

North Carolina Comprehensive Statewide Juvenile Reentry System Reform Implementation

Improving the successful reintegration of
juveniles into the community

A proposal submitted by:

Juvenile Community Programs, Juvenile Court Services, Juvenile Facilities,
and Juvenile Treatment and Intervention Services
Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice
North Carolina Department of Public Safety

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Program Narrative

The Juvenile Justice Section (JJS) of the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice (DACJJ) of the N.C. Department of Public Safety offers the following proposal addressing implementation of the North Carolina Juvenile Reentry System Reform plan to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). JJS proposes to build upon its strong foundation to make significant, strategic improvements to service planning and service delivery linkages to increase the success of youths in their journey through the juvenile justice system and as they return to their communities. North Carolina is especially well-positioned to implement the reentry reform initiative: it aligns with a juvenile facilities strategic plan endorsed by the legislature and the governor in 2014 that directs the reinvestment of cost savings from youth development center (YDC) closures into five new transitional homes and expanded reentry programming in FY2016-17; JJS maintains a statewide web-based management information system storing individual-level data to track placement, progress and outcomes of youths being served; and JJS is poised to leverage the technical and data analytic prowess of strong corporate neighbors, RTI International (RTI) and SAS Institute (SAS), in support of its reform efforts.

Statement of the Problem

A Strong Foundation

In 1998, North Carolina's General Assembly enacted the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, a comprehensive reform of the state's juvenile justice system. The Reform Act was based on the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders, created by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The two principal components of the Comprehensive Strategy - preventing delinquency by focusing prevention programs on at-risk youth, and improving the juvenile justice system's response to delinquent offenders through

a system of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives – were incorporated into the new Juvenile Code, which mandated the use of risk and needs assessments, and established a dispositional matrix that reserved commitment to a youth development center for serious, violent, and chronic offenders.

Risk and Needs Assessments. Because of the reform, North Carolina became an early adopter of risk and needs assessments. Introduced in 2001, the North Carolina Assessment of Risk (NCAR) is an actuarial instrument that served as one of the 14 validated tools upon which the model National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' (NCJFCJ) Juvenile Sanctions Center (JSC) Risk Assessment Instrument was constructed (Howell, Lipsey, & Wilson, 2014). Consisting of both static and dynamic criminogenic risk factors, it is virtually identical to the widely validated risk assessment instrument that performed best in a recent national OJJDP study that independently tested eight risk instruments in seven states (Baird, Johnson, Healy et al., 2013). The NCAR has demonstrated strong predictive validity in four independent validations and good evidence of high inter-rater reliability (Fraser, Day, & Schwalbe, 2002; Schwalbe, Fraser, & Day, 2007; Schwalbe, Fraser, Day, & Arnold, 2004; Schwalbe, Fraser, Day, & Cooley, 2006). The NC Assessment of Juvenile Needs (Needs Assessment) aids the JJS service managers in identifying criminogenic needs to be targeted through service planning.

Effective Community Programming. The code also set up Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPC) in each county to develop and implement a comprehensive community plan for delinquency prevention and intervention. The Department further strengthened the programming and services available to meet the needs of Level II youth – those at highest risk of commitment to secure custody – by funding community-based and residential services to fill the gaps in local communities where JCPC funding was insufficient to serve youths most at-risk as a cost-efficient

alternative to YDCs and detention centers. These evidence-based services, which include Multi-systemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), and wraparound and cognitive-behavioral transition programming, will be available in all counties beginning in FY 2015-16.

Efforts are underway to ensure that all of the JCPC- and JJ-funded community programs across the state are rooted in principles of effective programming. Mark Lipsey developed and validated a tool in our state called the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) (Lipsey, Howell, & Tidd, 2007). The SPEP is a data-driven rating system for evaluating program effectiveness, using what research evidence has identified as the most effective features of programs aimed at reducing rates of juvenile offending. Ratings of service categories, amount of service (dosage), quality of service delivery, and the proportion of high risk youth served are combined to produce an index of effectiveness as well as to prescribe ways to enhance program effectiveness. North Carolina's JJS has begun to use the SPEP to evaluate the state's community-based programs. This system of research-based statewide program improvement planning is augmenting the number and type of effective community programs available across the state.

Evidence-Based Treatment Programming in YDCs. In 2004, JJS initiated a 5-year-long data-driven overhaul of its youth development centers. Innovations included a change in focus from correctional to therapeutic; psychological evaluations using a standardized assessment battery upon admission; enhancing the staffing pattern to include a licensed mental health clinician and a social worker at a ratio no greater than 1 for every 16 youth; changing direct care staff roles from posted guards to counselors practicing engaged supervision; and training direct care staff to promote the acquisition of pro-social skills among youth in secure custody using the strategies identified by meta-analyses of "what works" with juvenile offenders as most effective: role-playing, modeling, repeated practice of alternative behaviors, and cognitive restructuring to

modify thoughts/emotions (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Four YDCs using this model of care and staffing pattern were opened across the state in 2008 to replace older, outdated ones.

Innovative Work within Court Services. Over recent years, JJS has made similar strides within its Court Services operations (the equivalent to Community Corrections in many states). In 2011, Court Services initiated a series of interventions aimed at reducing the use of unnecessary confinement in short-stay detention centers. Local and regionally-based educational efforts took place with stakeholder groups (judges, district attorneys, law enforcement, juvenile justice, community programs, schools, mental health, etc.) to share data on effective practices regarding detention and other issues in juvenile justice, with an emphasis on evidence-based practices. A structured decision-making tool, the Detention Assessment Tool (DAT), was piloted in 2012 to guide decisions about the use of short-term detainment. The efforts proved hugely successful: between 2011 and 2014, detention resident days decreased by 29 percent, resulting in a cost savings of more than \$13 million, while also decreasing rates of reoffending.

All of these efforts are paying off. Consistent with national statistics, North Carolina has witnessed a significant decrease in juvenile crime over the last decade. The rate of delinquency complaints has decreased by 35 percent, from 34.61 per 1,000 youth in CY 2002 to 22.52 per 1,000 in CY 2014. Annual YDC admissions have dropped nearly 70 percent - from 660 in CY 2001, to 201 in CY 2014 – and during this same period, annual detention admissions have dropped 57 percent - from 7,500 in CY 2005, to 3,229 in CY 2014.

