

**SafeFutures Training/Technical Assistance Coordination**

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**Final Program Report**

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**Overview**

SafeFutures challenged local juvenile justice, child welfare, health/mental health, education, economic development and social service systems, and faith and community based organizations to work together and to work better for youth and families.

SafeFutures communities have made innovations in services and changes in systems to integrate prevention, intervention, treatment, and graduated sanctions. To assist communities, OJJDP made significant commitments to local capacity building. This included national training and technical assistance resources and dedication of at least \$50,000 per year of local grant funds for training and technical assistance.

Through this grant, OJJDP supported the work of a national training and technical assistance coordinator for SafeFutures. To assist communities to make the most of capacity building resources, the coordinator worked with sites to:

- Identify local training and technical assistance resources and needs,
- Develop annual training and technical assistance plans linked to objectives,
- Select and work effectively with training and technical assistance providers,
- Leverage and broker additional training and technical assistance resources, and
- Exchange information and expertise across SafeFutures sites and with other communities.

Coordination supported a multi-level approach to community capacity building. For example, one SafeFutures site received three types of training and technical assistance to build an inter-agency case management/care coordination system for high risk youth. Coordinated training and technical assistance included: 1) strategic consultation for decision makers on information sharing policies and funding options; 2) technical assistance for managers and supervisors on procedures and accountability; and 3) training for line staff on assessment, service planning, and follow-up.

The overall goals of SafeFutures training and technical assistance coordination were to support grantees to achieve OJJDP and community goals and objectives for the initiative and to build local capacity to continue to strengthen services for youth and families and improve service systems beyond the grant period. Training and technical assistance coordination accomplished these goals in the context of the following objectives:

1. Deliver and broker training and technical assistance on OJJDP priorities.
2. Plan, coordinate and follow up on site-specific training and technical assistance.
3. Develop training and technical assistance resources.
4. Facilitate cross-site training and technical assistance.
5. Provide information for OJJDP SafeFutures team.

## **Accomplishments and Challenges**

### ***Deliver and broker training and technical assistance on OJJDP priorities.***

The coordinator assisted all sites to focus training and technical assistance resources on the OJJDP priority areas of systems change, service integration, use of data, and sustainability.

Systems change: The training and technical assistance coordinator worked closely with Systems Improvement Training and Technical Assistance Project staff and consultants to support sites' work in this area. The coordinator:

- Provided Boston SafeFutures with information on the operations of governance boards in Savannah, Georgia and Kansas City, Missouri; recommendations for developing agendas for early meetings of a new neighborhood governance board. Background information was also provided for new Systems Improvement Training and Technical Assistance Project (SITTAP) staff on the work of Boston SafeFutures to establish a neighborhood governance board for youth and family services.
- Assisted Contra Costa County SafeFutures to identify consultants to work with the Juvenile Services and Programs Advisory Committee to strengthen system of care planning, with County probation and behavioral health managers on joint planning, and with County officials and community leaders on collaborative

program and fiscal strategies. These activities were coordinated with SITTAP consultation.

- Provided Fort Belknap SafeFutures with consultation on strategies for making stronger connections among Tribal, federal and state programs; worked with SITTAP consultants to assist Fort Belknap SafeFutures to become the first Tribal program to successfully complete the state licensing process for a treatment facility for adolescents; and provided information and recommendations to support the work of Fort Belknap SafeFutures to advocate for State of Montana policy changes to better serve Native American families and reduce the over-representation of Native American youth in state corrections facilities.
- Assisted Imperial County with the development of new staff positions to perform planning tasks and support the governance function of the County's Interagency Steering Committee and worked with the SITTAP consultant on strategies to obtain commitments from key leaders to maintain inter-agency governance and planning as well as recent policy changes beyond the SafeFutures program grant period.
- Provided St. Louis SafeFutures with information on approaches to linking enhanced services for high risk youth with policy changes and training standards. Provided information on media strategies to support advocacy to make youth

services a higher budget priority and to shift the media's negative portrayals of youth.

- Assisted Seattle SafeFutures and the SITTAP consultant to identify consultants with expertise in graduated sanctions and media strategies to provide technical assistance for the local plan to re-invest funds from secure confinement to prevention, early intervention and intermediate sanctions.

