

Nebraska Center for Justice Research

Annual Report

2017



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha

The background of the top section of the page features a photograph of the University of Nebraska at Omaha building, which is a large, multi-story brick structure with a prominent portico supported by columns. The building has several dormer windows on its roof. The text "UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA" is visible on the facade above the portico. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Ryan E. Spohn

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research (NCJR) was established in 2014 with a mission to develop and sustain criminal justice research capacity internal to the State of Nebraska. Our goal is to assist the Legislature, justice agencies, practitioners, foundations, and stakeholders with research and evaluation to reduce recidivism, promote the use of evidence-based practices, and improve public safety.

This annual report summarizes the activities and financial status of NCJR in its third year. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, NCJR once again crafted our Adult Justice in Nebraska report to provide a foundation of data trends in areas such as law enforcement and corrections for the Legislature at the beginning of the legislative session. We added additional information this year on justice reinvestment and community corrections. NCJR also initiated evaluations for the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services of their Moral Reconation Therapy program and the Defy Ventures entrepreneurship, employment, and character development training.

NCJR faculty and staff also produced numerous reports from our current contracts and grants. In August, a new tab was added to our website to provide information on the Vocational and Life Skills Program, including a program overview and links to monthly reports and quarterly reports. Director Ryan Spohn and Associate Director Emily Wright completed their two-year evaluation of the Douglas County Youth Impact! crossover youth practice model. The final report includes qualitative findings,

quantitative outcomes, an impact assessment, and cost-benefit analysis of Youth Impact! Details on our projects can be found in the pages of this report. In regards to NCJR’s academic mission, our faculty and graduate students produced multiple academic publications and presented at the annual conferences of the American Society of Criminology, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, and the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association. Director Spohn and Associate Director Wright also provided invited presentations to organizations such as the Nebraska Juvenile Services Committee and the Omaha Community Partnership.

From a budgetary standpoint, we are encouraged by the well-balanced budgetary profile of NCJR that includes state funding, contracts with local agencies, federal grants, and funding by local foundations. The diversity of our funding profile not only broadens the impact of our research, training, technical assistance, and evaluation activities across the state, but also allows us to provide “matching” funding for products that benefit from both public and private dollars. Our overall budget increased by 21% over our total budget last year and we continue to see steady increases in our grant funding and contract funding. In summary, 2016-2017 was a year of continued growth and substantial output of research, evaluation, and academic products. In addition, we continue to build research partnerships, collaborations, and relationships with agency and community stakeholders. We look forward to learning from these experiences and increasing our capacity to serve the Nebraska community in subsequent years.

4	THE NEBRASKA CENTER FOR JUSTICE RESEARCH
5	MEET THE TEAM
6	SELECTED PUBLICATIONS
6	PUBLICATIONS UNDER REVIEW
7	GRANTS AWARDED
7	GRANTS UNDER REVIEW
8	CONTRACTS AND PROJECTS
9	SELECTED RESEARCH REPORTS
9	WHITE PAPERS
10	SELECTED ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS
12	INVITED PRESENTATIONS
12	PANELS AND DISCUSSIONS
13	TRAININGS PROVIDED
14	NCJR BUDGET
15	ADULT JUSTICE IN NEBRASKA (2016)
15	TRANSFORMATION PROJECT
16	ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION
18	DOUGLAS COUNTY YOUTH IMPACT!
21	VOCATIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS
22	FACULTY AFFILIATES
23	STUDENT AFFILIATES

THE NEBRASKA CENTER FOR JUSTICE RESEARCH

Mission Statement

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research’s mission is “to develop and sustain research capacity internal to the State of Nebraska, assist the Legislature in research, evaluation, and policymaking to reduce recidivism, promote the use of evidence-based practices in corrections, and improve public safety.” Our research focus is to use data, research, and evaluation to reduce recidivism, promote the use of evidence-based practices, and improve public safety in Nebraska with an emphasis on reducing prison overcrowding.

NCJR Facilities

NCJR currently occupies approximately 1,000 square feet in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (SCCJ), located in the College of Public Affairs and Community Service (CPACS) building on the University of Nebraska Omaha campus.

Statement of Goals

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research is comprised of a dedicated team of social science researchers who strive to serve the people of Nebraska as well as the University community. In pursuit of this overarching goal, we:

- 1) Conduct rigorous, objective examinations of justice-related issues facing the Nebraska community
- 2) Educate the public and provide assistance to the legislature regarding justice-related issues
- 3) Contribute to the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice’s graduate program by funding \ students to assist with applied research projects
- 4) Increase state funding to allow capacity to administer and evaluate future justice reinvestment activities
- 5) Increase research visibility through technical reports and academic publications
- 6) Increase our national reputation as a research and evaluation resource

For more information visit: www.justicereserach.unomaha.edu



Ryan Spohn, PhD (Director)

Ryan is the Director of the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. He received his B.S. in Sociology/ Criminology from Kansas State University (1996), M.S. in Sociology from Texas A&M University (1998), and PhD in Sociology from the University of Iowa (2003). His areas of research include juvenile delinquency, crime, families, child maltreatment, and the evaluation of criminal justice agencies and programs.



