



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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Planning of New Institutions: Workshops for Juvenile Facilities

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Background

Jurisdictions throughout the Nation continually struggle to find the most effective strategies to address delinquent behavior and reduce recidivism among delinquent youth. Research indicates that the most effective interventions are comprehensive, community-based programs that provide a continuum of services and sanctions. These include prevention programming, a system of graduated sanctions, residential treatment, and aftercare.

Secure confinement represents the most costly and severe response to delinquency. Therefore, jurisdictions should engage in careful planning to ensure that alternatives to confinement are being used effectively and that new or expanded facilities are developed only when warranted. Renovation, expansion, or new construction projects should be guided by the following considerations:

- ◆ A careful examination of the unique characteristics and needs of juveniles.
- ◆ Current research on the causes and correlates of delinquency.
- ◆ Principles of comprehensive community-centered programming.
- ◆ The community's own vision and mission.
- ◆ Best practices in juvenile facility master planning, design, and operations.
- ◆ Factors that contribute to effective and cost-efficient facility operations.

Understanding the elements of effective planning for juvenile facilities has become critically important as many jurisdictions undertake the task of replacing or renovating crowded or substandard facilities. An important training program is now available to these jurisdictions: Planning of New Institutions for Juvenile Facilities (Juvenile PONI) workshops, held regularly at the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Academy in Longmont, CO.

The Juvenile PONI workshop program is the result of a partnership between the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Corrections Program Office (CPO), both in the Office of Justice Programs of the U.S. Department of Justice. The workshop program is conducted in cooperation with NIC, which is part of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. OJJDP and CPO provide funding while NIC oversees workshop development and presentation. The Juvenile PONI program, which is funded in part through OJJDP's Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grants (JAIBG) program, represents an unprecedented commitment by the three sponsoring Federal agencies to devote special attention to juvenile confinement facilities.

Goal and Methods

The goal of the Juvenile PONI workshop program is to help jurisdictions make well-informed planning decisions about building new secure juvenile facilities or about renovating or expanding existing facilities. The workshops offer participants an opportunity to define their individual roles in the planning process and to develop team-building skills.

The Juvenile PONI workshops introduce operational, programming, and design concepts relevant to the facility development process and then provide participants with opportunities to practice and apply these concepts in the creation of action plans. Participants receive the latest information and materials on juvenile facility planning and design—on topics ranging from creating a vision statement to planning for transition to a new facility.

Participants

Each jurisdiction selects a six-person team to attend the workshop. The team must include officials with statutory responsibility for funding, operation, and administration of the facility. Other members might include judges, program administrators, citizens, financial officers, and/or architects and planners under contract to the jurisdiction.

Curriculum

Each 5-day workshop is organized into 16 modules. Several of the modules—including a historical overview of juvenile justice management and attitudes, an overview of the facility development process, and aspects of direct supervision—use a conventional lecture-discussion format. Other modules—such as clarifying team roles, framing a vision statement, developing functional space plans, and relating staffing plans to facility plans—use break-out sessions that require participant teams to produce and present their own work products.

All of the modules present and analyze information within the context of a real-life case study—a recently constructed juvenile facility near the Academy. Toward the end of the workshop session, participants tour the facility and participate in a question-and-answer session with the facility director and staff.

Conclusion

The Juvenile PONI workshop program responds to the need expressed by many juvenile justice professionals not just to build new juvenile facilities, but to be sure the job is done right. Doing the job right means teamwork and planning to produce facilities that both recognize and provide for the unique needs of juveniles and ensure the safety and security of residents, staff, and the community. For each jurisdiction, the process involves careful analysis of the juvenile offender population and broad-based cooperation among all stakeholders to ensure that alternatives to confinement are being used effectively and new or expanded facilities are developed only when warranted. With these ideas in mind, the Juvenile PONI workshops seek to achieve the following:

- ◆ Clearly define the unique characteristics that distinguish juveniles from adults and explore how these characteristics require that juvenile facilities be designed differently from adult facilities.
- ◆ Present research on the causes and correlates of delinquency, including a discussion of secure facilities as part of a system that provides a continuum of graduated sanctions ranging from limited interventions to more severe restrictions.

- ◆ Provide participants with an understanding of the facility development process and create an opportunity for participants to define their individual role in that process and to develop as a planning team.
- ◆ Introduce team members to operational, programmatic, and design concepts that may be used in the facility development process.
- ◆ Provide team members with the opportunity to practice and apply these concepts through hands-on exercises and the development of action plans.

For Further Information

The first Juvenile PONI workshop was conducted in November 1998. The sponsors offer three workshops each year, with five to six jurisdictions participating in each session. In response to the success of the initial workshops, OJJDP and CPO have allocated funds to continue the program through 2001. Jurisdictions that attend workshops may also request followup technical assistance.

For additional information on future Juvenile PONI workshops and related technical assistance, call Kim Dolise Kelberg at CPO (800-848-6325, extension 52903) or Dee Halley at the NIC Academy (800-995-6429, extension 116).

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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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