Opportunities for Improvement

With its Juvenile Reform as an impetus, NC's JJS is doing many things right. However, there is a need to understand and address why more youth do not succeed following reentry. After exploration and analysis, as well as consideration of the Council of State Governments'

reentry assessment, the diverse group of stakeholders comprising the North Carolina Juvenile Reentry Reform Task Force concluded that there is a significant opportunity to improve our approach to service planning, matching of needs to services, and programming, as follows:

Re-norming and Strengthening the Use of the Risk Assessment Instrument. The NCAR has demonstrated strong predictive validity since its introduction in 2001. Recidivism analyses based on NCAR data consistently produce the expected step-wise increase in rate of reoffending as level of assessed risk increases (e.g., it continues to “rank” assessed youth along a continuum from lower to higher risk), but the cut-offs defining Low, Medium, and High risk have appeared elevated over recent years and in need of adjustment. We further plan to develop an annual training and evaluation system through which we can establish that employees are using it in a consistent manner.

Strengthening the Use of the Needs Assessment Instrument. JJS uses a state-of-the-art criminogenic needs assessment instrument that provides an easy-to-use overview of a youth’s problems and treatment needs in important social development domains (family, school, peers, substance abuse, and mental health). It identifies cases with elevated risk and criminogenic needs to inform the best allocation of time and resources. However, more training and fidelity monitoring are needed to improve the reliability of the information gathered by this assessment, which is essential to effective service planning and for informing decisions regarding readiness for release. In addition, users must clearly understand its role in flagging offenders who require more in-depth assessment, including a face-to-face clinical assessment.

Uniform Case Planning. In the process of piloting a service planning tool, we have identified multiple areas in need of improvement. We plan to refine our plan and make content changes to ensure that it is appropriate for use with youth at all points of contact in the system. At

present, JJ-involved youths are managed by three somewhat siloed approaches to case plans: one type for those managed in the community; another for those committed to YDCs; and a third used with youth during reentry. We aim to have one unified system-wide service planning approach.

Service Matching. We have an impressive evidence-based and -supported array of community-based interventions, programs and resources for transitioning youth, but we do not have assurances that youth are being matched to services based on needs and responsivity factors. Service matching resources are needed to align evidence-based services (and program types identified by the SPEP) to specific treatment needs of youths and their families. In other words, there is a need to shift from a service-driven to a needs-driven approach.

The Task Force also identified several barriers to successful reentry programming:

Barriers to school reentry. State statutes provide that local school boards “may deny admission to or place reasonable conditions on the admission” of a youth who has been suspended or expelled from school, or who has been convicted of a felony.¹ Local school board discretion has led to the routine enrollment of youths discharged from facilities in alternative schools, rather than placement in the type of school setting best suited to meet the needs of each youth.

Limited vocational training resources. The opening of smaller facilities improved the safety and effectiveness of treatment of youth, but these facilities lack the classroom space to provide vocational training and sufficient workforce development opportunities.

Inconsistent family engagement. North Carolina’s juvenile justice system features a range of intervention and prevention programs and offers opportunities for parental involvement with local JCPCs and their programs, court counselors and staff at facilities. However, initiating and maintaining productive family engagement, particularly with families of youth reentering the community, remains a formidable challenge.

¹ NCG S §115C-366 http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_115C/GS_115C-366.html

Current Reentry Process and Target Population

Reentry. Juvenile court counselors supervise all youths released from commitment status on post-release supervision (PRS). Initial supervision is provided at the intensive level for a period of at least 15 calendar days. Statute mandates that the youth must be supervised on PRS for at least 90 calendar days and not more than 12 months. In FY 2012-13, 442 youths were on PRS at some point during the year, and the average daily population of youths on PRS was 156. Planning for juvenile reentry begins at court disposition, continues throughout the youth's confinement term, and follows their release to the community. It requires a continuum of care designed to guard against the reemergence of antisocial behavior, while also promoting ongoing progress toward service plan goals. For example, YDCs provide transitional services to youth such as assisting with school reentry and developing money management and job-seeking skills. Aftercare is conceptualized as the final stage of programming for youth, recognizing that while reintegration into the youth's home community marks a change in setting, the facilitation and monitoring of progress toward service plan goals must continue. Aftercare services are therefore aimed at addressing criminogenic needs by linking newly released youth with community supports, treatment providers, families, and schools and/or employment, while slowly diminishing the role of JJS.

Target Population. The target population for this project is all youth served by four types of residential programs, across 14 facilities: 1) three community-based male and female short-term residential facilities, 2) five community-based multipurpose group homes, 3) four YDCs, and 4) two community-based transitional living homes. Youths placed in these facilities have received a Level II or III disposition² in juvenile court and are assessed as medium to high risk. In FY 2012-13 and FY 2013-14, there were 1,014 releases from the 14 facilities: 482 from YDCs and 532 from

² By statute, Level I, Community Dispositions; Level II, Intermediate Dispositions; and Level III, Commitment (see http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-2508.html)

a residential facility. Among these, 14 percent were female and 86.7 percent were age 15 or older at release. African-American youth comprised the majority (59.6 percent). The average length of stay differed for each residential program type: 4 to 5 months for short-term residential, an average of 6 months for multipurpose group homes, 14 months for YDCs, and 4 months for transitional living homes. Youth in out-of-home placements presented with elevated risk and needs levels, including lengthy court histories, assaultive behaviors, substance use problems, serious school problems, parents unable or unwilling to provide supervision, a history of victimization, dangerous sexual behaviors, mental health needs, discord in the home, and familial substance use and criminality. The target population is predominantly medium to high risk, with the highest risk populations being served in YDCs (20% medium and 74% high risk) and transitional living homes (19% medium and 77% high risk). A table of reliable statewide risk and needs data broken down by type of residential placement is available upon request.

