

HANDBOOK

for

E JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARDS

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ACQUISITIONS

HANDBOOK

for

JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARDS

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U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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American Correctional Association

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

*United States Department Of Justice
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*

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Introduction

The American Correctional Association, with partial funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, has developed this booklet to help administrators and managers in juvenile justice programs and facilities in the creation and maintenance of community advisory boards. The material presented is applicable to all juvenile justice programs including training schools, detention centers, community residential and non-residential programs, as well as for probation and after-care services. It is based on the premise that a strong and continuing relationship between service providers and the community is an essential ingredient for the successful control of delinquency and for aiding juvenile offenders.

There is evidence that juvenile justice facilities and programs currently have an increased ability to use community resources. A 1990 Gallup Poll shows a strong public spirit of caring, demonstrated by sharp increases in giving and volunteering. Involvement in community service among most segments of society, including impressive increases in volunteering among minority groups, was recorded by the survey. Juvenile justice administrators should therefore strive to use this renewed interest effectively in the formation or rejuvenation of citizen advisory boards.



It is likely that the economic climate in the country will see a reduced amount of government funding for juvenile justice programs; a trend that is already occurring. One way the impact of these funding reductions can be softened, is to make increased use of volunteer boards. Advisory boards can often help generate alternative funding for much needed services, along with providing assistance in many other ways.

This handbook is designed to stimulate and assist agencies and programs in developing advisory boards and to provide help for those who already have boards, but who want to enhance their effectiveness. It can be used as a resource for communities that are interested in helping their local juvenile justice agency and for boards that have either local or state-wide program responsibility.

The information contained in this handbook is meant for *advisory* activity only. Some agency boards combine advisory activity with other statutory functions that are described by local code or administrative order. Combining the separate functions of a multipurpose board is the responsibility of the agency; yet, this handbook can be used for boards with functions such as placement and release.

Although every element of this handbook may not apply to each agency and program, the generic principles described can be used by all. The American Correctional Association offers limited technical assistance for those who wish to proceed beyond the limits of this handbook.

The Purpose of a Community Advisory Board

The role played by a local community-based advisory board is critical to the success of any program that:

- attempts to address local community issues;
- tries to change public policies and laws; and
- provides necessary services for juveniles.

Although some administrators and practitioners have difficulty accepting community input, the simple fact is all juvenile justice programs are part of a community and cannot exist in a vacuum. They must be responsive to their community, and that responsiveness can be enhanced through an ongoing dialogue with a local advisory board.

Following are seven reasons to establish a community advisory board:



To Help Establish a Philosophy and Mission

The first service the board can provide is assistance in the development or revision of the mission statement and philosophy of the agency or program. Often we find that administrators and staff are busy providing necessary immediate services to juveniles, and have not had the time to develop a broader view. They have not identified the role that the agency occupies within the range of services offered in the community. Questions like, "What is it we do that no one else does?" "What is it we do that no one else can do as well?" "What is this agency attempting to accomplish?" or "How does this agency propose to accomplish its mission?" need to be answered and put forth to the community.



The board can assist in the development or revision of the mission statement and philosophy of the agency or program



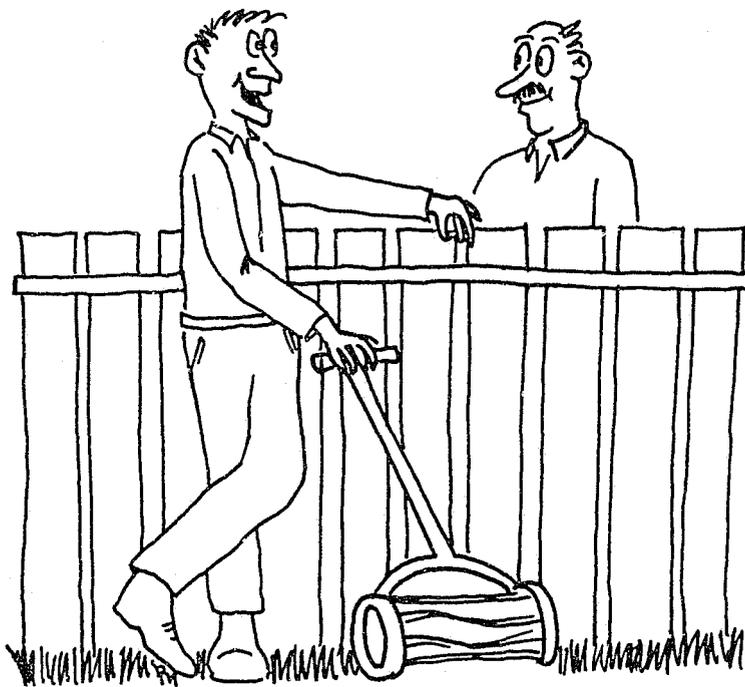
Parent agencies sometimes state a philosophy or mission that does not mesh with actual practice. Often these philosophies lack operational goals and objectives. A board can provide assistance in defining specific goals and objectives and help bridge differences. It is imperative that the agency, from the administrators and staff to each board member, has a complete understanding of the mission. It is equally important for the agency to enable all other service providers within the community to understand the mission, philosophy, and goals of the agency.