Emily Wright, PhD (Associate Director)

Emily is the Associate Director of the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. She received her B.S. in Psychology from Arkansas State University (2003), M.S. in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati (2004), and PhD in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati (2008). Her areas of research include neighborhood crime and victimization, exposure to violence, gender differences in offending and victimization, and correctional intervention strategies.



Laura Schoenrock, MPA (Program Coordinator)

Laura has been a Program Coordinator since April 2012. Laura is a graduate of the UNO Masters in Public Administration Program and holds a B.A. degree in Organizational Communication studies from the University of Northern Iowa. She is currently coordinating the development of a transitional program for imprisoned individuals in the state of Nebraska.



Johanna Peterson, MA (Research Coordinator)

Johanna is a Research Coordinator at the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. Johanna received her B.S. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska Lincoln (2012) and her M.A. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska Omaha (2014). She helps to coordinate data collection, develops research design strategies, and produces evaluation reports for the Vocational and Life Skills reentry programs across Nebraska.



Jordan Clark, (Data Coordinator)

Jordan is a Data Coordinator at the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. Jordan received her B.S. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska Lincoln (2012). She assists with data collection as well as database design and management, and provides technical support for the Vocational and Life Skills reentry programs across Nebraska.



Jared Ellison, PhD (Research Assistant)

Jared has recently accepted an assistant professorship at Old Dominion University and was previously the graduate student assigned to the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. He received his PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska at Omaha (2017), his M.S. in Criminal Justice Administration from Niagara University (2010). His research interests include short-term incarceration, corrections, and court processing.



Joselyne Chenane, M.S. (Research Assistant)

Joselyne is a PhD Candidate in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and a research assistant for the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. She received her B.A. in Education with a concentration in English and Literature from Egerton University (2007) and her M.S. in Criminal Justice from State University of New York College at Buffalo (2012). Her research interests include policing, race and justice, the intersection between race, and crime and neighborhood contexts.



Sara Toto, M.A. (Research Assistant)

Sara is a PhD student in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and a research assistant for the Nebraska Center for Justice Research. She received her B.A. in Criminal Justice (2013) and her M.A. in Criminal Justice (2015) from the University of Nevada, Reno. Her research interests include institutional and community corrections and exposure to violence and victimization.

SELECTED ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS
2014-2017

GRANTS AWARDED
2014-2017

Wright, E.M., Spohn, R.E., Chenane, J., & Juliano, N. (Online First). The importance of interagency collaboration for crossover youth: A research note. *Youth Violence & Juvenile Justice*.

Wright, E.M. & Tillyer, M.S. (Online First). Neighborhoods and intimate partner violence against women: The direct and interactive effects of social ties and collective efficacy. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.

Ellison, J. M., & Spohn, R. E. (Online First). Borders up in smoke: Marijuana enforcement in Nebraska after Colorado’s legalization of medical marijuana. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*.

Radatz, D.L. & Wright, E.M. (2017). Does polyvictimization impact incarcerated and non-incarcerated adult women differently? An exploration into internalizing problems. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 32(9), 1379-1400.

Richards, T.N., Tillyer, M.S., & Wright, E.M. (2017). Intimate partner violence and the overlap of perpetration and victimization: Considering the influence of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in childhood. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 67, 240-248.

Spohn, R., Wright, E. M., & Peterson, J. C. (2017). Rape and Mental Health Outcomes Among Women: Examining the Moderating Effects of “Healthy” Fear Levels. *Violence Against Women*, 23(9), 1055-1075.

Cain, C., Steiner, B., & Wright, E.M. (2016). Nonstranger victimization and inmate maladjustment: Is the relationship gendered? *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 43(8), 992-1017.

Radatz, D. L., & Wright, E. M. (2016). Integrating the principles of effective intervention into batterer intervention programming: The case for moving toward more evidence-based programming. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 17: 72-87.

Wright, E. M., Pinchevsky, G. M., Benson, M. L., & Radatz, D. L. (2015). Intimate partner violence and subsequent depression: Examining the roles of neighborhood supportive mechanisms. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 56, 342-356.

Spohn, R. E., & Wood, S. D. (2014). Spare the rod, endanger the child? Strain, race/ethnicity, and serious delinquency. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 12(3), 159-193.

Publications Under Review

Chenane, J. L., Wright, E. M., & Gibson, C. L. Traffic stops race and perception of fairness. Under review at *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy*.

Ellison, J.M., Steiner, B., Wright, E.M. Examining the sources of violent victimization among jail inmates. *Under review at Crime and Delinquency*.

Chenane, J.L. & Wright, E.M.. The role of police officer race/ethnicity on crime rates in immigrant communities. Under review at *Race and Justice*.

Kotlaja, M., Wright, E.M., & Fagan, A. Neighborhood parks and recreation centers: Risky or protective contexts for youth substance use? Under review at *American Journal of Community Psychology*.

Spohn, R. E., & Bjornson, A., & Wright, E. M. Factors associated with perceptions of rape events and reporting of rape events among college and non-college women. Under review at the *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research*.

2016-18

A Collaborative Evaluation of the Nebraska Connected Youth Initiative (with WestEd Justice and Prevention Resource Center). The Nebraska Children & Families Foundation.