Supporting the work of SafeFutures sites and SITTAP on systems changes challenged the coordinator to work creatively and quickly and to use a broad network of consultant and information resources. However, there were no significant obstacles to making progress on this objective.

Service integration: The training and technical assistance coordinator recruited an expert consultant and has worked with him to assist three sites to put in place integrated case management linking juvenile justice, behavioral health, education, youth development and faith and community based services to meet the immediate and dynamic needs of youth and their families. The coordinator delivered and brokered training for cross-agency care coordination teams, strategic consultation on management and fiscal strategies for those teams, and technical assistance for developing care coordination procedures and tools. For example, the coordinator:

- Provided tools and recommendations to assist Boston SafeFutures with the development of co-located services for youth on probation and parole.
- Assisted Contra Costa SafeFutures to identify a consultant to provide training and technical assistance for Probation Department and community case managers working as a team with gang-involved offenders and to set standards and procedures for integrated services.
- Provided strategic consultation and brokered clinical consultation to assist Fort Belknap SafeFutures to develop an inter-agency case management team. Provided information on and sample policies for consent for sharing information across agencies.
- Assisted Imperial County SafeFutures to address inter-agency team staff changes and to put in place ongoing operational policies. Made recommendations for integrating services provided by outreach workers and case managers.
- Provided information resources and recommended consultants to assist St. Louis SafeFutures to improve case management services for high risk youth.
- Presented information on care coordination concepts and practices for staff of the Seattle SafeFutures Youth Center. Facilitated contacts with programs working to integrate services for immigrant youth in other communities.

Integration of services does not, in and of itself, assure that programs are effective or automatically address gaps in services. As a result, the coordinator has also provided and brokered training and technical assistance to support service enhancements and on strategies for addressing service gaps. In particular, SafeFutures has challenged communities to strengthen and expand services for high risk youth offenders. Additionally, probation departments and faith and community based organizations have faced obstacles to coordinating services with school and behavioral health systems, including attitudinal barriers and related concerns about information sharing.

During the first two years of the initiative, SafeFutures sites focused services primarily, and in some cases exclusively, on prevention and early intervention with lower risk youth. The coordinator worked with sites to broaden the focus to include graduated sanctions and related services for higher risk youth. During the final three years of demonstration funding, research-based information and contacts with effective programs in other communities assisted sites to develop and refine new sanctions and services for serious, chronic and violent offenders.

Use of data: The training and technical assistance coordinator worked with national and local evaluators and OJJDP staff to encourage and assist sites to use information collected for the SafeFutures evaluation database in decision making, program management and service delivery. The coordinator provided information on the

evaluation database and its potential uses for consultants working with sites and for site staff and collaborative partners. The coordinator has:

- Provided recommendations for Boston SafeFutures on the re-design of their local evaluation plan with an emphasis on interim outcome measures.
- Consulted with Contra Costa County SafeFutures staff, local evaluators and technical assistance providers on strategies for improving data collection, providing data analysis information to service providers in a timely manner, and coordinating evaluation and training efforts focused on documentation and data collection.
- Worked with Fort Belknap SafeFutures staff, local evaluators, and SITTAP consultants to use data on SafeFutures programs to identify priorities for sustainability and to prepare a report for the Tribal government on youth and family service needs and strengths.
- Assisted Imperial County SafeFutures to develop the scope of work for new local evaluators emphasizing collection and analysis of data for program management purposes and linking the SafeFutures database and a new Medicaid billing system.
- Provided information for St. Louis SafeFutures on the State of Missouri's juvenile justice needs assessment management information system and recommendations



for linking the SafeFutures database with that system. Identified consultants to assist with that process.

- Assisted Seattle SafeFutures to identify consultants with juvenile justice expertise to provide technical assistance on analyzing data for use in Seattle's plan to re-invest detention and placement resources in early intervention.

The provision and brokering of training and technical assistance on use of data required the coordinator to address resistance on the part of some staff in all sites to collection of data. To address this challenge, the coordinator worked with site staff, local and national evaluators, and OJJDP staff to find ways to demonstrate immediate, practical uses of analyzed data. Additionally, the coordinator provided sites with sample tools and reports to make data collection as efficient and as meaningful for staff as possible.

