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Strategies: Improvement of the Systems Response to the Serious and Violent Juvenile Offender

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Strategies: Improvement of the System's Response
to the Serious and Violent Juvenile Offender

Prepared for

U.S. Department of Justice

The Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

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April 4, 1983



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention

Washington, D.C. 20531

FOREWORD

Serious and violent juvenile offenders have increasingly become a public concern. There is a solid basis for this concern. Juveniles 10 to 17 years of age account for a disproportionate percent of crimes in America. FBI Uniform Crime Reports for 1980 cite that while this age group constitutes 13.6% of the total population it accounts for 19% of all arrests for violent crimes and 44% of arrests for serious property crimes.

As part of the federal effort to assist states to combat juvenile crime, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has suggested that thirty percent of formula grant funds be earmarked for efforts directed at the serious and violent juvenile offender. The debate over how best to approach these offenders is not new. In recognition of past state and local efforts and in support of the philosophy that state and local governments have the ability to address crime issues in a most effective manner, OJJDP invited practitioners to participate in a forum to determine the most effective and efficient ways to use these funds.

This document presents the strategies developed by the forum. The strategies, based on past experience and sound research, are practical. They are, however, not all inclusive. And since they are offered in a spirit of debate it is hoped that the ideas enclosed will stimulate thinking, encourage experimentation, and result in shared information. It is only through working together to resolve to find innovative and humane solutions to the problem of serious and violent juvenile offenders that we contribute to a safer society in which all our youth play an active part.

Sincerely,

David D. West
David West

Director, Formula Grants and
Technical Assistance Division

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INTRODUCTION

In 1981, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) formulated guidelines for the implementation of its formula grant program, authorized under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended. The guidelines encourage states to allocate a minimum of thirty percent of their formula grant award to programs and services for serious and violent juvenile offenders. The guidelines stress that emphasis should be given to sentencing, providing resources necessary for informed dispositions, and rehabilitation.

Under its contract with OJJDP, Arthur D. Little, Inc. conducted a forum to develop strategies for states to use this thirty percent of formula grant funds for the serious and violent juvenile offender. Representatives from criminal justice planning agencies and departments of corrections from six states were invited to participate in the forum. The state representatives and other attendees were:

Anne Linden Carlisle	State Advisory Group Chair for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Maine
Dawn Faught	Juvenile Justice Specialist, State Planning Office, Tennessee
Frank Hall	Director, Division for Youth, New York
Jim Irving	Deputy Director, Juvenile Institutions, Illinois
Delores Kozlowski	Juvenile Justice Specialist, Commission on Law Enforcement Administration of Criminal Justice, Louisiana
Barbara McDonald	Juvenile Justice Specialist, Law Enforcement Commission, Illinois
Carolyn McGougan	Assistant Secretary, Juvenile Services, Louisiana
Susan McMillian	Director, Juvenile Institutional Programs, Tennessee
Orlando Martinez	Director, State Youth Services, Colorado
Dennis Nowicki	Deputy Superintendent, Riordon Police, Chicago, Illinois

Howard Schwartz	Juvenile Justice Specialist, Division of Criminal Justice Services, New York
Peter Simons	Juvenile Justice Specialist, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado
Jo Stephens	Director, Office of Economic Planning and Development, Arizona
Gwen Holden	Director of Program Coordinators, National Conference of State Criminal Justice Planning Administration
John Wright	Deputy Director, Juvenile Services, Department of Corrections, Arizona
Shirley Goins, Mike Mahoney	Consultants, Arthur D. Little, Inc., Forum Facilitators

The inclusion of staff from criminal justice planning agencies and departments of corrections allowed for the development of strategies that were realistic and balanced. The small number of participants promoted a free exchange of thoughts and ideas in work oriented sessions.

The task before the forum participants was to develop strategies to use formula grant funds to improve the system's response to the serious and violent juvenile offender. During the opening session, participants discussed the issues and problems associated with this population in their own states. These problems and issues ranged from the need to develop a transitional release program to reduce recidivism in New York; to the desire to preserve discretion in the juvenile court in Arizona; to the difficulty of combatting media coverage which does not accurately reflect juvenile crime in Illinois. The participants also indicated their commitment to developing strategies for addressing serious and violent juvenile offenders which: a) would be proven effective; b) would be low-cost if possible; c) would be feasible given the political, economic, and bureaucratic climate in all the states; d) would provide in their best judgement the most beneficial results; and e) could be implemented in any state.