To Act as a Communications Link With the Community

The most dangerous approach a program can adopt is to attempt to hide or over-control the facts when dealing with the community. An advisory board can informally tell the community what is going on in the agency. When a board member says, "I visit the program or facility regularly and support their actions," the community listens. This type of ongoing communication creates an opportunity to educate the local community and build support for the program and services the agency provides.

Besides supplying information about the events and progress of the facility or program, board members can discuss how difficult it is to manage delinquent children and how dedicated, patient, and committed staff are in handling these juveniles. Board members talking in their community are a powerful public relations tool.

The board's ability to minimize the damage created when a serious incident occurs is a major contribution. At some time, all programs will have a serious negative incident such as an assault, rape, murder, or escape. When such an event happens, statements made by agency staff or administration appear self-serving. An objective report by a community member balances the good created by the program with the negative incident and is often a lifesaver.



*Board members talking in their community are
a powerful public relations tool.*

To Provide Consultation and Advice

Agencies should, and usually do, encourage open discussion between administration and staff to maintain and improve the program and operations. The board, by providing another point of view and offering suggestions or advice, can expand and improve this process. Since the board is basically advisory, administrators should listen to the board, but are not obligated to use all the board's ideas; nor does a board want such control (or responsibility.)



Agency leadership should listen to the board, but is not obligated to use all of their ideas.

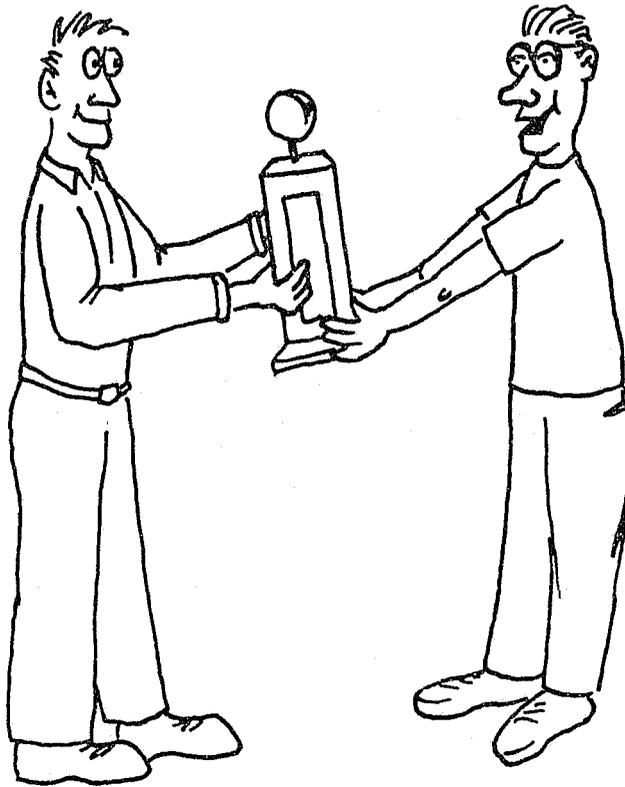


A wise administrator will find ways of partially empowering the board. Without some form of meaningful input, the advisory board will simply exist on paper and there will be no real purpose. The agency must be willing to believe that local community members have valid opinions regarding the operation and business procedures of the program.

There is a certain level of risk associated with allowing boards to affect agency policy and practices. To lessen that risk as much as possible, it is necessary for the agency to select board members carefully and to provide high quality board training (which will be discussed later in this handbook.)

To Provide Support and Encouragement

A board can be the champion of the program. Under the pressure of daily operations, staff often feel isolated and unappreciated. Because of their problems, juveniles constantly send messages of anger and dislike toward the staff. This takes its toll. Administrators under pressure to produce more and spend less, also feel frustrated and alone. A board can take the role of cheerleader to support, encourage, and bolster personnel, which leads to more successful programs and operations. The advisory board could initiate an awards program, for example, to recognize outstanding performance by both staff and juveniles.



The board can take the role of cheerleader.

To Act as Lobbying and Political Action Arm



Board members can lobby for their program or facility.

