



## Fact Sheet: Pennsylvania

### Key Facts:

- Pennsylvania's county-based public/private approach to delinquency has produced a model juvenile justice system. 1
- Considered a Balanced and Restorative Justice state, the mission of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system is to provide balanced attention to community protection, offender accountability to victims of crime, and the development of offender competencies to enable youth to become responsible and productive members of the community. 2 This philosophy has resulted in a juvenile justice system that is mission-driven, performance-based, and outcome focused.
- Pennsylvania is the first of four states selected by the MacArthur Foundation to participate in its Models for Change Initiative. [Selection was based on Pennsylvania's existing work in the] reform priority areas of aftercare services and support, coordination of the mental health and juvenile justice systems, and disproportionate minority contact within the juvenile justice system. 3
- Since 2004, Pennsylvania has been able to generate an annual statewide report card based on case closing data submitted by all 67 counties in the commonwealth. In 2006, 94% of ordered community service hours were completed; and \$2,397,438 was collected and paid as restitution to crime victims (84% paid in full); and only 11% of all 2006 closed cases (17,576) had a judicial finding for technical probation violations while under supervision. 4
- Pennsylvania is nationally recognized for its leadership in the implementation of evidence- and research-based programs for both the prevention and intervention of multiple problem behaviors in youth, such as *Blueprints for Violence Prevention Model Programs*, and the Communities That Care Model.
- The Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument is in use in 19 of 22 secure detention centers in Pennsylvania as a means to identify detained youth with mental health needs and to assist in developing referral plans for treatment for those youths.
- Data from 2004 show that minority youth (age 10-17) represent 21.5% of the overall youth population, yet accounted for 54.7% of the youth in secure confinement in Pennsylvania. 5
- Pennsylvania is in compliance with the core protections outlined in the federal Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act as they pertain to time and type of holding while in police custody; sight and sound separation of adults and juveniles; deinstitutionalization of status and non-offenders; and data collection and planning to address disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system.

### What Pennsylvania Law Says:

- The minimum age at which youth can be adjudicated delinquent is 10, and youth under the age of 10 who commit delinquent acts may be defined as dependent children;
- Juvenile delinquency jurisdiction may be extended up to the age of 21;
- Specified felony offenses, committed with a deadly weapon, by an individual age 15 or older are excluded from the definition of a delinquent act. Such cases may be transferred to juvenile court jurisdiction under the specifications of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act; 6
- There are 22 juvenile detention centers, with 803 beds, for temporary secure holding.

*There are strong partnerships among Pennsylvania's stakeholders—judges, district attorneys, public defenders, probation departments, community leaders, and city, county, and state officials—and considerable consensus about the strengths and weaknesses of the state's juvenile justice system. Reform efforts in Pennsylvania will focus on bringing about change in 3 areas: (1) the coordination of mental health and juvenile justice services; (2) the system of aftercare services and supports; and (3) disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system.*

--Keystones for Reform:  
Promising Juvenile Justice Policies and Practices in  
Pennsylvania

### State Resources:

#### Contacts:

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#### Websites/Resources:

[www.pccd.state.pa.us](http://www.pccd.state.pa.us)  
[www.jcjc.state.pa.us](http://www.jcjc.state.pa.us)  
[www.ncjj.org](http://www.ncjj.org)  
[www.jlc.org](http://www.jlc.org)  
[www.pachiefprobationofficers.org](http://www.pachiefprobationofficers.org)  
<http://www.jdcap.org/jdcap/site/default.asp>  
<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/Child/JuvenileDelinq/003670346.htm>

*Prepared by the Pennsylvania Commission on  
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and Delinquency Prevention*

1. Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission.  
(2006). *Pennsylvania juvenile delinquency benchmark*.

- (p.21). Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission.
2. Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee. (2004). *Mission and guiding principles for Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system*. (p.1). Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.
  3. National Center for Juvenile Justice. (2006). *States for change: Illinois*. Models for change: Systems reform in juvenile justice. Retrieved July 25, 2007 from <http://www.modelsforchange.net/locations/PA>.
  4. Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. (2006). *Statewide outcome measures 2006*. Retrieved August 22, 2007 from <http://www.jcjc.org>.
  5. Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. (2007). *Pennsylvania JJDP formula grant application*. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.
  6. The Pennsylvania Juvenile Act. (2005). (p.7). 42 Pa.C.S. Section 6301 *et seq*.