

# Michigan Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20

## 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Updated & Revised 1/23/2024

# *“Advancing The Path Forward”*



JUVENILE JUSTICE  
VISION 20/20



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## A Message from the President...

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Greetings,

During the COVID years and beyond, juvenile justice professionals in Michigan navigated a statewide juvenile justice reform that was intended to protect the rights of system-involved youth. An extensive legislative, juvenile justice reform package was passed into law in 2023 that included many changes, including but not limited to:

- Mandated the use of assessments at various times throughout the court process
- Removed the courts' abilities to collect reimbursement of funds for court services rendered from parents or youth in most cases
- Modified the use of the Consent Calendar (informal court processing of cases)
- Supported the development of a juvenile-specific data collection system
- Funded and supported the development of a juvenile "bureau" or "division" at the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) to support the policy development, data collection/quality assurance, and training.

Although some juvenile courts had already developed local, community-based models to treat youth in their respective communities, there was an identified need for more. Thus, this reform incentivized the further development and implementation of community-based services to expand the local treatment of youth through raising the State's Child Care Fund reimbursement portion for such programming. The financial piece of legislation also incorporated the remaining fiscal obligation between the counties/courts and the State regarding the *Raise the Age* legislation which was passed over 3 years ago.

This reform holds promise for improvements on many levels, and the local courts bear the "heavy lift" as implementation follows. Many members of the JJV 20/20 Executive Team participated in the reform process, and the Team members are committed to supporting the courts and system partners in this effort. Sharing of members' extensive experience in the courts through participation on State-led committees, offering training to support a well-educated, trained juvenile justice workforce, and other JJV 20/20 priority projects are identified in this Strategic Plan with this in mind.

The previous Strategic Plan for Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 (JJV 20/20) was the result of a planning process at the Hall of Justice, Lansing, MI that included representatives from key, diverse juvenile justice stakeholder groups. Each year, the Plan has been reviewed and updated by the Executive Team, often soliciting input from professionals who represent juvenile justice from across the juvenile justice disciplines.

Section 5 of this Plan was updated for 2024 in November 2023. It will guide the organization in its work to support juvenile justice excellence in Michigan through 2024. Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 and juvenile justice professionals are invited to review and offer feedback regarding the Plan by responding using the "Contact" tab on the JJV 20/20 website at: (<https://www.gvsu.edu/juvenilejusticevision2020/governance-5.htm>)

Those who participated in the Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 trainings and projects over the past thirteen years are greatly appreciated for their participation, time, interest in juvenile justice education, and their expertise and insights into how to improve juvenile justice. We thank them for their commitment to a quality juvenile justice system in Michigan for all.

Thank you for your support!

*Sandi Metcalf*, MS, CCE, ICM Fellow  
President  
Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20

## Acknowledgements

This Strategic Plan represents the current aspirations of Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 (JJV 20/20), an innovative, grassroots, volunteer, professional organization dedicated to the improvement of juvenile justice in Michigan. The process of obtaining the content for this Plan reflects a collaborative effort by many committed, juvenile justice professionals across the disciplines.

Executive Team members are chosen based on their extensive experience and expertise in the juvenile justice field and as juvenile justice “thought leaders”. The Executive Team members’ commitment and leadership make certain the JJV 20/20 organization remains strong and protects the interests of youth and families served within the juvenile justice system and supports public safety.

Special recognition is extended to the members of the JJV 20/20 Executive Team (2022 - 2024) who were involved in crafting this Strategic Plan (past and present) and who have given of themselves to volunteer toward the improvement of juvenile justice:

1. Sandi Metcalf – President (20<sup>th</sup> Circuit – Ottawa Juvenile Court Director – ret., Michigan Association for Family Court Administration – Past President, Michigan Governor’s Committee on Juvenile Justice member – ret.) – ICM Fellow
2. Kevin J. Bowling – Vice President (ret. 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit & Ottawa County Probate Courts and Michigan Association for Circuit Court Administrator, ICM Fellow, Past President – National Association for Court Management, Chair - Global Advisory Committee)
3. Dr. Kathy Bailey – Treasurer (Professor, Grand Valley State University, School of Criminology, Criminal Justice & Legal Studies)
4. Dave Pelon – Secretary (Deputy Court Administrator, 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court – Barry County Trial Court & Secretary of the Michigan Association for Family Court Administration)
5. Patrick Sussex – Trustee (Consultant & Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Auditor, Dept. of Health and Human Services – ret.)
6. Carla Grezeszak – Trustee (Court Administrator – ret. 23<sup>rd</sup> Circuit Court – Iosco County, Michigan Association for Family Court Administration – ret. & Past President, Northern Michigan Juvenile Officers Association)
7. Andy Thalhammer – Trustee (Circuit Court Administrator, 17<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court – Kent County, Michigan Association for Family Court Administration & Michigan Association of Circuit Court Administrators)
8. Terri Gilbert – Trustee (Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice Consultant) U of M Adjunct Faculty
9. Laura Marsh – Trustee (Programs Supervisor, ret., 17<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court & Internship Coordinator, Grand Valley State University)
10. Tanya Morrow – Trustee (Management Analyst, State Court Administrative Office, Michigan Supreme Court)
11. Derrick McCree – Trustee (Executive Director, Spectrum Juvenile Justice Services, Wayne County area)
12. Debby Shaw – Trustee (Juvenile & Probate Court Administrator, 44<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court – Livingston County, MI) Vice President, Michigan Association for Family Court Administration (2024)
13. Jonathan Kupec – Trustee – (Senior Probation/Intake Officer – 44<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court – Livingston County, MI)
14. Rhonda Ihm – Trustee (Deputy Court Administrator for Juvenile Services, 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court – Genesee County, MI) President, Michigan Association for Family Court Administration (2024)
15. Meghann Keit-Corrión – Trustee (Government Policy Advisor – Dykema Law, Lansing, MI) Previously, Government Affairs Associate at the Michigan Association of Counties and Legislative Director for Sen. Jim Stamas.
16. Alia Bittner – Student Trustee – (Grand Valley State University Graduate Student, School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies, Grand Rapids, MI)

