**July 28, 2014**

**U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs**

**810 Seventh Street NW, Washington, DC 20531**

**10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**ABSTRACT**

The July 28, 2014, quarterly meeting of the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Council) focused on juvenile reentry challenges facing justice-involved youth and highlighted federal interagency efforts to reduce recidivism and improve youth outcomes. Two speakers shared compelling and often heart-wrenching stories about their juvenile reentry experiences and Council members were invited to offer their insights within an engaging meeting format.

Tony West, Associate Attorney General of the United States, reminded attendees that on any given day, 60,000 youth are confined in juvenile detention facilities; once released they need support for successful transition to stable adulthood.

Karol V. Mason, Assistant Attorney General of the United States, asserted that youth justice experiences should improve the lives of juveniles, who should be guided onto a path of positive academic and career development.

Roy Austin, Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice, and Opportunity, The White House, brought home the fact that when a teenager’s life is subsequently ruined because of a mistake they made, expect 60-80 years of almost guaranteed waste if those in a position to effect reentry changes do not get it right.

Robert L. Listenbee, Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), DOJ, and Council Vice-Chair, discussed the components of the Federal Interagency Reentry Initiative. He emphasized that effective reentry and aftercare should begin immediately during the post-adjudication decision to confine a youth and should address risk/needs assessment services and release planning. Further, juvenile records should be automatically sealed and expunged once a youth has satisfied their obligation, or they may encounter lifelong barriers in all aspects of life.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center addressed activities to positively impact the well-being of transitioning youth, and announced an exciting follow up study of Texas students, scheduled for release this December. On June 9, 2014, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan sent a joint letter to every Chief State School Officer and State Attorney General, clarifying the commitment required to ensure that confined youth have access to high-quality educational services. The President recently announced the Youth Opportunity AmeriCorps partnership between OJJDP and the Corporation for National and Community Service to enroll disconnected youth into national service programs, with funding up to $10M over three years. The White House hosted an all-day forum on reentry and a session on foster youth.

This meeting identified many positive activities by those who clearly heeded Attorney General Holder’s call to make juvenile recidivism and reentry a priority.

**Kathi Grasso**,*Director, Concentration of Federal Efforts Program, OJJDP, DOJ; Designated Federal Official (DFO)*, *Coordinating Council,* opened with a number of housekeeping reminders and welcomed Council members, including those participating via webcast or telephone, and other meeting attendees. The webcast recording and meeting minutes, along with other presentation materials and handouts, will be posted on the Council website at [www.juvenilecouncil.gov](http://www.juvenilecouncil.gov) within 90 days of the meeting. Oral testimony or comments from the general public were not accepted at this meeting. Members of the general public were advised that they may submit written comments directly to Ms. Grasso at OJJDP, via her contact information (kathi.grasso@usdoj.gov) in the Federal Register notice announcing this meeting.

**Tony West**,*Associate Attorney General, DOJ,* stated his appreciation to participate in different and better ways to address the critical needs of the nation’s youth and their families. He spent time with Osbert Duoa and Starcia Ague, the young adults who candidly shared their reentry experiences at this meeting. Their compelling stories reinforce the Council’s need for leadership and Mr. West thanked everyone who has heeded U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder’s call to make juvenile recidivism and reentry a priority. The resulting collaboration has produced results that are making a difference in the lives of young people. Mr. West also acknowledged the presence of Mr. Duoa’s mother Saygba Carl and his mentor Chef Jennifer Stott.

Recidivism rates under system supervision are quite high. While the last two decades have yielded remarkable reductions in state and local juvenile arrest rates—including those for violent crimes and youth confinement—the fact remains that on any given day 60,000 youth are still confined in juvenile detention facilities. These young lives have value … something unique to express to the world. Once released, they need support to help them successfully transition to stable adulthood and they are depending on the folks in this forum to get it right. Reentry sessions are designed to reduce recidivism, and enhance post-juvenile justice systems education, job training, parenting skills, counseling, and health care. Through them, the Council and partnering agencies and organizations can maximize opportunities to connect young people to mentoring resources, support networks, and job skills to help them reach their full potential. Quoting from Robert Browning's poem *Paracelsus*, Mr. West exhorted everyone to “open out a way whence the imprisoned splendor may escape.”