Sustainability: The coordinator provided resource information to sites on options for expanding and diversifying sources of funding for services. When sites identified specific fiscal strategies they wanted to pursue, the coordinator recruited consultants with expertise in those areas to provide technical assistance. The coordinator delivered and brokered training and technical assistance on key components of sustainability, including data and sustainability, setting priorities, fiscal strategies, structural and governance concerns, and sustaining leadership and professional development. For example, the coordinator:

- Worked with SITTAP staff to provide Boston SafeFutures with strategic consultation on development of the neighborhood governance board and provided information on potential funding opportunities for Boston's Day Reporting Center.
- Assisted Contra Costa County SafeFutures to identify consultants to provide technical assistance on maximizing Medicaid billing for coordinated County probation and behavioral health services for youth, and building the capacity of community-based organizations to get access to Medicaid funds.
- Worked with SITTAP consultants and site staff to identify governance options for Fort Belknap SafeFutures programs that have operated under the auspices of the community college during the grant period. Recommended non-grant funding sources (Medicaid and Title IVE billing systems and revenue generation by programs through contracts for services and through community-owned, youth-run businesses) for youth and family services.
- Coordinated training and technical assistance for Imperial County SafeFutures on ongoing governance of inter-agency services, training standards for inter-agency staff, approaches to billing Medicaid for care coordination services, and management information systems to inform policy makers and facilitate billing. Made recommendations on ways to re-direct existing staff and other resources.

- Provided St. Louis SafeFutures with information on how other communities have used data, community organizing and media strategies to successfully advocate for allocation of more general fund dollars for youth services and identified potential consultants to assist with efforts in those areas.
- Recommended consultants to assist Seattle SafeFutures with revenue and cost projections, governance options, and media strategies to support the local plan for re-investing existing resources in early intervention services for youth.

Technical assistance helped most sites to develop plans for allocating new resources to sustain SafeFutures accomplishments. These new resources include increased revenue from federal and state funding streams such as Medicaid, Title IVE, and juvenile justice and behavioral health block grants. Sites have re-directed local staff, however, they have been able to re-allocate only relatively small amounts of existing local funds. Lack of local revenue in four sites, categorical funding requirements in all sites, and high fixed costs for detention centers and other state and local mandates in all sites have combined to make re-allocation of existing funds challenging.

***Plan, coordinate and follow up on site-specific training and technical assistance.***

For each SafeFutures community, training and technical assistance was a critical element of local progress to improve services and systems for youth and families. Site

staff state that training and technical assistance helped communities to achieve SafeFutures goals and objectives. Moreover, training and technical assistance helped to build skills and provide tools that will benefit communities beyond the SafeFutures grant period.

Training and technical assistance coordination systematically assisted SafeFutures communities to define training and technical assistance needs, plan strategies for addressing those needs, and get access to required resources. This has been accomplished through ongoing assessment and re-assessment of training and technical assistance needs and resources with sites, OJJDP staff and technical assistance providers; development and refinement of training and technical assistance plans; and coordination of and follow up on training and technical assistance.

Site-specific coordination assisted SafeFutures communities to make the most of the initiative's training and technical assistance resources and to set training and technical assistance as an ongoing priority. It had been a low priority during the first year of the initiative when site staff reported that finding, requesting, and using training and technical assistance resources was "more trouble than it was worth." They found one time training sessions on categorical topics to be only of limited use.

Beginning in the second year of the initiative, the coordinator worked with each site to develop a clear understanding of each community's objectives and to define training and technical assistance priorities and specific plans for addressing those

priorities. An interactive assessment tool guided the development of annual training and technical assistance plans for each site. Plans linked each priority to specific training and technical assistance strategies, providers, time lines, and outcomes. The coordinator worked with each site to update and make changes to plans, as needed.

Site plans reflected the needs and resources of each SafeFutures community. Rural Imperial County used national and local training and technical assistance resources to schedule monthly training sessions for staff from agencies and organizations working with youth and families. Seattle pooled SafeFutures training and technical assistance resources with other City of Seattle, King County, and foundation funds. Ft. Belknap linked training opportunities with tribal community college credits.