Sincere gratitude is extended to Grand Valley State University’s School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies Department, the staff of the Michigan Judicial Institute, the 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court chief judges and administration, and the strategic team volunteers for ongoing support. Thank you!

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## 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Rev. 1/23/2024

### Section 1: Introduction and Overview

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The first Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan was completed in November 2011. The overarching goal of the strategic planning process was to increase awareness of juvenile justice through the establishment of a statewide action agenda for juvenile justice improvement in Michigan.

The initial strategic planning process was collaborative and inclusive of anyone who was invested in the improvement of the juvenile justice system in Michigan. Representatives from state departments, private agencies, juvenile courts and professional court associations, law enforcement, education, clergy, etc. were present. Dr. Brenda Wagenknecht-Ivey, PRAXIS Consulting, Denver, CO facilitated the process. From this planning effort, five strategic focus areas emerged: 1) The Unique Purpose of the Juvenile Courts; 2) Effective Outcomes for Youth, Families and Communities; 3) Juvenile Court Operational Performance; 4) Adequate and Sustainable Funding; and 5) A Strong Juvenile Justice Workforce.

Fast forward to 2021, the Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 (JJV 20/20) Executive Team and professionals have successfully led multiple efforts to improve juvenile justice in Michigan since the original Strategic Plan was implemented. Juvenile justice is becoming part of the discussion among legislators and government at the state and local levels, although education of legislative and state stakeholders continues to be a significant need. It is desired this increased awareness, however, will result in positive support and enhancements to the system. JJV 20/20 Executive Team members are ready to assist in moving the juvenile justice agenda forward, as needed.

The following are highlights of a few major accomplishments of Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20:

- 1) Unique Purpose of the Juvenile Courts – Published a Juvenile Court Core Tenets Briefing Book which identifies the statutory and policy citations that are foundational to the juvenile courts in Michigan. Monitored juvenile justice legislation and met with various legislators offering subject matter expertise and education, as needed.
- 2) Effective Outcomes – Conducted a comprehensive review of Risk/Needs Assessments used by juvenile courts throughout the state; it also included recommendations. This project culminated in a robust Juvenile Justice Risk Assessment Report which has been used nationally by the Global Advisory Committee and other states/organizations as they have examined the efficacy of risk/needs assessments use within the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems. This effort is due to be updated.
- 3) Juvenile Court Operational Performance (Data) – The Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 organization identified juvenile justice data as a very high priority in the original strategic planning process. Within the first year of organizational operation, a survey of those submitting and sharing juvenile justice data was conducted to determine what data was being collected; who was collecting the data; to whom the data was being submitted; and with whom the data was being shared. A “datapalooza” gathering of all those who participated in the survey and other stakeholders was hosted at the Ottawa County Administration Building and a “Datapalooza Report” resulted from continued discussion, emphasizing the need for commonly identified and defined, juvenile justice data in Michigan.
- 4) Adequate and Sustainable Funding – Published a Funding Briefing Book which assists stakeholders in understanding the juvenile justice system and how treatment interventions are funded in Michigan. JJV

20/20 also supported legislation and actively advocated for fiscal support of the “Raise the Age” legislation (effective October 1, 2021).

- 5) Strong Juvenile Justice Workforce – Conducted surveys of juvenile justice professionals to determine training needs within the state. This survey is continually updated and informs the JJV 20/20 training agendas for statewide juvenile justice conferences hosted at Grand Valley State University’s PEW campus, downtown Grand Rapids, MI. Throughout the pandemic, numerous virtual trainings were hosted by JJV 20/20.
- 6) Data (continued) – In October 2013, Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 received a grant award from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). In response, the Executive Team and Action Team members, along with several juvenile justice stakeholders including the State Court Administrative Office and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, designed and developed a statewide Juvenile Justice Data Sharing Model which achieved proof of concept. This project represented a comprehensive approach to develop a sustainable, data collection and sharing juvenile justice system in Michigan that was based on national justice data collection standards; it was user friendly; cost-effective; and didn’t require courts to abandon the local case management system. With the assistance of BJA grant funding, JJV 20/20 members and stakeholders also developed a Juvenile Justice Data Dictionary and completed the Service Specification Package for technologists to use for consistent implementation across the state. The Data Dictionary is the first, collective approach toward common data definitions and a common language among Michigan’s juvenile courts that included the input and consensus from multiple court administrators, judges, JJ stakeholders, and national and local technology experts. This documented is posted on the JJV 20/20’s website for anyone to access, and several states have utilized it in the application of developing juvenile justice data sharing systems, and in a second iteration, through a collective process, it was expanded to include risk/needs assessment elements.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court has graciously functioned as the fiduciary for the grants received by JJV 20/20 and has provided other project support of project management along with the support from DTMB. This project has also been of interest to other states who have contacted the JJV 20/20 president and/or members of the Executive Team, as they are struggling with juvenile justice data collection and data sharing.

