

# NATIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE NETWORK

## Snapshot

### REDUCING THE COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES OF A DELINQUENCY ADJUDICATION\*

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When it comes to dealing with youth in trouble with the law, the responsible thing to do is to ensure that youth are rehabilitated and don't commit new crimes. Taking this level-headed approach makes our communities safer. Unfortunately, our current juvenile justice system is like an exceptionally difficult maze, with too many paths in and too few ways out. And in many jurisdictions, current policies often ensure that youth who leave the system are still caught in the maze – years and often decades later.

In particular, youth returning from juvenile facilities face many challenges reintegrating into the community. These hardships, or “collateral consequences,” include barriers to education, employment, military service, and public benefits – making it difficult for them to leave the maze and become responsible members of society. A promising strategy to redesign the maze and reduce these collateral consequences is to keep juvenile records confidential. When communities take this practical step to build clearer exits to the maze of the justice system, they will help youth fully exit the maze so they can move on to contribute to their communities.

#### Confidentiality of Juvenile Records<sup>1</sup>

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While a common perception is that juvenile delinquency records are private and protected, confidentiality of these records has eroded significantly in recent years, while at the same time,

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