With respect to recidivism, Table 1 shows rates for YDC and residential exits in FY 2012-13 and FY 2013-14. Recidivism rates over a 24-month period following discharge range from 33 percent for YDC exits to 55 percent for exits from transitional homes.

Table 1. Number of Youth Placed and Two-Year Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates, by Facility Type: FY 2012-13, FY 2013-14

Post-Discharge Time Frame	Short-Term Residential Programs	Multi-Purpose Group Homes	YDCs	Transitional Living Homes
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6, 12 or 24 Months	142	66	230	11
Distinct Juveniles with Delinquent Complaints	32	19	13	0
Distinct Juveniles with Delinquent Complaints Adjudicated	24	15	9	0
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	34	19	69	6
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	56	30	77	6
Recidivism - Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	39%	45%	33%	55%

Source: JJS (NC-JOIN), DPS (OPUS)

JJS has a demonstrated commitment to continuous process improvement to positively impact the lives of youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. It is poised, through the reentry reform initiative, to address deficiencies in case planning, service matching, and programming to improve outcomes for youths, including those most at-risk of future offending, and their families. JJS has assembled a dynamic Juvenile Reentry Reform Task Force comprised of members from agencies representing child welfare, social services, mental health, educational systems, the courts and other public and private entities that will continue to guide and provide oversight during the implementation of the reform initiative. JJS's statewide management information systems are also an enormous asset in informing implementation progress and outcomes. Finally, JJS will partner with RTI and SAS to engage their extensive knowledge and experience on the technical development and evaluation components of the implementation project.

Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures

North Carolina has made great strides in its JJ system reforms, recognizing the need to focus on rehabilitative programming that provides necessary services to our most serious JJ-involved youths. However, deficits and gaps exist in this programming and statewide infrastructure. The reentry reform initiative developed under the Second Chance Act Planning Grant addresses our system's shortcomings, and includes research-informed strategies to transform North Carolina's reentry process to significantly reduce recidivism, and improve positive youth outcomes.

Goals and Objectives

During the planning year, the Reentry Reform Task Force and its subgroups, guided by CSG, identified and developed strategies to address four overarching objectives seen as essential to the proposed reentry systems reform effort: 1) the implementation of an individualized, continuous and

comprehensive service plan that is initiated at intake and follows each youth through all points of contact with the system; 2) the delivery of effective transition programming emphasizing workforce readiness and education; 3) enhancing efforts to engage and strengthen families; and 4) improving the ability to track the impact of efforts on recidivism, education, employment and behavioral health outcomes. The resulting reentry reform initiative is designed to meet the following goal and objectives: *Reduce the recidivism rate by 50% over 5 years, and improve education, employment, and behavioral health outcomes of “deep-end” youth involved in the juvenile justice system*

- Objective 1. JJS will deliver risk and needs-driven case planning and service linkage, and employ effective supervision practices.
 - Key Task 1. Improve the Reliable Use of our Risk and Needs Assessment Instruments.
 - Key Task 2. Implement a Comprehensive Service Plan.
 - Key Task 3. Implement a Service Matching Tool.
- Objective 2. JJS will deliver effective and developmentally appropriate programming, including education and workforce development services that target criminogenic needs.
 - Key Task 4. Implement a Workforce Development and Education Strategy.
- Objective 3. JJS will engage and strengthen families of youth involved along the juvenile justice continuum, including reentry.
 - Key Task 5. Implement a Family Engagement and Strengthening Strategy.
- Objective 4. JJS will document the effect of its reentry reform strategy on recidivism, education, employment and behavioral health outcomes.
 - Key Task 6. Evaluate North Carolina’s Statewide Reentry Reform Initiative.

The reentry reform initiative’s goal and objectives are meant to be achieved over the next five years. Because funds are available to support only the first year of implementation, only short-term

reform efforts are presented. The conceptual framework for the 12-month implementation project is depicted in the attached logic model.

Performance Measures

JJS has strong capacity to provide the required Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) performance measures. JJS has two established juvenile justice data systems with policy and procedure requirements for up-to-date, accurate data: NC-JOIN (North Carolina-Juvenile Online Information Network) and ALLIES (A Local Link to Improve Effective Services). NC-JOIN, in operation statewide since January 2004, contains individual-level data on intake, court, facility and non-court-ordered and court-ordered supervision and service provision. ALLIES, a statewide client tracking system in operation since July 2011, contains individual level data (e.g., program participation, duration and outcome) and program-level data (e.g., program type, funding) on JJS-funded prevention, intervention and reentry programs. Additionally, RTI, the proposed sub-grantee, has developed the Implementation Indicators Tracking System to document near “real-time” performance measures specific to this initiative that are not contained in JJS systems. Thus, JJS is well-positioned to provide OJJDP with timely, statewide quantitative information on youth targeted for this reentry initiative, as well as system-level changes resulting from the initiative’s efforts, from which to measure performance.

Project Design and Implementation

The proposed Juvenile Reentry Reform Initiative is comprised of seven inter-related objectives detailed below. It envisions an implementation plan consisting of a seamless continuum of coordinated services and supervision for each youth tailored to his or her elevated risk factors and criminogenic needs, in concert with workforce development, education, and family engagement and strengthening strategies. The 12-month project timeline is attached.

Key Task 1. Improve the reliable use of North Carolina’s risk and criminogenic needs assessment. In Months 1-4, DACJJ’s Research and Decision Support Section (RDSS) staff will re-norm the risk assessment instrument. They will use a sample of completed risk assessment scores extracted from NC-JOIN and the sample’s recidivism rates will be tracked. Recidivism following risk assessment will be defined as juvenile adjudications, sourced from NC-JOIN, and adult convictions, sourced from OPUS (Offender Population Unified System). Analyses will be used to adjust points, weights and cut-offs as warranted to more accurately reflect rates of reoffending. The RDSS has experience re-norming risk assessment instruments, having recently completed a similar project involving the risk instrument used with the state’s adult offenders.

