

# Providing and Receiving Technical Assistance:

## Lessons from Models for Change

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**ModelsforChange**  
Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

The preparation of this document was supported by John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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## Models for Change

All young people should have the opportunity to grow up with a good education, get a job and participate in their communities. Creating more fair and effective juvenile justice systems that support learning and growth and promote accountability can ensure that every young person grows up to be a healthy, productive member of society.

*Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice*, a MacArthur Foundation initiative, began by working comprehensively on juvenile justice reform in four states, and then by concentrating on issues of mental health, juvenile indigent defense, and racial and ethnic disparities in 16 states. Through collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), *Models for Change* expanded its reach and is now working to replicate and disseminate successful models of juvenile justice reform in 31 states.



# Introduction

## Models for Change Initiative

In 2004, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation launched the *Models for Change* initiative. The goal of this initiative was to accelerate the reform of juvenile justice systems across the country into systems that hold young people accountable for their actions, provide for their rehabilitation, protect them from harm, increase their life chances, and manage the risk they pose to themselves and to public safety. To accomplish these goals, *Models for Change* sought to use the experiences of a select number of states and communities to help create sustainable, effective, and research-based reform models within a select number of targeted areas of improvement (Hurst, 2012). Core states in *Models for Change*, selected based on readiness for change, diversity and their prominence, were Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Washington. Additional states have joined the effort through participation in Action Networks, a related component of the *Models for Change* initiative, focusing on the key issues of indigent defense, racial and ethnic disparities, and mental health-juvenile justice collaboration. These states include California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin.

## Role of National Resource Bank in Providing Technical Assistance

In addition to financial support, these states received technical assistance through a coalition of 16 leading national juvenile justice research, policy and advocacy organizations. The MacArthur Foundation provided grants to these organizations to support the efforts of the core states and Action Network sites through the provision of training and technical assistance. Together these groups formed what the Foundation titled its National Resource Bank (NRB). The NRB represents a wide range of expertise necessary to implement juvenile justice reform including: child and adolescent development, communications, community organizing and advocacy, corrections and probation, indigent defense system reform, mental health, policy analysis, prosecutor engagement, racial and ethnic fairness, data and data systems, and integration of child-serving systems. The NRB is also responsible for providing a national perspective on the reform efforts and connecting the sites to emerging successful programs and practices. Finally, the NRB helps to document and disseminate the successes and models developed through *Models for Change* to promote broader juvenile justice systems reform.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide a brief overview of key aspects of technical assistance in general;
- Describe the distinctive approaches used to offer technical assistance through the *Models for Change* initiative to participating states and local jurisdictions; and
- Discuss the lessons learned based on the experiences of both the NRB technical assistance providers and the state and local recipients in order to inform the field about how to improve on current technical assistance techniques.

# Overview of Technical Assistance

Although there is surprisingly little written on what makes technical assistance effective, a review of the research and relevant reports makes it possible to outline critical aspects of technical assistance including development of a common definition, describing both traditional and newer mechanisms for delivering technical assistance, and outlining commonly defined elements of effective technical assistance.

## Defining Technical Assistance

Although the definition of technical assistance often varies, a common feature is the transfer of information and tools from one entity to another in order to address an identified need for change (Wesley & Buysse, 1996). Technical assistance is, in essence, a process for developing creative, cost-effective ways to provide targeted support to an organization, system or individual to:

- Assess gaps, barriers, and needs and identify potential responses to address these issues;
- Develop a strategic plan for long-term change; or
- Create an innovative approach to an emerging complex issue. (Blase, 2009) (National Technical Assistance Center, 2000)

The process by which individuals, organizations, institutions and societies develop the abilities to perform functions, solve problems, set objectives and achieve them will vary based on the need. Thus, the duration and intensity of technical assistance will fluctuate to meet the actual need. That is, the technical assistance can be short-term to address a specific area or support the development of a particular skill or long-term to support overall systems reform. Technical assistance can provide basic information to provide and promote access to up-to-date information and resources, or can provide intensive support to build capacity and achieve systemic change. These categories are not mutually exclusive; managed well, technical assistance will help the organization, system or individual leverage limited resources to reach new objectives effectively.

## Mechanisms for Providing Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is a broad term that encompasses many different forms of support. As a mechanism for transferring information, it can include (1) traditional approaches, (2) technology-based approaches, and (3) or other hybrid approaches. Each of these approaches is described below.