As many justice professionals know, the operation of the juvenile justice system is determined largely in the political arena. At the same time, laws or regulations severely limit most administrators and staff from lobbying for their program or facility. A knowledgeable and dedicated advisory board is perfect for this purpose.



Recent national studies have shown that the attitude of the public is contradictory. Citizens expect juvenile programs to punish, while simultaneously changing behavior. These two goals are often at odds with each other. The board can be useful in discussing this contradiction in public attitudes and educating appropriate officials, thereby freeing the administration to concentrate on providing services to juveniles.

Along with expressing agency views to politicians, the advisory board also can relate political information to the administrator. Members have a feel for the local community's politics when it comes to the operation of juvenile justice programs. Shifts in public attitude or changing political ideology can be quickly felt through the advisory board. Issues of turf or problems between the agency, the governing political body, and the public can be aired and effectively addressed.

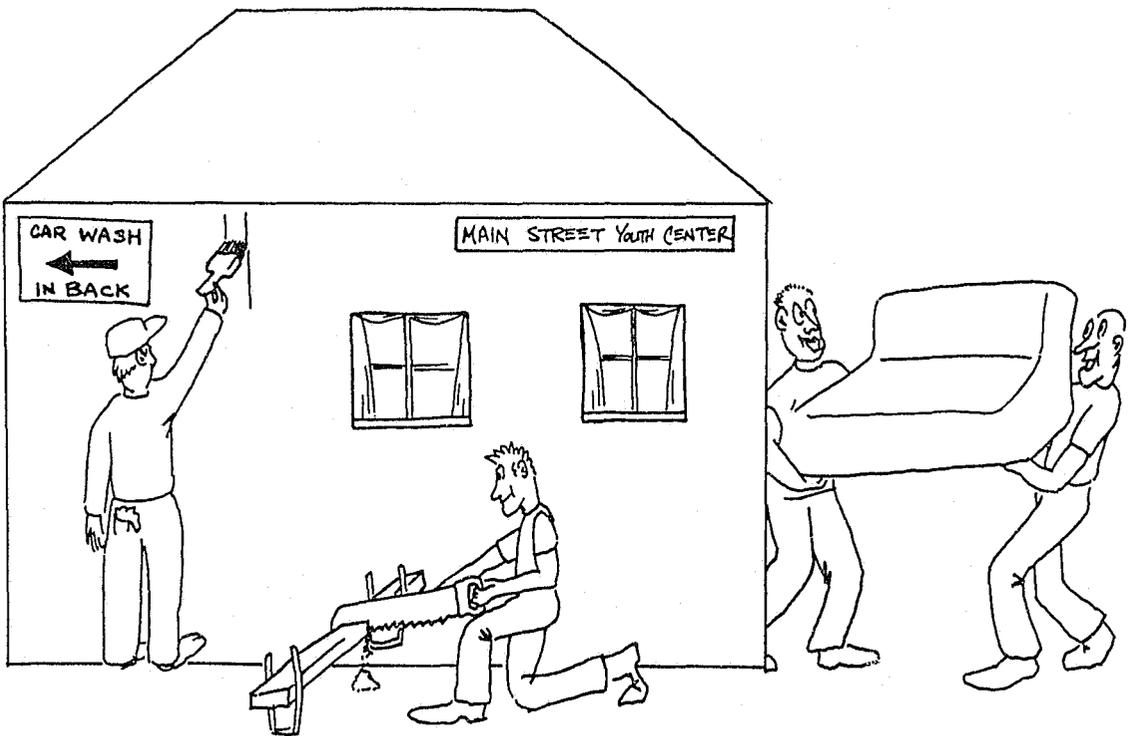
To Provide Additional Program Resources

Beyond what they can contribute politically, advisory boards can bring in a variety of additional resources. For example, they have the ability to generate practical volunteer help. The special skills and interests of the board members can be used for a variety of operational purposes such as transportation and security. Program services like tutoring and community tracking, also can be done by board members. Using volunteers is a good way to provide treatment services like Alcoholics Anonymous and religious support and guidance.

A board treasury not connected with the agency budget, can be established. This treasury can be filled through donations and through community work projects carried out by the juveniles, such as car washes. Funds from this source can be used to supplement the agency's funding for indigent juveniles, as well as quality-of-life items not usually funded by a government agency.

Another form of resource assistance can be in the donation of items to the facility or program. Examples of donations could include computers, recreation equipment, furniture, educational/vocational materials, and personal items needed immediately by the juveniles.