In Months 1-4, a training curriculum will be developed to address the administration, scoring, and use of the validated risk and needs assessments. An in-person training curriculum module (to be incorporated in the intensive training surrounding the launch of the comprehensive service plan, described under Objective 2), as well as a version to be used as an annually recurring booster training, will be developed, with the latter embedded within the web-based employee learning management system (LMS). In Months 3-8, a web-based annual certification exam and supporting materials will be developed to establish that the user can reliably and consistently administer the instrument. Policy changes addressing the use of the assessments in service planning and release and reentry decisions, the training and certification requirements for use of the instruments, and changes made in supporting quality assurance processes will be completed in Months 4-8. Corresponding changes will be made in affected job descriptions, performance management tools and in contract language for community-based providers. Implementation of the certification requirement and launch of the web-based training and testing will occur in Month 9.

Key Task 2. Implement a comprehensive service plan. To address deficiencies in the use of service plans by court supervision and facility staff, JJS developed an electronic NC-JOIN-based, needs-driven, comprehensive service plan for use by court counselors dealing with youth under varying types of community supervision. The service plan is developed and updated following a needs assessment, data-gathering activities, and structured interviews with the youth and family at least every 90 days. It has been piloted in its current version in four of the state's 30 judicial districts since February 2015, with its evaluation concluding in late summer 2015.

During the 12-month project period, we plan to develop additional modules for the comprehensive service plan to address its functionality within residential facilities, ensure that criminogenic needs are consistently targeted, and link needs to facility- and community-based services. In Months 1-3, a subset of the members of the Task Force's service planning subgroup, joined by staff representing the four types of residential placements for youths, community program providers and Juvenile Court Services, will identify needed content changes. During Months 2-6, staff from SAS, via the Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC), will use their programming and software expertise to help incorporate content changes while also making functional improvements. SAS will introduce enhancements to the service plan application to produce an improved, automated business workflow to enable efficient and effective management of service plan components, and implement an intuitive and user-friendly application interface. In Months 6-8, SAS will undertake user acceptance testing, and in Months 8-12, SAS will work to incorporate into the service plan the analytic model described under Objective 3, below, to produce the automated services recommendations that result from sophisticated linkages between needs assessment and services matching.

Concurrent to SAS' efforts, JJS, assisted by Task Force service planning subgroup members, will identify an implementation team drawn from a vertical slice of the agency. In Months 1-2, the team will develop a training and implementation plan that includes multiple tiers of training for leadership, supervisors responsible for fidelity management, stakeholders and staff, and include plans for the development of fidelity checklists to be used during monthly case reviews by supervisors, coaching protocols and resources, and a QA process that includes checks on service planning and fidelity monitoring activities. In Months 2-6, the team will develop the training curricula targeting the above audiences, as well as an intensive two-day training for court services, YDC and residential program staff, incorporating family engagement training (see Objective 5), strengths-based interviewing, tools for developing natural supports, use of the risk and needs assessment instruments (see Objective 1), needs-driven service planning, and service-to-needs matching. The training curriculum development team will include an evaluation plan, a curriculum designed specifically for remedial purposes, a plan for bringing new hires up to speed, and a plan for annual refresher trainings offered through the web-based LMS. In Months 5-8, the team will work with leadership to identify and revise policies to incorporate changes regarding service planning and corresponding changes in our QA instruments. They will revise job descriptions and performance management instruments to incorporate new expectations of court services, facilities and community program employees and QA staff. In Months 7- 8, the team will work with the staff of University of North Carolina's School of Government in Chapel Hill to develop training modules for the juvenile and family court judges, public defenders and district attorneys to be incorporated into their ongoing trainings. Policy changes will be rolled out through the web-based LMS. Training of trainers in the service plan initiative will be completed in Month 9. They in turn will train the staff in their regions by the end of Month 10.

Key Task 3: Implement a Service Matching Tool. North Carolina has a wide array of community-based services funded through JCPCs and data about the outcomes they achieve, as well as metrics reflecting their effectiveness components (SPEP). However, it is lacking a reliable system through which a youth's assessed needs can be matched to the most appropriate and effective services. JJS aims to make use of powerful data analytics to develop an algorithm that will help identify the programs that best meet youth's needs. This service-matching algorithm will incorporate at least five components, with analytics helping to integrate these components in the development of individualized comprehensive service plans. These five key components include: (1) Criminogenic Needs, as identified on the Needs Assessment instrument and supplemented by domains of need identified through the comprehensive service planning process; (2) Youth Characteristics, including demographic factors, offense history and overall risk of reoffending as measured by the validated Risk Assessment; (3) Hindering Risk Factors, consisting of factors identified by the research literature as interfering with desistance from crime (e.g., high alcohol use, high marijuana use, high psychopathic features, depression, high anxiety, drug dealing, , gun carrying, criminal/incarcerated parents, gang membership or involvement, etc.); (4) Primary Service Types, as determined using the SPEP; and (5) Services, Programs and Resources. SAS will develop an algorithm that will draw from components (1) through (3) and match youth to the SPEP Primary Service Types (4) found to be most appropriate for their needs. As described previously, all community-based JCPC-funded programs have undergone SPEP evaluation.

Data analytics work will further link the program types as identified by the SPEP to specific JCPC-funded programs, evidence-based mental health services, contractual programs (e.g., Functional Family Therapy), and school attendance, advocacy and academic support resources.

These services include tutoring programs, “Graduation Success Coaches” and “Mentor at the Gate” services through Communities in Schools, as well as vocational training, job-finding and coaching resources. Substance abuse programs and resources and county-based resources will meet needs identified in other domains (e.g., respite programs for safety, restorative justice programs for accountability, pro-social peer support, and pro-social leisure activities).

Through a retrospective analysis of historical case information and related data sources, SAS will develop analytic models to identify common relationships and patterns in the factors that affect youth outcomes. Analytics will stratify youth into groups along common risk and need factors. Analyses will identify the correlation of risk/need factors with associated services to better understand the relationship and impact of services on both recidivism and positive outcomes. SAS will apply an analytic model in a predictive manner to current and future cases to enable improved need to service matching and increase the opportunities for positive program outcomes. As the data continues to be monitored and assessed over time, and as additional sources of information are integrated into the analytic model, the model will be refined to provide better information and insight into matching youths to service programs. Upon completion, this algorithm will be accessed automatically whenever a service plan is developed or updated in NC-JOIN.