Traditional approaches to providing such technical assistance include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- **Conference calls** may be held between the technical assistance provider and an individual or community group. The support provided is limited to that which can be discussed during a telephone call.
- **Materials or fact sheets:** The technical assistance provider may compile and share materials, resources, fact sheets, or bibliography with the individual or community regarding a particular topic or on an issue that is relevant to the local effort.
- **On-site consultation** may include site visits and meetings-annual, regional, topical, or planning- when national experts are brought in to present to the stakeholder groups.

Technology-based approaches are newer and offer some advantages to more traditional methods such as cost effectiveness, the capacity to accommodate busy schedules, training large groups in real time and extending the availability of the training and information by publishing it online for future viewing at anytime (National Technical Assistance and Training Center, 2012). Approaches include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- **Webinars** have the capacity to provide content, tools, and technical assistance to large audiences, can be archived for future viewing at anytime, and allow a mechanism for interaction between a national expert or facilitator and individuals in the field.
- **E-newsletters** are a regularly distributed publication, delivered electronically via email that provide information of interest about a topic to a group of subscribers.

- **Video conferencing** is much the same as teleconferencing but it allows individuals from two or more locations to communicate with two-way video and audio transmission.
- **Discussion boards** allow one individual to post a comment or question online. Other individuals who are members of the same discussion board may read that comment or question, and respond with their own remarks over time. This is an excellent means for connecting individuals with both national experts and peers from other communities engaging in similar reform efforts.
- **Social media** (blogs, Twitter, Facebook) allows for the interactions among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment on content among themselves in virtual communities and networks.

In major juvenile justice reform initiatives like *Models for Change*, technical assistance is much more than transferring information. Technical assistance providers in these initiatives provide a variety of hands-on supports for reform, including assistance in organizing governing committees, training of stakeholders and staffs, guidance in data collection and analysis, encouragement for family and community engagement, advice for developing new policies and practices, instruction in developing and implementing new screening and assessment instruments, and connecting to networks of jurisdictions that have addressed similar reforms.

Such initiatives may include hybrids of those approaches described above or one or more of the following:

- **Peer-to-peer** technical assistance is a structured opportunity for connecting individuals and communities engaged in similar reform efforts so that each can learn from one another's experiences.
- **Group program site visits** provide an opportunity for an individual or an organization to learn from another organization by visiting the site or program to observe the day-to-day operation and learn from the experiences.
- **Centers for excellence** are model programs that provide leadership, best practices, support and training with a particular focus.

## Elements of Effective Technical Assistance

A review of information available to the field on how to provide effective technical assistance reveals commonly identified elements for the planning and delivery of technical assistance. A summary of the recommended elements is outlined below:

- Careful and clearly defined problem and roles;
- Provider has skills needed, including technical expertise and problem-solving or facilitation skills;
- Written agreement on objectives, products and activities, timeframes and level of effort;
- Commitment to change from key personnel;
- Clear channels for communication;
- Thorough consultant preparation;
- Flexibility in approach;
- Strategies should shift according to feedback;
- Should be sequenced to continue improvement efforts; and
- Should be designed to deliver reinforcement on a consistent schedule. (National Technical Assistance Center, 2000) (National Center for Service Integration, 1993)

Beyond identification of common elements for planning and delivering effective technical assistance, some have tried to identify standards to promote consistency and quality in delivery of technical assistance. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC) published the *Core Performance Standards for Training, Technical Assistance and Evaluation* to promote the consistency, quality and effective practice in the planning, coordination, delivery, and evaluation of training and technical assistance.

For example, standards for provision of technical assistance outline all documentation that must be received before moving forward with responding to a request, provide questions for conducting a needs assessment, provide

a checklist for developing a comprehensive technical assistance plan, describe how to select a technical assistance provider that is most likely to be able to deliver appropriate information to the target audience, and outlines elements of a comprehensive written final report.

Although these standards describe the building blocks to understanding technical assistance, there is little guidance provided regarding the mechanisms and techniques for providing and receiving effective technical assistance.