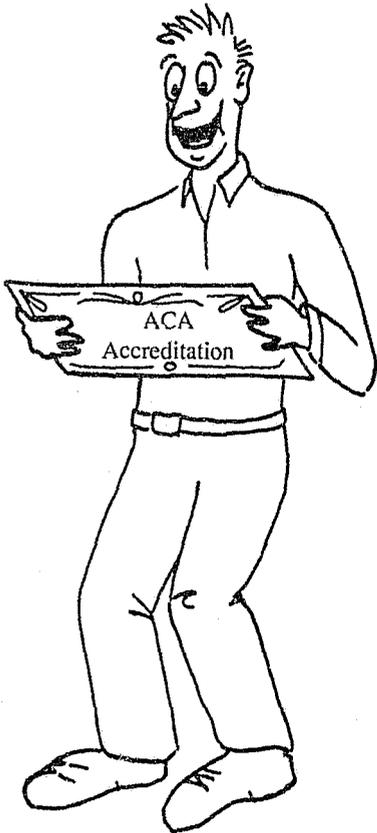
The last type of help could be in special advisory board projects such as a building or remodeling committee, landscaping, juvenile employment or placement services, and recommendations for staff hiring or promotion.



The board can bring a variety of resources to the program or facility.

Compliance With National Standards and Customs

A very important reason to develop and maintain an active advisory board is to show that the agency is providing adequate care, supervision and programs for juveniles, in accordance with national standards. The American Correctional Association's standards for juvenile training schools, detention centers, community residential facilities, day treatment centers, and probation/aftercare services *require* the establishment of community advisory boards.



The board can help the program or facility comply with national standards.

Standard #2-6021 from Standards for Juvenile Community Residential Facilities states:

The agency has a local governing authority or advisory board that is representative of the community in which the agency is located.

The standards also address training for boards and volunteers, as in Standard #2-7224 in Standards for Juvenile Probation and Aftercare Services:

Written policy and procedure for volunteer citizen involvement include a system for selection, training, definition of tasks, responsibilities and authority.

Standards require input from community sources, for example, Standard #3-JDF-1A-12 from Standards for Juvenile Detention Facilities says:

Written policy, procedure, and practice provide that there exists a community advisory committee, representative of the community, that serves as a link between the program and the community.

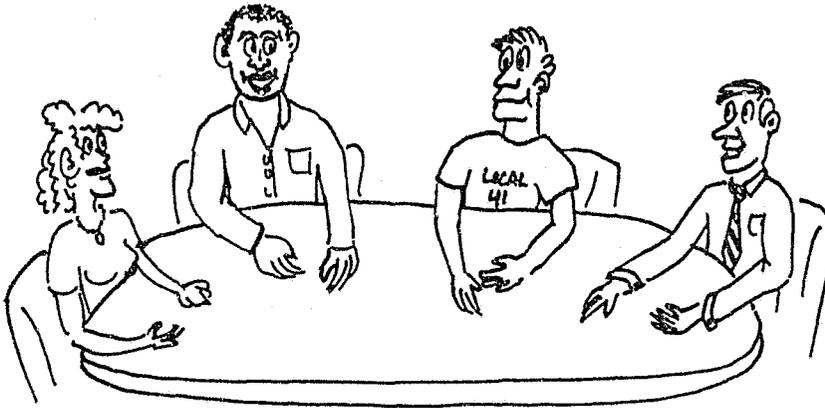
Other standards, such as those set forth by the Child Welfare League of America, the National Advisory Committee, the American Bar Association and some local or state standards also require community advisory board activity in one form or another.

Selecting the Board

The key to any successful human relations activity is the people involved. Therefore, the *selection* of advisory board members is of major importance.

Since the board is local, the members should represent the community served by the program or facility. They should not live in distant locations, if possible. They should, as much as possible, represent the same cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious background as the juveniles being served by the facility or program.

Board members from various occupations should be selected, with specific emphasis on those from the local business community. A common mistake is to fill the board with service providers such as juvenile justice social workers, teachers, lawyers, police officers, etc. Existing advisory boards have found that seeking the advice of juvenile justice practitioners as needed, is better than including too many of them on the advisory board.



Board members should represent the community served by the program or facility.

It is good practice to balance the board by including some individuals with widely differing juvenile justice philosophies, but most of the members should be somewhere in the middle. A good rule of thumb for selecting advisory board members is to select them much the same as you would good staff, expecting them to be thoughtful, sincere, and tough, but fair.

In general, persons with strong special agendas should be screened out. At times, however, it may be smart to place an active critic on the board if you feel the person to be fair. Often, after becoming involved and witnessing the entire operation of the program or facility, a critic becomes a supporter—and an avid one, at that.