Working through the GDAC, SAS will follow a “standard high level work plan” for the service matching project. SAS plans a 12-month timeframe to completion, and perhaps longer to embed it within the electronic service plan. Specifically, in Months 1-2, JJS will prepare for the data analytics work by developing an online directory of programs by county, matched to the need or domain that they address, to be used in building this matching program. SAS will begin work on the data environment “build-out” and data acquisition tasks in Months 1-3, on Analysis Development and System Design in Months 4 – 6, on System Configuration and Development and

Quality Assurance in Months 7 – 10, and on User Acceptance Testing, Business Intelligence Reporting, Knowledge Transfer and Production Roll-Out in Months 11-12. The service matching algorithm will not be fully functional until late in the implementation year, so staff will be trained in the use of the online directory of services when matching services to need in the interim.

Key Task 4: Implement a Workforce Development and Education Strategy. During the 12-month project period, the Workforce Development and Education Strategy prioritizes work in three areas: planning for the creation of community development specialist positions to support the training and employment needs of youth during reentry, planning for the opening of additional transitional homes to facilitate educational, training and employment opportunities, and developing a systematic process for collaborating with local school districts on public school reentry. None of these activities require grant funds; they are, nonetheless, important components of the reform initiatives that were identified during the planning process.

Community Development Specialists. The 2014 Juvenile Justice Facilities Strategic Plan calls for the reinvestment of funds stemming from the closure of two older YDCs into expanding reentry services. Thus, JJS will explore the reclassification of positions from the closure of YDCs to create community development specialist positions and assess deployment of these positions around the state to maximize services to youth. Staff in these positions would be dedicated to providing support to and advocate for youth during reentry (e.g., serve as employment coaches), expanding training and employment opportunities for youth pre- and post-discharge through outreach to and building partnerships with businesses, and identifying business needs to better align workforce development activities during placement with employment opportunities in the community.

Transitional Housing. The facilities strategic plan also calls for the reinvestment of funds to open five new transitional homes. Currently, JJS contracts with a private provider to operate two

transitional homes that provide post-discharge housing for 6 to 12 months for youth who are moving to independent living or who need a step-down placement before returning home. Education, training and employment are a major focus of the homes' programming, and youth are experiencing success in these domains. Five new homes are slated to open in reentry reform implementation year 2. JJS will embark on a planning process with the private provider under contract to prepare for the opening of the new homes, incorporating planned reentry enhancements.

Public School Reentry. Post-discharge school placement decisions are governed by local school superintendents and principals. This has given rise to varying school re-enrollment practices, including the over-reliance on alternative schools rather than educational settings that are best suited to meet the needs of each youth following a period of confinement in a residential facility. JJS, in partnership with the Department of Public Instruction, will therefore develop a process for juvenile court services and local school districts to better engage and work together to link youths to appropriate school settings.

Key Task 5: Implement a Family Engagement and Strengthening Strategy. During the 12-month project period, the Family Engagement Strategy initiates a multi-pronged approach to proactively seek feedback from parents about their experiences with the JJ system to inform system improvements, support facility and court services staff so they are better equipped to engage parents, strengthen families and expand parents' opportunities to interact with their children during placement and increase involvement in decision-making.

Parent Satisfaction Survey. In Month 4 and annually thereafter, facility staff will administer the existing YDC parent satisfaction survey. Over the month, parents who attend service planning meetings or visit with their children will be recruited to complete the anonymous paper and pencil survey. Data entry and analysis of parents' responses will occur at JJS central

offices during Month 5. Aggregate satisfaction measures will be reported to the project team in Month 6 and the Task Force at its 3rd quarter meeting. Additionally, short-term residential services providers administer satisfaction surveys annually to parents of youth in placement, so JJS staff will coordinate with providers to obtain and disseminate aggregate survey findings to the project team and Task Force on an annual basis. Simultaneous to the administration of the YDC parent satisfaction, JJS will administer (Month 4), analyze (Month 5) and report findings (Month 6) from the post-discharge parent satisfaction survey that was developed by the Family Engagement Subgroup under the Second Chance Act Planning Grant. This survey will target parents of youth discharged from a YDC or short-term residential facility who may or may not be on post-release supervision, and will be a critical tool for understanding their reentry needs, challenges and successes. Finally, the Family Engagement Subgroup will continue to develop satisfaction surveys and survey administration strategies to obtain feedback from parents with experience along the juvenile justice continuum.

Family Engagement Training. In Months 2-4, JJS will develop or adapt a training curriculum on family engagement to support staff in their efforts to engage parents. The training will help build an understanding of the importance of family engagement, inform staff of the challenges experienced by families of justice-involved youth, and provide strategies to engage them. The training will be rolled out to facility and court services staff in conjunction with the Train-the-Trainers training on the comprehensive service model and service matching (Month 9); it will be incorporated into training for new hires; and an annual refresher will be produced for delivery through the web-based LMS.

Family Strengthening Initiative. Since 2011, the JJS has contracted with AMIkids North Carolina Family Services to provide high-fidelity Functional Family Therapy (FFT), a Blueprints

Model Program, to adjudicated youths and their families in 50 counties statewide, with very good completion rates and outcomes. In FY 2015-16, JJS will expand contracted services with AMIkids so that FFT will be available at no cost to youths or their families in 89 of the state's 100 counties. While these services will not be funded by the current reentry implementation grant, we intend to incorporate FFT within our service matching array, targeting unmet family needs at the time of reentry. In Months 1-3, the team will work with community programs staff and providers from AMIkids to develop training and referral resources to be shared with trainees during the upcoming comprehensive service planning. They will work with the service matching team to ensure that the availability and contact information for FFT is listed in the service array directory for the 89 counties in which it is provided. This will ensure that it is subsequently included as a service option within the electronic service-matching tool to be developed by SAS.

