Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention,
Office of Justice Programs,
U.S. Department of Justice

TRIBAL YOUTH PROGRAM

FOCUS GROUP REPORT

August 30, 2005
Caleo Spa and Resort
Scottsdale, Arizona

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, is committed to providing programming to prevent, reduce, and control juvenile delinquency. The Tribal Youth Program (TYP), established by Congress in 1999, is dedicated solely to the prevention and control of juvenile crime and improvement of the juvenile justice system in Indian country. TYP includes a range of culturally appropriate projects, activities, and funding opportunities to help American Indian and Alaska Native communities reduce, control and prevent juvenile crime; work with court-involved youth; improve juvenile justice systems; prevent use of alcohol and other controlled substances; and develop comprehensive mental health services.

On August 30, 2005 in Scottsdale, Arizona OJJDP convened a group of interested individuals to identify significant youth issues, to discuss the role of government in effectively addressing those issues; and more specifically to share their recommendations on how the Tribal Youth Program can support tribes in responding to areas of concern. Participants included a cross-representation of tribal and federal agency representatives with diverse experience working with Native youth. Most participants had experience working directly with TYP as a grantee (see attached roster of attendees.)

Focus Group Questions and Responses

Through a structured discussion process, the participants responded to a series of focused questions to evaluate the effectiveness of OJJDP's delivery of services through the Tribal Youth Program initiative. The questions and group responses are summarized as follows:

What is your experience in working with OJJDP?

The relationships that have been developed in working with OJJDP on TYP have been good. In particular, the flexibility, the assistance provided to regain the management juvenile issues, and the ability to 'plant a lot of seeds' creates an environment for grantees to move forward over time. OJJDP has helped to deliver ideas for evaluation.

The turnover of grant managers may be a concern that OJJDP should pay close attention to and address. There is a need to develop greater levels of interagency collaboration, with support from all branches of government. Support and collaboration from all branches of government, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Federal Interagency Working Group would increase the ability to address child protection, juvenile suicide, and methamphetamine addiction within tribal communities. Collaboration, ultimately, would greatly enhance grant implementation and lead to successful completion of program goals and objectives.

> *Greatest positives*:
> - Flexibility in programming
> - Openness to engage tribes in program development, through efforts like these focus groups
>
> *Opportunities for improvement*:
> - OJJDP grant manager turnover
> - Interagency collaboration and support for government involvement at the local level
> - Utilize the Federal Interagency Working Group to enhance national collaboration
> - Incorporate Native culture and faith based components

[(x) numbers] indicate the number of similar responses by focus group participants.

Tribes would benefit from focus groups being brought to them for identifying challenges and developing solutions.

It is important to incorporate culture and faith based aspects into youth programs to help youth develop an identity with their native communities.

What are your opinions on the use of cooperative agreements vs. grants? (In particular as they impact tribal sovereignty) AND…Has the change from a grant to a cooperative agreement inhibited your ability to implement your grant?

Grant programs may not always result in measurable accomplishments and documented successes. Cooperative agreements encourage collaboration between the tribe and the funding agency. They may support a closer working relationship and help foster accountability.

The difference between a grant and a cooperative agreement may not be clear to all funded tribes. Questions were raised about whether cooperative agreements provide additional flexibility for program implementation, or if there are additional limitations or requirements with cooperative agreements. For example, clarification was needed on OJJDP's role in grantee hiring of employees.

Communication and working together with the federal government are important components of cooperative agreements (2). There should be a two-way education process between grantees and TYP program managers to enhance the ability to effectively work together (2). Cooperative agreements are beneficial to the evaluation process, as they respect government to government relationships and provide for a high level of accountability. They can also help make programs more realistic and make it easier for a tribe to make necessary changes.

Cooperative Agreements
Greatest positives:
• Cooperative agreements improve collaboration between OJJDP and grantees
• Beneficial to the evaluation process
• Help tribes make adjustments to their strategies
Opportunities for improvement:
• Clearly define expectations for collaborative agreements
• Clarify questions about hiring processes for grantees

With the exception of hiring employees, the participants did not relate any ways the change from grants to cooperative agreements inhibited their ability to implement their grants.

Upon review of the four program categories for TYP, would you make any recommendations for revision of the categories?

Applicants for TYP funding can apply for no more than two of the four TYP categories, which are:

1. Provide prevention services to impact risk factors for delinquency.

2. Provide intervention for court-involved tribal youth.

3. Improve the juvenile justice system.

4. Provide alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs.

[(x) numbers] indicate the number of similar responses by focus group participants.