Organizing the Board

An effective and efficient advisory board should operate in an organized fashion. It must have at least an elected chairperson and a set of by-laws that explain the board's functions and rules. The by-laws should be clear and distinct, while allowing flexibility to the board in unusual and unforeseen circumstances. An advisory board needs the structure of by-laws, but will be more functional if the by-laws are not too complicated or rigid. (Appendix A contains a sample set of by-laws.) The organizational structure of the board should depend upon the role the advisory board is expected to play within the organizational structure of the agency.

The board, only in its *collective* action, should be permitted to act by the agency. The individual members of the board should NOT be allowed to act independently to impact agency policies. The success or failure of an advisory board often depends upon the cohesiveness of the board and their use of democratic procedures to gain consensus and advise the agency.

The advisory board must be given real, productive activities to assist the agency in accomplishing its mission. Not all board members will agree on some issues. To prevent contradictory messages to the administrator, it is necessary for the board to adopt one recommendation on a particular issue. The agency administrator should consider all input from the board, while not allowing the board to drift into unproductive areas of concern.



The board must act as a group to help the agency accomplish its mission.

Political power at the local level is also an issue when developing advisory boards. It is not uncommon for some individuals that have substantial influence in the local community to try to manage the advisory board to further their personal agendas. This activity may, at the outset, seem burdensome and intrusive to the staff, but the use of the board for personal goals is severely curtailed when boards are required to operate as a group and not as individual members. The purpose of a board is to provide leadership and advice collectively. Local agendas, whether positive or negative in nature, must be addressed through the group action of the board.

Training the Board

Critical to the success of any community advisory board is the proper training of its members. More boards have failed because the members were not fully informed than for any other reason.

The agency must provide high quality board training that allows members to understand the daily and overall operations of the program or facility, the legal issues involved, and the practical limitations of the particular program.



Training must be as extensive as staff training in some areas, and membership on the board must be contingent upon completion of the training. Without knowledge and understanding of the mission and philosophy, the problems and dangers of the offenders, and realistic expectations of what can be accomplished, the board could become an adversary of the agency and its program.

The agency must provide high-quality board training.



Board training should touch on all the areas that staff are required to learn, and include a general orientation to the policies, organizational structure, programs, and regulations of the agency. Members should be trained not only on juvenile justice issues, but also on how to operate effectively as a board. Specific topics include the role, rights, and responsibilities of board members, parliamentary procedure, and the board's by-laws and rules. The chairperson of the board should be given additional training and information about the program so that he or she may, in effect, further train other members.

The amount of board training should be roughly equal the number of hours of training required of part-time staff. A fully trained board will lessen the burden on staff since they will not find it necessary to interrupt with questions concerning basic operations and philosophy.

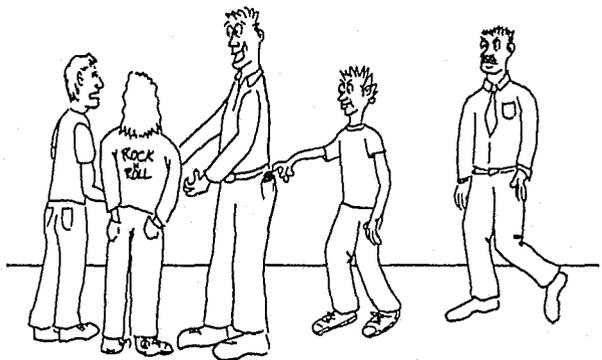
Challenges and Limitations

Just establishing an advisory board does not automatically guarantee success. Specific planning, training, monitoring, and management are vital to promote a successful endeavor.

Allowing — in fact, encouraging — a group of citizens to advise on the operation and philosophy of a correctional facility or program presents a perceived danger that lay persons, not professionals, are running the process. As stated before, the board must be required to act only as a group, thereby eliminating an individual member from affecting policy. The agency administrator must actively supervise the board just as he/she would employees. He/She also must sincerely consider the board's advice, but retain final authority and responsibility.

Other problems will be eliminated or reduced by proper selection, training, and monitoring of board members. Administrators should be aware of some potential problems that stem from inexperienced board members. Just a few are a board member's:

Over-involvement with juveniles;
Naive expectations;
Tendency to be manipulated; and
Lax security habits.



The agency administrator must actively supervise board members, just as he/she would employees.



If a board member is suspected or rumored to be acting improperly, the administrator must talk immediately to the board chairperson or order an investigation. Allowing rumors or innuendos to influence activities is harmful and should be quickly addressed. On occasion, it may be necessary to terminate a board member for conduct that significantly harms the program or agency. A strong set of by-laws is most important in this area. They must clearly show the process for termination, which should be similar to the termination process of a probationary employee, and what authority the administrator has to assist the board.

