

Be the Change You Want to See: Putting Ideas into Practice

UNO Juvenile Justice Certificate 2024-2025
Cohort: Stephanie Anderson, Carla
Andreessen, Tristan Perry, Brennan Cole, Lamar
Brown



JJ Certificate Program Purpose

The program is designed to enhance participants' knowledge of “what works” and develop skills that can be applied directly with the youth they serve. The learning environment creates safe space for professional development by engaging in critical dialogue, self-reflection, skill demonstration, and exposure to experiential learning opportunities.



Goals of the JJ Certificate Program

The certificate program aims to impact Nebraska's juvenile justice workforce by:

1. Developing the capacity of current and future juvenile justice professionals to implement best practices in their organizations and Nebraska's Juvenile Justice System.
2. Equipping future juvenile justice leaders with the knowledge to lead Nebraska in an evidence-based manner.
3. Growing a statewide network of juvenile justice professionals who act as a resource and support to each other and their communities.





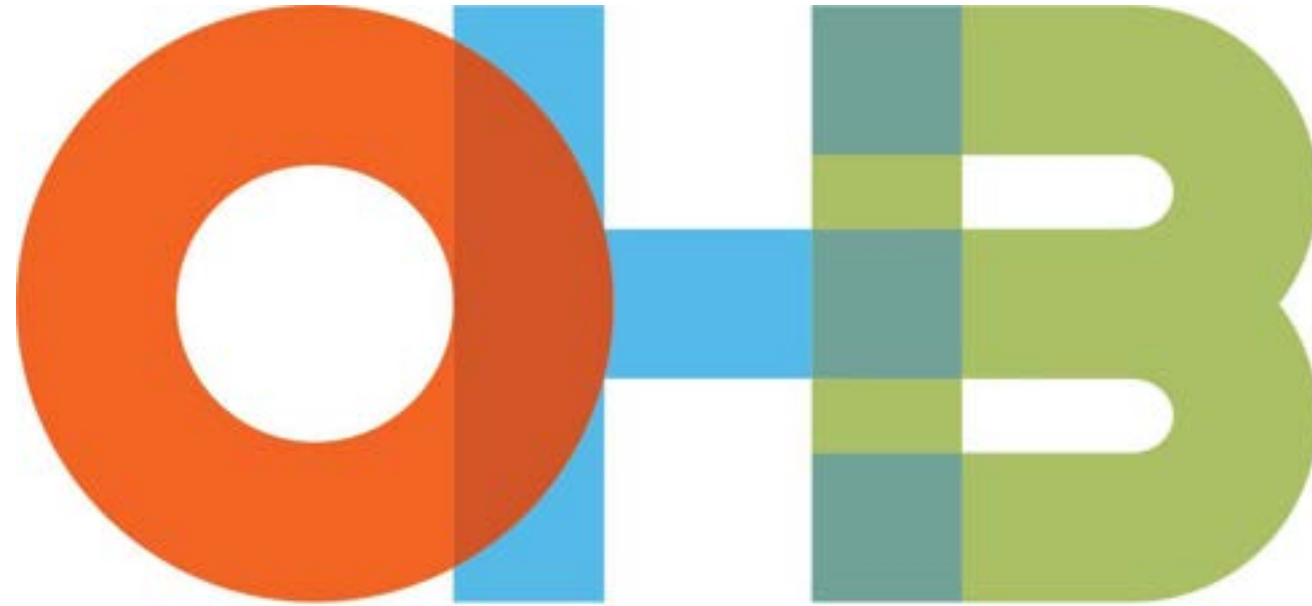
Capstone Project Requirements

To successfully complete the Juvenile Justice Certificate Program, each participant must complete a capstone project. The project chosen must:

- (1) demonstrate juvenile justice knowledge learned and
- (2) apply that learning to benefit your organization/community.

*Participants should utilize implementation science concepts to assist in successful completion of their project.