Discussion comments on categorical recommendations include:

The current program categories do not provide services for those who live off their reservations or for youth not associated with a specific tribe. Prevention is a very important category, with the majority of tribes applying in these categories (one and four) as they appear easier to implement than categories two and three (2). These categories may require a collaborative effort on the part of the tribe and it may take more than three years for the partnerships to develop and the program to demonstrate successful completion of their identified goals. Categories one and four have some overlap, and could possibly include emphasis on traditional and cultural approaches. Additional suggestions included providing language to highlight strategies that emphasize system changes. It was suggested that re-entry programs should be a separate category.

Additional assistance would be helpful in learning about the options available through TYP. Examples of what has worked and programs that might fit under each category should be made available as resources on the website (2). Highlight successful strategies and programs. It was suggested that there

Funding Categories

Greatest positives:
- Categories one and four offer great flexibility
- Good focus on prevention strategies and program development

Opportunities for improvement:
- Fund off-reservation programs to assist Native youth in those areas
- Some programs may require more time to develop necessary partnerships
- Include cultural and traditional approaches to working with youth
- Add a separate category for re-entry programs

be a spreadsheet or matrix available online to assist those looking for ideas on successful programs. Include input from youth and work with *all* youth, not just those that are at-risk.

Encourage partnerships between state agencies and the tribes. Outreach to organizations and state associations might help increase the awareness of available funding and resources for tribal agencies, including law enforcement and Indian health services.

Based on the information provided on the process for delivery of training and technical assistance, would you recommend any improvements or alternate methods of providing outreach to funded tribes?

Training: Recommendations include more in depth hands-on training for processes, including active work sessions at regional meetings to create a logic model for programs. Add time early in the grant process for regional trainings to include time for grantees to meet with OJJDP program managers. More time could be spent working with funded tribes on team building. Notices should be sent out earlier to provide more lead time to plan for training programs and conferences. Topic-specific, core components of training could be provided at scheduled, specific

Training Recommendations
- Involve TYP mangers onsite at the local/tribal level.
- Incorporate additional components for team building
- Provide sufficient advance notice to plan for training programs and conferences

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times each year, with the potential for these core training topics to also be provided in a video or electronic format.

Technical Assistance: Provide for immediate contact between newly funded tribes and OJJDP program managers. Help tribes develop partnerships within communities and provide assistance to support local agencies working together to help one another. TYP managers need to be more involved at the tribal level. Maintain a focus on the implementation and process side of grants. It would help to be notified of due dates for financial and progress reports, receive reminders of upcoming events, and have managers identify key points and recommendations, etc. Assist grantees as they outline their goals and objectives to provide guidance on what is and is not possible within the grant structure.

Technical Assistance
- Make a connection to grantees as soon as possible after awards are made
- Focus on implementation
- Send reminders of training and reporting dates

Administration: Turnover is a significant area of concern, whether the turnover is within OJJDP's staff, within the technical assistance provider agency, or within the tribal community/grantee implementation team. Mechanisms should be put in place for three-way information-sharing between OJJDP, technical assistance providers, and the grantees. In addition, grantees might benefit from the opportunity to communicate with each other (online, website, newsletter, and list-serve). Online resources should include summary information on the funded projects and a showcase of promising practices, identified by categories.

Administration
- Develop a mechanism for maintaining current contact information for managers, TA providers, and grantees
- Create an information-sharing network online, as well as through list-serves and newsletter.

In your experience, what are barriers to effective data collection, evaluation, and progress reporting for tribes?

Overall Comments: Training should discuss actual as well as perceived barriers to data collection and evaluation. Sample evaluation and progress reports, by category, would be helpful (2). OJJDP needs to be clear in providing directions on what is needed for TYP reporting/evaluation to develop guidelines that clarify not only what information is needed, but also relate why reporting and evaluation are important. A lot can be learned from mistakes and grantees need to know that mistakes are alright.

Evaluation should be presented in terms and processes that make sense to reduce intimidation about evaluation requirements.

Evaluation: Training and technical assistance on evaluation needs to continue. Evaluation language and steps for implementation are not easily understood by program implementation staff. Evaluation needs to be presented in terms and processes that make sense so people are not afraid of evaluation. It would be important to clarify this during training and to assist in developing evaluation plans during the trainings. Discuss not only

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how to do evaluations, but also discuss how the information is helpful to the tribe as well as to OJJDP (3).