This was a rigorous and ambitious project for a volunteer organization with limited resources, made possible, in large part, due to close partnerships with case management vendors, pilot juvenile court administrators/judges, local, state, and national technologists, the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB), the State Court Administrative Office, Grand Valley State University/Community Resource Institute, and the Department of Human Services. Four pilot courts – Kent, Macomb, Ottawa, and Berrien – were instrumental to achieving the “proof of concept” of the “Multijurisdictional Juvenile Justice Data Sharing Model”.

- 7) JJV 20/20 has continued to work with State legislators and others to move a JJ data sharing system that works for the state and the juvenile courts forward and one that collects commonly defined and complete data for the purpose of improved *quality* of JJ data from which informed funding and policy decisions can be made.

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- 8) To support a strong, juvenile justice workforce, JJV 20/20 has hosted several high-quality, statewide training conferences at Grand Valley State (GVSU) University's Grand Rapids campus, downtown Grand Rapids, MI. GVSU graciously provided convening facilities for these conferences.

To help support JJ professionals and to encourage professional development, the trainings have been offered at a very low cost, and during the pandemic, JJV 20/20 offered the trainings and conferences for free. National, state and local subject matter experts from across the disciplines who are committed to JJV 20/20's mission have offered their expertise to allow JJV 20/20 to provide these trainings/conferences.

As the pandemic played havoc with in-person conferences in 2020, the Executive Team quickly moved to a virtual format, offering statewide workshops and conferences free of charge. Attendance registration continually increased to over 400 registrants for the last workshop.

The JJV 20/20 Executive Team, the Strategic Focus Area Team members, and the JJ stakeholder surveys, assist in providing training on subjects helpful to those who are directly working with JJ youth and families in some capacity. The trainings are designed to provide meaningful information for judges, defense attorneys, administrators, probation officers, group leaders, therapists, detention staff, and all those who work within the JJ system.

The June 2021 virtual conference offered trainings by Rick Miller (Kid at Hope, AZ State University), speaking on "Creating and Activating Hope: The Power of Choice", and Dr. Lawanda Ravoira (Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center), presenting on "Hope is What We Do: Girl-Centered Practice". A short list of previous trainings offered are as follows:

- "You Can't Do it, Yet...Michael!": The Art of Effective Strength-Based Communicating with At-Risk Youth and Family Members
- All Kids Can Succeed, No Exceptions! Instilling Hope in Youth and Families in Juvenile Justice
- Hope: A Truly Remarkable Examination
- Working With Youth & Families: A Relational Approach
- The "Being Present" Model: Helping Staff and Youth Tap Into Their Inner Strength
- Beyond "Just Say No": Youth as Assets in Marijuana Use Prevention & Intervention
- Court Involved Youth & Suicide: 10 Ways We Often Get It Wrong
- Substance Abuse in Juvenile Populations
- LGBTQI Youth: Queer Criminology
- LGBTQI Youth: Improving Outcomes for Youth, Families and Communities
- Girls and Juvenile Justice
- Mental Health and Juvenile Justice
- Human Trafficking
- Risk/Needs Assessments, Effective Case Management
- Creating and Activating Hope: The Power of Choice & Girl-Centered Practice
- Violence, Trauma, and Resilience
- Navigating the Juvenile Justice Landscape: Youth Hate Crimes, Identity-Based Bullying, and Gangs
- The Role of the Judge in Transforming Juvenile Probation: A Toolkit for Leadership Overview
- The Role of the Judge in Transforming Juvenile Probation: A Toolkit for Leadership Training (March 2024)



- Juvenile Justice Legal Updates
- Risky Online Behavior, Treatment Options for Youth who have Experienced Trauma
- Safety and Security for Juvenile Justice Professionals
- Autism, Trauma Informed Care, and Juvenile Justice Legal Updates

See <https://www.gvsu.edu/juvenilejusticevision2020/june-2021-virtual-training-event-49.htm> for details on other trainings offered and the training materials.

Partnerships with the Michigan Judicial Institute (MJI), the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court judges has presented an outstanding opportunity to work with State and national partners who have extensive experience in training of judges and court professionals. JJV 20/20 Executive Team has greatly valued these partnerships and looks forward to working with their staff in the future, as it enriches the process for everyone involved.