Following this general discussion of the extent of the problem and the purpose of the forum, the group identified five major strategies for using the earmarked thirty percent of formula grant funds. These strategies reflect different approaches to the problem at the state level. They focus on altering policies that affect the processing and disposition of serious and violent juvenile offenders. The strategies include: (1) drafting or amending legislation; (2) developing and using performance standards for

juvenile correctional facilities; and (3) addressing the issue of the use of discretion by juvenile justice system officials in handling this population. A fourth strategy, continuity of care, deals with consistency of treatment of youth from disposition through release back to the community. The final area, (5) public education, focuses on disseminating to the media and the public accurate information regarding the seriousness and pervasiveness of juvenile crime.

Following the opening discussion session, the participants were divided into two groups to discuss specific implementation steps for each strategy. Though these strategies are not new, the participants deemed that these represented both high priority and feasible responses to problems which surround the serious and violent juvenile offender.

Each strategy was defined as follows:

- Statement of Problem: A definition of the issue including the need for examination, and a statement of anticipated outcomes.
- Strategy and Its Implementation: A description of the strategy, necessary steps for implementation, the key actors, needed resources, and evaluation component. A necessary resource for implementation is usually funding. However, there are strategies, such as a change in policy, which do not require excessive funds. Specific mention of the use of OJJD formula grant funds is assumed rather than repeated. Specialized resources, such as additional staff, are indicated.
- Considerations in Implementation: A discussion of the political concerns, constraints and issues, as well as suggestions for implementation.

This document is the product of the forum. It contains the specific strategies developed which are a range of options for consideration. No doubt, other strategies and solutions exist. It is hoped that the strategies identified will serve as a catalyst to plan for and effectively utilize OJJD formula grant funds in serving the serious and violent offender.

Monitoring the Impact of Legislation

Statement of the Problem

An increasing amount of state legislation is targetted at the serious and violent juvenile offender. These legislative actions frequently provide directions for the disposition and sentencing of these offenders. However, often the legislation is passed without benefit of data on the cost, policy and program implications. Evaluation and monitoring of the impact of the legislation so as to improve future legislation is one strategy that a state may employ with their earmarked OJJDP funds.

Strategy and Its Implementation

The goal of this strategy is to identify legislation targetted on the serious and violent juvenile offender and to monitor the outcomes to determine its effect. Based on the monitoring, recommendations can be made for improvement in future legislation to meet the needs of serious/violent offenders and the public.

Although the results of this strategy can encompass a broad spectrum of system improvement issues, the primary results desired include:

- Improvement of information on legislative outcomes through evaluation; and,
- Development of legislative goals to insure that the legislation impacts the problems it is designed to correct.

The initial step for this strategy is the determination of who will be responsible for legislative monitoring and/or evaluation. The manner in which this strategy can be implemented may vary, depending upon the needs and resources of a particular state. The following two options are ways in which this strategy could be implemented.

1. Establishment of a Committee by the Governor or Legislature
Successful legislative monitoring/evaluation can occur through the use of a committee, appointed by the Governor or Legislature. This committee would be responsible for the evaluation of the impact of legislation and for developing recommendations for change. An advantage of this method is the implicit commitment by either the Governor or the Legislature to support recommendations.
2. Appointment of a Legislative Liaison. A legislative liaison could be designated within the current staff compliment. The OJJDP funds could be used to support this position. However, it should be recognized that the tasks of monitoring legislation, making recommendations for change, and working with both service providers and legislators to understand the

implications of proposed legislation is demanding and may be more than a full-time job, especially when the legislature is in session.

Once the individual(s) responsible for implementing this strategy has been selected, the next step is to develop action plans and work tasks which will guide the strategy implementation. Examining the impact of waiver requirements or the lowering the age of jurisdiction on youth for example, may be some of the work tasks in the strategy.