JJC CAPSTONE PROJECT



OMAHA HOME FOR BOYS

Creating an Effective Intake Process

Carla Andreessen



Overview of OHB

- Omaha Home for Boys (OHB) is a private, nonprofit organization based in Omaha, Nebraska, dedicated to supporting and empowering youth, young adults, and families. The OHB mission is to inspire and equip individuals to lead independent and productive lives through a continuum of care that includes Crisis Stabilization program, Residential program, Day reporting, independent living support through Supportive Housing and Jacobs Place, education, and a variety of community services.
- Our Crisis and Residential programs attend our OHB Rule 18 school.

INTRODUCTION OF TOPIC

- **GOAL:**

To develop a structured process that facilitates the involvement of all relevant team members during the initial intake meeting. This initiative will enhance the understanding of the OHB School and ensure a comprehensive assessment of each youth's educational needs.



- **PROJECT DESIGN:**

The current intake process for youth at OHB lacks a formalized educational component. This often leads to confusion among youth team members regarding the educational framework at OHB, as well as leaving several questions unanswered. Being a part of the intake meetings, team members will have an opportunity to learn more about our school.

Intake Session Process:

These sessions will include the following key elements:

1. Survey

2. Intake flyer

3. Review of prior school records

4. OHB School expectations

Survey



1. Do you know how many high school credits you have earned?
2. Would you have earned additional high school credits elsewhere? If so, where?
3. What do you like about school? What do you dislike about school?
4. What is the most effective way for you to communicate with the teacher when you need assistance?
5. What questions do you have regarding the OHB School?
6. Is there anything you would like the Education team to know about your experience in school?



Intake flyer



OUTCOMES

- Meet the team
- Dialogue concerns, strengths, challenges, etc.
- Collaborative approach
- Survey and insights
- Contact information
- Positive impact for a team approach and positive school experience

LESSONS LEARNED

- Enhanced student engagement
- Environment makes a difference
- Communication is key
- Team engagement
- Next Steps





Youth Justice Internship Program (YJIP)

