Building Bridges: A Community Engagement Framework for State Advisory Groups to Advance Systems Change

Presentation for State Advisory Groups by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice
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Acknowledgements

General Framework

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         Community
         Engagement
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Education and Data Sharing

Mobilization

Asset Mapping

Empowerment

Toolkit Audience

- State Advisory Groups
- State Agencies
- Youth and Families
- Community organizations/members

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Education and Data Sharing

Connecting Communities & SAGs

Community's role: Guide SAG activities with lived experiences and unique perspectives

SAG's role: Make state-level information, such as three-year plans, budgets, and/or projects, available to local communities

To ensure Title II resources are allocated effectively, SAGs should be able to answer:
1. What programs are currently funded through Title II?
2. How can local organizations apply for Title II funding?
3. What are the outcomes of previous programs?

Data Sharing with Communities

- Prioritize transparency
  - Sharing key system data (arrests, detention, recidivism rates, and court activities)
  - Distributing bi-annual reports, three-year plans, and crime analysis to community members in accessible formats, like fact sheets/infographics
- Collect qualitative data from communities
  - Community level surveys, listening sessions, or focus groups community forums
  - **Goal: gain a richer view of how systems impact youth and families**

Resource from the Toolkit

Fundamental Measures

The Fundamental Measures present model data elements and methods for quantifying critical components of the juvenile justice systems. The measures were developed with input from organizations representing all sectors of juvenile justice — from law enforcement through the court process and juvenile corrections — with the intention of improving national juvenile justice data through uniform and systematic improvement of local data collection, use, and analysis.

Explore the measures in two ways:

Key Questions

The Fundamental Measures are built on a framework that focuses on ten core questions for juvenile justice systems to answer.

> 1 How many youth are involved in various stages of the system?

> 2 What are the key characteristics of the youth involved?

> 3 How did the youth become system involved?

> 4 How did the youth move through the system?

> 5 Is the system fair?

> 6 How do youth change while in the system?

> 7 Does the system meet the needs of youth, their families, and the community?

> 8 What was the experience of youth in the system?

> 9 How much does it cost?

> 10 What are the long-term measures of success?

Juvenile Justice System Sectors

The juvenile justice system is comprised of several different agencies, each with a distinct role and mission. These agencies may vary in their responsibilities and the degree to which they intersect from state to state, but each one interacts with youth and their families. Many of the Fundamental Measures require information sharing between the distinct agencies.

> Law Enforcement

> Detention

> Court Processing

> Probation

> Placement

> Reentry

> Community Providers

National Center for Juvenile Justice's 'Fundamental Measures for Juvenile Justice'

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Mobilization

Identifying Community Partners

Purpose: Engage community partners in initiatives to address the needs of system involved youth or the child-serving agency

- Youth and parent organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Local youth organizations (e.g., YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs)
- School boards
- Local businesses
- Foster care agencies
- Violence prevention groups

- Local NAACPs
- Defense attorney organizations
- Local law enforcement
- Community centers
- Mental and behavioral health providers
- Other institutions that represent underserved and marginalized groups

Building Trust

- Community members need to feel seen, heard, and respected.
- Bring community organizations into decision-making spaces (e.g., advisory councils).
- Goal:
  - Break down "us vs. them" mentality
  - Reduce negative stigma around systems
  - Ensure community members have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback

Encourage Practical Ways to Get Involved

- Join state's SAG or attend SAG committee meetings
- Apply for grant opportunities
- Be a grant application reviewer to help select programs and projects for funding
- Collaborate with system stakeholders to design, implement, or evaluate programs and initiatives

The Power of Storytelling

- Uplift the stories of young people and community members to drive change, strengthen community connections, and humanize the experiences of young people and their families
- **Social media & other storytelling platforms**
  - Showcase youth success and community work
  - Build a united front for youth initiatives

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Asset Mapping

What is asset mapping?

- Purpose: identify and organize community resources to support youth, focusing on a community's gaps, strengths, and opportunities
- Offers a clear picture of what the community has to offer
- Can help direct Title II investments effectively

Key resources to map

- Programs & Services: Nonprofits, schools, vocational training
- Financial Resources: Grants, donations
- Community Spaces: Faith-based organizations, youth clubs, community centers

Collecting Data for Three-Year Plans

- Data collection methods: Surveys, interviews, community meetings, mapping tools
- **Goal:**
  - **Gather a comprehensive view of local resources and gaps**
  - **Identify areas lacking critical resources**
  - **Direct funding to areas with the greatest need to maximize impact**

Resource from the Toolkit

More resources on asset mapping can be found in the toolkit!