# Provision of Technical Assistance in Models for Change

Many of the NRB organizations have a long history of providing technical assistance. The provision of technical assistance by NRB organizations to support the efforts of the *Models for Change* states was based on the collective experiences of the NRB members in successfully doing this work for many years and was guided by this knowledge on how to provide effective technical assistance described above. Although there are new mechanisms for delivering technical assistance because of gains in technology, the NRB members relied heavily on more traditional methods for supporting these efforts. What marks this effort as significantly different from other national initiatives will be described in detail below.

## Distinguishing Factors of Models for Change Technical Assistance

The technical assistance provided by the NRB to the *Models for Change* and Action Network states was distinctive for a number of interrelated reasons including:

- **State and Local Focus** – As part of the strategy for bringing about system reform, the initiative focused its work at both the state and local levels. Participating states were required to not only have significant participation from the state level but to also identify several localities (counties/parishes) to participate in the effort. Thus in each participating state there was constant interaction and learning between the efforts going on at the local and state levels. It was understood that to achieve long-lasting juvenile justice reform, aligning state level policy to support local work was necessary and local sites were in an excellent position to plan, implement, evaluate, and adjust models appropriate for the local context rapidly.
- **Locally Driven Targeted Priority Areas** – As distinguished from many other national initiatives, most of the targeted priority areas were not pre-determined by the Foundation, rather they were selected through a process that allowed for the selection of locally driven priority areas for reform. Participants from each state were required, based on their assessments of need, to identify the most critical issues facing their state’s juvenile justice system. State and local team leaders worked with national experts and representatives from the Foundation to identify these critical issues known as Targeted Areas of Improvement (TAIs), such as community-based alternatives to placement, evidence-based practices, and mental health. The groups identified these TAIs during strategic planning sessions held in each state where consensus was reached on what the state’s priority areas for reform should be. This locally driven strategic planning, guided by national experts and the Foundation, set the platform for state-relevant, long-lasting systems change.
- **Duration of Technical Assistance** – While this effort was not unusual in the types of technical assistance that the NRB provided, it was different than most in that the Foundation made technical assistance available over an extended period of time (more than 5 years in most cases). This extended period of support allowed for thoughtful planning and guided implementation, as well as the ability to respond over time to emerging issues.
- **Comprehensiveness** – The wealth of knowledge and resources the NRB organizations brought to the states, from a variety of fields relevant to juvenile justice reform, allowed for a comprehensive and integrated approach, as well as the ability to respond to multiple issues (TAIs) simultaneously.
- **Coordination of Multiple Efforts** – Not only were there multiple technical assistance resources available to states, but the technical assistance services provided by NRB members were coordinated to ensure an integrated approach to change. This ongoing coordination of efforts within each state created an opportunity to take reform one step further by allowing the NRB organizations a chance to raise additional issues and provide follow-through technical assistance.

This multi-pronged national juvenile justice reform effort, with locally driven targeted priority areas, led to swift and lasting systems reform in states that participated in this effort in large part because the Foundation saw the need for a coordinated group of technical assistance providers able to deliver appropriate and targeted technical assistance throughout the duration of this effort. The distinguishing features described above, the experiences of the NRB organizations in participating in this initiative, and the achievements of the states provide useful lessons to the field in how to support widespread systems change as described in the next section.

# Lessons Learned

The experiences of the NRB members and the localities and states involved in *Models for Change* demonstrate a number of principles for effective technical assistance.

## **1. Stakeholders and technical assistance providers should identify and articulate goals clearly at the beginning of the technical assistance.**

A major cause of ineffective technical assistance is the failure to develop and articulate clear goals at the beginning of the reform effort. Public officials in states and localities often have a wide range of needs, and expectations that a particular provider can help with. Some of those expectations may be unrealistic in terms of the skills and experience of the provider, the amount of resources available to devote to the reform effort, or the duration and intensity of the technical assistance. Also, within a state or locality, various stakeholders may have multiple – and even conflicting – goals.

At the same time, providers often want to help in as many ways as they can, which may feed unrealistic expectations among public officials and stretch the capacity of the provider. Thus, it is in the interest of both the jurisdiction receiving technical assistance and the individual or organization providing technical assistance to reach consensus and identify specific goals for the partnership they form. The goals may be limited, like one-time training of site personnel on new research in a particular field, or may be more ambitious, such as reducing racial and ethnic disparities at a key decision point in the juvenile justice system over a two-year period.