Presented by York County: Brennan Cole and Tristan Perry

York County Snapshot



Main Issues

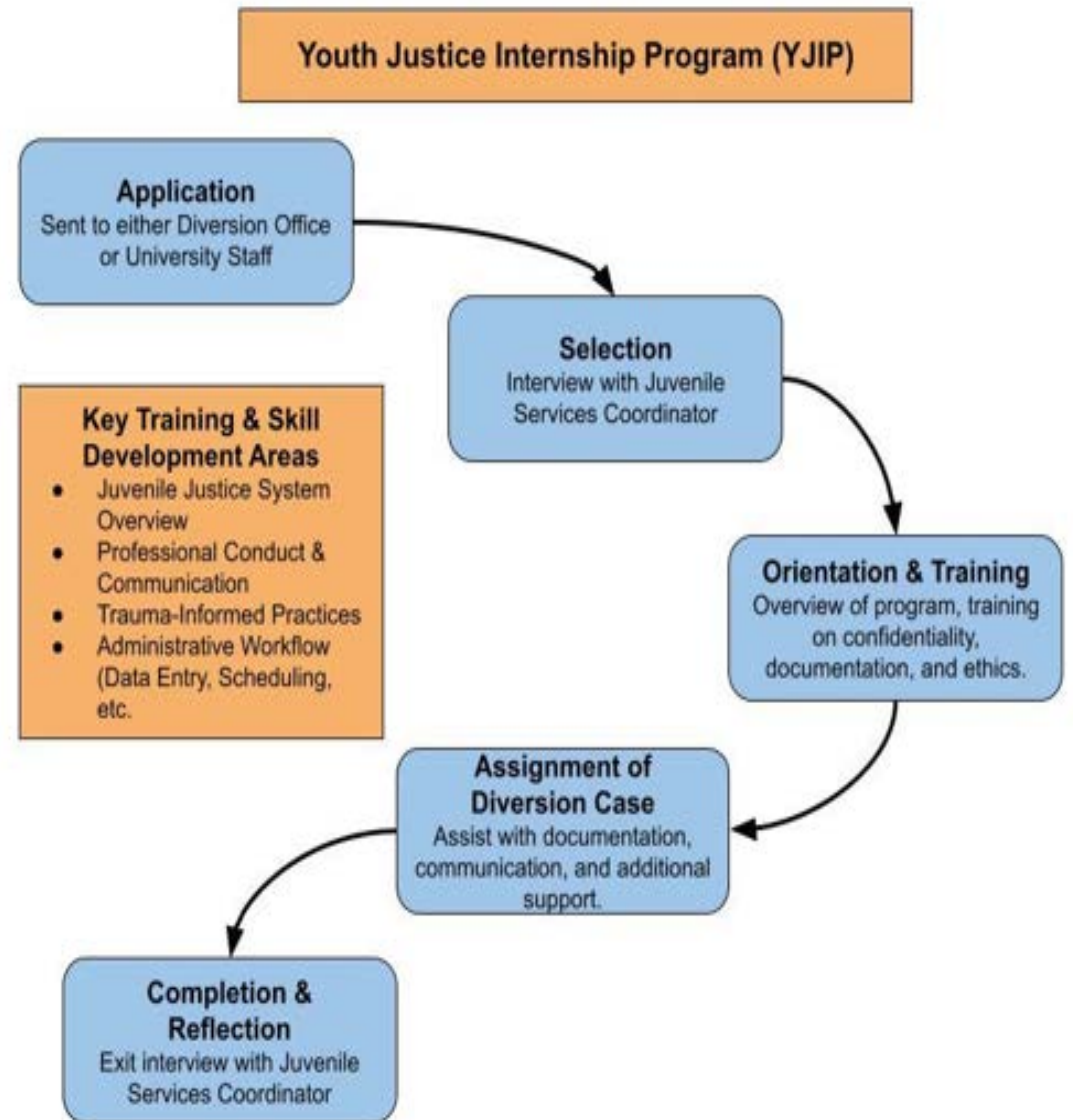
- Rural County that has limited access to resources
- Extended timeframes in programs- Due to large caseload for case managers
- Siloed community efforts to decrease youth delinquency

Creative Solutions

- Acquire additional funding or free partnerships
- Decrease staff to youth ratio and create more one-on-one opportunities
- Build bridges of communication and information sharing between community agencies