- 9) The Executive Team has written multiple “position papers” and has sent them to legislators, Michigan Supreme Court justices, JJ organizations, media, etc. to offer a balanced perspective on legislative subject matters that may have unintended consequences about which leaders at the state level may not be aware.

These are just a few of the accomplishments Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 has achieved in a brief period with the ultimate goal of improving Michigan’s juvenile justice system. Unmentioned are countless hours of volunteer time to co-lead Strategic Focus Area Action Teams; write and review documents; prepare, monitor, and manage grant applications; attend meetings; and advocate for juvenile justice funding, policies, and laws which support the basic tenets of the system.

Many of the documents cited above can be found on the Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 website hosted by Grand Valley State University at:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/juvenilejusticevision2020>

### **Advancing the Path Forward**

This Strategic Plan represents “Advancing the Path Forward”. Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 is over 11 years strong and represents juvenile justice professionals who continually seek improvements for youth, families, and communities through effective juvenile justice. Through strategic planning, the JJV 20/20 organization “plans its work and works its plan”. As reflected, some needs and aspirations may change over time, and others may stay the same from year-to-year. Strategic planning is not a static process; it modifies and molds to meet the needs as recognized through a deliberative and inclusive process.

Quality and reliable data continues to be an absolute necessity to sustain a viable, quality juvenile justice system within Michigan. Demands for varied, flexible, reliable, and/or increased funding are at the heart of the system to address the needs of youth and families, especially with the advent of the juvenile courts implementing the “Raise the Age” legislation on October 1, 2021.

Over the past years, the need for consistent levels of services and seamless services across agency and jurisdictional lines, has arisen. Expansion of community-based services, requiring additional funding, is critical.

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Lack of adequate funding continues to be a concern as increasingly, the cost of juvenile justice rises at the local levels.

Concern about the numbers of “Baby Boomers” retiring and leaving an institutional knowledge void in juvenile justice continues to be significant, and the lack of funding for prevention services and technology are identified as detrimental to an effective juvenile justice system.

Confusing child welfare’s and juvenile justice’s needs, requires everyone to evaluate each aspect of the system while recognizing there are “crossover youth” aka, “dual wards”, who are or have been found in both systems. Education of legislators, stakeholders, and the public about the third branch of government – the Judicial branch – and the juvenile justice system, and the significant role of the juvenile courts, is paramount as delinquency is a community issue, not just a juvenile court issue. Effective, devoted, and informed champions for juvenile justice are critically needed.

As the implementation of this Plan continues to address previously identified issues relevant today, and it tackles the emerging issues, it is important to remain focused on the goal – to support a juvenile justice system that effectively administers justice and restores wholeness to all those who enter the juvenile courts and receive services from stakeholder organizations. This effort takes unmitigated commitment of everyone involved, and together, the quality of life in all communities will be improved and preserved.

## Section 2: Mission, Vision, and Core Values

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**The Mission Statement** represents what Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 stands for today. **The Vision** reflects what the organization desires to be in the future, and **the Core Values** are the tenets that guide Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 as an organization.

**It is important to note** some terms are used interchangeably throughout this Strategic Plan. “Juvenile courts” usually connotes the “juvenile justice system” except when referring to legislation and/or policy specific to the “juvenile courts” in Michigan. The reference to a “juvenile” or “youth” reflects “court-involved” and/or “system-involved” youth.

### **Mission Statement**

To promote juvenile justice by supporting the effective administration of justice, providing education and training, advocating for sufficient funding, and quality data, to maintain an informed, transparent system

### **Vision**

Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 is a leader by promoting and supporting the transparent administration of:

- Fair and equitable justice for all
- Individualized, effective interventions to address the needs of all youth and families; and
- Accountability that builds resilient youth and families, and safe communities through cultural understanding and humility.

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Enhancing the effectiveness of the juvenile system through unified voice and collaboration:

**Core Values**

High Performing

Relevant

Transparent

Dedicated

Professional

Visionary

Mindful

Holistic

Evidence-Based

Outcome-Focused

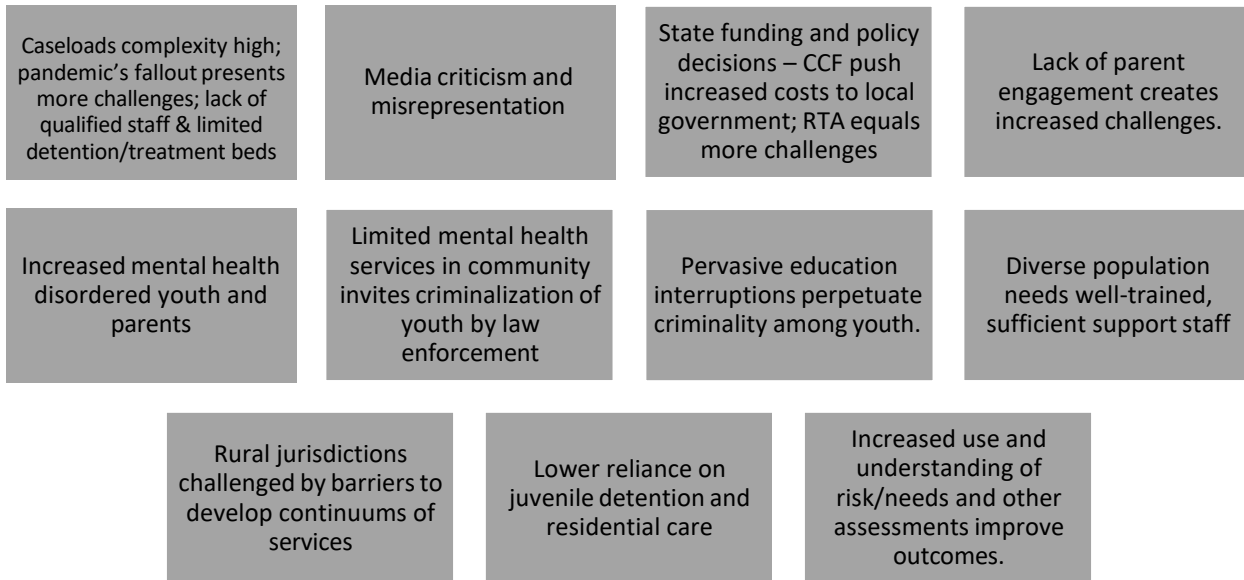
Compassionate

Restorative

Respectful

**Section 3: Trends Summary and Implications**

Understanding juvenile justice trends is critical to the improvement of the overall system. During the strategic planning process, a trends analysis was conducted through extensive discussion which covered a variety of areas identified below. A literature review was also conducted in delinquency, incarceration and waiver rates, and areas of legal, procedural, psychological, gender, interventions, and reform trends.



The following are some trends identified and discussed during the strategic planning process:

**Overall rates and caseloads of delinquent youth in the juvenile courts are down.** However, it appears the complexity of cases has increased. Juvenile courts are managing youth who manifest increasing mental health disorders. Staffing is stressed, and severe staff vacancy in the courts, lack of detention/treatment beds limits options.

**Media criticism and misrepresentation of the juvenile justice system has increased.** Transparency, trust, and collaboration among multiple, interfacing juvenile justice partners, has suffered.

**State funding and policy decisions have reduced the State's portion of Child Care Fund reimbursement for JJ and increased the cost of JJ to the local counties.**

**Lack of parent engagement raises more challenges in the efforts of case management.** Many parents suffer from personal mental health and substance abuse disorders and are unable or unwilling to engage.

**Increased referrals of children and youth who manifest mental health disorders and cognitive deficits coupled with delinquent behavior.**

**Limited mental health services for youth in the community, and criminalizing youth to receive services is common across the state.** Access to mental health services on a community level is limited, compelling law

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enforcement to charge a youth with a law violation to obtain mental health and other services through the juvenile court.

**Interruption of education is a significant issue for court-involved youth.** More needs to be done to disrupt the “school to justice pipeline” and to modify current school safety legislation to reduce expulsion and long-term suspension of students involved in the courts. Some courts have implemented schools to address this, but the courts were not established for this purpose. The educational system needs to be willing to work with the courts to educate court-involved youth and provide a flexible system to meet the needs of this population.

**The LGBTQI population referred to the juvenile courts relies on well-trained staff, attorneys, and judges, and inclusive practices to sufficiently care for these youth in court and when in juvenile detention.** More training and individualized services are needed

**Rural jurisdictions continue to struggle to develop sufficient continuums of services in the community.** Improved access to services is critical in areas where there are lower population numbers and high need for services.

**Lower reliance on detention and residential care** are strategies that have been actively utilized in jurisdictions through expansions of community-based options. Prevention and diversion funding will be critical to support this trend.

**Increased understanding and use of criminogenic risk/needs assessments** is helping juvenile courts better identify and address the specific needs of youth and levels of treatment dosages. More training is needed.

**“Raise the Age” legislation implementation came into effect on October 1, 2021.** The solution to reliable, sustainable funding, and the collection of quality data to measure outcomes continues to hamper the process.

**Funding challenges, perceived lack of transparency, and the lack of the local court voice in decision-making at the state level** have raised concerns about the future of juvenile justice and how past effective collaborations will be potentially negatively impacted.

**Girls entering the juvenile justice system continue to be of concern as it appears numbers are increasing, and services are extremely limited.** Girl-centered services are critical for this population to be sufficiently served.

**Diversity, equity, and inclusion have been priorities among the juvenile courts for decades, but** the overrepresentation of youth of color in the system trend continues regardless of dedicated efforts to change the outcomes. Model updates and new strategies are needed.

#### Section 4: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Summary

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An extensive SWOT exercise reveal many of the issues discussed in this Plan.

**Strengths reflected** a strong, well-trained workforce; the use of technology and assessments to measure a youth’s progress; a focus on individualized planning; juvenile court collaborations and information sharing; and hard-working professionals who care.

**Weaknesses identified** areas of lack of education and understanding of the juvenile justice system by decision-makers, funders, and policymakers; lack of public awareness; the “invisibility” of the juvenile courts at the State and local levels; and the lack of sufficient funding simultaneous to the demand for increased service.