2016-18

Project Safe Neighborhoods, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Research partner with City of Omaha.

2015-17

Project Safe Neighborhoods, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Research partner with City of Omaha.

2014-16

Evaluation of the Douglas County Crossover Youth Practice Model. (with Emily Wright). The Sherwood Foundation.

2014-15

Project Safe Neighborhoods, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Research partner with City of Omaha.

Grants Under Review

2017

Project Safe Neighborhoods, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Research partner with City of Omaha.

CONTRACTS AND PROJECTS 2015 - 2017

Role: Principle Investigator

2017-20	Evaluation of Douglas County Assessment and Case Management Services. Douglas County Corrections. With Ben Steiner and Emily Wright.
2017	Defy Ventures Evaluation. The Sherwood Foundation (Co-PIs: Roni Reiter-Palmon & Joseph Allen).
2016	Completely KIDS Evaluation Completely KIDS.
2016-18	Juvenile Justice Alternatives to Detention Evaluation. Douglas County/The Sherwood Foundation.
2015-17	Examining the Predictors of Sexual Victimization among Female Inmates: PREA considerations. Iowa Department of Corrections. With Ben Steiner.
2015-16	Justice Assistance Grant: Strategic Plan 2015. Nebraska Crime Commission (Co-PI: Anne Hobbs).
2015-16	Douglas County Collective Impact Initiative. The Sherwood Foundation
2015-16	Parole Validation Study. Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. With Ben Steiner and Lisa Sample.

Role: Project Evaluator

2017-19	Minority Health Initiative Evaluation, Colfax and Platte Counties, NE. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.
2016-18	Vocational & Life Skills Evaluation. Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.
2016-17	Blue Courage® Police Training Assessment. The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training.
2016-17	Douglas County Operation Youth Success Evaluation. The TerraLuna Collaborative.
2015-17	Minority Health Initiative Evaluation, Colfax and Platte Counties, NE. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.
2015-16	Vocational & Life Skills Evaluation. Nebraska Department of Correctional Services

Selected Research Reports, 2015-2017

Evaluation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (Youth Impact!): Results Summary. 2017. For the Sherwood Foundation. With Emily Wright and Joselyn Chenane.

Alternatives to Detention Evaluation: Year One Report. 2017. For Douglas County and the Sherwood Foundation. With Emily Wright, Joseph Mroz, Joseph Allen, and Roni Reiter-Palmon.

Adult Justice in Nebraska. 2016. For the Nebraska Legislature. With Jared Ellison.

Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Classification Tool Development. 2016. With Zachary Hamilton & Alex Kigerl.

EPIC Alternative Education Program: Formative Evaluation Report. 2016. For the Douglas County Youth Center and the Sherwood Foundation.

Alternatives to Detention Theory of Change Report. 2016. For Douglas County and the Sherwood Foundation.

Completely KIDS Final Report (2014-2015). 2016. For Completely KIDS.

Operation Youth Success: Developmental Evaluation Final Report. 2016. For the Sherwood Foundation. With Jennifer Miller.

Douglas County Youth Impact! Views of Challenges from the Professionals Involved. 2016. Brief report submitted to the Douglas County Youth Impact! Working Group. With Emily Wright. Funding Agency: Sherwood Foundation.

Douglas County Youth Impact! Views of Successes from the Professionals Involved. 2016. Brief report submitted to the Douglas County Youth Impact! Working Group. With Emily Wright. Funding Agency: Sherwood Foundation.

Douglas County Youth Impact! Recommendations from the Professionals Involved. 2016. Brief report submitted to the Douglas County Youth Impact! Working Group. With Emily Wright. Funding Agency: Sherwood Foundation.

Project Safe Neighborhoods 2014 Grant Final Evaluation Report. 2016. For the City of Omaha.

Marijuana Enforcement in Nebraska (2009-2014). 2016. For the Nebraska Legislature. With Jared Ellison.

Adult Justice in Nebraska. 2015. For the Nebraska Legislature. With Jared Ellison.

Project Safe Neighborhoods 2013 Grant Final Evaluation Report. 2015. For the City of Omaha.

The Impact of After-School and Family Strengthening Programs on Student Outcomes: The Completely KIDS Liberty Project. 2015. For Completely KIDS.

Traumatic Brain Injury Screening: Differences between Youth with and without Juvenile Justice System Involvement in Nebraska. 2015. For the Nebraska Office of Vocational Rehabilitation at the Nebraska Department of Education. With Jeff Chambers.

Colorado’s Legalization of Medicinal Marijuana: The Effects on Nebraska’s Law Enforcement and Local Jail System. For the Nebraska Legislature. With Jared Ellison.

Nebraska Coalition of Juvenile Justice Strength-Based Assessment. 2015. For the Nebraska Crime Commission.

Trends in Adult Justice. 2014. For the Nebraska Legislature. With Jared Ellison.

White Papers

Weiner, R., Hobbs, A., & Spohn, R. (2014). Evidence Based Practice in *Juvenile Justice: Nebraska White Paper.*

SELECTED ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS 2015 - 2017

Chenane, Joselyne (presenter), Ryan Spohn, and Emily Wright. “Evaluation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (Youth Impact!).” Poster presented at the 2017 Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association conference.