Board members that do not attend meetings or participate regularly in board activities must be terminated also. Again, the by-laws should explain the rules of attendance and potential members should be advised of those rules before accepting a board appointment.

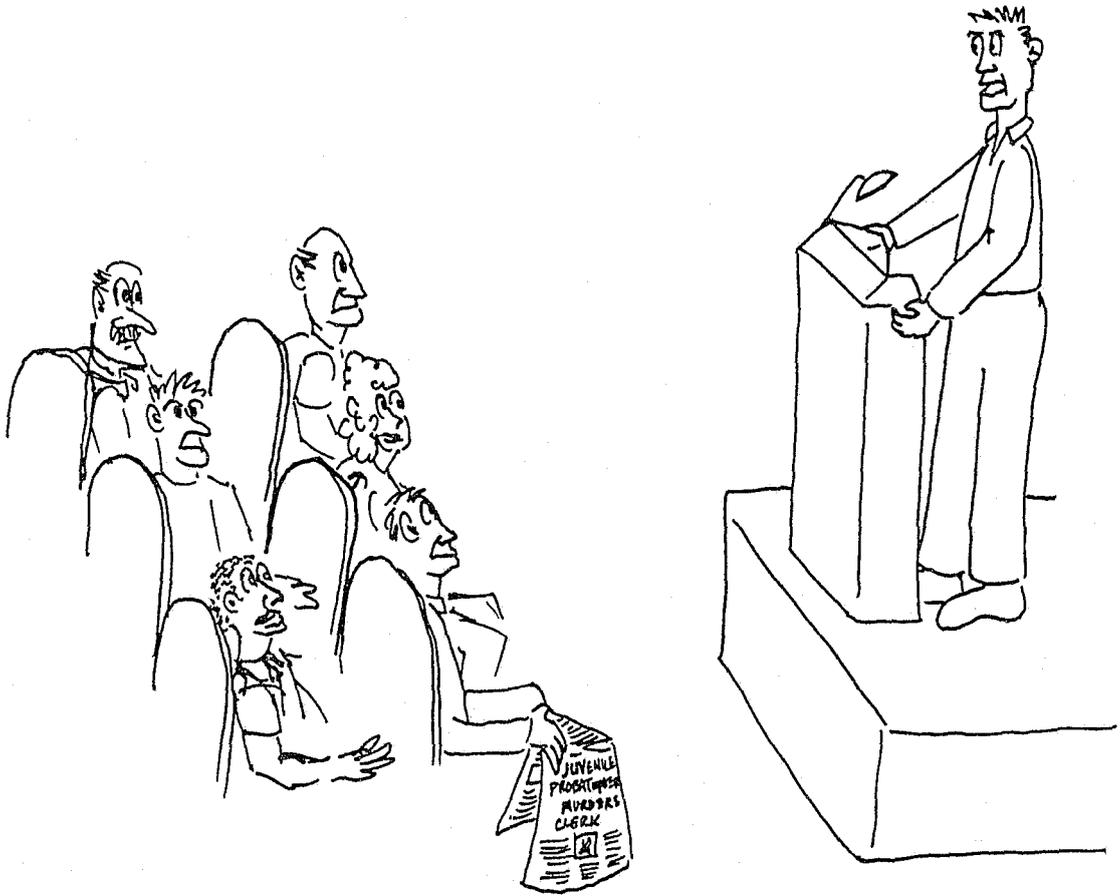
REMEMBER: The benefits to be derived from the utilization of an advisory board greatly outweigh the potential for improper involvement or problems.

Crisis Management

Community advisory boards are an important factor in monitoring the quality of care and programming in a facility or program. The well selected, trained, and active community board can be a good insurance policy if things go wrong.

When the program encounters a community crisis related to either the acts of staff or the acts of offenders, the local advisory board can provide a forum to address the particular problem or crisis. They can interpret to the community what is being done to correct the problem, that appropriate steps are being taken to assure public safety, and the continued need for the program. At the same time, the board can provide information to the staff on actual dilemmas and problems related to the crisis.

Without an advisory board, the correctional program, despite its history of success, can be severely curtailed or even disbanded because of just one crisis.