**Opportunities included** JJV 20/20’s statewide trainings to support a strong, educated workforce; forming new partnerships with higher education, community, national funders, State organizations, etc.; and improved understanding of technology to measure case progress and to provide the juvenile courts with information to improve their systems, locally.

**Threats were identified** as a lack of collaboration and transparency between the State and the local levels; forced State mandates that lessen potential, positive outcomes; lack of juvenile “champions” with system experience and expertise; lack of data that is based on common definition and common data elements; JJ vulnerability due to lack of a juvenile-specific data system to meet the needs of the State and the juvenile courts; loss of institutional knowledge with little succession planning; inadequate, inconsistent, and unstable funding; and competing priorities that lack agreement on needs and plan of action.

**Michigan Juvenile Justice – Vision 20/20**

**Strategic Focus Areas**

(Revised January 2024)

1. Advance the Unique Purpose of the Juvenile Court
2. Support Enhanced Juvenile Court Performance and Data Collection Based on Common Definition
3. Advocate for Reliable, Adequate, and Sustainable Funding
4. Support a Strong, Well-trained, Informed Juvenile Justice Workforce



## **STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #1: ADVANCE THE UNIQUE PURPOSE OF THE JUVENILE COURT**

**Description:** Founded in 1899, juvenile courts have a unique purpose and function. A referral to the juvenile court is often the entry point into the juvenile justice system from a legal perspective and a service response.

The core tenet of the juvenile courts recognizes youth are different than adults and should be treated so; once involved in the juvenile court system, juvenile offenders should receive appropriate and effective treatment in the least restrictive environment within their community and in a manner that ensures public safety.

Preserving and advancing the unique purpose and functions of the juvenile court is a high priority for Michigan's juvenile justice leaders. Both are needed to ensure Michigan's juvenile justice system provides the fair and equitable administration of justice and offers rehabilitative and restorative services for court-involved youth to succeed while holding them accountable and protecting public safety.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Goal 1: Juvenile justice professionals, the public, and court clients understand the purpose and functions of the juvenile court system.

Objective 1: Educate stakeholders, partners, and the public on the history, purpose, principles, services, functions of and research on the juvenile justice system.

Objective 2: Create visibility and build support for the juvenile justice system at the local, state, tribal, and national levels.

Goal 2: Juvenile justice enhancements and/or reform in Michigan is informed by the core tenets of the Juvenile Court.

Objective 1: Collaborate and advocate with others to implement system enhancements and initiatives.

Objective 2: Advance juvenile justice priorities among stakeholders through education/training.

Objective 3: Identify and share the *good* work of the juvenile courts, JJV 20/20, and juvenile justice youth using success stories to educate the public.

### **2023 Priority Projects:**

- 1. Support the development of a juvenile justice training curriculum for judges, referees, attorneys, and other stakeholders.**

This curriculum will assist professionals working in the field to better understand the complexity of juvenile justice and provide growth within the field, ultimately, improving outcomes for court-involved youth/families. Partnerships with the Michigan Judicial Institute, the State Court Administrative Office, the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and other professional organizations, will be sought and strengthened.

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**STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #2: SUPPORT ENHANCED JUVENILE COURT OPERATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE AND DATA FOUNDED ON COMMON DEFINITION**

**Description:** Juvenile courts across the state are committed to procedural fairness and quality research to guide the courts to be high-performing organizations. This includes: (1) being more accessible; (2) managing cases, court operations, and juvenile services effectively; (3) resolving matters and providing services to the juvenile in a timely manner; (4) administering justice in a fair and equitable manner; (5) using research to guide education of staff; (6) advocating for procedural fairness; forming strong relationships with court-involved youth and their families; practicing diversity, equity, and inclusivity within the daily operations of the courts; and (6) being efficient and effective with resources.

**Goals and Objectives**

Goal 1: Juvenile courts provide fair and equitable treatment.

Objective 1: Advocate treating all juvenile offenders equitably and in accordance with the law and with “cultural humility”.

Objective 2: Support the objective measuring of the public’s perception of trust and confidence in the juvenile court system.

Goal 2: Juvenile courts provide transparent, evidence-based or promising practice services that are therapeutically designed, user-friendly, and accessible.

Objective 1: Provide helpful and understandable educational resources to juvenile justice professionals, stakeholders, and court users.

Objective 2: Support information sharing and collaboration among all justice system and community partners per statute and when appropriate.

Goal 3: Juvenile courts are efficient, effective, and data-driven.

Objective 1: Support the use of progressive technology strategies to improve consistency of data collection processes and procedures.

Objective 2: Encourage the use of transparent, flexible methods to collect *quality*\* data.

Objective 3: Support analysis of *quality* data.

Objective 4: Support data collection training of staff.

\* Quality data = commonly defined and consistently collected data elements.

**2024 Priority Projects:**

1. **Support the funding and implementation of a unified juvenile justice data system in which the data elements are commonly defined among the juvenile courts.**

Data collected through case management systems are essential to the support and growth of various systems. To be effective, they need to be beneficial to those seeking data on the State level and, those who use the data for improvement purposes, on the local level.