This meeting will identify effective strategies that should be applied as soon as young people come into contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and it will target approaches that involve meaningful engagement with families, caregivers, and multiple service systems. The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center will address activities to positively impact the well-being of transitioning youth. Administrator Robert Listenbee will report on OJJDP strategies that position state and local government efforts to support youth transition to a healthy crime-free and productive adulthood. In conjunction with the Administration’s commitment to this mission—and as part of his My Brother’s Keeper initiative—President Obama recently announced the Youth Opportunity AmeriCorps partnership. OJJDP and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) are jointly funding up to $10M over three (3) years to enroll disconnected youth into national service programs. Mr. West thanked CNCS for its commitment to this initiative and CNCS staff members Melissa Bradley and Kim Mansaray.

**Karol Mason**, *Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, DOJ,* expressed gratitude for the leadership and commitment of all the attendees, including DOJ leadership. She specifically thanked Roy Austin, with whom she worked in his previous role as the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, DOJ, for his staunch advocacy toward juvenile justice. His presence at the meeting speaks to his commitment and that of the White House, where he now serves as Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice, and Opportunity. Ms. Mason also acknowledged Administrator Listenbee for his tireless work leading OJJDP in the Department’s efforts to improve the juvenile justice system, and highlighted the work of Amy Solomon, Office of Justice Programs, DOJ, on the [Federal Interagency] Reentry Council. Ms. Mason participated in a neighborhood revitalization conference the previous week and credited Mr. Listenbee’s vision and energy for changing the national conversation on these issues.

Youth contact should be fair and minimal: the task is not to just reduce confinement rates but to also ensure that justice-involved youth get needed support following their release. More than just obtaining their G.E.D., youth should be guided onto a path of positive academic and career development. Ms. Mason referred to the Council’s prior discussions on the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, expressing gratitude for that collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to help keep youth in school and out of the school-to-prison pipeline. On June 9, 2014, Attorney General Eric Holder and ED Secretary Arne Duncan sent a joint letter to every Chief State School Officer and every State Attorney General, clarifying the commitment required to ensure that confined youth have access to high-quality educational services.

Ms. Mason is heartened by the progress being made and what she views as a trend in local communities, states, and at the federal levels toward more accessible quality education, lower recidivism rates, and a better outcome for confined youth.

**Roy Austin**,*Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice, and Opportunity, The White House*, thanked OJJDP leadership for their activist roles in improving the lives of juveniles, and communicated his appreciation for the opportunity to work with CNCS and Melissa Bradley.

Mr. Austin cited two significant events hosted by the White House since his arrival: an all-day forum on reentry and a session on foster youth where 50 children were invited to recommend system improvements. He described enormous numbers of youth in the foster care system, and those who will “age out,” so all possible actions to achieve progress must continue. He has collaborated with CSG Justice Center Director Michael Thompson to identify businesses that hire formerly incarcerated individuals. In this way, companies such as Home Depot and Johns Hopkins Medical Center are helping to facilitate reentry: their actions highlight both the moral/ethical imperative and the business benefits of hiring such persons who make incredible employees. Fewer youth are being detained but the need remains to seek alternatives to incarceration and detention, mitigate the school-to-prison pipeline, acknowledge the mental and emotional differences youth demonstrate, and address their career and parenting needs. When the life of a 17-year old is subsequently ruined because of a mistake they made, expect 60-80 years of almost guaranteed waste if those in a position to effect change do not get this right.

Mr. Austin asserted confidence in the ongoing leadership, energy, and unparalleled commitment of Mr. Listenbee, Mr. West, Ms. Mason, and the My Brother’s Keeper Initiative, to get it right and change lives.

**Robert Listenbee**,*Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), DOJ, and Council Vice-Chair*, thanked the Associate Attorney General Tony West, the Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason, and the Deputy Assistant to the President Roy Austin. He stated his appreciation for Mr. West’s vision and the efforts by Amy Solomon and many others on the issue of reentry. Such a strong team renders the job of OJJDP administration much easier, including strong partnerships with the CSG Justice Center through the National Reentry Resource Center, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and other organizations which support OJJDP’s vision to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes. Mr. Listenbee also acknowledged Second Chance Act grantees and his colleagues at the Bureau of Justice Assistance who administer the Second Chance Act reentry programs for adults in the criminal justice system. The Federal Interagency Reentry Council and its subcommittee addressing juvenile reentry worked closely with OJJDP and helped to plan this Council meeting. Council members attending in person and via teleconference were introduced.