Data Collection: Many times the service population is small, which makes it difficult to gather measurable data. Information sharing and data collection may involve some ethical challenges. Help the tribes discuss and address issues around confidentiality. Assist in setting standards and provide software for data collection.

Progress Reporting: Grantees would like to hear back from TYP managers their progress reports; they want to know the reports are being read (2).

> **Progress Reporting**
> - Provide grantees with recommendations and feedback on their progress and performance measure reporting.

How can OJJDP provide assistance in overcoming barriers to data collection, evaluation and progress reporting?

Overall Comments: Current work being done by OJJDP is successful. The managers provide clear, user-friendly communication. How and when information is presented is as important as what information is presented. Utilize practical, hands-on training sessions that include templates (fill-in forms) (3) on how to collect data, with outcome measures defined for each category. Give

> Give examples and demonstrate what can be learned from data collection and evaluation …
> …how it validates their efforts.

examples and show what they will learn from the data collection/evaluation and what it will do for them – what information will they gain from their efforts. Use DVDs that are interactive, showing 'how-to' information, which would be a cost effective way to provide assistance.

Evaluation: Publish a listing of resources for help with answering questions relating to evaluation. Provide assistance at the local level to help with evaluation needs, including assistance on identifying what information is needed, how to gain the information, and what format to use for recording the information.

> Develop a FAQ site, and more online tools to assist with evaluation.
>
> Show sample formats for creating evaluation models.
>
> Demonstrate methods for using surveys and focus group questions at the local level for data collection.
>
> Create tools for grantees to use in graphing data results

Data Collection: Provide examples of surveys or focus group questions that grantees can use, showing what questions to ask that would provide specific types of data. Provide examples and assistance on how to show the data, including how to make a graph to demonstrate outcomes to the community. Grantees need to be able to send data somewhere, knowing it is confidential, and receive it back in a useful format.

Do the performance measure areas adequately address program successes?

The project's performance measures do not identify risk factors (2). Questions should be written to gain the most honest information. The current measures identify that there was a program and it met basic criteria, however it will not necessarily demonstrate if it was

successful. It does not necessarily include an evaluation piece. In regard specifically to #3, many grantees do not initially have a tribal court or a juvenile justice system. The numbers and percentages do not always accurately reflect the actual results.

How can additional (non-TYP funded) tribes be informed of the funding opportunities available through OJJDP?

The following list represents some of the suggestions given for providing outreach on TYP funding opportunities:

- National Congress of American Indian (NCAI) – youth commission. United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

> Provide regional workshops to help tribes develop strategies, write proposals, and prepare to apply for funding.

- Do not limit outreach to justice venues; include education, tribal radio stations (2), etc.

- Include quotes from grantees as selling points. This helps make the program realistic and achievable for new and potential participants.

- Provide regional workshops to help tribes write proposals and prepare to apply for funding.

- Send solicitation information to program people as well as to tribal council and administration.

- The Department of Justice could have a website dashboard – showing the number of dollars available and how many programs were funded for youth. Encourage interaction and collaboration between the various Justice Department programs, agencies, and departments.

> Utilize existing state and national Native events to provide information on Tribal Youth Programs and OJJDP's commitment to Native youth.

- Provide outreach through the annual providers training the week after Thanksgiving. This is the largest Native event in Alaska.

Do you recognize barriers for sustaining programs beyond TYP funding; and what are your recommendations for overcoming these barriers?

Tribal Strategies: Success equals sustainability. Sustainability needs to be addressed seriously by tribal governments and tribal leadership to discuss and identify priorities (2). The tribes are used to managing projects only when there is money. There are ways to sustain programs without money. Core people, even one person, can make the difference and keep the project moving forward with or without money. Make the tribe depend on the project (2). Tribes also need to work together with each other. Look into the future and plan for future generations.

> Begin talking about sustainability from the application stage and at early training events. Continue to deliver this message throughout the program development process

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Technical Assistance Strategies: Provide guidance at the first grantees meeting on sustainability, which needs more clarification, guidance, and specific examples. Increase to a 4-year grant funding period to provide tribes with a greater opportunity to demonstrate success. Place an emphasis on tribes staying the course to follow their goals and objectives throughout the process of administering the grant. Work a transition plan into the grant implementation process.

Program Strategies: Tribes need to collaborate with internal programs (2) and build TYP around existing programs. Design teams to work together, communicate, and showcase successes. Tribes should do needs assessments to assure programs are addressing specific community problems and concerns. They need to show how TYP is part of the community's whole picture.