Key actors in implementing this strategy are legislators who make legislative change. Additional groups who could be involved in this strategy include:

- governor and his staff, who will be involved, first, if the governor mandated committee approach is utilized, and second, because they disapprove or approve legislation.
- others from the criminal justice system, who can provide monitoring information or who can offer insights into the actual implementation of legislation;
- advocacy groups or private individuals, who can gather data on proposed legislative impacts; and
- legislative liaisons of other agencies who may work closely with the individual(s) assigned the responsibility for legislative monitoring.

Through advance data gathering inappropriate legislation may be avoided. When that is not possible, there still remains a need to inform legislators of the impact of statutes they have passed.

Continuity of Care Model

Statement of Problem

There is a lack of coordination, continuity and appropriate integration of services to insure a smooth transition for the serious and violent juvenile offender from the institution into the community. These deficits have occurred for a variety of reasons, one of which is lack of funds which force states to support institutional programs to the detriment of aftercare services. Another reason is the structure of correctional systems whereby services are fragmented into institutional and community activities which do not allow for a continuity of care model. A third reason is a philosophical one which place emphasis on youth in the institution by virtue of the crime committed and views a youth on aftercare as rehabilitated. While all these reasons may be valid in certain circumstances, there is nonetheless a need to develop aftercare for the serious and violent juvenile offender.

Strategy and Its Implementation

The continuity of care strategy is an approach to assist in successful reintegration for the serious and violent juvenile offenders into their communities. The goals and anticipated outcomes of this strategy are:

- To reduce recidivism and repeat offenses by the serious/violent offender through a sound case management plan of comprehensive services;
- To provide increased community care and to reduce institutionalization;
- To protect the public through a management plan that applies consistent rules and procedures;

Specifically, this strategy speaks to the development of a case management approach of working with and tracking clients to insure a planned return to the community. In this approach permanent case managers are assigned to the youth at the time of intake into the institution. At that time a plan is developed which includes services for the youth's reentry into the community. Most of the reentry services are purchased from direct service providers in the community. This structure has the capability of providing for continuity of case planning by case supervisors, from disposition to aftercare. Staff are responsible for release planning of the youth to insure that upon reentry the necessary support systems are available and in place. It also allows the case manager to monitor the youth's progress.

The most advantageous way to implement this strategy is to use existing institutional counselors to serve as the case managers. Re-training of staff to meet new role expectations for the needs of the population in transition may be required. A second alternative, if this is not feasible, is the hiring and training of new staff to serve as case managers. The essential elements of the continuity of care model are listed below.

1. Utilization of a case management approach. This will insure continuity of planning through the use of: purchase of care alternatives; a range of structured to less structured options for the youth; use of the same case manager from intake to discharge; and, consistent rules, procedures, and standards for management.
2. Employment of constant monitoring. This will minimize delay in decision making and guarantee that key actions and decisions are done in the best interest of the youth and the community.
3. Establishment of an oversight board. This will provide direction and leadership, as well as promote the model of continuity of care within the system.
4. Documentation of costs. This will substantiate the validity of the program to the public at large.

Personnel from a spectrum of agencies involved with the serious and violent juvenile offender are vital to the success of this strategy. Participation of the following should be sought:

1. Director, Department of Corrections - to insure that the continuity of care model is provided with the necessary support.
2. Case supervisors in the institution - to be involved with the case manager, discussing the progress of the youth and working together to make appropriate reentry plans.
3. Aftercare workers - to work with the case manager prior to release from institution for aftercare planning and support.
4. System component representatives - to be relied upon for advice, support, placement and evaluation of youth, and to assist in the planning process for youth throughout this continuity of care. These representatives should be drawn from advisory boards, public and private service providers, school boards, parole boards, police, judges, and prosecutors.

Other individuals who may be involved peripherally include legislators for gaining monetary and community support as well as unions and chambers of commerce who will provide job training and assist in obtaining local support for services.