Whether the goals are narrow or broad, the site leaders and the provider should put the goals in writing and get buy-in on the way the goals are framed from all stakeholders. Sometimes this process proves difficult, or reveals separate agendas or conflicts beneath the surface. That is not necessarily a bad thing: it is much better to learn about problems or disagreements early on in the process than after implementation has begun.

## **2. Technical assistance providers should clarify at the beginning what they can and cannot do.**

A related issue is the need for a clear understanding of what the technical assistance consultant can and cannot provide. As noted above, stakeholders may believe (or hope) that a provider can help with many of their issues, whereas the provider may have skills in a particular area. Providers should take responsibility for explaining to stakeholders how they can help, what strategies they will use, and what results can be expected. An honest conversation at the beginning of the technical assistance can avoid frustrations and finger-pointing later on.

## **3. Technical assistance providers should establish credibility through experience, knowledge, resources, connections, and guidance.**

It is important for providers to establish credibility at the outset. Public officials sometimes regard providers as outsiders who don't know their jurisdiction and its issues. Every provider has heard a public official say, "Our problems are unique." While every jurisdiction does have its own combination of strengths and challenges, providers are often well-versed in common problems across states and localities, and therefore have much to offer. At the same time, part of building credibility is paying close attention to the characteristics of individual communities, stakeholders and their priorities. This includes knowing who else has provided technical assistance previously and what the experience has been with other providers.

Site visits by providers are an important part of this effort. The situation on the ground may prove very different from what stakeholders describe in conference calls. Site visits offer invaluable opportunities for providers and key stakeholders to get to know each other and develop relationships.

Listening and reflecting understanding of technical assistance recipients' perspectives is a key strategy to create an effective partnership. Providers then have the opportunity to build on what they have heard and understood by offering carefully considered insights drawn from their experience in other jurisdictions; by using their specialized knowledge of the field to apply research to the problems at hand; by accessing other resources to help the jurisdiction, or by helping the jurisdiction to better use resources that it already possesses; by connecting the stakeholders to public officials in other jurisdictions who have addressed similar problems effectively; and by providing realistic guidance directed at the specific issues of concern.

**4. Once the goals are established, stakeholders and technical assistance providers should develop a written work plan with concrete objectives, strategies to be employed, desired outcomes, measures of progress, individuals responsible for each activity, and timelines for completion.**

A written plan is a concrete roadmap of the work to be done. The work plan should reflect the goals and scope of work agreed to by the stakeholders. It should identify the point person in the site for regular communications with the provider. It should also include the amount of resources to be devoted to the reform effort, and how those resources will be allocated over time.

The process of developing the plan can be as important as the plan itself. Developing a work plan requires site stakeholders and providers to agree on specific activities that will be undertaken, commit their time to conducting those activities, and decide on how to measure whether their efforts have been effective. For an ambitious project the process may take some time, as differing attitudes and opinions emerge. Yet the resulting plan will more likely have the support of those who invested their time in developing it, and their early engagement will be important when challenges arise down the road.

**5. Stakeholders should collect and analyze data on the problem, the efforts to address the problem, and the effectiveness of those efforts.**

The most effective juvenile justice reforms are data-driven. Local and state stakeholders, with support from technical assistance providers, should collect baseline data to determine what is most in need of reform and where the opportunities are to effect change. The work plan should reflect the results of the data collection and analysis in terms of priorities for reform. Data are also essential in order to measure the impact of new policies and practices. Stakeholders should continue to collect data throughout the reform, so that it is possible to chart progress. Providers play a key role in helping stakeholders understand what data may be useful, how to interpret those data, what responses may be effective as a response to identified areas for change, and how to measure effectiveness of implemented changes. Providers should encourage and assist sites to embed a data-driven process into their system improvement efforts. In the most effective reforms, relying on a collaborative, data-driven process becomes the way a state or locality does business.

Sometimes stakeholders (or providers) say that a specific problem "isn't quantifiable." But if the problem is not quantifiable, then the amount of reform also is not quantifiable. That makes it difficult to determine if the reform was worth the effort and expense. Funders expect measures of progress, with good reason. Providers should be prepared to suggest quantitative measures for both the problem and the suggested solutions, and stakeholders should be prepared to collect quantitative data on effectiveness.