Technology. JJS will explore the use of technology to reduce barriers (e.g., transportation, childcare, time constraints) that often limit families' ability to visit with youth during placement or participate in monthly treatment team meetings. For example, free, HIPAA-compliant video-conferencing (e.g., VSee.com) is available and could be used by parents at home if they have computer and internet access, or in a juvenile court counselor's office if they do not. Additionally, a focus group of parents recently noted that the use of rewards or incentives may help to increase engagement. Thus, JJS will explore the use of its Parent Involvement Management System, a web-based or mobile tool to communicate with and reward parents for being involved (e.g., participating in meetings with teachers), as a way to incentivize parent engagement.

Key Task 6: Evaluate North Carolina's Statewide Reentry Reform Initiative. During the planning year, RTI, under contract to JJS, developed a comprehensive plan to evaluate North Carolina's statewide juvenile reentry initiative. This approach is sensitive to the requirements of

the Second Chance Act in that it: (1) establishes a clear definition of recidivism, includes a plan to develop baseline recidivism rates for the target population that includes multiple measures within the juvenile and adult justice systems, and disaggregates recidivism measures by risk and needs levels; (2) establishes positive youth outcome measures expected to be achieved by the reentry initiative and baseline measures from which the impact of the initiative on these outcomes can be assessed; (3) sets annual improvement targets for recidivism; and (4) includes a plan to collect, analyze, and report data on outcome improvements to provide ongoing feedback, ensuring continuous quality improvement on the reform effort. All data captured for this project will be for the purposes of internal improvements in JJS procedures, protocols, and programming. Though this project is collecting data on juvenile offenders in the JJS system, it is only for the aforementioned uses and not for contribution to generalizable knowledge. Therefore, these activities are not research and 28 CFR part 46 does not apply

The evaluation plan includes a process study and an impact study to document, monitor and assess the reentry reform initiative over the next five years. During the 12-month project period, the evaluation will focus on finalizing the evaluation design, initiating the process study and conducting a baseline outcome study from which the impact of reform efforts can be assessed in future years. Given the statewide roll-out of the comprehensive service plan and related reform initiatives, it is not possible to randomize study subjects for an impact evaluation. However, evaluation activities planned for the 12-month project period lay a strong foundation to support a future impact evaluation using a scientifically sound, quasi-experimental approach (e.g., propensity score matching methods).

Process Study. RTI will initiate a comprehensive process study that uses a mixed-methods approach to document the required GPRA performance measures, and implementation indicators

specific to North Carolina’s reentry reform initiative. In addition to tracking implementation through GPRA measures, the process study will address research questions to address change at three levels – youth, program and system – and help to establish a “pre-reform” baseline from which reform implementation will be assessed in future years, and describe early reform implementation. A detailed table listing research questions, data sources, and sample measures driving the process study has been prepared and is available upon request. The study leverages the strength of JJS’s automated data systems, which will be augmented by primary data collection using semi-structured interviews/focus groups with reentry reform stakeholders, a statewide survey of court services and facility staff, parent surveys and abstraction of information from Task Force meetings minutes, the N.C. Juvenile Reentry Reform Initiative Strategic Plan, the plan’s timeline and other relevant documents. RTI will develop and compile information for the Implementation Indicators Tracking Tool that will serve as a repository of GPRA performance measures, including those not captured in NC-JOIN or ALLIES.

In Months 1-3, RTI will finalize the statewide survey and semi-structured interview/focus group protocols, develop and execute data sharing agreements with JJS (as needed), and seek Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approval of the process study. Following IRB approval, RTI will lead the following data collection and acquisition activities: (1) RTI will document pre-reform and early reform implementation performance measures, including progress on the 2014 Juvenile Justice Facilities Strategic Plan, in the Implementation Indicators Tracking Tool (Months 4-12), and collaborate with JJS to compile GPRA performance measures to meet OJJDP reporting requirements (Month 6 and 12); (2) RTI will obtain aggregate responses from the parent surveys to document parents’ experiences with the juvenile justice system, (Month 6); (3) RTI will obtain a copy of Task Force meeting minutes to document major topics of discussion,

changes made to planned reform initiatives, or development of new initiatives; (4) RTI will use Survey Monkey to administer the statewide survey to Court Services and facilities staff (Month 10). This anonymous survey will capture satisfaction with pre-reform reentry policies and practices, perceived gaps and barriers to reentry (e.g., communication, collaboration and services), satisfaction with training on the comprehensive service plan and service matching tool, expectations about the impact of reentry reform, and barriers to implementation; (5) RTI will conduct individual semi-structured interviews or focus groups (e.g., with local court services staff) with reentry reform stakeholders to capture a broad range of perspectives on pre-reform reentry policies and procedures, expectations about the impact of the reform, and early perspectives on reform implementation, including major facilitators, barriers and lessons learned; RTI will recruit Task Force members (representatives from JJS, N.C. Department of Public Instruction, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, JCPCs and community-based service providers), YDC and residential facility staff, as well as Court Services staff, judges and district attorneys in six judicial districts, representing urban and rural areas of the State, to participate in an interview or focus group (Months 11-12); and (6) to document early adoption practices of the service plan and service matching tools, RTI will obtain fidelity monitoring data from JJS, if available (Month 12).

RTI will synthesize quantitative and qualitative performance measures for semi-annual reporting to OJJDP and JJS (Month 6 and Month 12). Although outside the scope of the 12-month project period, it should be noted that RTI plans to analyze and report on survey, interview, and focus group findings in implementation year 2 (Months 1-3).

Baseline Outcome Study. The baseline outcome study will be led by SAS, a market leader in business analytics and business intelligence software, through the Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC). GDAC is a data integration and business intelligence program developed as a

public-private partnership between North Carolina State Government and SAS. GDAC compiles a wide range of government agency data, including criminal justice, employment and education data, and is on track to access publicly-funded behavioral health service utilization data.

Using NC-JOIN, JJS will identify two baseline study samples: (1) the approximately 500 youth discharged from a YDC during FY 2012/13 and FY 2013/14, and (2) the approximately 450 youth discharged from other residential placements during the same period. SAS/GDAC, using identifying and demographic data from NC-JOIN and other DACJJ and GDAC sources, will perform entity resolution to create a holistic view of a youth. Entity resolution relies on analytic algorithms and probabilistic matching to identify and match, with a high level of accuracy and confidence, data records related to an individual across multiple data sources. With the youth entity resolved, analytic models can access data from all linked sources to achieve the desired baseline and future outcome assessment.