There are a number of resources needed to implement and maintain this type of program in addition to the OJJDP funds. A primary resource is a data base for tracking youth from the institution to aftercare to identify whether the youth are receiving the necessary services and support during the transition to the community. In addition, other resources include:

- Contractual Services Programs - tailored and developed to meet the individual youth needs;
- Appropriate Staff Availability - availability and access of staff to meet with the client and case manager to share information and plan for the youth; and
- Staff Training - for those who will be assigned the new responsibility of serving as case managers throughout this process.

Considerations in Continuity of Care Model

As mentioned, the continuity of care approach requires a strong case management system, a client tracking system and staff trained to provide aftercare planning and services. Additional considerations are discussed below.

Staff resistance is an impediment which must be overcome if the program is to succeed from the outset. Other issues such as inter and intra agency coordination, staff responsibilities, court policy and procedures and reorganization issues, also pose constraints to this strategy. Age of jurisdiction also may pose difficulties if it limits further action in the juvenile justice system.

Coordination issues between agencies play a part in any transition program. Agencies may be unwilling to participate in such an effort and relinquish some of their discretion. Consequently, the role of the case manager will become one of not only planning, tracking and monitoring of youth and programs, but also one of negotiation. Current competition for funds is keen, especially in departments with responsibility for both juveniles and adults. Public perception regarding services for offenders versus services for non-offenders in the community usually weighs in favor of the non-offender. This is compounded by a shortage of correction's funds which results in favoring institutional over community programs. Community resistance and concern for protection are other barriers that must be met.

Standards

Statement of the Problem

Lack of public support and confidence in the juvenile justice system can affect the system's ability to plan, program, and treat youth. For example, if the public perceives that the system is too lenient, they may demand legislation which waives youth to adult court or requires specific lengths of stay in juvenile correction facilities. This would decrease the discretionary powers of the system by removing some of the decision making authority for particular youth. In order for the juvenile justice system to convince the public that it is: a) operating efficiently and effectively, b) delivering services appropriately, c) monitoring itself, and d) able to maintain discretion over the population it serves, some type of mechanism needs to be developed and implemented. One way to give such assurance is through the development and application of standards which visibly manifests concern for accountability. The development and application of standards has significant merit beyond convincing the public of the system's accountability: as a minimum, overall quality of services are enhanced. For the purposes of this record of our forum, however, we present standards development and application as a defense mechanism against a demanding public because that was the context in which forum participants suggested it.

Strategy and Its Implementation

This strategy deals with the development of standards for correctional departments or divisions because it is this portion of the system which primarily deals with the serious and violent juvenile offender. The development and use of standards as measurable objectives mandates a minimum level of performance to be met. This will assure that certain services are provided, a minimum level of care is maintained and that the system has the ability to continually monitor its progress and ensure that services are provided according to a firm set of rules and regulations.

Every state has the ability to develop their own standards by examining pertinent issues and selecting those which warrant a minimum requirement of care. However, this can be a time consuming process and one which relies upon the input and commitment of personnel. If time and personnel are at a premium, the second way to develop standards is by using established national standards, such as American Bar Association Standards, American Correctional Association/Commission on Accreditation for Corrections Manual of Standards, and Standards for the Administration of Justice prepared by the National Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. In either case, the state should seek assistance of an outside group, i.e., an accrediting body, to review standards development and implementation.

Regardless of the manner in which standards are developed, there are a number of tasks which should be completed in the process. The first task in this strategy is for the Administrator of Corrections to make a decision and commitment to initiate standard development and implementation. Because it can be a lengthy process, the commitment by the Administrator is critical to ensure that once the process has begun, it will be carried out and completed. Once this decision is made, the Administrator selects two or three staff members to work with him throughout the process.

A corresponding step is to determine which part or parts of corrections will undergo the development and consequent scrutiny for standards. It is ideal to have all operations undergo standard development to ensure consistency, comprehensive efficiency and accountability. However, this may not be practical due to the amount of time, personnel, or funds necessary, and therefore the decision may be made for only specific activities to undergo standard development. Regardless of the scope the next steps follow.