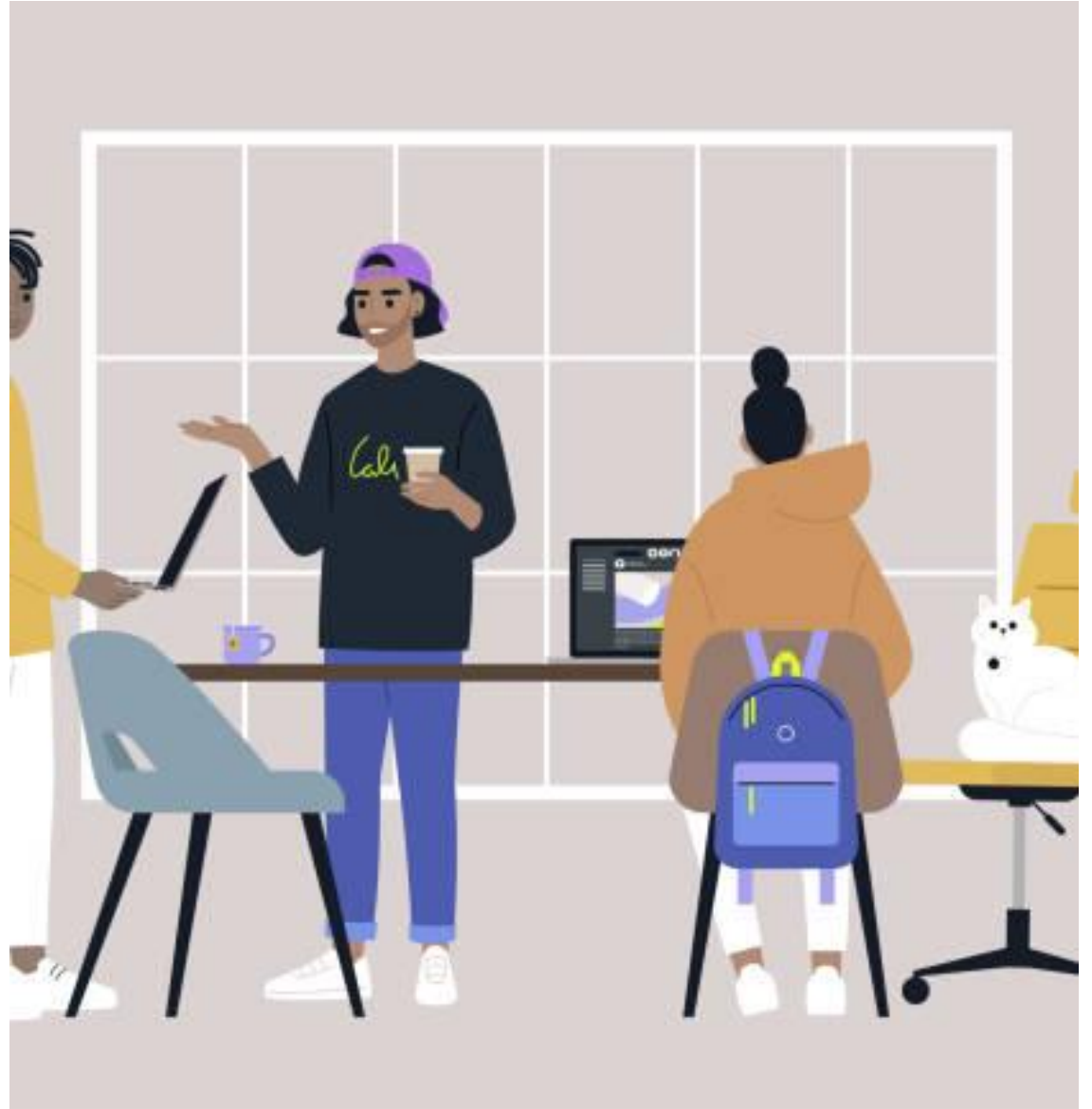
Project YJIP Overview & Implementation

- Goals: Develop a structured college internship program to support diversion case management
- Interns assist with non-sensitive tasks like:
 - Documentation
 - Scheduling
 - Client follow-ups
- Timeline: Structured intern model in place by August 2025
- Primary partnership: York University and York County Attorney's Office



Program Impact & Evaluation

- Training for interns on juvenile justice, ethics, and professionalism.
- Ongoing intern recruitment and collaboration with the local university
 - 2 – 3 interns each semester
- Improve case resolution timelines by 15% by July 2026
- Future data: Timeline benchmarks, task completion rates, intern retention/satisfaction.



Lessons Learned & Next Steps

- Strong interest from local colleges confirms need and feasibility.
- Building clear intern roles and supervision structure is key
- Challenge: Balancing intern involvement with client confidentiality
- NEXT STEPS:
 - Finalize partnership agreements with York University
 - Launch pilot with first intern group
 - Expand to additional justice-related departments if successful



Art-Based Programs for Justice-Involved Youths

Presented By: Stephanie Anderson, Program Director
WhyArts, Inc.



RADIUS

WhyArts and RADIUS

- Development of art-based programming for partnership between WhyArts, Inc., a non-profit serving historically marginalized populations in the greater Omaha area, and RADIUS , a Douglas County facility that serves boys and girls aged 12-18 involved in the juvenile justice system.

Why are the arts important in the juvenile justice system?