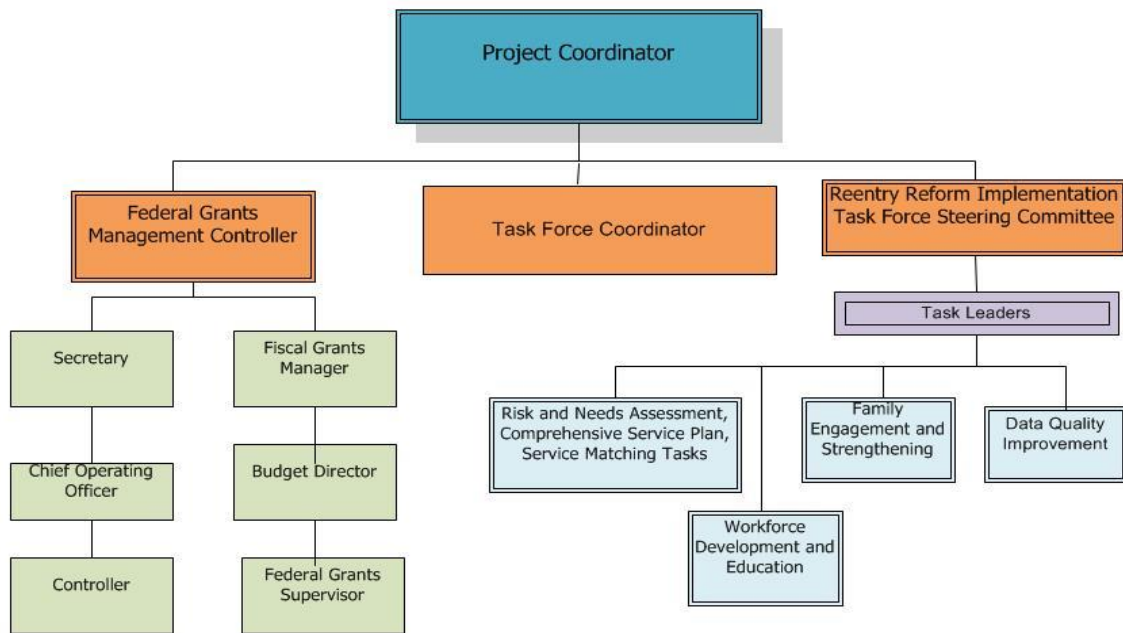
For the baseline analysis, SAS will use NC-JOIN data on demographics, offense characteristics, risk level and criminogenic needs of study subjects, as well as juvenile recidivism (e.g., new complaints, probation/post-release supervision violations, adjudications). Adult recidivism (e.g., charges, convictions), education/training (e.g., enrollment rates, attendance), and employment outcomes (e.g., employment rates, wages, employment industry) will be sourced through the GDAC. The pre-reform discharge cohort will be followed for a minimum 24-month period. Data from all sources will be acquired, compiled and prepared using a cross-database matching process to create an individual-level analysis baseline (pre-reform) dataset by Month 6.

In addition to generating descriptive statistics on post-discharge recidivism, education and employment outcomes (e.g., recidivism rates, average time to recidivist charge, employment rates, average wages) for the two baseline study samples, SAS will use advanced analytic techniques to

test for “dosage” effects (i.e., length of placement) on outcomes, and to test for variation in outcomes by youth’s risk and needs levels. The baseline analytic models will identify key risk and need factors as well as educational, treatment and service programs and their correlation to both recidivism and positive outcomes. As additional data are collected about the pre-reform discharge cohort in the following 24 months, the model will continue to be refined and “learn” from subsequent outcomes. The model insight into the relationship and impact of these factors and services will help drive policy and practice changes to enable more effective need to service matching, resulting in reduced recidivism and an increase in positive youth outcomes. Model development and analyses will occur in Months 6-12. SAS will summarize its preliminary findings in a technical report to be delivered to JJS in Month 12. Additionally, SAS will present baseline (pre-reform) outcome study findings to the Task Force, as needed.

Key Task 7: Provide Project Management Support and Reporting. The Project Coordinator (PC), **Jean Steinberg, Ph.D.**, is a clinical psychologist based in the JJS central office, with significant field experience within the deep end of North Carolina’s juvenile justice system and a keen understanding of implementation science. As PC, she will oversee a reentry reform program steering committee consisting of the Task Force subcommittee chairpersons. She will also supervise the Task Force Coordinator (to be identified), who will prepare the agendas for Task Force meetings and steering committee meetings, review and share minutes, and oversee scheduling logistics. The PC will be assisted in fiscal oversight and expenditures by staff from the Federal Grants Management section of the Department of Public Safety, Division of Administration’s Controller’s Office. **Angela Taylor, LCSW**, Director of Social Work within the Juvenile Justice Section, will serve as the Task Leader for the Family Engagement and Strengthening Strategy. **Duane Cogdell, M.Ed.**, the Transition Services Coordinator for Juvenile

Education Services, will serve as the Task Leader for the Workforce Development and Education Strategy. The risk and needs assessment, comprehensive service plan, and service matching tasks will be led by **Dr. Steinberg** with assistance from **Candice Moore, MPA**, Evidence-Based Practices Administrator and System of Care expert within Court Services. RTI research social scientist **Debbie Dawes, MPA** will lead the Evaluation Task. All Task Leaders are members of the Task Force subcommittee that developed their priorities and implementation plan. A project organization chart follows, and resumes of key personnel can be found in an attachment.