Confinement can exert a powerful negative effect on youth. Transformation of the system requires the adoption of a developmental approach to confinement. The goal is to keep most adolescents out of the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Nevertheless, some youth must still be confined to ensure the safety of the community and to receive appropriate services and treatment (e.g., educational services, employment training, mental health and substance abuse treatment, life skills training, mentoring, and housing support). Even a brief justice system contact can significantly impact adolescent development. Each child reacts differently: for some, the arrest process itself can create depression and difficulties for youth struggling to resume a normal developmental path. Youth need reinforcement of a prosocial identity so the focus is to keep them in touch with family or other caring adults, minimizing disruption in their schooling or vocational skills development. Many confined youth never fully resume essential educational pathways.

Reentry and aftercare should begin immediately at the post-adjudication decision to confine a youth, and should address risk/needs assessment services and release planning. Services and supervision should follow the youth upon return to his/her community and the process ends when the child is successfully reintegrated into the community. The OJJDP Juvenile Reentry Initiative emphasizes the importance of improving youth outcomes; increases the capacity to measure recidivism and other youth outcomes; closes the gap between the research on what works and existing policies and practices; and improves the coordination effectiveness of the Federal Interagency Reentry initiatives through a six-point transition strategy:

1. Promote the latest research and best practices to reduce recidivism and improve other key youth outcomes. An OJJDP-supported white paper by the MacArthur Foundation on this topic is being released today.
2. Provide all branches of government with tools to apply the research and assess the effectiveness of policies and practices on their juvenile justice systems.
3. Promote efforts by states to track recidivism rates, working with the National Reentry Resource Center (a CSG Justice Center project) and Susan Burke (Chair of the Recidivism Committee for the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators). An issue brief detailing recommendations for better measurement, analysis, collection, reporting, and deployment of recidivism data for justice-involved youth will be released today. Partner with select states to pilot a comprehensive approach on the collection and use of this data.
4. Help state/local governments transform their approach to youth transitions and revamp the Second Chance Act to focus on broad system reforms and discreet programs or practices.
5. Identify the services and supervision youth are receiving and the effectiveness of those interventions by focusing on states with dramatic youth confinement reductions.
6. Address gaps in the knowledge about effective practices to reduce recidivism and improve other key youth outcomes. The Interagency Juvenile Reentry Committee is designing and testing models to address gaps in juvenile justice practices and services for transitional youth, family engagement, and trauma-informed approach.

There are exciting new efforts to address this particular issue. The research program and resource developmental data collection will expand the ability to meet the needs of youth and improve their outcomes. Once youth satisfy their obligation, juvenile justice records should be automatically sealed and expunged. Justice system records follow many youth into adulthood, often creating insurmountable barriers to accessing education, employment, housing, and other services. Change requires good intentions, science, and the determination of everyone, and there is reason for hope that our children will reap the benefits.

Mr. Listenbee posed questions to guests and specific Council members for the remainder of the meeting and welcomed insights from around the table.

**Council Member Discussion**

Setting a New Vision for Juvenile Reentry: Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Youth Outcomes

**Q: Policy makers can only hold their juvenile justice systems accountable for reducing recidivism and improving other youth outcomes for youth if they can track these results. To what extent are states currently tracking these data and using the information to inform policy?**

**Michael Thompson***, Director, Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center*, reminded everyone that less than four years ago, the issue of school discipline was not a focus across the country. Now, he witnesses state leaders everywhere challenging each other to address this initiative and expressed his appreciation for this particular work of the Council to bring the issue front and center. He stated a dramatic 51% decline in confined youth over the last 15 years and the need for follow up. The CSG Justice Center conducted a survey focusing on recidivism with the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators and the Pew Charitable Trusts. Thirty-nine states responded and are engaged in some form of tracking, but that still leaves 20% of states lacking in this area.

Mr. Thompson asserted that there are multiple aspects of recidivism to consider; for example, it is less than useful to know that a youth had no further contact with juvenile systems yet discover him/her eight months later in the adult criminal system. Measurements are being made in some areas, but more work is needed, especially at the local level where the data is even harder to collect.