Wright, Emily, Ryan Spohn, and Joselyne Chenane (presenter). “Crossover Youth in the Justice System: An Outcome and Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Crossover Youth Practice Model.” Presented at the 2017 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Meetings.

Schoenbeck, Madison Gene (presenter), Kevin Mitchell, Ryan Spohn, Joseph Mroz, Joseph Allen, and Roni Reiter- Palmon. “Evaluating the System of Alternatives to Youth Detention in Douglas County.” Presented at the 2017 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Meetings.

Solomon, Starr (presenter), H. Daniel Butler, and Ryan Spohn. “Examining the Relationship Between Misconduct and Restrictive Housing.” Presented at the 2017 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Meetings.

Chenane, Joselyne (presenter), Emily Wright, and Ryan Spohn. “When Helping Crossover Youth Helps the Juvenile Justice System: Reports from Agency Professionals.” Presented at the 2016 American Society of Criminology Meetings.

Toto, Sara (presenter), Ben Steiner, & Emily Wright. “Assessing Gender Specific Risk Factors for Sexual Perpetration and Victimization in Prison”. Presented at the 2016 American Society of Criminology Meetings.

Emily Wright (presenter), Ryan Spohn, and Joselyne Chenane. “Enhancing Services for Crossover Youth: Challenges and Recommendations.” Presented at the 2016 American Society of Criminology Meetings.

Miller, Jennifer (presenter) and Ryan Spohn. “Collaborative Efficacy? Assessing Collective Impact in the Context of Juvenile Justice Reform.” Presented at the 2016 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Meetings.

Ellison, Jared M. (presenter) and Ryan Spohn. “Assessing the Consequences of Colorado’s Legalization of Recreational Marijuana on Nebraska.” Presented at the 2016 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Meetings.

Butler, H. Daniel (presenter), Starr Solomon, and Ryan Spohn. “Programming in Administrative Segregation: An Evaluation of the Transformation Project.” Presented at the 2015 American Society of Criminology Meetings.

Juliano, Nick, Shawn Johnson Coonfare, Ryan Spohn, and Emily Wright. “Implementation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (SYPM) in Douglas County: A Unique Public/Private Partnership to Improve the Lives of Youth.” Presented at the 2015 Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities Conference.

Spohn, Ryan and Emily Wright. “Evaluation of Douglas County Youth Impact” Presented at the 2015 Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association Meeting.

Spohn, Ryan (presenter) and Abby Bjornson. “Factors Associated with Perceptions of Rape Events and Reporting of Rape among College and Non-College Women.” Presented at the 2015 Midwest Sociological Society Meeting.

Ellison, Jared (presenter) and Ryan Spohn. “Borders up in smoke: Marijuana enforcement in Nebraska after Colorado’s legalization.” Presented at the 2015 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Meeting.

Jared Ellison, Graduate Assistant
“Borders up in smoke: Marijuana enforcement in Nebraska after Colorado’s legalization.”
Presented at the 2015 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Meeting, Orlando FL.



INVITED PRESENTATIONS 2015 - 2017

Spohn, Ryan. “Nebraska Center for Justice Research: Research and Community Engagement Activities.” Omaha Community Partnership meeting, June 22, 2017.

Wright, Emily, Ryan Spohn, and Joselyne Chenane. “Evaluation of Douglas County Youth Impact!”. Presented at the quarterly meeting of the Nebraska Juvenile Services Committee, Lincoln, NE, April 11, 2017.

Wright, Emily, Ryan Spohn and Anne Hobbs. “Justice Initiatives in Nebraska.” Presented at Mass Incarceration Criminal Justice Reform, Best Practices Conference, Omaha, NE, Sept. 23, 2016.

Spohn, Ryan and Jennifer Miller. “Developmental Evaluation.” Presented at the August 2015 meeting of the Omaha Evaluators Group.

Spohn, Ryan and Anne Hobbs. “Using Data to Inform Good Agency Practice.” Presented at the 2015 Nebraska Justice Alliance Meeting.

Spohn, Ryan and Emily Wright. “Evaluation of Douglas County Youth Impact!” Presented at the 2015 Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association Meeting.

Chambers, Jeff and Ryan Spohn. “Traumatic Brain Injury Screening Differences between Youth with and without Juvenile Justice System Involvement in Nebraska.” Presented to Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council. Lincoln, NE. June 26, 2015.

Ellison, Jared and Ryan Spohn. “Borders up in smoke: Marijuana enforcement in Nebraska after Colorado’s legalization.” Presented at the March 2015 meeting of the Omaha Evaluators Group.

Spohn, Ryan. “Rape and Mental Health Outcomes among Women: Examining the Moderating Effects of “Healthy” Fear Levels.” Presented at the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Nebraska-Omaha, March 10, 2015.

Spohn, Ryan. “Nebraska Center for Justice Research: Legislative Activities.” Presented at the Omaha Friends and Families of Inmates meeting, Feb. 28, 2015.

PANELS & DISCUSSIONS 2015 - 2017

Spohn, Ryan. “Nebraska Center for Justice Research: Research and Community Engagement Activities.” Omaha Community Partnership meeting, June 22, 2017.