- Youth in the justice system often face significant barriers to participating in creative experiences, which are vital for:
 - personal expression
 - emotional well-being
 - community connection
- By bringing art directly to these populations, we aim to:
 - foster inclusion
 - inspire creativity
 - provide opportunities for individuals to engage with, and benefit from, the transformative power of the arts.



How does art benefit youths in the system?

- For at-risk and justice-involved youths, the arts can provide an outlet for addressing emotional and/or problem behaviors through opportunities to learn new skills, develop new talents, and express thoughts and ideas in creative and therapeutic ways (Ezell and Levy, 2003; Miner–Romanoff, 2016).
- Creating art can strengthen a youth’s problem-solving skills, autonomy, self-esteem, engagement, mood, sense of purpose, and social competence (Brewster, 2014; Miner–Romanoff, 2016; Wolf and Holochwost, 2016).
- For youths dealing with trauma or victimization (including exposure to violence), the arts can help them cope with painful experiences by fostering resilience, allowing the youths to view themselves as survivors rather than as victims (Heise, 2014; van Westrhenen and Fritz, 2014)

Ezell, Mark, and Michelle Levy. 2003. “An Evaluation of an Arts Program for Incarcerated Juvenile Offenders.” *Journal of Correctional Education* 54(3):108-14

Wolf, Dennie Palmer, and Steven Holochworst. 2015. *Our Voices Count: The Potential Impact of Strength-Based Music Programs in Juvenile Justice Settings*. Washington, D.C.: National

Endowment for the Arts Heise, Donalyn. 2014. “Steeling and Resilience.” *Art Education* 67(3): 26-30

Mission, Funding, and Teaching Artists



- The Mission of WhyArts, Inc. is to provide access to inclusive arts education and experiences for historically marginalized and underserved communities by creating strategic partnerships that connect professional teaching artists with community organizations.
- WhyArts, Inc. was able to acquire grant funding for 40 one-hour long workshops to be held at RADIUS. Teaching artists will come from the WhyArts roster of teaching artists, all of whom have background checks and years of experience working with youth.



Collaboration

WhyArts, Inc. and RADIUS



Through collaboration with WhyArts, Inc., RADIUS staff and RADIUS youth, appropriate and engaging curriculum was developed.



Starting in the summer of 2025 youth at RADIUS will be working with WhyArts teaching artists on:

- Graffiti Street Art
 - Sewing Design
 - Watercolor
 - Multimedia art
 - Cartooning & Anime
 - Sculpture
-
- After each 6-week session surveys will be distributed to the youth and then WhyArts and RADIUS staff will evaluate the program and make any necessary adjustments.



S.I.T.

STAYING IN TOUCH



A POST PROBATION FOLLOW UP SERVICES PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE

To implement a plan that focuses on providing support to juvenile's post probation aiming to reduce the recidivism rate.





BACKGROUND

Post Probation is a critical period for youths as they transition back to their regular lives due to vulnerability and uncertainty. Many young people encounter difficulties like the absence of positive role models, returning to the same environment they came from, a lack of accountability, and insufficient supervision. Before being released, many youths start to get their lives on the right track and feel optimistic about their future. However, once their probation ends, they often feel abandoned and lose their sense of purpose. Providing structured follow-up services can significantly enhance the youth's chances of leading productive, crime-free lives.