All SafeFutures site plans for training and technical assistance directly addressed objectives set in strategic plans to assist communities to make discernible progress. SafeFutures measured the outcomes of training and technical assistance not only by increases in knowledge but, more importantly, by practical application. In addition to assisting sites to address OJJDP priorities (discussed above), coordination supported progress on local objectives. For example:

- Information on approaches in other communities informed the structure of Boston's governance board.
- Training strengthened skills of Contra Costa County staff providing intensive

services that reduced recidivism rates for youth released from secure confinement.

- Training and technical assistance helped Ft. Belknap to integrate traditional tribal approaches and contemporary therapeutic interventions in the Youth Ranch horse program which reduced the number of youth in out of home placement.
- Training on data collection and analysis assisted Imperial County law enforcement agencies to put in place a system for tracking gang crime on an ongoing basis.
- Training and information resources helped St. Louis develop new, gender-specific services for young women offenders.
- Training assisted Seattle to increase culturally and linguistically appropriate services for underserved immigrant youth.

The training and technical assistance coordinator also worked with sites on continuing staff and leadership development as a key aspect of sustaining SafeFutures accomplishments beyond the program grant period. OJJDP resources have assisted sites to significantly increase training opportunities for staff of local and Tribal government agencies, school systems, and community-based organizations. The coordinator assisted sites with development of ongoing training plans focused on local priorities. For example, the coordinator:

- Provided tools and recommendations for the work of Boston SafeFutures to identify inter-agency training needs, develop an inter-agency training plan, and pool resources across agencies and programs for training.
- Assisted Contra Costa SafeFutures to identify a consultant who is working with staff and collaborative partners on developing training standards linked to state funding streams for County and community staff working with high risk youth and families.
- Provided information for Fort Belknap SafeFutures and Imperial County SafeFutures staff and collaborative partners on a curriculum for training youth and family service workers that was developed by Cornell University for New York State and adapted for use by community colleges in California.
- Provided recommendations for the staff and leadership development elements of the Vision for Children at Risk plan being carried out in St. Louis and Seattle's Reinvesting in Youth plan.

Additionally, the coordinator provided informal technical assistance and facilitated “coaching” by other consultants for SafeFutures staff and collaborative partners taking on new leadership and management roles. In an unanticipated outcome of SafeFutures, individuals from target communities who have had limited formal experience with

leadership and management have assumed new leadership roles in local government agencies and community-based organizations. Community members with leadership skills, understanding of the community, and strong community relationships have moved into positions previously held by non-residents with more formal educational and professional credentials.

The coordinator and consultants supported these individuals and provided “mentoring” to assist them with moving from working for community-based organizations to government agencies, working with colleagues who have had more formal educational opportunities, taking on new responsibilities, and other challenges. The coordinator and consultants also assisted directors of local government agencies to work effectively with these new leaders, support continuing education opportunities, and address workplace diversity issues. In two sites, this has resulted in new human resources policies that will continue beyond the program grant period.

Several sites also found that staff teams working with higher risk youth are most effective when the teams include former gang members and other individuals who have overcome the challenges facing youth offenders. They have faced some challenges in hiring and working with these staff. The training and technical assistance coordinator has provided information resources and consultation in this area. For example, the coordinator provided two sites with an OJJDP publication and sample policies from other communities on screening the criminal records of staff working with youth. Those sites have incorporated the information provided in personnel policies.



The dynamic nature of communities challenged the coordinator to respond to changing needs and opportunities in each SafeFutures site. This required regular contact with SafeFutures staff and collaborative partners to learn about the local communities, issues, and dynamics.

***Develop training and technical assistance resources.***

The coordinator worked with OJJDP training and technical assistance providers to make national resources designated for SafeFutures as effective as possible. Before the initiative began, OJJDP provided funds as part of ongoing grants to a range of training and technical assistance providers to assist SafeFutures sites. These providers had developed training models that did not necessarily address the specific needs and situations of SafeFutures communities.