His key recommendations include ensuring that: recidivism is measured in multiple ways; risk levels are understood and factored; infrastructure exists at the state level; information is provided to key decision makers and the general public; and the outcome data drives policy.

**Q: What are the key takeaways about reducing recidivism and improving outcomes for justice system-involved youth?**

**Mr. Thompson**, *CSG,* reiterated the release of the white paper developed with the MacArthur Foundation, to inform what the research identifies will improve outcomes on a broad level. This document helps people understand what works, outlines distinct strategies, and translates how to operationalize these concepts so that performance can be measured. He discussed the principles of the white paper on risk assessments to coordinate juvenile and child welfare systems. His recommendation was to stop funding programs that don’t work, better train the work force managing these complicated programs, and offer practical guidance on how to really distinguish non-compliance versus the immaturity of youth.

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**Q: Ms. Starcia Ague and Mr. Osbert Duoa bring a clear youthful perspective. What are the needs of justice-involved youth and communities across the nation?**

**Starcia Ague**, *Youth and Family Advocate Program Administrator, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Administration,* commented that juvenile justice-involved youth often experience multiple types of childhood trauma, followed by neglect to their physical and mental health needs. She suggests the following actions be taken:

* The research shows youth need societal help to be productive, and proper funding is the key, so please reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.
* Education is key so teach youth how to be tomorrow’s humanitarians and leaders. Provide basic education: every detention facility should offer vocational and/or college classes.
* Abolish automatic-decline [when a juvenile is automatically sent into the adult criminal justice system without a hearing].
* Prohibit the sale/mass distribution of juvenile records.
* Do not presumptively shackle juveniles throughout the country; instead conduct significantly greater in-reach into the facilities where they are housed, utilizing faith-based communities, universities, community colleges, etc.
* Summarize massive reports such as those created by the National Academy of Sciences or the Federal Advisory on Juvenile Justice into everyday plain language to make them youth- and family-friendly. She is currently engaged in this effort.
* Implement more pre-filing diversion programs.
* Include youth and family members at the table to define and implement reforms, with some follow up mechanism to demonstrate actual use of their input in effecting policy changes.

**Osbert Duoa**, *Retail Sales Manager, Rhode Island Harvest Kitchen Project,* first acknowledged the source of his spiritual faith and strength and then stressed the importance of youth having a father figure. Although he had strong maternal support, he related that he would have wanted a father figure in his life. Adolescents need access to physical and mental health services once incarcerated and they can benefit from programs that are managed by people who show they actually care. Youth need individuals to check on them and stay in contact with their probation officer or case managers.

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**Q: Describe the challenges you faced transitioning from the juvenile justice system.**

**Ms. Ague** related that she occasionally still struggles to overcome her experiences with rape, abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Her voice breaking, she shared that more emphasis was seemingly placed on the voluminous mandated reporting and less on the services she needed for actual healing and to move forward. At age 15, she was released after five years of confinement, with reading and math proficiency at a third-grade and fifth-grade level, respectively. She had many financial questions, such as what is an APR, how to build/manage credit, understanding various loan types, applying for student financial aid, tax preparation, etc. In hindsight, she acknowledges that the best thing that happened to her was being locked up, which led to the decision to turn her life around. As a result, better priorities and values were instilled within her, including the desire to attend college, and she began taking care of herself for the first time.

However, some of Ms. Ague’s greatest challenges occurred in the area of job hunting. Eagerly researching information on resume preparation and interview techniques, she submitted 35 job applications, received two callbacks, and was invited to an in-person interview with a telemarketing company. Excited about the future, and with numerous letters of recommendation in tow, she aced the interview, was informed of her working hours, and was even taken to see her intended office workspace. She was devastated to be summarily dismissed once they learned she had a felony conviction. Eventually she secured a summer job and was able to attend college but she still feels the sting of that rejection. Many youth do not enjoy the same support she had to address her resource gaps and to overcome an extremely dysfunctional background. On her 21st birthday she headed to college but—even with co-signers—could not find an apartment complex that would accept her, based on her record. Finally she rented a basement apartment from several professors and was also able to live in the dorms temporarily.

