Mission Statement
The Juvenile Justice Institute is committed to using applied research to identify the needs of the juvenile justice system; evaluate programs and policies; monitor the overrepresentation of juveniles based on their race and gender; and advise the Legislature and Governor on the Nebraska juvenile justice system.

Who Do We Serve?

Policy Makers
JJJ is directed in statute to help inform policy makers about juvenile justice data, trends, and best practices. Since the beginning JJI staff have served on numerous statewide advisory boards, testified on proposed juvenile justice legislation, informed interim legislative studies, and published over 70 Nebraska juvenile justice reports.

Researchers
JJJ partners with researchers at the state and national level. JJJ has partnered internationally with researchers and practitioners from Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, and Colombia. These multilevel partnerships have resulted in published academic articles, informed policy, and provided training.

Students
JJJ is committed to helping develop the future workforce through internships and graduate research opportunities. Over 40 students have worked for JJJ over the past 20 years and hundreds of students have participated in classes taught by JJJ faculty and staff. Through the reentry mentoring class, 243 students and mentor matches have been made over the last decade.

Practitioners
JJJ aims to translate research and data into practice to help guide the development of evidence-based programs. Evidence-based Nebraska has provided training to hundreds of program staff statewide and does a process evaluation of almost 200 programs each year. JJI regularly presents at state conferences about emerging Nebraska juvenile justice trends.

Our Values

Experience
JJJ staff are experts in the field of juvenile justice, developing statewide evaluation projects, and innovative research methodologies to study issues relevant to young people.

Accessibility
We believe in having evidence-based practices that are accessible to those serving youth and staff that are accessible to the community as a resource.

Finding Solutions
At JJJ, we value “living in the solution.” If a problem arises, our aim is to assess the issue and identify potential solutions to the problem strategically.
Meet Our Team

Anne Hobbs, J.D., Ph.D.
has served as the director of the Juvenile Justice Institute since 2009. She received her J.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, College of Law in 1993, and her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2011. Her research interests include implicit bias, restorative justice, inequality in our justice systems, disproportionate minority contact and program evaluation. She was awarded a 2021 Fulbright Scholar to Singapore to study prisoner reentry. She is currently a 2022-2024 Restorative Justice Fellow through Center for Restorative Practices and BJA.

Julie Garman, Ph.D.
is a research associate with the Juvenile Justice Institute at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her research interests include special populations, program and policy evaluations, primarily in the areas of juvenile justice and correctional treatment. She works primarily on the Evidence-based Nebraska project, collecting and analyzing data on the effectiveness of various programs for youth throughout Nebraska.

Monica Miles-Steffens, MPA
is a juvenile justice coordinator with the Juvenile Justice Institute. She oversees multiple projects, with an emphasis on training and development, restorative practices, and international collaborations. She has over 25 years of experience in juvenile justice direct service, government, and non-profit positions. She has worked extensively with grants, community planning, training, and program implementation.

Amy Gathje, M.A.
received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Nebraska at Omaha School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. She has experience as a mentor and caseworker with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. She is the program specialist for the Evidence-based Nebraska project, providing training and technical support for programs statewide.

Kim Trost
is the project coordinator at the Juvenile Justice Institute. She graduated from Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, with a B.A. in Communications. While at JJI, she has worked on multiple projects, including Nebraska’s Strategic Plan for Victims and Survivors of Crime and the Strategic Plan for the Nebraska Justice Assistance Grant. She has planned Evidence-based Nebraska trainings and dialogues, as well as tracking budgets and projects at JJI.
2002: The Juvenile Justice Institute is founded
2003: Probation Detention Intake Survey funded through the Nebraska Crime Commission
2004: Juvenile Pretrial Diversion Reporting and Evaluation Project for the Nebraska Crime Commission
2005: Evaluation of the Douglas County Nebraska Juvenile Assessment Center—Phase III
2007: Lancaster County Juvenile Justice System Evaluation, Lancaster County Nebraska
2007: Standardized Risk Assessment in Nebraska’s Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers Detention Facilities, State of Nebraska Office of Juvenile Services

2008: Statewide Juvenile Diversion Training
2009: Building Bright Futures Truancy and Recovering Lost Youth Task Force Program
2010: Evaluation of Lancaster County Alternatives to Juvenile Detention
2012: Nebraska State DMC Assessment
2012: Evaluation of Lancaster County Early Identification and Assessment Process - Final Evaluation
2012: Youth Reentering Lancaster County After Commitment to a State Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC)

2013: Kansas State DMC Assessment
2013: Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community Planning User Manual
2014: The Lancaster County Juvenile Reentry Project - Final Report
2014: Evidence-based Practice in Juvenile Justice: Nebraska White Paper
2015: Analysis of the Nebraska Intake Risk Assessment Instrument
2012-2015: Nebraska Juvenile Diversion Programs
2015-2016: Nebraska Alternatives to Detention Programs
2016-2017: Evidence-based Nebraska Annual Report

2018: Recruiting and Retaining Higher Risk Youth in Promotion Prevention Programs
2019: School Resource Officer Contacts and Perceptions
2020: Reliability and Predictive Validity of Screener/Assessment Tools in Nebraska Juvenile Diversion
2020: Nebraska’s Community-based Aid Mental Health Services
2015-2020: Hall County Detention Utilization Study
2015-2020: Restorative Justice Conferencing Programs
2021: Annual Report 2020-2021 - Juvenile Case Management System Definitions and Data Fidelity Project
2021: Perceptions of Youth on Juvenile Diversion
2022: Annual Report 2020-2022 - Evidence-based Nebraska Pre-and-Post Assessment Tool

*A complete list of all documents can be found on JJI’s website.*
The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice launched a new Juvenile Justice Certificate Program.

Anne Hobbs, Ph.D., was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to Study in Singapore. Singapore is doing incredible work within its prison systems. Prison Fellowship Singapore is the leader in many innovative efforts within prisons, at the prison gate, and at reentry.

Julie Garman, Ph.D., was recognized at the UNO School of Criminology and Criminal Justice Scholarship and Award Luncheon with the Staff Excellence Research and Assessment Award.

Anne Hobbs, Ph.D., and Monica Miles-Steffens taught the Juvenile Delinquency class on the UNL campus using their newly published e-textbook.

The Juvenile Reentry Mentoring Class began. This class not only provides youth with quality mentoring, but provides the students in the field experience. Many students have gone on to work in the juvenile justice field due to this class.

Anne Hobbs, Ph.D., and Kelly Riley, presented on the statewide restorative justice project at the Through the Eyes of the Child Conference.

T. HANK ROBINSON, J.D., Ph.D.  
Founding Director of JJI
Robinson is a University of Nebraska at Omaha alumnus, earning a doctorate in Criminology and Criminal Justice in 2002, subsequently leading the Juvenile Justice Institute and Consortium for Crime and Justice Research from 2002 to 2011. Under his leadership, these research units produced more than $1 million in revenue to support graduate student tuition and salaries at UNO.

DENISE C. HERZ, Ph.D.  
Founding Faculty (UNO)

NANCY THOMPSON  
Founding State Senator
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Juvenile Justice Institute
UNO School of Criminology & Criminal Justice
unojji@unomaha.edu
402-472-3677

Lincoln Office
901 N. 17th St.,
Nebraska Hall 310
Lincoln, NE 68588-0561

Omaha Office
Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, Rm 219B
6400 University Drive South
Omaha, NE 68182

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