innovative and culturally appropriate approaches to the treatment of native youth are less likely to be developed within the confines of a predominantly non-native staff.

**DJJ Recidivism Data:**

**Secure Treatment Releases--Statewide**

<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>Total TX releases</b>	<b>Total Recidivists</b>	<b>Recidivism Rate</b>
FY08 (FY06)	113	46	40.7%
FY09(FY07)	113	51	45.1%
FY10(FY08)	105	40	38.1%

**Secure Treatment Release--Alaska Native Youth**

<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>Total TX releases</b>	<b>Total Recidivists</b>	<b>Recidivism Rate</b>
FY08 (FY06)	38	25	65.8%
FY09(FY07)	42	23	54.8%
FY10(FY08)	29	16	55.2%

**Probation Release--Statewide**

<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>Total Probation releases</b>	<b>Total Recidivists</b>	<b>Recidivism Rate</b>
FY08 (FY06)	403	112	27.8%
FY09(FY07)	355	108	30.4%
FY10(FY08)	402	112	27.9%

**Probation Release—Alaska Native Youth**

<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>Total Probation releases</b>	<b>Total Recidivists</b>	<b>Recidivism Rate</b>
FY08 (FY06)	155	57	36.8%
FY09(FY07)	146	49	33.6%
FY10(FY08)	166	59	35.5%

### Formula Budget Spending for FY 11

Formula funds are primarily utilized to gain compliance with the four core mandates of the JJDP Act. DJJ has worked diligently with support from AJJAC towards compliance, and although Alaska continues to have reduced violations we are not in full compliance of the Act. DJJ holds compliance of the core mandates as a high priority and will continue efforts towards this. Some of the Formula programs that support compliance with the federal Act are listed below:

#### Grants:

##### Formula Non-Secure Attendant Shelter Grants

AK Family Services-Saxton Youth Shelter	Wasilla	\$13,100
Covenant House Youth Reception Center	Anchorage	\$33,260
Juneau Youth Services	Juneau	\$14,060
Presbyterian Hospitality House	Fairbanks	\$21,740
Providence Kodiak Island Counseling Center	Kodiak	\$6,620
Residential Youth Care	Ketchikan	\$20,000
Youth Advocates of Sitka	Sitka	\$17,849

##### Formula Native American Pass-Through Grants

Kenaitze Indian Tribe	Kenai	\$10,000
Copper River Indian Association	Copper Center	\$10,000
Native Village of Elim	Elim	\$10,000

#### Contracts:

##### Professional Administrative Services (PAS)

PAS monitors juvenile holds in Adult Jails and Lock-ups and reports this information to the DJJ Compliance Monitoring staff monthly. This ensures any violations of the federal act are dealt with expeditiously.

\$30,000

#### Rural Programs:

##### Selawik

In an effort to learn how to increase communication and to offer more effective services for rural Alaskan communities DJJ has teamed with the Department of Education, Behavioral Health, the Governor's office, the Mental Health Trust Authority, the Office of Children's Services and State Troopers to work with the rural community of Selawik.

\$25,000

##### Training for Rural Law Enforcement Officers:

In an effort to ensure that juveniles are held appropriately and safely in rural Adult Jails and Lock-ups the DJJ Compliance Monitor offers training to rural law enforcement, State Troopers and Community Jail staff on the required federal juvenile holding practices. Over 175 rural law enforcement officers from 90 rural communities received compliance monitoring training in 2010.

\$30,000

## Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee Members

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Carol Brenckle	AJJAC Chair	Kenai	398-8228
Vicki Blankenship	AJJAC Vice Chair/ Compliance Monitoring Workgroup Chair		
Barbara Tyndall	Secretary/DMC Workgroup Chair	Fairbanks	479-9511
Courtney Enright	Youth Workgroup Co-Chair	Fairbanks	488-1433
Michael Jeffery	FASD/Substance Abuse Workgroup Chair	Ketchikan	254-4054
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Dean Williams	Legislative Workgroup Chair	Palmer	229-4937
Christopher Allridge		Anchorage	
Jeff Budd		Anchorage	229-0009
Conner Gamache	Youth Member	Sitka	747-4821
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Julie Smith		Anchorage	250-3254
Lisa Typpo	Youth Member	Fairbanks	750-7147
Tina Woods		Anchorage	351-1108
		Anchorage	561-5633

**DJJ Staff:**

Barbara Murray	Juvenile Justice Specialist	Juneau	465-2116
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Candace Brower	Compliance Monitoring	Juneau	465-8463
Clay Kent	Program Coordinator	Juneau	465-1389

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