**6. Technical assistance providers should identify specific strategies and measures for the desired outcomes.**

For any identified issue, providers should come with an array of strategies that may be helpful to the jurisdiction. Conversations should be targeted at problems identified through gathering of qualitative and quantitative data, and should be sensitive to the jurisdiction's political realities and appetite for reform, as well as funding opportunities and limitations. Revising existing policies may address the problem. In some cases, specialized training for staff may be effective. The situation may present an opportunity to try new tools, programs or other innovations. Or there may be a need for leadership change. Sometimes new legislation may be required. Or budgets may need to be revised to provide better incentives for reform. Providers should be able to guide stakeholders through discussions of all available options and the steps for implementing them.

**7. Technical assistance providers should identify and nurture local and state champions.**

Reform efforts cannot succeed without committed leadership. Often a key stakeholder, such as a juvenile court judge or chief probation officer, requests the technical assistance. That stakeholder's commitment is crucial to the success of the effort. In addition, there are usually others in the jurisdiction who have a deep interest in the issue and who could provide leadership, including prosecutors, public defenders, police chiefs, sheriffs, school officials, local and state juvenile justice agency administrators, child advocates, parents, directors of community organizations, and leaders in the faith community. Sometimes these individuals hesitate to take a prominent role, in deference to the official who requested the technical assistance or because they don't feel knowledgeable enough about the work.

Providers should support these potential champions of reform. Providers can deliver background materials, research, training, individual consultation, information

on additional available resources, and contacts with individuals in other jurisdictions who have addressed similar issues. Providers may also notice dynamics that need to be adjusted to provide the opportunities for newer voices to rise and champion change. Providers can play key roles in helping individual players develop new skills and access new opportunities. They can also encourage those in positions of power to create atmospheres that support and create space for newer voices. From the beginning of the technical assistance effort, providers should consider how to identify and support champions and potential champions. A collateral benefit of this effort is that providers will receive continued support when the person who hired them leaves for another position or is replaced.

**8. Technical assistance providers should offer concrete examples of what has worked in other jurisdictions and contacts with key personnel in those jurisdictions.**

One of the most effective ways for stakeholders to learn about reforms is to see them in action. Once the parties establish the goals of a reform effort, providers should identify other jurisdictions that have confronted similar problems and addressed them effectively. Providers should also provide contact information for key personnel in those jurisdictions. This makes it possible for stakeholders to communicate with leaders and those in the same roles (e.g., judge, chief probation officer, agency director). Many public officials also benefit from visiting a successful site and learning about effective reform strategies firsthand. *Models for Change* sites have found "model" site visits by other jurisdictions to be very valuable. Providers can help jurisdictions choose and organize meaningful site visits, plan relevant agendas, and send teams that will make site visits most effective for the jurisdiction. They can also help delegates identify important questions to ask and observations to make while on site. As an alternative, site leaders can consult with particular individuals in other jurisdictions who have led reforms. *Models for Change* has established large networks of practitioners on the ground who serve as resources to each other in implementing system reform.

## **9. Stakeholders and technical assistance providers should recognize differences between reform efforts and plan technical assistance accordingly.**

Some technical assistance needs are very straightforward, such as providing information to agency staff through a training or identifying “model” policies in other jurisdictions. System reform efforts, on the other hand, are often complicated, lengthy, and difficult, involving many system stakeholders who may not see eye-to-eye. Providers and stakeholders should recognize these differences in their early planning. For discrete and limited needs, a webinar or training or one day of on-site technical assistance may be completely satisfactory. For system reform efforts, an integrated, planned series of different types of technical assistance – data collection and analysis, training, model site visits, policy reform, implementation and evaluation of new programs – may work best.

Moreover, stakeholders and providers should recognize the differences between situations in which a site seeks technical assistance on its own initiative, and those in which the funder provides technical assistance as part of the reform effort. Where a site seeks technical assistance on its own, the stakeholders may have more freedom to frame the technical assistance needs and identify the provider they want, but they will have to supply the funding or other resources necessary to obtain assistance. It may be harder to obtain the technical assistance, but stakeholders may value the assistance more because they have to go out and find money for it. Where a funder provides technical assistance as part of a larger reform effort, the stakeholders may have a more limited list of providers and skill sets to choose from, but the assistance is paid for by the funder. That makes it easier for the stakeholders to obtain the assistance, but they may not value it as much. In such situations, stakeholders may feel less commitment or sense of urgency to follow the advice of providers. Having full and open discussions on the goals of the reform initiative, early in the process, may help to avoid this problem.