Wright, Emily, Ryan Spohn, and Joselyne Chenane. “Evaluation of Douglas County Youth Impact!”. Presented at the quarterly meeting of the Nebraska Juvenile Services Committee, Lincoln, NE, April 11, 2017.

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Spohn, Ryan. “Nebraska Center for Justice Research: Legislative Activities.” Presented at the Omaha Friends and Families of Inmates meeting, Feb. 28, 2015.

TRAININGS PROVIDED 2013 - 2015

Outcomes and Performance Measures: Training for NDCS Reentry Grantees. Training provided for the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. (June 26, 2015)

Performance Measure Training: 2014 FY JAG Funds. Funded by the Nebraska Crime Commission (November 3, 2014)

Developing Outcomes for VOCA & STOP (VAWA) Grant Programs. Funded by the Nebraska Crime Commission. (October 8, 2014)

Measuring Relevant Processes and Outcomes in Violence Prevention Programs. With Anne Hobbs and Monica Miles-Steffens. Funded by the Nebraska Crime Commission. (June 17, 2014)

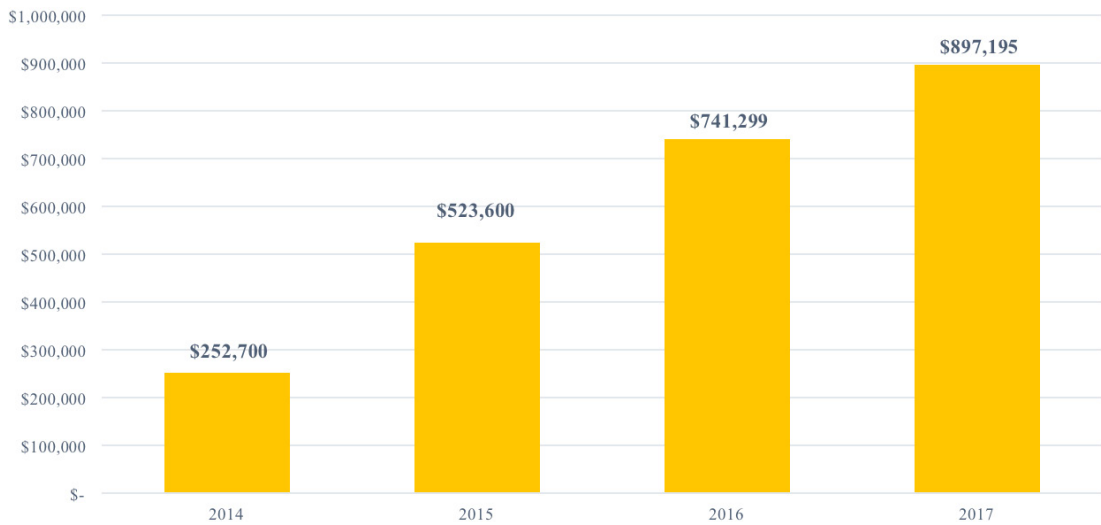
Outcomes and Performance Measures: Training for JAG, STOP VAWA, and VOCA Subgrantees. Funded by the Nebraska Crime Commission. (May 15, 2014)

Cross-Over Youth. Training provided for Lutheran Family Services. (February 12, 2014)

Evidence-Based Practices. Training provided for JAG Byrne sub grantees, as requested by the Crime Commission. (June 13, 2013)