Ms. Ague cares deeply about this issue of juvenile records. She conveyed how mind boggling it is that youth are labeled rehabilitated and then returned into the same environment from which they stumbled, with the expectation of achieving different results. Her state of Washington is one of eight with open juvenile records, and one of three engaged in mass distribution of those records from which profits are generated.

**Mr. Duoa** explained how gang members interfered with his progress as he tried to attend school while incarcerated. Often sitting in the same juvenile corrections school classes, this tension affected his participation in several educational programs. Once he was released, he got rides to/from school and began seeking jobs. He loved school and managed to stay away from negative former friends and influences. He is especially grateful for his employment at Harvest Kitchen which he credits for keeping him out of the streets. In the “Kitchen,” cultural and neighborhood differences between the various participants blurred as the work at hand unified them all. He even designed a logo that reads “More Time in the Kitchen and Less Time on the Streets” and is currently seeking to create promotional tee shirts and hats.

Mr. Duoa also cited the birth of his little brother during his transition as both a challenge and an inspiration to avoid the streets and to be a better person. In Africa, they have nothing and everyone struggles but he has decided to seek and pursue what is next for him. He now understands that he is here to do something positive with his life and that helped him acquire the will to change and be different.

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**Q: You both are highly accomplished young people – who/what helped you achieve success?**

**Ms. Ague** looks forward to the day when there is an improved juvenile justice system, and she is retired and no longer considered special. Initially she was denied county court internships because of her juvenile record but in due course many people helped her along the way. She gives credit to Professor Nicholas Lovrich, Ph.D., Washington State University (WSU), who prepared her for an internship and gave her recommendations that mitigated the negative impact of her records. Spokane Valley couple Ernie and Kristi Hensley embraced her into their family, unofficially adopting her as their goddaughter, and prepared her for college. She is thankful for meeting Dr. Eric Trupin (also of WSU) during a random health survey when she was incarcerated. Unlike many others who told her to keep in touch, he actually followed through upon her college graduation and helped her secure employment as a research assistant at the university. Through Models for Change, she made great connections to share her story through public speaking and received an award in 2012. She would technically still be a felon were it not for George Yeannakis, Special Counsel for Team Child: that group took her case pro bono and she ultimately became the only juvenile to receive a pardon from Governor Chris Gregoire. The Open Society Foundation selected Ms. Ague to become a 2014 SOROS Justice Fellow. Her project is titled “Freedom Inside” and she is partnering with academia to develop leaders. A documentary in her name recently won a Northwest Regional Emmy. This is the legacy of support she has garnered, even when she doubted herself.

**Mr. Duoa** first pays homage to his mother Saygba Carl, his mentor Chef Jennifer Stott, and programs in which he was able to participate. Next he credits himself in a very insightful manner – because of his very troubles, he is now privileged to sit among such a distinguished group of people at the Council meeting, sharing his experiences and hopes.

He does not feel quite as accomplished or polished as he might wish. Mr. Duoa referred to a Liberian saying, “Are you chasing something or what is chasing you?” He believes he is still chasing something, as yet undefined, but the uncertainty did not seem to create any anxiety within him. Right now he follows the activities of Mr. Listenbee and other Council members. He quietly asserted that he will eventually come to understand what he is chasing and pursue it with confidence and purpose; so Mr. Duoa’s journey of self-discovery continues.

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**Q: Think back 5-8 years and what your world looked like then: what advice would you give to a younger version of yourself who may not see the same limitless opportunities?**

**Mr. Duoa** accepted that his younger self was bound to rush into problems even if he’d been presented with wise advice. Young people willfully choose to experience what they want, but he would tell a younger Osbert to keep doing what he was doing to move forward.

**Ms. Ague** tells youth they will have to work harder than the average person because of the strikes against them, but perseverance and tenacity will pay off if they just stick with it. To achieve this, they must really want to improve for themselves and not for other people.

Meeting materials, including detailed BIOs for Michael Thompson, Starcia Ague, and Osbert Duoa, will be available on the Council’s website at [www.juvenilecouncil.gov](http://www.juvenilecouncil.gov).