After assigning staff to the task and determining which part(s) of corrections will undergo standard development, the remainder of the staff who will be affected by this change should be notified of the process. Because staff are ultimately responsible for insuring that standards are maintained, their support in the process is essential. They must be made fully aware of the purpose and intended results. Support also should be solicited from other players in the correctional system:

- The Governor and legislators are important to the process to: a) help obtain additional funds necessary, and b) support the effort with the public;
- Budget Directors will be involved in obtaining funds for upgrading services and programs to meet the minimum level of requirements of standards; and
- Public at-large will be involved because it is through their support and approval of the standards development process that funds will be available to upgrade services and programs and that the division will be able to maintain discretionary powers.

The standard development process can take between five months to one year to complete depending upon: a) the actual portion(s) of the system involved, b) availability of staff to devote time to this effort, c) manner in which standards are developed, e.g., using national standards or developing specific standards, and d) the changes which must be made to meet those minimum requirements of care. The process includes:

- Reviewing existing standards from other states and agencies to accept or reject specific standards as appropriate;

- Rewriting of accepted standards in precise form for applicability to own state or developing own standards based upon the goals and objectives and components of the organization;
- Defining and writing measurable compliance expectations;
- Creating an instrument for reporting compliance expectations;
- Testing the instruments;
- Creating a schedule for response time to distribute standards; and
- Scheduling monitoring of the process.

After staff have had an opportunity to review and respond to the distributed standards and the above indicated steps have been completed, the compliance test begins. This involves: listing the necessary items for compliance; the expected timeline to reach each compliance; an identification of personnel who are responsible for reaching compliance; and a monitoring schedule for the system. From this point onward, the system is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to insure that compliance is met.

Considerations in a Standard Development Strategy

The support of staff is paramount to the success of standards development. The concept of standard development and implementation should be presented in a targeted, deliberate manner to encourage staff understanding and cooperation. While the process can aid staff in understanding their roles and responsibilities by the development of written policies, procedures, and job functions, standard development is a critical process which can be painful because of the changes it may bring about, e.g., it may be necessary to eliminate personnel, change roles or responsibilities, or change employment qualifications. Therefore, the process must be well defined and must initially gain the support of staff in order to be successful.

If a state chooses to develop in-house standards, the priority, emphasis and importance given to the individual standards will be a major consideration in the design phase. The question of whether all standards will receive the same emphasis must be answered. This would include an examination of the goals, objectives and priorities of the activity, the major problems to be solved, and the results to be achieved.

A primary barrier to standard development and implementation is the cost inherent in the process. While the development of the actual standards may not be costly, the upgrading of services and programs

to meet the upgraded standards can be a very costly process. Although the thirty percent of OJJDP funds can be used, certain costs are implicit in carrying out the mandate of standards development and implementation. It is for this reason that the state or agency budget officers must be willing to commit to this process.

These barriers or constraints should be viewed in context with the benefits which will be gained from standards development. The positive results achieved through standards development can be an asset when seeking support for this process and in overcoming some of the barriers. The most significant benefits of the process include:

- Standard development and utilization promotes and improves the management of the system by establishing specific guidelines;
- Staff have a better understanding of the service structure, their roles and the system as a whole;
- System efficiency increases as it regulates and monitors itself;
- Public relations improve because the system adheres to certain standards of service delivery;
- Youth are guaranteed a specific level of care;
- System change is promoted on both the short and long term;
- Self-regulation mitigates against undesirable legislation; and
- Litigation insurance is guaranteed, and therefore this process is seen as very cost effective.

There are, as stated previously, certain barriers which must be overcome. Once implemented, however, standards are a means of improving resources to provide better care for clients and demonstrating accountability to the public.

Development of Dispositional Guidelines

Statement of Problem

Correctional administrators, police, prosecutors, and the court system in particular have considerable discretion in the exercise of their functions. Attempts to limit their discretion take the form of legislative mandates requiring specific length of stay guidelines, transfer of decision making from one system component to another, or removal of jurisdiction over a specific type of juvenile offender. Although discretion for each system component varies from state to state, the underlying concern of how much discretion to allow each component is generated from questions such as: Can a system which is intended to provide services to "rehabilitate" an offender be expected to provide public protection? The follow-up question then becomes who should have the discretion for this population and what level of discretion should it be? One viable way to insure that discretion is maintained with appropriate system components is to develop written approaches and mechanisms which mandate that specific dispositions be made under certain circumstances.