NCJR BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2014 - 2017

Total Budget Fiscal Year 2014-2017

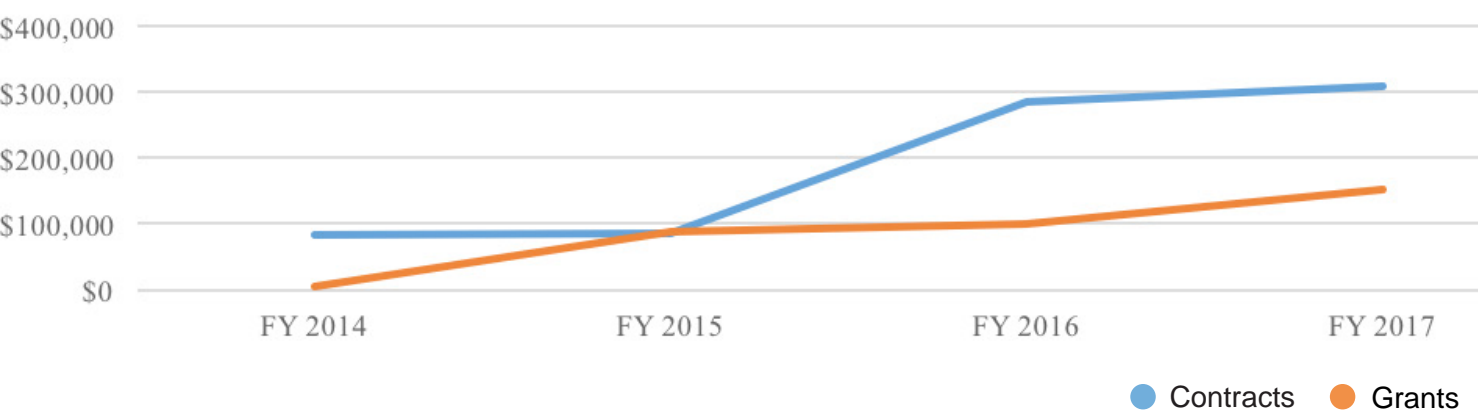


FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET BREAKDOWN

NCJR Funding Sources



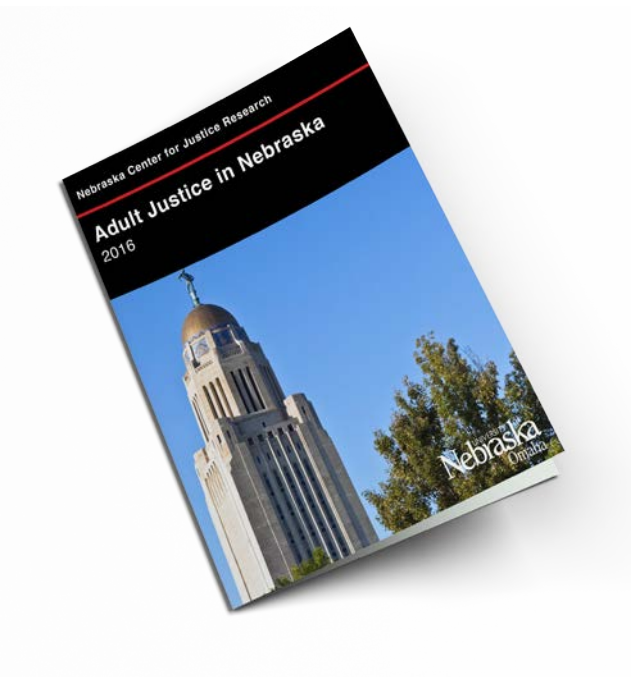
Contracts and Grants by Fiscal Year (FY 2014-2017)



Reports Conducted For The State Of Nebraska

ADULT JUSTICE IN NEBRASKA (2016)

This report compares criminal justice data across Nebraska from 2012 to 2015. Completed in January, 2017, the document presented the most recent and comprehensive system-wide data available. NCJR will continue to provide updates to this report each year and submit the findings to the Nebraska state legislature. Our hope is that the report serves as a reference guide for providing a clearer understanding of recent trends in crime and criminal justice activities in the state of Nebraska. The report was made possible by the financial support provided to NCJR by LB 907.



You Can Find this Report on Our Website

Project Highlight

TRANSFORMATION PROJECT



Transformation Project is a prisoner transition and reentry program aimed at improving outcomes for inmates both during their incarceration and upon their release. Transformation Project was first implemented in 2009 for general population inmates and has recently evolved into a program aimed at improving the behavior and outcomes of inmates in restrictive housing.

The **vision** of Transformation Project is to create a prison system where inmates are committed to the values, attitudes, and behaviors they believe will help them successfully transition through incarceration and reentry.

The **mission** of Transformation Project is to facilitate prisoners in developing a foundation for learning and motivation to change through a process of self-reflection and goal setting.

The **goals** of Transformation Project are to create a foundation for change by adhering to the fidelity of Motivational Interviewing principles and the program model, increase participants’ prosocial behavior, and ultimately, reduce recidivism.

Project Highlight

ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION (ATD)



The purpose of Alternatives to Detention is to maintain strategic partnerships with community stakeholders and agencies for the purposes of reforming the Juvenile Justice system in Douglas County. Further, the purpose is to strengthen relationships across the juvenile justice system, ask assertive questions about the efficacy of existing practices, gather catalytic evidence towards change, and increase mutual accountability for all actors.

In that light, the OYS/JDAI Data Committee has commissioned an evaluation of the Alternatives to Detention (ATD) in Douglas County and will partner with Dr. Ryan Spohn in the implementation of that process. This evaluation is meant to ground, support, and increase efficiency for our local effort rather than duplicate or impede.

Some of the important lessons identified in our April Meeting included:

Ultimate Goals:

- Reduce use of confinement
- Continuum of care
- Collective responsibility
- Maximize success of youth and maintain a safe community

Some Problems ATDs address:

- Promote place for youth to learn/grow – community/school/home
- Provide early intervention – family intervention
- Create a holistic approach to ensure positive outcomes for youth
- Honor diversity/situation of youth/family
- Eliminate bias/inappropriate use of confinement and prevent entry into JJS
- Balance of public safety with appropriate level of youth supervision/accountability