In Month 1-2, the PC will work with Task Leaders, the Task Force and its subgroups to build on the proposed implementation timeline to construct a highly detailed project management scheme listing deliverables, benchmarks, identifying parties who are responsible, accountable, to be consulted, and to be kept informed about tasks, and performance measures. She will develop a meeting schedule with each Task Leader to assist in the oversight process and will begin regular meetings with each in Month 1. In Month 1, she will arrange at least monthly meetings with the state's Department of Public Safety's Fiscal Section's Federal Grants Management team to devise

and adhere to a system for tracking grant expenditures and in-kind matches, and set up a schedule for overseeing the submission of quarterly and final financial reports. In Months 3, 6, 9 and 12 the PC will devote meeting time with each Task Leader to review quarterly progress and assist them in preparing a brief report to be presented at the quarterly meetings of the Task Force. In Months 6 and 12, the PC will prepare and submit the semi-annual and final progress reports via the GMS.

Capabilities and Competencies

Dr. Steinberg, the proposed Project Coordinator, started her career in juvenile justice in 2001 as the clinical director at the state's then-largest YDC. In 2004, she led a state-wide multidisciplinary team that developed evidence-based programming, rooted in the Risk-Needs-Responsivity model and findings from meta-analyses of "what works" with juvenile justice-involved youths, for eventual implementation in YDCs across the state. Dr. Steinberg designed and directed a pilot that evaluated the impact of the new programming on youth randomly assigned to either standard care or to the new model of care. After establishing that the new model of care produced statistically significant improvements in the frequency of serious incidents, use of disciplinary segregation, school achievement and recidivism rates over a three-year period relative to standard YDC-based care, Dr. Steinberg went on to oversee the high-fidelity implementation of the new programming across four newly-constructed replacement YDCs built in 2008.

In addition to her project management, program design, evaluation, and implementation experience, from 2008-2013, Dr. Steinberg directed the clinical services and programming offered in the state's detention and youth development centers across the state, rolled out numerous statewide initiatives regarding treatment programming and mental health services, and also worked closely with JJS' court services and community programs sections to ensure that policies, procedures, and practices were in step with advances in the field. Dr. Steinberg recently returned

to the JJS after a year spent as the Director of Clinical Implementation Strategies at a Duke University-affiliated nonprofit focused on the statewide dissemination of evidence-based treatments for children's mental health problems.

Given the successful partnership between JJS and RTI over the course of the planning grant, JJS aims to contract with RTI to carry out the evaluation plan that the RTI team developed during the planning phase. RTI, located in Research Triangle Park, N.C., is one of the world's leading research institutes. RTI is renowned for its expertise in designing and conducting criminal and juvenile justice-related evaluations, and has a demonstrated history of working together with funding organizations and implementation sites to produce data and analyses that support systems change initiatives, program development and continuous quality improvement. The sub-grant lead on the project will be Debbie Dawes, who will serve as the Evaluation Task Leader, overseeing the process and outcome studies. Ms. Dawes is a research social scientist in RTI's Center for Justice, Safety, and Resilience. She has 20 years of experience involving public policy analysis, and process and outcome evaluation. Under the *Multi-site Evaluation of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI)*, Ms. Dawes led the analysis of juvenile reentry outcomes (e.g., substance abuse, mental health, education, recidivism), and co-authored the technical report, *Boys' reentry experiences: Pre- and post-release characteristics, service receipt, and outcomes among juvenile male participants in the SVORI multi-site evaluation*. Ms. Dawes served as a site lead on the process evaluation component of the *National Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts* where she interviewed key stakeholders (judges, probation officers, prosecutors, behavioral health providers), observed and assessed court and program operations, and contributed to technical reports documenting the implementation of reentry courts.

JJS will further partner with GDAC and its analytics vendor SAS to develop the electronic comprehensive service plan and service matching tool, and lead the baseline outcome evaluation. Since its inception in 2007, GDAC has created a hub for data integration and advanced analytics to support data-based decision-making within North Carolina's state government. The Center provides the underlying technical infrastructure, resources, expertise and governance necessary for statewide data integration and analytics initiatives. As the hub for statewide data integration efforts, GDAC has integrated numerous statewide data sources that would be beneficial for JJS's reentry and service matching initiative. Using advanced analytics, SAS helped the District of Columbia to provide an algorithm to inform early release and parole decisions. In addition to identifying the best candidates for release, the technology also recommended which treatment programs would be most effective for each inmate, both during and after incarceration, to minimize the chances of re-offending or violating release orders. Although developed for the adult corrections system, the concepts and techniques are applicable to the juvenile justice system with respect to recidivism, reentry and service matching. The planned collaboration with the GDAC can bring extraordinary value and insight to JJS's work including, (1) matching information about youths and their families across a broad range of data sources; (2) the ability to follow youths after juvenile justice system involvement through the GDAC criminal justice data, possibly employment/workforce data, education and social service data; and (3) improved needs to service matching through historical research of prior case needs and services matching to develop algorithms to provide optimal need to service matching for improved outcomes.

Sustainability Plan

The proposed reform initiatives have the endorsement of the Deputy Commissioner of Juvenile Justice, and each of the Juvenile Justice subsection's Directors. All members of the

Section's executive management team served as members of the Task Force, and chaired subcommittees that developed the reform objectives. Each has submitted a letter of support documenting their commitment to seeing the initiative through to fruition, and to encoding in job descriptions, performance evaluations, policies, QA processes and standard operating procedures the initiatives outlined within the implementation proposal. Additionally, JJS is fiscally well-situated to invest resources to sustain reforms beginning in 2016. The first of the facility closures is slated for late 2016, making funds available to sustain reentry reform efforts and building on what is accomplished in the first implementation year. JJS plans to sustain reentry reform initiatives requiring funding through this reinvestment mechanism.

An additional component of the sustainability plan is North Carolina's dynamic Task Force, which includes two members from the state legislature. All members have re-committed to the effort, and membership will be enriched by the addition of representatives from the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), the UNC School of Government, and the nonprofit organization Communities in Schools. The sustainability plan is further strengthened by the availability of the state's GDAC as an ongoing data access and analytics resource. In future years, we plan to garner legislative support for an annually recurring allocation of state-funded GDAC hours to JJS to support our ongoing service matching and outcome analytics efforts. Our Task Force includes two legislative members who may assist in leveraging GDAC analytic hours to support ongoing efforts to improve reentry outcomes. We are confident that the pledged commitment of support and resources from North Carolina's top executive and legislative leadership will sustain our reentry initiative.