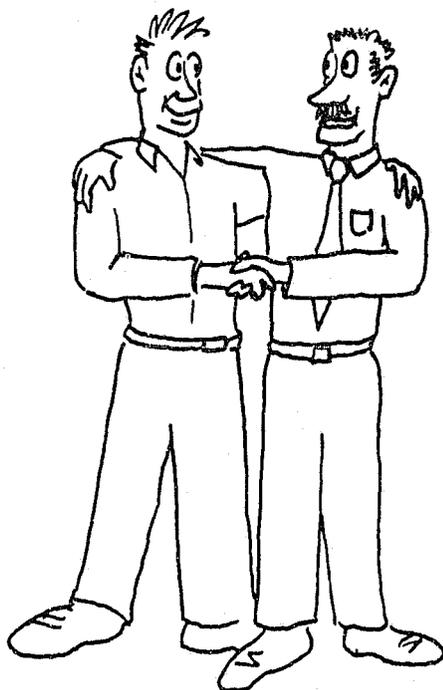


When a crisis occurs, the board can provide a community forum to address the problem.

Community advisory boards:

- Provide help in establishing or defining program philosophy, mission, goals, and objectives.
- Provide an opportunity for juvenile justice professionals to gain input from the local community.
- Offer suggestions from another point of view on program operations.
- Provide encouragement, support, and resources to staff and juveniles.
- Allow staff to keep their finger on the pulse of the political issues in the community.
- Allow juvenile justice professionals to educate the local citizenry on the purpose and objectives of the programs.
- Provide the correctional agency with clout to address particular crisis situations.

Clearly such services are important, and indeed, necessary in these times of shrinking budgets and increasing demands for services. Every agency can increase its productivity and services to juvenile offenders by establishing and professionally managing a community advisory board.





APPENDIX A

The following pages contain a *sample* set of by-laws for a community advisory board. Because of the diversity that exists among agencies, programs, and advisory boards, developing by-laws that are universally applicable would be impossible. This information, therefore, should be considered as simply one method of developing by-laws.

SAMPLE
BY-LAWS OF THE
CITIZENS' ADVISORY BOARD
FOR A
JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITY OR PROGRAM

ARTICLE I - PURPOSE

The Advisory Board (the Board) of the Juvenile Facility or Program (Program/Facility) is established to represent the City of your city, County of your county, and surrounding communities, for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the Program/Facility in serving the needs of the State of your state in the field of juvenile justice, enter specific function of your program, and for such purposes as to advise the Director of the Program/Facility as to the individual community's needs, effectiveness of service programs, and policy matters as seen by the members of the Board.

ARTICLE II - DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

SECTION I - Duties

In order to carry out the aforesaid purpose for which it is created, the Board shall become fully informed as to the purpose of the Program/Facility, the scope of services provided by its organizational structure and governance, and the needs of the constituency served by the Program/Facility, and shall regularly communicate to the Director of the Program/Facility its own views and advice. To such end the members of the Board shall participate in appropriate training, educational and informational programs and shall diligently avail themselves of all sources of pertinent knowledge and information. The Board shall also recruit, as necessary, members of the community to enhance the effectiveness of the Program/Facility.

SECTION II - Limitation of Authority

The Board shall have no authority to direct or control the Director of the Program/Facility or staff in any matter whatever, nor to control the administration of program, nor to set policy, but shall serve in an advisory capacity only. The Director of the Program/Facility shall monitor the activities of the Board and shall have the authority to remove any member found guilty of improper behavior.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION I - Number and Tenure

The Board may consist of eleven (11) persons to be appointed by the Director of the Program/Facility. Each member of the Board shall serve a term commencing on the first day of January following his or her appointment, continuing for three (3) years and until his or her successor has been duly appointed and qualified; provided, however, that four (4) of the persons constituting the first Board shall serve for an initial term of one (1) year, four (4) for an initial term of two (2) years, and three (3) for an initial term of three (3) years as designated in their respective appointments, and in each case until their respective successors shall have been duly appointed and qualified. The terms of one-third of the Board, or as nearly so as practical, shall expire each year. Those persons designated to serve on the first Board for an initial term of less than three (3) years and those appointed to fill a vacancy and serve out an expired term may be reappointed.

SECTION II - Nomination and Qualification

As a preliminary step in its selection of the Board members, the Chairperson shall appoint a nominating committee of three (3) Board members who will solicit and seriously consider nominations from this Board, the staff of the Program/Facility, and all other persons, both individuals and organized bodies, having concern for the purposes of the Program/Facility. The nominating committee shall present their recommendations of persons to fill the vacancies for approval. The Board Chairperson will forward those names along with the Board's recommendations to the Director for final selection. In selecting persons to serve on the Board, factors such as occupation, field of interest, place of residence, demonstration of concern for human welfare, and similar factors, to the end that the Board shall comprise of persons having a wide scope of abilities, concerns, influence, and be a representative cross section of the communities served. There will be no discrimination based on age, sex, race, creed, religion, color, or national origin. All members of the Board shall be residents of the State of your state.