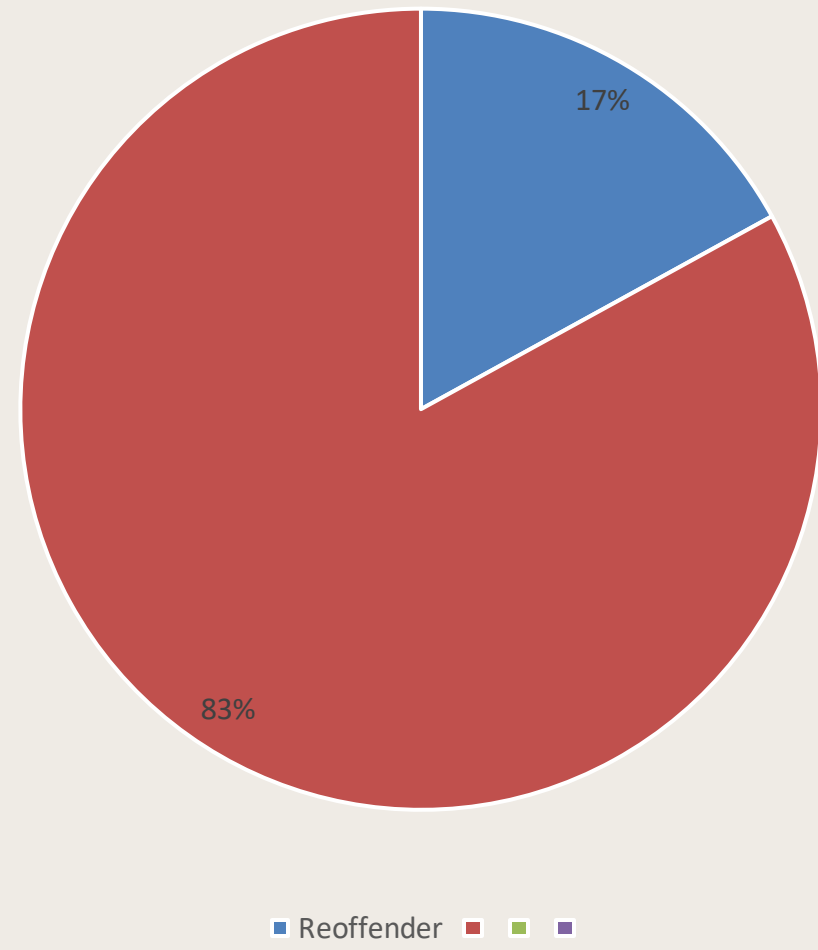


Data

As of the end of 2024, the recidivism rate for juveniles in Nebraska is approximately 24.4%. This means that nearly one in four juveniles who were released from probation were found responsible for a subsequent qualifying adjudication within one year of their release.

