

The Missouri Juvenile Justice Model and Its Intersection with New Mexico

Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee

July 30, 2025

Children's Defense Fund:

“One of the most persistent roadblocks to juvenile justice reform across the country is resistance to change.”

“We need a system that returns young people to the community prepared to succeed and become productive adults to serve as a model for the entire nation. We don't need systems that do further harm and return youths, most of them nonviolent offenders, back to their communities hopeless, angry, and unprepared to succeed in life.”

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE MISSOURI MODEL:

Small, Non-Institutional Facilities Close to Home

Integrated Treatment: Treating the Whole Person

Individual Care Within a Group Treatment Model

Safety through Supervision, Structure and Relationships



*The Missouri Youth Services Institute (MYSI) – Approach for Positive Juvenile Justice System Outcomes

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE MISSOURI MODEL:

Integrated Treatment and Education

Families and Communities as Partners in Treatment

Support from Transition through Aftercare



*The Missouri Youth Services Institute (MYSI) – Approach for Positive Juvenile Justice System Outcomes

How Missouri's Juvenile System Became a National Model

Like most states, Missouri housed juveniles in centralized, prison-like conditions between the late-nineteenth and late-twentieth centuries...Conditions in the reform schools remained deplorable throughout the twentieth century because the schools held abuse and neglect victims with juveniles who committed serious, violent offenses.

While the rest of the nation focused its attention on get-tough measures to address the growing concerns over violent juvenile crime, Missouri initiated a change focused on restoring and rehabilitating vulnerable youth.

Today, Missouri DYS has divided the state into five regions, operates thirty residential facilities, and works closely with Missouri's forty-five juvenile courts. Delinquents are committed to Missouri DYS when the juvenile court determines there is no community-based service suitable for the juvenile.

Missouri DYS is successful in offering juveniles at their most vulnerable the resources they need to cope with difficult circumstances. Because of this success, Missouri DYS is an example for other states looking to revamp their juvenile justice systems.

Division of Youth Services

Individualized Care and Family Engagement

Day Treatment/Resource Centers

Residential Treatment

Education Services

After Care



Individualized Care



Service Coordinator, or case manager, who serves as an advocate.



A risk/needs assessment is completed to help decide the appropriate placement.



Comprehensive Individual Treatment Plan (CITP)



Administrative Review



Community integration plan

Family Engagement



Families are an important piece of the treatment process, and their participation is encouraged.



Family Strengthening



Parent Support Services



Family Engagement Activities

Day Treatment Resource Center



Community-based programs where youth receive supervision, education, treatment, and recreation services while living in their community.



These programs may also provide treatment, educational and recreational services to parents, families and the community.



Youth spend six hours each day in school and return home to their family in the evenings.



Day Treatment/Resource Centers operate all services year-round.



Youth will design an individual education plan with a teacher that will outline their goals and the expectations of both the staff members and youth.

Residential Treatment



Community-based residential programs (Home-like - 10 or fewer youth)



Moderately Structured Facilities - 9



Secure Care - 4

Education Services



DYS employs roughly 120 certified teachers at its 27 sites.



DYS follows a 12-month school calendar, and students are assigned a full-day schedule of classes.

Employment



Youth Specialists: Guide & support youth with daily life skills, treatment & educational goals.



Service Coordinator: Support youth & their families on their path to success from entry into care to discharge.



Community Mentors: Social role model that helps youth successfully transition back to the community



Youth Group Leader: Oversees treatment teams & youth to help youth successfully transition back to the community.

Missouri Youth Services Institute (MYSI)

A Rehabilitative Approach

- We work to move juvenile justice systems from a traditional correctional approach toward a rehabilitative and therapeutic model where ***youth are treated in a humane and nurturing environment that results in the youth making positive and long-lasting changes.*** Working hand-in-hand with our client's organizational leadership team, the MYSI team conducts an initial assessment and evaluation of a jurisdiction's facilities and system to determine the feasibility and ability of MYSI's assistance.
- Our team assesses the client's programming, organizational structure, behavior management systems, patterns of incidents, staff turnover patterns, training, leadership development, physical plant and facility placement, and job descriptions. This information is gathered through direct observations and interviews. This is followed by application of the foundations of the Missouri approach to all aspects of the client's organization.

A woman with dark, curly hair is speaking in a kitchen. She is wearing a white top and a necklace. In the background, there is a shelf with several potted plants, including an orchid and a green leafy plant. The scene is brightly lit.