Upon acceptance by the Board and the Director, each new Board member will complete the required training as set forth by the Program/Facility within three (3) months. The Board member may sit on the Board during this time period.

SECTION III - Vacancies

Any vacancy occurring in the Board and any membership to be filled by reason of an increase in the number of members shall be filled by the Director of the Program/Facility following procedures prescribed by the foregoing Section II of Article III. A person so appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term of his or her predecessor in office.

SECTION IV - Compensation

Members of the Board shall not receive any compensation for their services.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

SECTION I - **Time and Place**

The Board shall meet in regular session not less than ten (10) times each year. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson, or in the event of his or her failure or refusal to act, by a majority of the Board. The time and place for the holding of regular meetings may be provided by resolution of the Board. The time and place for the holding of special meetings shall be stated in the call.

SECTION II - **Notice**

Notice of any meeting of the Board shall be given not less than five (5) days prior to, by written notice delivered personally or sent by mail to each member of the Board at his or her address as shown by the records of the Board. Any member may waive notice of any meeting.

SECTION III - **Quorum**

A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board, but if fewer than a quorum are present at any meeting, a majority of those present may choose to conduct the meeting unofficially or adjourn without further notice.

SECTION IV - **Manner of Acting**

The act of a majority of the members of the Board present at a meeting at which a quorum is in attendance shall be the act of the Board.

SECTION V - **Failure to Attend Meeting**

Unless excused by express action of the Board, the failure of a member to attend three (3) consecutive meetings of the Board, whether regular or special meetings, following notice as required by these by-laws, the Board shall operate to terminate such person's membership on the Board with a resultant vacancy to be filled by the Director of the Program/Facility, consistent with Article III, Section II.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

SECTION I - Officers

The officers of the Board shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary/Treasurer, and such other officers as may be determined from time to time by the Board.

SECTION II - Election and Term of Office

The officers of the Board shall be elected annually by the Board from among its membership at its last meeting preceding the first day of January of each year. New offices may be created and filled at any meeting of the Board. Each officer shall serve until the end of the calendar year or until his or her successor shall have been duly elected and qualified.

SECTION III - Removal

Any officer elected by the Board may be removed by a vote of two-thirds of the existing Board whenever, in its judgment, the best interest of the Board and its objectives would be served by so doing.

SECTION IV - Vacancies

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, disqualification, or otherwise may be filled by the Director, with approval of the Board, for the unexpired term.

SECTION V - Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board and shall in general supervise and give direction to its activities. He or she shall sign all resolutions and written communications of the Board. The Chairperson or his or her delegate may attend management meetings of the Juvenile Agency in an ex-officio capacity.

SECTION VI - Vice-Chairperson

In the absence of the Chairperson, or in the event of his or her inability or refusal to act, the Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties and functions of the Chairperson and when so acting, shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him or her by the Chairperson or by the Board.

SECTION VIII - Secretary/Treasurer

The secretarial functions shall include keeping the minutes of the Board meetings, giving notice as required by these by-laws or as directed by the Chairperson, keeping a register of the addresses and telephone numbers of each member of the Board, and in general, performing all duties incident to the office of Secretary, and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Chairperson or by the Board. As Treasurer, he or she shall in general, with the Chairperson and the Director, supervise and give direction to all financial activities performed by the Board. He or she shall be accountable for all monies under the jurisdiction of the Board. The Treasurer will advise and inform the Board at least quarterly as to the financial status of the Board. The Treasurer shall require that all checks drawn on the bank accounts under the jurisdiction of the Board bear the signatures of two (2) Board members.

ARTICLE VI - COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Standing committees may be created by the Board on recommendation of the Chairperson to enhance the effectiveness of the Board, with members of such committees being required to be members of the Board. Sub-committees may be appointed by action of the Board for particular purposes to advise and inform the Board on specific matters whenever, in the judgment of the Board, the services of such a sub-committee would enhance the effectiveness of the Board. Persons appointed to serve on sub-committees shall not be required to be members of the Board.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended or repealed and new by-laws may be adopted by a majority of the quorum of the Juvenile Program/Facility Advisory Board present at any meeting, provided that not less than thirty (30) days written notice is given to the members of the Board of the proposal to amend or repeal or to adopt new by-laws at such meeting; such notice to set forth, specifically, the action to be taken.

ARTICLE VIII - CONDUCT OF MEETING

Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure shall govern the conduct of all regular and special meetings of the Board.

These by-laws have been accepted and approved on _____

Chairperson

Director