The juvenile courts and other JJ stakeholders, currently and historically, have collected and shared significant amounts of JJ data with the state. However, the data lies in disparate data systems that don't allow it to be effectively used for informational and research purposes. Given the State Court Administrative Office has procured \$150M in the FY 23 – 24 Governor's budget, and SCAO's JIS case management system has been chosen to collect the necessary court data for the State, the opportunity for integration with a juvenile-specific case management system(s), utilizing common definitions of terms, and effective case management functionality, can be achieved.

2. **Support SCAO's efforts to update/add value to the JJ data dictionary created by JJV 20/20; compare and contrast the dictionary with the National Center for State Court's National Open Data Standards (NODS) document to align the documents where possible; and identify where the data elements can be blended with the current Judicial Data Warehouse (JDW) elements.**

The JJV 20/20 Data Dictionary is an effective tool to guide data collection and research of data on the common definitions of data elements collected. It was updated approximately 3 -4 years ago, but much has changed. Data elements may need to be added and definition refinements will be critical.

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### **STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #3: ADVOCATE FOR SECURING RELIABLE, SUFFICIENT, AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING**

**Description:** Michigan’s juvenile justice system needs reliable, adequate, and sustainable funding to perform effectively. Budget cutbacks, ongoing and inconsistent interpretive changes to the Child Care Fund, and the uncertainty in funding continue to pose challenges for juvenile justice organizations. Staffing levels, the availability of interventions and services across the State, and the inadequacy of juvenile court/JJ stakeholder representation to assist in the successful implementation planning may significantly impact the success of the “Raise the Age” legislation and will place other external pressures on the juvenile courts.

Currently, the reimbursement of state-defined, eligible expenditures is characterized as a percentage cost share. However, historically, the State has received funding to offset a portion of the State’s percentage which is not shared with the local courts/counties. Thus, a new review of the Child Care Fund and other funding streams for delinquency needs to occur. Further, some juvenile detention facilities rent beds for detention and treatment programs to outside courts/counties. This allows the courts/counties to keep the facility open, but the non-reimbursable costs often may burden the court/county in which the facility is located for the care of out-of-county youth.

In sum, the juvenile justice system needs reliable, sufficient, and sustainable funding and resources to administer fair and equitable justice; to provide individualized, comprehensive, and effective programs for delinquent youth in all areas of the state; and to ensure accountability that builds safe, resilient communities. Securing reliable, adequate, and sustainable funding are high priorities for the future.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

Goal 1: Michigan’s juvenile justice system has the funding and resources needed to protect communities, administer fair and equitable justice and help court-involved youth and families succeed.

Objective 1: Support the sharing of innovative methods among the juvenile courts and stakeholders that use existing resources more efficiently and effectively (e.g., consolidating services) and support consistent, cost-effective services statewide (e.g., using shared services agreements).

Objective 2: Advocate for expanded funding streams that help juvenile court and juvenile justice stakeholders provide comprehensive and critical services.

Objective 3: Explore new strategies to expand funding and support Michigan’s juvenile justice system.

Goal 3: Juvenile courts have the resources/funding to provide a full range of effective services that meet the unique needs of delinquent court-involved youth and families.

Objective 1: Educate the public on the funding of juvenile justice in Michigan.

Objective 2: Support a funding structure that allows Child Care Fund to be used for non-mandated and mandated services, including prevention.

Objective 3: Advocate for a state plan to provide resources to the rural and/or remote juvenile courts.

**2023 Priority Projects:**

1. **Support redefining juvenile detention facilities as a form of “community-based services” and support increased funding reimbursement for local, county, and court managed juvenile detention facilities for operations.**

For decades juvenile detention facilities were used for purposes of public protection and/or protecting a minor from self-harm. The services offered have included education, medical and dental care, a safe environment, etc. Today, many juvenile detention facilities are providing assessments of various kinds, and some provide an array of intensive treatment to the youth who reside there. This treatment programming that is often local, is used in lieu of residential placement in an effort to include the family in the treatment process while stabilizing a youth’s behavior, etc. The whole concept of juvenile detention is long overdue for a redefinition that truly reflects the local community services being offered.

Expanded funding is also critical for these facilities to remain open to other, less fortunate counties in which there is no local juvenile detention facility. These counties are often accessing services within other county facilities, but the local taxpayers bear the burden of the operational costs of housing youth who are not residents of that county nor under that county’s jurisdiction. JJV 20/20 asserts this arrangement seems to be unfair. The counties that have such facilities need to be supported through the Child Care Fund for operational costs as they utilize their facilities for the benefit of others.