**Mr. Listenbee** remarked that OJJDP has adopted an approach to systemic, across-the board, statewide, comprehensive juvenile justice reform and it supports right-sizing the system: reducing the number of youth coming into the system and ensuring fair treatment for them. He requested that federal colleagues share their reentry activities and insights on future collaborations. Without exception, all members shared their appreciation for and encouragement to the guest speakers, Starcia Ague and Osbert Duoa.

**Q: What have been the MacArthur Foundation’s findings on improving outcomes for youth transitioning from the juvenile justice system?**

**Laurie Garduque, Ph.D.**, *Program Director, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation,* indicated the challenge is to translate the experiences of young people like Mr. Duoa and Ms. Ague to become the rule, and not the exception. Adolescents are not adults and, amid promising signs of reform initiatives, states are now embracing the developmental framework. Juvenile justice system reforms must address the heterogeneity of young people it contacts and avoid making generalities. Reforms must focus holistically on the youth—not just the offense—and his/her capacity to change. Systems reform is about the transition from the initial contact with juvenile justice systems to reentry back into society as successful and productive adults.

Dr. Garduque relates the cornerstone of how this transition is viewed to the notion that adolescents are not adults and the resultant legal implications in terms of accountability. The psychological and neurological research demonstrates youth have higher impulse levels, are more sensation seeking, and are more susceptible to peer pressure. This period referred to as offending is really more a period of reckless and risky misbehavior. Helping young people requires a determination of fair treatment and holding them accountable in developmentally appropriate ways so they do not reoffend. States and localities have embraced the developmental approach and are tackling the reforms at different processing points. Transition begins at the initial contact, so the first opportunity is to divert youth with rehabilitation. The array of rehabilitative and treatment options available to the justice system are limited and the research reveals that those options do more harm than good.

Interestingly, many effective practices are often less expensive and yield better outcomes. The emphasis must be placed on system reforms—and not just on transition—as youth leave corrections. The CSG white paper speaks to the “right-sizing” of systems and how this releases resources for youth who must remain incarcerated. For example, the Louisiana juvenile justice system experienced a 46% budget cut over the last 5 years equating to over $70M, yet they have increased the evidence-based policies and practices and have reduced the recidivism rate and the number of incarcerated youth. They “right-sized” the system, addressing the heterogeneity of the young people involved in the system. Even when children commit serious offenses, they have the capacity for change. Dr. Garduque acknowledged that the degree of change that is possible is often unknown and it will not be easy to predict to what extent these youth can adapt and be resilient when they reenter society. Offenders deserve opportunities to gain the skills and competencies needed to function as successful adults. Many youth should be placed back into their communities, using local resources and services, and should enter school/work programs to acquire those skills.

The goal is to ensure that youth succeed and not just capture them as they reoffend. Unfortunately, there is currently no cure for adolescence and the likelihood is that many youth will engage in behavior that results in justice system contact. Reform efforts require placement of youth into systems and it is critical for OJJDP and other federal agencies to figure how to help young people thrive. There is a diminishing point of return after six months confinement where youth harden into persistent, more serious offenders. The tools, knowledge, and experience are available now at the federal, state, and local levels to demand better outcomes for youth in the justice system. Studies show that informal contact with juvenile justice systems for low-risk juvenile offenders keeps them out of the system, and that they have the capacity to change.

**U.S. Department of Education (ED)**

**Jonathan Brice**, *Deputy Assistant Secretary,* addressed three overarching areas where education plays a critical role in helping support juvenile reentry: (1) reducing suspensions/expulsions in schools and any type of juvenile justice interaction resulting from the school space; (2) working with juvenile justice correctional facilities across the country to ensure that young people receive the same quality education expected in a traditional school, including college- and career-ready curriculum, great teachers, access to technology, and mental health and counseling services; and (3) transitioning back into traditional K-12 schools, G.E.D. programs, or post-secondary college and career opportunities. ED has taken the following steps in the past year:

* In January 2014, ED Secretary Arne Duncan and Attorney General Eric Holder released a school discipline guidance package (a product of the Supportive School Discipline Initiative) identifying the need to reduce suspensions, expulsions, and any other interactions between students and police.
* ED Secretary and the AG collaborated on a joint letter to state education chiefs and juvenile correctional facilities leaders explaining the need to right-size juvenile correctional facilities and to insist that those facilities adhere to the type of quality education mandated for all children, regardless of school assignment. The letter identifies five pillars to reforming juvenile justice education, including: (1) focusing on better climate support and providing wrap-around services; (2) improving state funding; (3) attracting and retaining great teachers, who make the difference in all schools; (4) exposing students to college- and career-ready curriculum; and (5) integrating support for transition services, across child-serving agencies, from the moment they enter the juvenile justice systems.
* ED is collaborating with other federal government offices, including the Office of National Drug Control Policy, to clarify which youth are eligible for federal financial aid, even if they have received a drug-related conviction. They have reposted a year-old myth buster to clarify this eligibility to youth.
* A myth buster was recently released that clarified the use of education-related technology in juvenile justice correctional facilities. For youth with such varied educational needs, the appropriate use of technology can exponentially increase teacher effectiveness.

**U.S. Department of Education (ED)**

**Johan Uvin**, *Acting Assistant Secretary,* highlighted five opportunities for specific actions in the next 12-18 months:

* This August, ED will release a solicitation to select up to 10 performance partnership pilots for disconnected youth, where states, local, and tribal governments can request the flexibility to pool all non-mandatory funding administered by the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services, for which the youth are eligible. The President’s 2015 budget requests that the same authority be extended to include DOJ programs as well.
* Last week, the President signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.
* Business engagement, as part of the Ready to Work Report presented by Vice President Biden, has one mission: train Americans with the skills employers need and match them to good jobs that need to be filled right now.
* ED and DOJ are creating an interagency initiative that would involve a number of demonstrations around reentry career and technical education.
* ED has made a commitment to pursue some breakthrough technologies in juvenile correctional facilities.

**Office of National Drug Control Policy**

**Michael Botticelli***, Acting Director, Executive Office of the President,* stated that substance use disorder significantly underscores youth involvement in the juvenile justice system. He cited a 2004 study that indicated approximately 50% of youth detained in juvenile facilities had a substance use disorder, in addition to the trauma and mental health issues. Youth leaving their homes require stable housing, effective treatment, employment, and education. Substance use disorders represent one of the last diseases where people are intentionally allowed to progress to the most acute condition before interventions are applied. One national strategy related to justice-involved youth encompasses prevention, intervention, and screening opportunities, to keep youth and young adults from developing more significant disorders.

Continued support of research is essential and Mr. Botticelli referenced the National Institute on Drug Abuse JJ Trial Study – a seven-site cooperative research program designed to identify and test strategies for improving the delivery of evidence-based substance abuse and HIV prevention and treatment services for justice-involved youth. Programs should be brought to scale that show promising results, such as juvenile drug courts or recovery high schools, and that address the complex behavioral and psychosocial needs of adolescents and young adults. The system must also incorporate family treatment and the support of other caring adults as part of an overall treatment plan.

Research that addresses the unique developmental needs of young adults must be continued. Since justice-involved youth are also involved in other systems—child welfare, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment—coordination of care across these systems is vital to the development and support of a mutually supportive care management plan. Mr. Botticelli commended the work of Dr. Larke Huang and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, to fund state adolescent infrastructure treatment grants viewed from the perspective of multiple systems capacities, and policy academies focusing on the multidimensional needs of transitioning youth. Finally, care management services require the development of core competencies and cross training among the workforce that cares for this population.

**Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)**

**Melissa Bradley**, *Chief Strategy Officer*, is thrilled to partner with the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Justice to support unaccompanied minors. She reiterated today’s announcement of the three-year $10M funded Youth Opportunity AmeriCorps partnership between CNCS and OJJDP to leverage the power of national service and support youth at all stages in the system. As an AmeriCorps member, youth receive an education award to use for training, community college, or other higher education. Research shows that those who serve have a higher likelihood of employment and tracking the indicators is an important task. The power of community helps bring people to work amongst their peers. Ms. Bradley acknowledged the two young adult guest speakers and emphasized the value of mentorship as an essential component of the program.