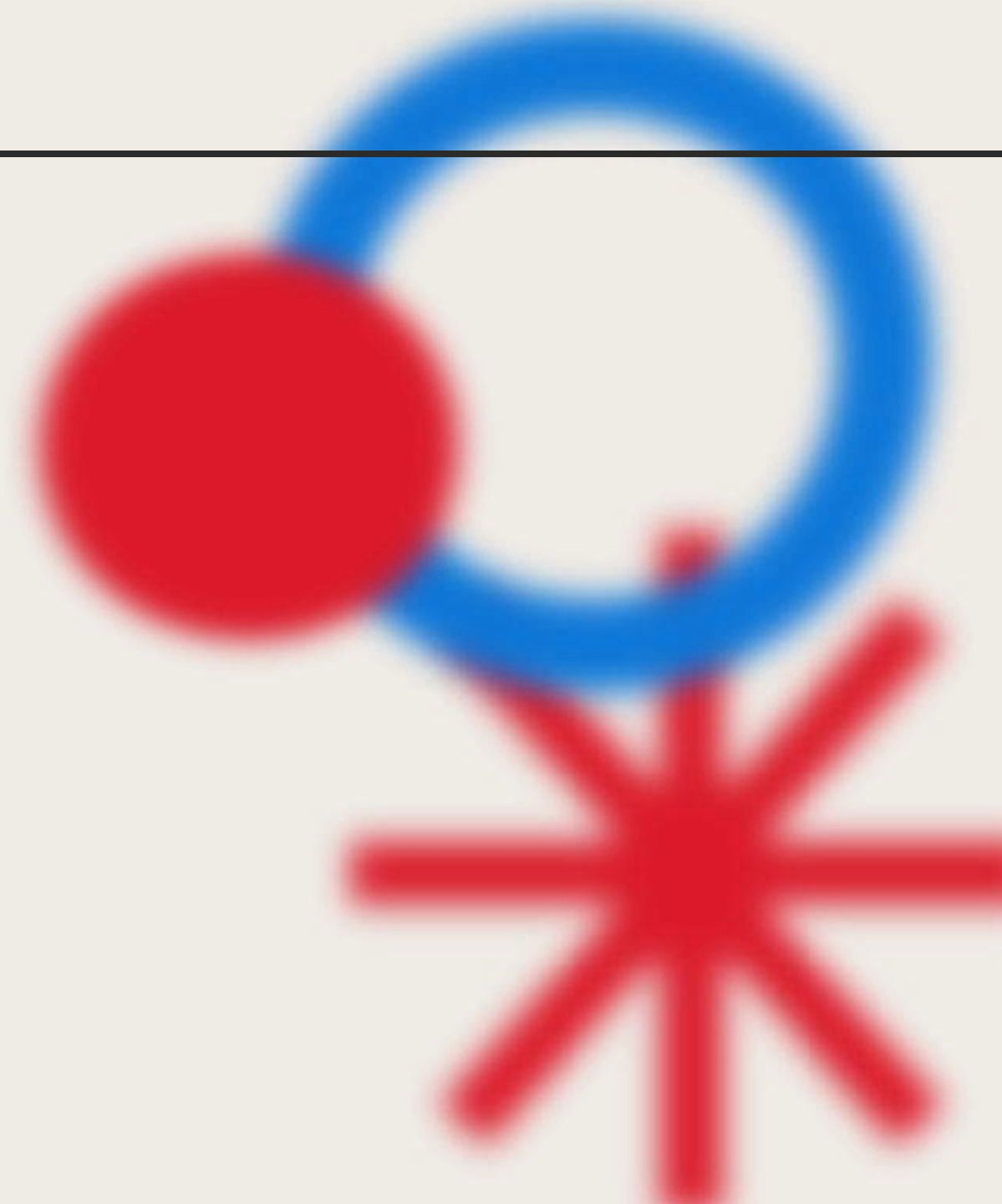
<https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/publication-report-files/Q4-2024-Juvenile-Infographics.pdf>

Recidivism Rate



CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Lack of support
 - Limited resources
 - Lack of employment
 - Lack of supervision
 - Lack of education
-



Solution.....



FOLLOW UP SERVICES

Implementation Strategies



Life Skills Development:

- Create workshops on critical life skills, financial literacy, conflict resolution and communication.
- Encourage participation in community service projects to build responsibility and connections within the community.

Family and Community Engagement:

- Involve families in the follow-up process through support groups and educational sessions.
- Create partnerships with local community organizations to provide additional resources and support networks.

Implementation Strategies



Continued Case Management:

- Assign support team to maintain regular contact with the juvenile post-probation to monitor progress and provide ongoing support.
- Develop an individualized follow-up plan that outline goals, resources, and timelines for each youth.

Educational Support:

- Collaborate with schools and educational organizations to ensure access to continued education, GED programs, and tutoring services.
- Facilitate enrollment in vocational training programs to enhance job readiness and employability



Implementation Strategies

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling:

- Offer group therapy and peer support sessions to foster a sense of community and shared experiences.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Establish metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of follow-up services, including tracking recidivism rates, educational attainment, and employment status.
- Regularly assess program components to ensure they meet the evolving needs of the participants.



Conclusion



By implementing a structured follow-up services program for juveniles exiting probation, this initiative seeks to bridge the gap between formal supervision and independent living. This program aims to empower youth to overcome challenges, build resilience, and thrive as contributing members of society, ultimately building a safer communities for all.



Questions for the Panel



Visit our Poster Sessions!

- Amanda Milander-Mace
- Cydney Volker
- Nia Williams
- Stephany Stanek-Smith

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