Strategy and Its Implementation

This strategy speaks to the development of written materials, criteria and guidelines which define the discretionary powers of each component of the system under specific sets of circumstances. The guidelines also will indicate what set of actions should be taken for youth who have committed specific acts. This enables the system components to develop and define their discretionary powers and to know their limitations.

The first step in developing dispositional guidelines is to enlist the assistance of the primary and secondary decision makers in the juvenile justice system. These individuals will develop the guidelines and criteria which guide the system's operation. Administrators and directors in the juvenile corrections division also should be included in this process. These are the individuals who will need to accept the written guidelines and criteria in order for them to be effective. Therefore, their input and acceptance are important to insuring adherence to the rules and guidelines. It is critical that individuals who are willing to evaluate and, if necessary, support systems change are involved. These individuals can be convened by a knowledgeable, influential, yet indirect participant in the system.

States will vary in their approaches to this issue. However, there are certain activities inherent to any attempt to develop written dispositional criteria and guidelines. They are as follows:

1. Analyze the current decision making process;
 - a. identify the manner in which administrative decisions occur;
 - b. identify current decision making points in the process;
 - c. identify individuals making the decisions - is each decision maker in the system given discretionary power consistent with the defined role;
 - d. identify existent guidelines which promote proportionality of sanctions to offense;
 - e. identify the relative uniformity of dispositions: are there gross examples of inequity based on categories of age, sex, offense;
 - f. identify the monitoring process of decision making; and
 - g. identify the manner in which decisions are reported.
2. Gather information and request help from other states grappling with the same issues, - contact those states that have made progress in addressing the situation, e.g., Arizona and Illinois;
3. Develop written criteria and guidelines for voluntary acceptance of philosophy and implementation of the proposed directions;
4. Determine the problem areas which will exist based upon the frame of reference of the guidelines and the analysis of the current decision making process;
5. Engage volunteers to track legislation and public opinion to watch for formal limits being considered and placed on discretion in decision making; and
6. Develop and effectuate an evaluation system for the proposed process.

The process should result in a series of guidelines which indicate where discretionary powers exist in the system, who has discretion, and under what set of conditions would certain actions occur in the system. The product of the effort is a package of materials which will indicate to the public and the system components how the system works, who makes decisions, and under what certain conditions do specific actions occur. The desired outcome of this strategy is to preserve the integrity of the juvenile justice system at all decision making points.

Public Education

Statement of Problem

The media influences public opinion, often through sensationalized and misleading stories. Public opinion, in turn, influences legislation, funding decisions and policy. Juvenile crime in general and the violent juvenile offender in particular receive considerable media attention, some of which overstates the seriousness and pervasiveness of the problem. The public perceives that juvenile crime and the number of serious juvenile offenders are extensive. For example, the National Public Opinion Survey, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, in the Spring of 1982, indicated that 87% of those people sampled believed violent juvenile crime increased substantially during the 1960's and early 1970's. However, the best available data suggest that it has stabilized and may have even declined in the last few years.¹ The purpose of the public education strategy is to counter balance the media attention with accurate information about juvenile crime and serious and violent offenders. The goal is to positively influence both the media and public opinion.

Strategy and Its Implementation

One specific strategy to educate the media and the public is to conduct a forum or seminar intended to correct misleading information and portray a more factual account of the serious and violent juvenile offender. The forum would concentrate on presenting a description of the juvenile justice system and the nature and extent of serious and violent crime by juveniles through the use of factual data and information.

There are three initial steps in preparing for the forum. First, determine issues which are of major concern to the public, e.g., numbers of serious and violent juveniles; the nature of serious and violent acts; and/or a belief in the leniency of the system. Second, determine what specific information needs to be collected, organized, and synthesized for presentation and discussion at the forum.

The third step is to determine who should be invited to attend the forum. This is particularly critical because it is the selection of the audience which will guide the education of the public and will insure that the goals of the forum are attained. Three groups comprise the specific audience which the forum will attempt to educate: the media, legislators and the general public.

¹ M. Joan McDermott, Facts About Violent Juvenile Crime. National Council on Crime and Delinquency (Grant 79-JN-AX-0012). July, 1982.