by Katherine Gaughen

MAP

Guide to **Mapping Community Assets** for Transitioning Youth
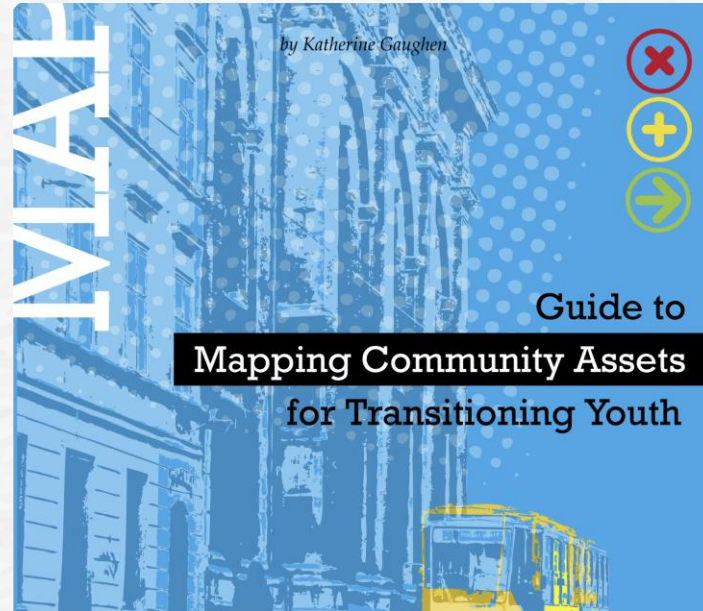
Annie E. Casey Foundation's 'Guide to Mapping Community Assets for Transitioning Youth'

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Empowerment

Empowerment Through Capacity Building

Role of SAGs & DSAs: Be a bridge to community partners, providing capacity-building resources for effective solutions in probation transformation and delinquency prevention

SAGs & DSAs can provide:

- Funding opportunity list servs or announcements
- Grant management training and resources
- Budget development and management resources
- Audit or financial review resources
- Encouraging partnerships between grassroots organizations and larger entities to increase capacity
- Grant writing training
- Data and evaluation training and resources

Making the Partnership Accessible

- Prioritize meeting accessibility
- Expand communication and outreach efforts
- Recruit community members to fill SAG vacancies
- Remove barriers to SAG participation (e.g., background checks)
- Encourage feedback on policies and programs

Strategies for Enhancing Community Partnership
- Create space for community insights at SAG meetings
- Partner with organizations for forums/listening sessions
- Use surveys to collect feedback and follow up on action taken

Responding to Sustainability Needs

SAGs and DSAs can empower community partners by being responsive to identified development and sustainability needs of community organizations

- **Examples include:**
  - Supporting multi-year awards
  - Fostering a partnership structure that positions the SAG or DSA as a collaborative problem-solving ally, rather than an auditor or monitor
  - Supporting sustainability planning for community-based efforts

Community Partners as Connectors

Community partners can make an impact through direct services and programs, and also by serving as a bridge between communities and SAGs/DSAs, communities and executive agencies, and communities and legislative bodies

Role of community partners:
- Share community insights on strengths, needs, service gaps
- Uplift youth and family voices in decision-making spaces

State Advisory Group

Community Organizations

Legislature

Executive Agency

SAG Implementation and Exploration Worksheet

The toolkit worksheet helps SAGs assess what they're already doing and what they could be doing to facilitate better community engagement.

SAG Implementation and Exploration Worksheet

Educating Community

- Where do you currently publish your three-year plan?
  _____
  - Where are three additional places you could share it to increase community access?
    _____
    _____

- Do you create any slide decks, infographics, summaries or reports to communicate your crime and needs analysis to the community?_____
  - What is one resource you currently have or could create that would synthesize your crime and needs analysis to make it easier to share with communities and partners?
    _____
    _____

- Do you have a communications or dissemination plan to share the data and insights you collect for your three-year plan with communities?
  _____
  - Did you do a survey, interviews, listening sessions, or attend events with specific groups to collect data for your state plan?
    _____
  - How can you use the information collected to create a distribution plan for sharing the findings and conclusions that this data was used to develop?
    _____

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Questions?

Feel free to unmute or put your questions in the chat.

Stay in touch!

Melissa Milchman

Executive Director

- Contact me at <u>milchman@juvjustice.org</u>
- Connect with CJJ at <u>https://juvjustice.org/</u>
- Sign up for our <u>monthly newsletter</u> to get access to more information, reports, and resources from youth justice partners nationally.
- Access the full toolkit <u>here</u>.