In some cases, training and technical assistance providers worked with the coordinator to adjust workshop content and formats to address local priorities and to incorporate and reflect the geographic, economic, cultural, and other realities of SafeFutures sites. For example, the National Mentoring Center developed a new workshop to meet Seattle's need for training on culturally appropriate approaches to mentoring in immigrant communities. The Strengthening Families Project Multi-Cultural Parenting Program used information provided by the coordinator on local demographics and programs to tailor workshops and adjusted the length of workshop sessions. The

Spergel model training and technical assistance provider worked closely with the coordinator on strategies for working with SafeFutures communities.

It was more difficult for other providers to make adjustments. For example, Comprehensive Strategy training and technical assistance was designed to support a year long planning process but made available when OJJDP time lines gave SafeFutures sites less than six months to complete strategic plans. Although sites used Comprehensive Strategy concepts and materials, provision of technical assistance was problematic. Four sites benefited from Boys & Girls Club of America workshop training on working with gang involved youth. However, sites chose not to participate in ongoing technical assistance because it required collection of specialized data and use of a special database at a time when sites were finding it challenging to meet SafeFutures evaluation database requirements.

The coordinator also worked with OJJDP to develop new resources and identified new providers to assist sites in areas not addressed by designated OJJDP resources. The coordinator assisted OJJDP to develop the Systems Improvement Training and Technical Assistance Project (SITTAP) and worked closely with the SITTAP grantee and consultants. Most of the originally designated national training and technical assistance resources were organized in agency-specific and problem-focused categories, just as services for youth have been. SITTAP has helped SafeFutures communities to develop new policies, change resource allocations, coordinate services, clarify roles and responsibilities, and resolve conflicts in order to better serve youth and families.

The coordinator responded to site requests for assistance to find training and technical assistance providers who were culturally competent and who were or had recently been practitioners working in the field. Training and technical assistance is most effective when it addresses and incorporates cultural diversity. This includes attention to the dynamics of race, language and culture in learning styles, communication, and content. SafeFutures sites, providers, and the coordinator worked together to build capacity for cultural competency.

Sites found training and technical assistance provided by practitioners to be particularly helpful. The coordinator recruited the director of an inter-agency case management team, director of a social services department who was leading his city's systems change effort, staff from intensive home supervision and gender-specific programs, leaders of programs providing alternatives to incarceration, and other practitioners to assist sites. Site staff and collaborative partners stated that they benefited from the "realistic perspectives" and "concrete ideas and recommendations" provided by practitioners.

Additionally, the coordinator developed information resources to assist sites. For example, the coordinator:

- Co-authored two publications on care coordination strategies;
- Prepared and updated a resource list posted on the OJJDP SafeFutures Web Site;

- Used the SafeFutures listserv to provide informative articles and information on helpful web sites;
- Provided individual sites with articles, studies, and other documents specifically related to their work; and
- Provided sites with sample tools, such as forms and file formats.

***Facilitate cross-site training and technical assistance.***

The coordinator planned and facilitated four cross-site meetings designed to advance the overarching goals and objectives of SafeFutures. National evaluators credit the cross-site meetings with clarifying objectives and expectations and informing the direction of the initiative as a whole and in each site. These cross-site meetings:

- Provided a guided self assessment and planning tool for sites' work on systems change;
- Presented training and provided a forum for information exchange on services for very high risk youth and gender-specific services for young women;
- Featured an interactive training exercise on coordinating services for high risk youth;
- Introduced an expert practitioner to present a workshop demonstrating effective use of data in an inter-agency program for a cross-site meeting;
- Presented an interactive planning exercise to assist sites to develop sustainability action plans; and

- Facilitated identification of lessons learned and recommendations for other communities, based on the SafeFutures experience.

After each cross-site meeting, sites reported increased activity in the areas addressed, used tools and information introduced at the meeting, and requested follow up training and technical assistance. Cross-site meetings played a role in an increased emphasis in SafeFutures sites on graduated sanctions and related services for serious, violent and chronic offenders; new fiscal strategies; integrated services; and use of data for evaluation, service delivery, and management purposes.

The coordinator facilitated the work of a planning team of site representatives, OJJDP staff, national evaluators, and technical assistance providers for each meeting. During Years 2 and 3 of the initiative, site staff and OJJDP had different priorities for the meetings. Site staff wanted to assure that meetings provided opportunities for sites to learn from each other and from active practitioners from other communities facing challenges similar to the ones in SafeFutures sites. OJJDP staff wanted to focus meeting time on training by outside experts affiliated with research-based models. Agendas were developed to balance these perspectives. By Years 4 and 5, OJJDP staff had shifted their perspective and supported more time for facilitated information sharing and identification of active practitioners to present information from their communities.