PHOEBE DICKSON

Missouri Youth Services Institute Consultant

ACLU LITIGATION & CAMBIAR NEW MEXICO

2003 – ACLU-NM approached by parents of adjudicated youth regarding lack of mental health treatment and physical abuse of children (including allegations of sexual abuse by peers and staff)

NM Case #: D-101-CV-200702921

2003-2005 – ACLU-NM monitors conditions within JJS facilities and documents: verbal and physical abuse by peers and staff; use of individual isolation for extended periods; lack of mental health services; mismanagement of medications and lack of medical staff; lack of grievance process and tracking of incidents; failure to provide services required to ensure parole

2005 – class action suit prepared; August: settlement negotiations begin at CYFD's request

2006 – Feb. 16: initial agreement

2007 – Nov. 20:

ACLU-NM files suit following an attack of a developmentally delayed teen by staff;
Seeks closure of NM Boys School in Springer and access to behavioral health, medical, and community-based services;
CYFD pays \$705,000 and hires Missouri Youth Services Institute to implement the Missouri Model.

2008 – First mention of Cambiar New Mexico; funds appropriated to remodel JPTC and retrain staff following passage of HM8.

2009 – Sept:

ACLU lawsuit settled;
CYFD pays additional \$500,000 for legal fees;
new agreement entered until Dec. 31, 2010:
Implementation of Cambiar New Mexico, reducing number of adjudicated youths within units, improving grievance process, providing behavioral health services

2010 – ACLU files suit alleging the second agreement had not been followed.



2011 – restraining order sought by ACLU against CYFD in addition to extension of 2010 agreement; granted only another 7 months additional oversight - specifically over the San Juan Detention Center, but denied oversight for the other facilities



NEW MEXICO: Juvenile Justice Services within CYFD

- Pre-adjudication – County Detention Centers
 - Bernalillo (Albuquerque)
 - Dona Ana County (Los Cruces)
 - San Juan County (Farmington)
 - Chavez County (Roswell)
- Post-adjudication CYFD Detention Centers;
 - YDDC in Albuquerque (M&F);
 - J Paul Taylor in Las Cruces (M only);
 - 2 Reintegration Centers: Eagle Nest and ABQ
- Juveniles may serve a one-year (short-term) or a two-year (long-term) commitment.
- Federal Requirements Compliance Monitoring
- Juvenile Detention Compliance Certification
- Referrals: Delinquent Referrals, Status Offense Referrals, and Probation Violations

Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC)

JJAC's state juvenile justice members advise and guide the implementation of the Federal Juvenile Justice and Prevention Act (JJDPA) and are charged under JJDPA to participate in:

- The development and evaluation of the state's three-year juvenile justice strategic plan;
- The review of sub-grant applications for receipt of federal JDDPA and state Continuum Grant funds;
- Efforts to ensure their state compliance with the purposes and requirements of the JJDPA; and
- Review and recommendations for sub-grant applications for receipt of State of New Mexico Legislative appropriated General Funds.

Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI):

- Detention risk screening is a tool used to reduce unnecessary or inappropriate secure confinement of juveniles.
- Re-validation of the NM RAI occurred in 2022 using data from FY 2020-2022.
- In 2003 the legislature enacted law for CYFD to develop a RAI and require the use of the objective screening tool for all referrals into juvenile detention.
- Two specific risks are measured by detention screening instruments:
 - Public safety risk—the risk of committing another public offense prior to adjudication
 - FTA risk—the risk of Failure to Appear in court after release.

Captain Lawrence Barnett
Santa Fe Police Department

CCJ- 2013 Cambiar Presentation

2010 Feasibility and Master Plan

Adolescent Brain Science and Juvenile Justice Policy Making

[D]uring adolescence, teenagers experience a “hypersensitivity to emotional content” while their ability to self-regulate their reactions to those emotions and accurately predict the consequences of their behavior have not yet fully developed.

Lawrence Steinberg, *Adolescent Brain Science and Juvenile Justice Policy Making*, 23 PSYCHOL. PUB. POL'Y & L. 413 (2016)

Challenges – Next Steps?

- Lack of regional detention center
- Family and Community Engagement
- Cost to local governments – Operational Funding
- Miscommunication between CYFD and local law enforcement
- Limited space
- Complete mental health assessment - require assessment and treatment plan at detention facilities to reduce risk of future offending
- More frequent aftercare significantly reduces future offending/probation violation
- Capacity to improve – DOH/New Agency
- Improve coordination between pre- and post-detention
- Develop comprehensive rehabilitation training and continuing education