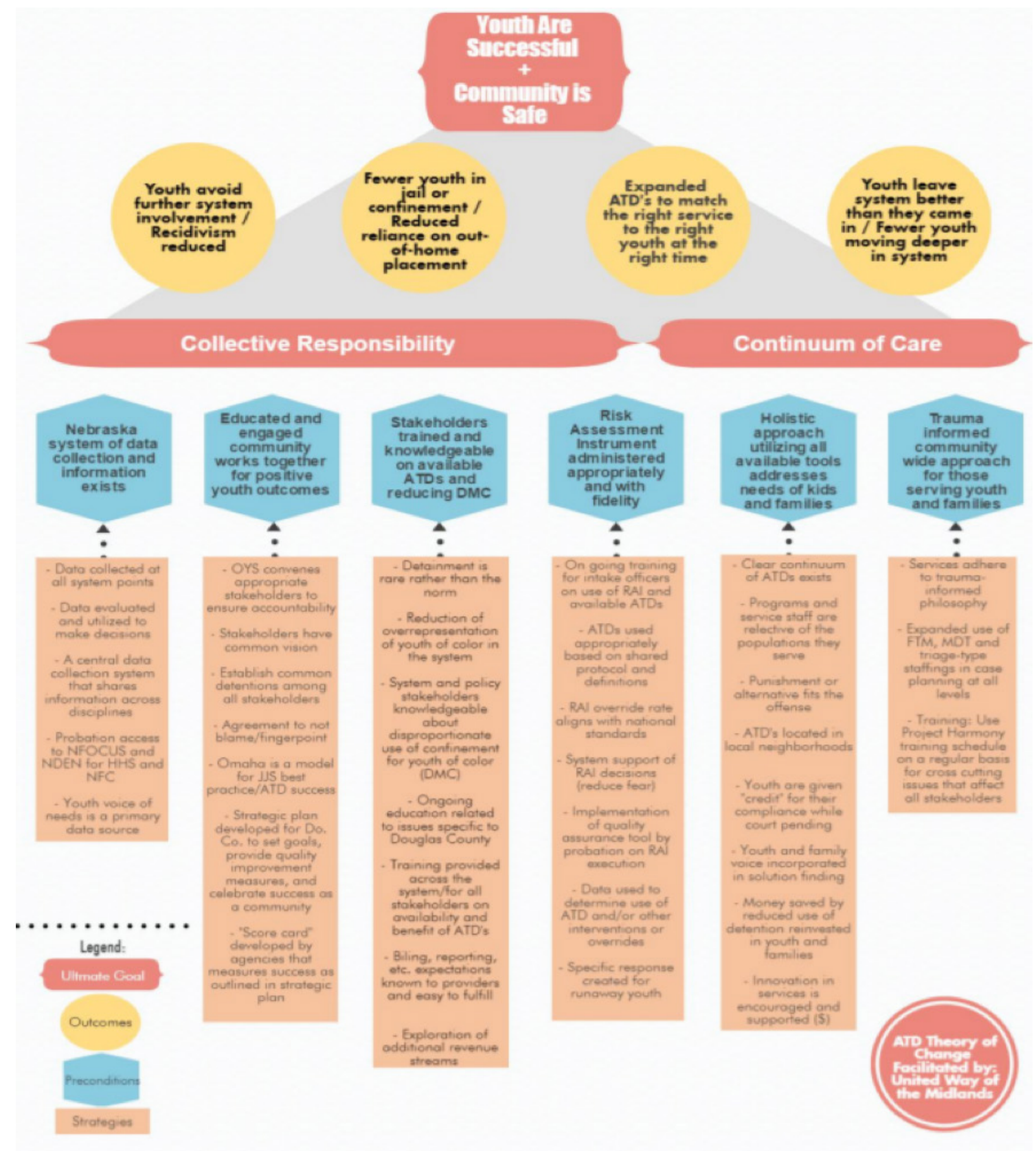
Some Ways of Defining Success:

- Kids staying out of detention, showing up for court
- Positively engaged in prosocial and academic pursuits and promote a connection to a caring adult
- Plan of support upon exit and a return to school (home school)
- Appropriate services delivered based upon youth's individual needs
- Reduce recidivism

Challenges and Barriers to ATDs:

- Fear
- Funding
- Misinformation
- Mistrust at different levels of the system of the TOOL
- Lack of understanding and education

[Click HERE for full report](#)



Project Highlight

EVALUATION OF THE CROSSOVER YOUTH PRACTICE MODEL (YOUTH IMPACT!)



This project evaluated the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) – now Youth Impact! (YI!) – in Douglas County, Nebraska. The goals of the project were: a) to conduct an outcome evaluation of the initiative (does YI! decrease recidivism and increase prosocial outcomes among youth?), b) to conduct a process evaluation of the initiative (how does YI! achieve these goals?), c) conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the initiative, and d) explore a broader systems analysis of the impact of YI! on juvenile justice in Douglas County. The findings from the evaluation are presented below, and recommendations are provided as well.

Data & Methodology

This evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, which included quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data includes three separate groups: the comparison group (n=562, consisting of crossover youth one year prior to the YI! implementation approach to responding to dually-involved youth); the CYPM-Full Treatment group (n=215; this group received the full intervention, including a YI! team/decision meeting, case plan, interagency meeting, and multidisciplinary meeting), and the CYPM-Eligible group (n=127; these youth were YI! eligible, but for various reasons, were unable to have a team/decision meeting, case plan, interagency or multidisciplinary meeting). Additionally, qualitative data was gathered from 13 YI! team members approximately 3 years after implementation (Spring 2015).