Three of the four cross-site meetings took place in or near site locations (San Diego near Imperial County, Seattle, and Ft. Belknap.) "Host" sites shared information on local

accomplishments and challenges related to meeting themes and topics. Panel presentations and visits to site programs were a catalyst for cross-site information sharing and problem solving.

In addition to cross-site meetings, the coordinator facilitated cross-site training and technical assistance through cross-site visits, conference calls, electronic communication, and exchange of tools. The coordinator assisted sites to set objectives for cross-site training and technical assistance, develop agendas, and use information locally. For example,

- Ft. Belknap staff and local evaluators visited Boston to get information to assist in designing the SafeFutures evaluation database.
- Contra Costa County outreach workers visited St. Louis and worked alongside outreach workers there to learn about effective techniques for reaching youth gang members actively involved in violence.
- Ft. Belknap staff visited Imperial County and participated in joint training on care coordination.
- Imperial County's gang intervention team visited OJJDP grantees in Arizona to enhance implementation of the Spergel model.
- Boston local evaluators shared policies, procedures, and forms for getting informed consent to participate in evaluation research which were used by three other sites.

- Ft. Belknap, Imperial County, and St. Louis exchanged assessment and documentation forms and used ideas from the other sites to refine local tools.

This "peer-based" training and technical assistance exchanged among SafeFutures grantees and with other communities was a powerful learning tool. Structured opportunities to exchange information and ideas, to communicate on line, to disseminate materials, and to develop networking relationships assisted grantees to build capacity and to establish support networks.

***Provide information for OJJDP SafeFutures team.***

The training and technical assistance coordinator worked closely with the three OJJDP staff assigned at various times during the grant period as OJJDP SafeFutures coordinator to support the work of the OJJDP SafeFutures team. The training and technical assistance coordinator:

- Maintained regular contact with the OJJDP program coordinator and program managers to exchange information and recommend ways to support sites and solve problems,
- Presented workshops for OJJDP staff on systems improvement and integrated services,
- Planned and facilitated an OJJDP National Conference workshop on SafeFutures,
- Prepared an OJJDP fact sheet on SafeFutures training and technical assistance,

- Prepared content for the OJJDP SafeFutures Web Page, and
- Assisted OJJDP staff to respond to public and other inquiries related to SafeFutures.

As a result of changes in staff and assignments, the OJJDP SafeFutures Program Coordinator and Program Manager positions for three sites changed several times during the grant period. The training and technical assistance coordinator briefed newly assigned staff on cross-site and site-specific activities and issues and assisted OJJDP staff and sites during staff transition periods.

During Years 3 and 4 of the initiative, the training and technical assistance coordinator facilitated the work of OJJDP staff and national evaluators to encourage sites to collect and use evaluation data. The coordinator developed agendas for and participated in site meetings with OJJDP staff and national evaluators on issues related to data collection and use and delivered and brokered technical assistance on using data. This team approach resulted in more data collection and more uses of data in three sites. It would, however, have been more effective if OJJDP staff, training and technical assistance providers, and national evaluators had worked more collaboratively earlier in the initiative.



## **Observations and Recommendations**

SafeFutures broke new ground in federally funded efforts to prevent and respond to juvenile crime and its causes. Rather than simply funding new programs or enhancing existing services, SafeFutures challenged six communities to make fundamental, permanent changes in local and tribal government and community service systems. Other communities and funders planning comprehensive initiatives can benefit from lessons learned during the initiative.

OJJDP and the larger field would benefit from further exploration and documentation of aspects of the SafeFutures experience, including:

- Systems changes and service innovations accomplished through SafeFutures,
- The nature and extent of capacity building achieved through a demonstration project,
- What works and what doesn't work in providing training and technical assistance for comprehensive initiatives,
- What helps and what makes it harder for communities to sustain grant-funded innovations, and
- What SafeFutures tells funders about planning and managing comprehensive initiatives.

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