

Michigan Juvenile Justice Reform: Court Process and Supervision Policy Framework

Assessments and Disposition

- Require a validated risk and needs assessment tool(s) to be used statewide prior to disposition and establish policies to support the use of the tool including annual court/probation training and quality assurance requirements. Assessment results shall be used by the court to inform disposition decisions and determine the most appropriate supervision commensurate with public safety and improved outcomes for youth and shall also be used to inform facility placement decisions. Establish timeframes for reassessment for youth on community supervision and in placement.
- Require a validated mental health screening tool to be used pre-disposition to inform the need for a more in-depth assessment, and if warranted, guide dispositional and service decisions.
- Establish maximum lengths of time for probation terms based on risk level and offense severity with probation generally averaging no longer than six months except for the highest risk youth.
- Limit eligibility for placement unless the court documents on the written record that youth is a threat to public safety and all reasonable alternatives in the community have been tried.
- Restrict placement for all youth who commit status offenses, due directly to a non-law probation/court order violation, and/or youth whose most serious offense is a misdemeanor
- Establish length of stay guidelines informed by risk and offense, with maximum time limits and range parameters for youth's time in a facility, and overall time under county/state wardship, with the goal of facility lengths of stay averaging approximately 6 months except for youth that commit the most serious offenses.
- Establish a minimum age of 12/13 for any long-term residential placement.
- Require dispositional review hearings to be held at least every 3 months.

Probation Supervision and Family Engagement

- Eliminate the use of standard conditions of supervision and require that supervision conditions must be tailored and individualized to each youth and informed by the results of a validated risk and needs assessment.
- Establish statewide juvenile probation standards, as part of the newly established block grant structure, that are aligned with research-based practices and require that all recipients of funding must follow. Standards can include:
 - Engaging youth and families in setting conditions and participating in case planning/team meetings
 - Establishing common elements to be incorporated into case plans that are informed by risk and needs assessment results and tailored and appropriate for each youth
 - Developing criteria for early supervision termination
 - Establishing guidelines for tailoring conditions of supervision
 - Establishing common criteria for the use of out-of-home placement
- All probation officers must attend statewide training and be certified in the use of risk assessments and case management, and in the newly established probation standards, at least every x years.
- Require probation agencies to use a graduated response and incentives matrix that is aligned to best practices to inform responses to violations. Require the use of such a system and data collection around its use.
- The court may not remove a youth from home solely for a technical probation violation.

- Develop a statewide family engagement strategy for Michigan’s juvenile justice system, including family engagement policies and standards across court, probation, detention, and placement.
- Establish a statewide youth and family advisory group and establish a discretionary grant program to support county-level youth and family advisory groups to inform resource allocation decisions and policy implementation.

Community-Based Services

- As part of the proposed block-grant structure, define “research-based” services in statute, direct that state funding is used primarily for such services along with promising/grassroots practices (e.g. credible messengers, restorative justice programming, pro-social supports).
- SCAO/entity TBD employs a statewide team of quality assurance specialists that support counties to implement research-based practices, including ongoing risk/needs assessments, probation standards, training, quality assurance reviews/technical assistance, supporting cross-county and cross-system partnerships, and in partnership with the committee, coordinating the cultivation and effective implementation of community-based, evidence-based models like MST, FFT, EPICS, etc.
 - Require all counties, or those above a certain population size, to use their block grant to support a county JJ QA Specialist to support these activities.
- Establish local collaboratives that include behavioral health, education, justice, and other agencies, focused on the provision of youth services (potentially as part of the human service collaboratives) and require youth and family representatives. Require local collaboratives to conduct inventory/mapping of gaps in programs and services for reducing recidivism and improving outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system.
- Establish a discretionary grant program to pilot community-based behavioral health services including mobile crisis intervention models, telehealth services, and culturally responsive services that can respond to the needs of youth and families.