Meeting Evaluation

At the end of the focus group the attendees were asked to evaluate the process and provide feedback on their availability to participate with OJJDP's TYP managers in an ongoing process of program evaluation and enhancement. The attendee comments are outlined below:

Positive Aspects of the Focus Group:

The participants were committed to the process and shared their insights candidly and positively. They felt this was an excellent, well-organized meeting. The circle setting allowed everyone to be involved. It was good that everyone had an opportunity to speak on each topic. It was an excellent location for this type of meeting.

Opportunities for Improvement:

More information up front would have been helpful, especially an overview of the need for the process and the TYP issues to be addressed. It would have been good to include tribal youth in the discussions. The issues were complex and more time would have allowed deeper discussion on each topic. It was difficult to work through lunch – a break would have helped regenerate for the afternoon.

Availability to Assist in Future Discussions:

All meeting participants were willing and excited about the opportunity to participate in future meetings and to provide additional feedback as requested by the Tribal Youth Program managers.

Key Findings and Next Steps

Overall Recommendations: The focus group participants were most pleased with the flexibility that was afforded to the grantees in developing and implementing relevant programs within tribal communities. All participants related positive working relationships with OJJDP Program Managers as well as NAAF staff. They felt requests for assistance and information on programming expectations were clearly identified. Specific recommendations included:

- Provide definition on the differences between grants and cooperative agreements, including how the relationship between the tribes and OJJDP are impacted by those differences.

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- Give examples of successful programs and guidelines for development of evaluation and performance measure reporting for current grantees as well as those planning to apply for funding.
- Consider providing opportunities to entities that provide assistance off-reservation to Native people, and emphasize partnerships between state agencies and tribes.
- Lengthen funding periods to allow grantees to form the necessary partnerships for successful completion of their goals.
- Address re-entry programs within the funding categories.
- Identify risk factors in the performance measures.
- Look to National Congress of American Indians, United National Indian Tribal Youth, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to increase awareness of the Tribal Youth Program.

Communication: There were frequent suggestions to enhance the program's web presence to include sample documents and showcase successful strategies. Provide online forms to fill in for reporting, data collection, and performance measures. Create a frequently-asked questions page and provide matrices of strategies by funding category, as well as suggestions for sustainability of programs beyond the TYP funding timeframe. Provide resources on DVD/CD in addition to a web-based format.

Technical Assistance: The participants recognized the need for solid three-way communication between OJJDP program managers, technical assistance providers, and the grantees. Grantees also learn from each other, which can be enhanced by additional venues for networking and information sharing between grantees. This would also be helpful in maintaining current contact information for grantee tribes and providing a communication process for staffing changes between grantees, technical assistance providers, and OJJDP. Grantees would like to receive feedback from TYP managers on their progress reports and the submission of performance measure data. Provide examples and how-to guidelines for completing these reports. Additional opportunities to communicate with each other would include online, website, newsletter, and list-serve.

Training: Provide practical, hands-on training early in the funding cycle and allow the grantees time for one-on-one meetings with OJJDP program managers. Also provide guidance at the orientation training on sustainability and evaluation. Give the grantees as much lead-time as possible to plan for training programs and conferences.

Next Steps: The focus group results clearly substantiate the need for this program in Indian country. OJJDP might consider making outreach opportunities like this focus group a regular part of their strategy to stay in touch with the needs at the local level for TYP grantees, technical assistance providers, and program managers. The many excellent recommendations for ways to enhance the current level of training and technical assistance will guide the program managers to making future improvements to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Tribal Youth Program. The attendees will be provided with copies of the meeting summary and will be called upon as additional questions and concerns arise.

[(x) numbers] indicate the number of similar responses by focus group participants.

Attachment One – Roster of Attendees

Ada Bends
Crow Tribal Youth Program
Crow Tribal Housing Authority (C.T.H.A.)
Crow Agency, MT

Lisa Jaeger
Tribal Youth Program
Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.
Fairbanks, AK

Michelle Chino
Nevada Institute for Children
Las Vegas, NV

Andrea Thomas
Tribal Youth Program
Southeast Regional Health Consortium
Sitka, AK

Michelle Singer
One Sky Center
Oregon Health & Science University
Portland, OR

Lisa Leno
American Indian Prevention Coalition, Inc.
Phoenix, AZ

David Fullerton
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Grand Ronde, OR

Patrick Dallas
Havasupai Tribe
Supai, AZ

Walter Lamar
Lamar & Associates
Arlington, VA

Velma Mason
Department of Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Washington, DC

Esther Moyah
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian
Community
Community Development Department
Scottsdale, AZ

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