2. **Support efforts to financially incentivize funding based on EB/effective outcome-based programming.**  
The term, “outcome-based programming” includes support for programming that may not have been formally evaluated to meet the evidence-based rigor to be listed on one of the many evidence-based program lists in the nation. It is imperative sufficient funding of the juvenile courts and juvenile justice stakeholders be provided at the state and local levels and offer flexibility for diverse programming and a positive, supportive culture within the juvenile justice continuums of services provided. This project supports legislative and other avenues of funding to sufficiently develop, procure, and implement access to remedial, educational, therapeutic, vocational, and other forms of services to meet the needs of justice-involved youth. It will also monitor and advocate to limit the number of added requirements mandated to sufficiently fund such programming.
3. **Support efforts to financially incentivize the use of validated risk/needs assessment instruments and seek to ensure consistency of or to “standardize” the use of these instruments among the juvenile courts.**  
Financial support for the purchase of validated risk/needs assessment instruments needs to be available to the juvenile courts and detention centers. Juvenile courts use validated risk/needs instruments in multiple ways and at various decision – making points within their respective court processes. Some of the reasons the courts may use such instruments on a limited basis or not at all include lack of funding, training, etc. To “standardize” does not mean to have all the courts use the same instrument. Rather, through consensus, it is to identify and support key decision-making points within the processing/servicing of a youth’s court referral, where common practice among the juvenile courts that includes administration of a risk/needs assessment would occur, i.e., detention, diversion, intake, every 90 days while a youth is under court jurisdiction to measure outcomes and refine treatment regimens to improve outcomes, etc.

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## **STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #4: SUPPORT A STRONG, WELL-TRAINED, INFORMED JUVENILE JUSTICE WORKFORCE**

**Description:** The success of Michigan’s juvenile justice system is dependent in part, on the strength of its workforce and developing a workforce committed to a career in juvenile justice. A competent, motivated, and satisfied workforce, career-focused in juvenile justice, will help ensure excellent court performance and effective outcomes with the youth served. This must be a high priority for the long-term viability of juvenile justice in Michigan.

This area is critically important for the following reasons:

1. More sustainable, personalized, technical, and visionary staff training is needed at all levels; continuous training is needed to equip employees with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to manage legal cases, effectively interact with those served, and to ensure high performance well into the future.
2. A core training curriculum for juvenile justice professionals needs to be updated for probation officers, judges, referees, defense attorneys, etc.
3. Leadership and juvenile court management-specific training is needed as legislative and policy changes are inevitable.
4. Succession planning and leadership development are needed to ensure deep “bench- strength” when vacancies occur.
5. Judicial and administrative champions, who fully understand and who have management experience in the juvenile courts and the juvenile justice system, are needed to ensure a strong JJ system in the future. The next generation of leaders is needed to fill the void that will occur when current leaders retire.
6. Many juvenile justice employees do not see juvenile justice as a career, including within the juvenile detention facilities. More work is needed to make juvenile justice a sought-after career, starting with JJ specialty-degree areas within higher education.
7. Professional development, career path guidance, and opportunities for growth are lacking.
8. High turnover in some juvenile justice positions threatens the juvenile justice system. Obtaining quality and sufficient staffing is increasingly becoming more difficult, in part, due to COVID and also, may be an unintended consequence of recent legislation.
9. Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace is needed at all levels and in all positions.
10. Forging new partnerships with universities, law schools, and academicians to enhance education, job readiness, and juvenile justice research present tremendous opportunities.
11. Juvenile justice must retain its ability to be nimble, reflect those served and the cultures of their respective communities, and employees need to be prepared to embrace change. Advocacy at the state level for this is also needed.
12. Equal opportunities are needed with equitable pay in all counties across the state.

13. Employee satisfaction and a positive work environment are necessary to recruit and retain competent staff and improve organizational performance.
14. Legislators, advocacy groups, and state departments need to be educated on the juvenile courts and the entire judicial system. They need to acknowledge the positive work the courts and JJ stakeholders do for the youth served and to support jobs in JJ as critical to the quality of life all taxpayers have in their respective communities.

### **Goals and Objectives**

#### Goal 1: Juvenile justice professionals possess the knowledge and skills to perform their jobs.

Objective 1: Provide juvenile justice professionals with consistent, comprehensive, and accessible training/ educational opportunities.

Objective 2: Establish partnerships to enhance opportunities for JJ staff knowledge, skill development, and required certifications.

Objective 3: Develop opportunities for mentorships upon request to transfer knowledge and skills to the next generation of leaders, managers, and employees.

#### Goal 2: Juvenile justice is a desired career in Michigan.

Objective 1: Promote juvenile justice as a career in high schools, law schools, and universities throughout the state.

Objective 2: Educate students and professionals about the juvenile justice system and the opportunities for and value of a meaningful career in JJ.

Objective 3: Support competitive pay, benefits, and other perks that will attract quality professionals to a career in juvenile justice.

### **2024 Priority Projects:**

1. Actively support a well-trained juvenile justice workforce through mentorship, talent development, career/professional development/training, and required certifications.
2. Measure the value of each training and identify targeted areas for future training ideas using a feedback form completed by conference/webinar participants/attendees.
3. Support MJI updating/expanding the juvenile court probation officers' certification curriculum as required to work in the juvenile courts per Michigan Court Rule.
4. Explore MJI partnering with universities to provide opportunities for students to complete the probation officer certification process while in college.