In addition, where a funder provides technical assistance, a jurisdiction often has the benefit of a large network of other jurisdictions that have successfully addressed, or are currently addressing, the same issues. Moreover, large juvenile justice reform initiatives like *Models for Change* have extensive lists of providers on a variety of issues related to the initiatives.

Both the provider and the jurisdiction should ensure that there is a match between the goals of the jurisdiction and the assistance offered. Sometimes a funder requires a jurisdiction to address a particular issue and at the same time provides experienced technical assistance on that issue. The provider should ensure that the jurisdiction has a climate that is ready to receive technical assistance on such an issue, and that all stakeholders have similar expectations about the boundaries of the project. If stakeholders feel that they are “forced” to take on a particular issue as a condition of broader funding, they may not fully engage on the issue or may even actively resist. Thus, an important and challenging task for providers is to meet people where they are on an issue and help them move forward.

## **10. Stakeholders and technical assistance providers should recognize the appropriate role of the provider.**

A reform initiative belongs to the stakeholders. The success or failure of a reform initiative ultimately depends on the commitment, energy, creativity, and thoughtfulness that stakeholders bring to the enterprise. The role of the TA provider is to offer support to the stakeholders and help build their capacity for on-going reform, not to take over the initiative. Several things follow from this basic principle. First, a jurisdiction must devote enough of its own resources to reforms, particularly in terms of dedicated staff time, to make success possible. Second, a provider should not become “staff” of the jurisdiction. At the beginning of the effort, the jurisdiction may need help from the provider in tasks like collecting data and preparing effective agendas for governing committee meetings. However, as soon as possible, staff from the jurisdiction should take over those tasks.

At the same time, the provider is in a unique position to offer support. The provider can be a coach and sounding board for leaders in the jurisdiction, enabling them to bounce ideas off someone with outside eyes and different insights, someone who can bring new language to help define a problem or communicate possible solutions, and someone who can support a leader who is being a courageous innovator. Providers should encourage feedback from site stakeholders. Providers can learn a great deal from seeing themselves through stakeholders' eyes.

In addition, the provider can say things that no one else can. Sometimes stakeholders are fearful that they will jeopardize their jobs or bring down political pressure if they voice their honest opinions. Providers, as independent agents, can raise sensitive issues and give cover to those who otherwise would be hesitant to speak.

### **11. Technical assistance providers should have an exit strategy.**

In many juvenile justice reform initiatives, providers become strong partners with state and local stakeholders. A major advantage of this is the trust and ease of communication that develops between them. At the same time, there is always a concern that the site will become dependent upon the provider. When the initiative ends, or the technical assistance funding runs out, the site can be left with a gap in leadership. Consequently, providers should work to develop capacities within the site to address the site's needs. In addition, providers should help the site plan for the transition away from direct technical assistance.

Beyond the specific exit plan, providers and stakeholders should begin sustainability planning early in the reform effort. Sustainability planning should include continued leadership and support from key collaborative stakeholders, ability to demonstrate positive outcomes and program effectiveness, maintenance of changes in administration and staff practices, extended funding and budgeting, marketing strategies regarding reform accomplishments, and support for changes in law and policy.

### **12. Stakeholders and technical assistance providers should celebrate and communicate successes.**

Juvenile justice reform is hard work. Many reform initiatives have floundered. In some parts of the country, juvenile justice systems are as inadequate today as they were in 1967 when the U.S. Supreme Court issued its historic decision *In re Gault*. On the other hand, over the last ten to fifteen years, there have been remarkable achievements in juvenile justice reform. Excellent research is available on the differences between adolescents and adults, and on "what works" to reduce violence and recidivism among young people. We also know much more about what doesn't work. We have a much better idea of the mental health problems of youth in the juvenile justice system, and how to address those problems. Many jurisdictions have a powerful track record of reducing unnecessary secure detention without jeopardizing public safety. Jurisdictions are developing programs to meet the gender-specific needs of girls. There are many examples of jurisdictions that have reduced racial and ethnic disparities. At the national, state, and local levels, these victories have come only with hard work, commitment to fundamental principles, and major investments of time, energy, and money.

When they achieve success, stakeholders and providers should enjoy their accomplishments. They should also communicate their results to others. There is no shortage of vehicles for communication. Major reform initiatives like *Models for Change*, the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and many nonprofits have rich websites, regular newsletters, and extensive listservs.





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