Results

The Youth Impact! initiative is creating meaningful and positive change for the way multi-agency cases are handled in Douglas County. Given that, justice-involved youth often experience a multitude of social and family problems (e.g., poverty, school problems, mental health, and/or violence); a multi-systems response is needed so that professionals from various backgrounds and expertise can respond more effectively. The conclusions are as follows:

1. Youth Impact! is Effective. This evaluation found that YI! was effective across several levels of juvenile justice and child welfare: a) **system level** (e.g., better decisions, cost-benefit), b) case-level (e.g., more efficient case processing, case closure, fewer new sustained petitions, higher diversion and dismissals, reduced entrenchment in the system), c) team-level (e.g., improved relationships, decisions, and satisfaction), and d) youth-level (e.g., more dismissals/diversion, lower recidivism, better living situation post-identification, improved behavioral performance). Sharing information about crossover cases not only leads to better, more well-informed decisions, but the process also strengthens working relationships and trust among those involved.

2. Youth Impact! is Cost-Effective. Initial implementation in Douglas County is estimated to have cost \$59,752. Of this total, \$25,500 was data system costs and the remainder was staffing costs for implementation meetings. In addition, a systematic calculation of system costs and benefits provide an annual estimate of Net Benefit of \$173,161, suggesting that YI! more than pays for itself within the first year of administration.

3. Youth Impact! Represents a “Best Practice” for System Integration and Collaboration. YI! represents a better way to respond to crossover youth. The more research that is being conducted nationwide suggests that cross-systems collaboration and information sharing is vital to the improvement of case processing, management and services for crossover youth.



Recommendations

1. Continue to Support Youth Impact! in Douglas County. More generally, more counties in Nebraska should adopt and implement CYPM efforts. Further, Nebraska counties which are implementing CYPM efforts should look to the Douglas County YI! initiative for consultation.

2. Give Youth Impact! support and formal organization in Douglas County with: a) a formal management/leadership team, b) dedicated staff positions (for case processing, case management/planning, and data analysis), and c) inter-agency institutionalized policies that allow for across-agency information sharing and collaboration.

3. Support “succession planning” activities for Youth Impact!, including: a) creating and maintaining policy and procedure manuals so that even new members can “learn the ropes” quickly; b) have multiple persons in leadership positions (like the chair and co-chair) in case turnover occurs, and c) provide adequate resources to crossover positions to make these positions desirable as long-term careers.

4. Administrators should consider treating crossover positions as specialty positions. The complexities of the cases and dual involvement truly necessitate a deeper understanding of issues involving trauma, abuse, family dysfunction, and delinquency. As such, crossover staff should be trained to tackle these issues and provided an understanding of the other system(s) in which the youth is involved. A specialty position (one of commensurate pay, benefits, and the necessary training and education) may also have less turnover than other staff positions.

5. Encourage JJS and CWS administration to continue to think of and support creative ways to overcome barriers to system integration, including ways to identify crossover youth, easily share sensitive case information, institutionalize multisystem collaborations, and foster cross-agency trainings.



Vocational and Life Skills Programs Work to Reduce Recidivism and Increase Employment across Nebraska

Omaha – Since 2015, a grant administered by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) has funded prisoner reentry programs across the state of Nebraska to provide vocational and life skills training. To qualify for programming, participants must currently be inmates; under probation or parole supervision; or within 18 months of release. In the first grant cycle, 2,449 participants were served by Vocational and Life Skills (VLS) programs. In the first six months of the second grant cycle, which began in July 2016, 1,535 participants were served.

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research (NCJR), under the advisement of Director Ryan Spohn, Ph.D., signed on as a research partner in May 2015. Johanna Peterson, research coordinator, and Jordan Clark, data coordinator, work directly with NDCS and the VLS programs to track data on program participation. Participant surveys and interviews also provide additional insight into barriers and successes unique to participants. Through this work, NCJR provides feedback on what aspects of programming appear most beneficial to program participants. Over time, this evaluation will indicate whether or not participants return to prison at a lower rate than those who did not participate and if those participants are able to gain and maintain employment in the community.

Eight programs received funding in the second grant cycle. NLS programming is offered at all ten correctional facilities in the state and many more participants are served in area communities. Program services vary widely including specific job training, community college courses, and residential facilities, and offer peer-support and case management throughout programming. Many of the staff of the programs can uniquely relate to participants, as they were also involved in the correctional system at some point. This personal connection to the participants’ reentry challenges can increase hope within participants and show that they can succeed and become a productive member of society.

The word is getting out. Local news stories have highlighted the work of many of the grantees. Short videos explaining the services offered by each program play on televisions inside correctional facilities. There is a demand for programming. Just nine months into the two-year grant cycle, many programs have reached their participant service goal for the entire grant cycle. Some programs have waitlists of people eager to participate. Grantees work closely with one another to close gaps in services and work with community members to find employers and landlords willing to hire and rent to participants. The future of VLS programming is bright and NCJR staff are excited to work with programs and staff dedicated to offering people second chances and a path forward.

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Students Funded By Semester

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Jared Ellison
Ebonie Epinger
Maja Kotlaja
Danny Madrid
Starr Solomon
HOURS/ WEEK: 105

NCJR Fall 2016

Timothy Barnum
Joselyne Chenane
Jared Ellison
Julie Garman
Starr Solomon
HOURS/ WEEK: 80

NCJR Spring 2017

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HOURS/ WEEK: 120

NCJR Summer 2017

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HOURS/ WEEK: 160



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