- Media representatives should include print as well as electronic media, editors as well as reporters and small weekly journals as well as large daily newspapers.
- Legislators should be selected on a bi-partisan basis and should include those in general leadership positions as well as those in key committee positions regarding the juvenile justice system.
- General Public should include anyone from the public who wishes to attend.

There are, however, other groups who help to form public opinion and they should be invited to attend. These include:

- Local politicians (City Councilmen, Board of Supervisor members, Commissioners, etc.)
- Judiciary
- Legislators
- State Correctional Administrators
- Law Enforcement Personnel (Sheriffs, Chiefs of Police, Juvenile Officers)
- Special Interest Groups (senior citizens, child advocacy groups)

Who to invite to the forum will vary from state to state, and jurisdiction to jurisdiction depending upon the issues and problems you want to discuss.

Concurrent with these decisions is the designation of a forum convener. To avoid the appearance of being self-serving, it is important that the convener not be involved in direct service provision. The convener serves a number of different purposes. First, he is responsible for setting an agenda for the meeting and ensuring that all issues are properly aired. He also must be able to manage the preparation, logistics, and ultimate conduct of the forum. Finally, he places himself in a highly visible position on an issue of great public interest. He must be able to relate to the public and respond to this interest. For those reasons, the selection of a convener is critical to the overall success of the forum.

Prior to the forum, the information to be used during the forum presentation will need to be collected. Specific information that will help to clarify and correct the misinformation or misrepresentation which has permeated the public consciousness can be gathered from a variety of sources such as: the state criminal justice system; state aggregate data sources; federal reports and monographs; FBI Uniform Crime Reports; relevant national research projects; and attitudinal surveys or research studies performed in the state.

Following the collection of the relevant data and materials, a presentation should be developed which is factual, while at the same time interesting, thought provoking and newsworthy. The presentation should be geared towards obtaining media attention. This will help to achieve the purpose of the forum - education of the media and the public. Once all final preparations (e.g., site selection, invitations, press packages, publicity, finalization of forum presentation) are completed, the convenor assembles the audience for the forum.

There are a few key points which should be remembered during the presentation.

1. Know the audience and target the presentation accordingly. Make sure that all information is accurate, easily understandable, and that it directly corresponds to the goals of the forum.
2. Use visual aids for ease of transmitting information. For example, a simple client flow exhibit can be a very useful aid in describing the processing of juveniles through the system. Avoid complicated flow charts.
3. Present information which is reactive to certain events and proactive to future events based on the data projections. Be prepared to respond to these reactions and questions by being intimately familiar with the data presented.
4. Give the audience the opportunity to learn information and facts about the juvenile justice system and the population being discussed. Encourage questions to increase their knowledge.

The public education strategy should be actively supported by correctional and judicial personnel in order to ensure its success. The data presented is the result of their work and efforts and collection of the data is dependent on their cooperation. Likewise, correctional and judicial personnel should assist in answering questions about the information presented, either during or after the forum. Therefore, their presence at the forum and cooperation in planning, implementing and following the forum is important. Also, the forum can serve as a reminder to juvenile justice system personnel that it is their responsibility to see that accurate information concerning their activities needs to be presented on a continuous basis.

The forum can be as costly or inexpensive as warranted. Activities such as public relations, data collection, facility rental, and convener fees may require money if donation and volunteer efforts are not possible. The forum may incur travel costs for the convenor and other participants; if a series of forums are to be held

throughout the state. And finally, the follow-up monitoring and evaluation of the forum impact may generate personnel costs. However, the costs of this strategy can probably be covered by the thirty percent OJJDP allocations.

Considerations in the Public Education Strategy

A consideration with the public education strategy is exposure of the juvenile justice system. Anytime the system is opened up for public view and discussion, particularly in a group setting, there is the potential for making the system weaknesses more visible. Adequate preparation and anticipation of major public concerns will help to avoid having the system's weaknesses as the dominant theme of the forum.

The development of clear expectations and presentation of accurate information enhance the possibility of achieving the desired goal of the public education strategy. The thorough preparation and interesting delivery of precise data is the key to this strategy.