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

**Larke Huang, Ph.D.***, Senior Advisor, Children and Youth Office of the Administrator,* began her remarks with a request to Ms. Ague, for a copy of the National Academy of Sciences report—after translation into plain language. SAMHSA supports AG Holder and the Reentry Council in reducing juvenile recidivism through various policy and grant making and Dr. Huang listed many activities taking place:

* A major HHS effort is to analyze the connection between criminal/juvenile justice individuals and opportunities through health reform while youth are incarcerated, and to provide them with immediate services upon their release.
* SAMHSA has a Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative because of the high rates of mental health issues involved within the criminal justice system.
* ASPI and the Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS) recently developed a reentry myth buster on Medicaid eligibility for confined youth.
* HHS also coordinates the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (a collaboration of 18 federal departments and agencies on behalf of youth ages 10-24) and participates in the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention.
* SAMHSA coordinates policy initiatives with the Attorney General’s Defending Childhood Initiative and his Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence, and implements some of the recommendations. They connected OJJDP with SAMHSA’s National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, the major grant program that analyzes age groups of children exposed to trauma across service sectors, and have invited OJJDP Administrator Robert Listenbee to serve as their 2014 grant program plenary speaker.
* They also convened the Dialogue on Youth and Justice for justice-involved youth of color with behavioral health issues in collaboration with the International Association of Chiefs of Police and other community leaders.
* Partnering with Dr. Laurie Garduque of the MacArthur Foundation, they held four policy academies addressing diversion: two focused on state juvenile justice systems reform where 11 states participated, and two focused on tribal youth academies.
* There are four grant programs with one specifically on juvenile justice drug courts providing funds for drug/alcohol treatment. The three other youth programs are not specifically juvenile justice-focused, but have a major impact on their Children’s Mental Health Initiative, funded at $100M, where 28% of the youth coming into the program are justice-involved. On the adolescent substance abuse treatment side, about 70% of youth for those programs are juvenile justice, or juvenile justice referred.
* Future initiatives include funding for another policy academy—possibly on juvenile reentry—in conjunction with the MacArthur Foundation, and translating the CSG Reentry and Employment White Paper for youth offenders into action in their grant programs.
* Finally, they collaborated with administrators from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families and CMS to submit to the states a “Try” Director Letter that addresses the definition and the implications of complex trauma for young people.

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

**Linda Elam, Ph.D.***, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Disability, Aging and Long-Term Care Policy,* substituted today for Ajay Chaudry (*Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Human Services Policy*). As a former Medicaid director, she spoke to the importance of Medicaid for this population and reiterated the great interest in Medicaid that the Affordable Care Act stimulated for adult and juvenile justice reentrants. The best intervention is prevention – providing early services to children when encountering disciplinary problems in school, before their involvement in the juvenile justice systems. Dr. Elam also communicated HHS involvement in the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, an interagency initiative designed to share information and build local capacity to prevent and reduce youth violence.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

**Audrey Rowe***, Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service,* cautioned attendees that today’s 4-H Program does not resemble your mother’s program. Much of their work at USDA involves identifying how to better provide training, education, and opportunity for young people. She referenced their after-school National Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk [Military Partnership] Program (CYFAR) which is training many youth in the culinary arts. The program provides young people with basic skills that are usable at home and in their future employment endeavors. Ms. Rowe invited Lisa Lauxman to continue the discussion.

**Lisa Lauxman,** *Director, Youth Development, CYFAR Coordinator, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA,* calls USDA the “people’s agency” because they touch people every day and in every way. Ms. Lauxman represents the Department’s Cooperative Extension Program where the 4-H Program resides and relayed the presence of a 4-H club in a juvenile detention center since 1988. In its 24 years of existence, the center saw more than 2,000 teenage youth pledge the organization’s motto to “Make the Best Better” during troubled times in their lives. Upon release from incarceration, youth participants leave with connections to a positive youth development program that will embrace their continued voluntary involvement. The program can be found in 131 counties across the country and territories.

**U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)**

**Richard Morris**, *Office of Youth Services, Employment and Training Administration (ETA)*, indicated his department works daily with DOJ and other agencies on the Federal Interagency Reentry Council to reduce barriers to employment for those with past involvement in justice systems, so they can compete for work opportunities and provide for themselves and their families, pay their taxes, and contribute to the economy. ETA’s Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (RExO) grants have supported successful efforts to reduce recidivism and improve the workforce outcomes for juvenile justice-involved youth and adults. Since 2009, DOL has funded over $400M in grants and served 9,000 individuals in this regard. In June 2014, the Department announced $44M for its Face Forward Initiative #2. This second round of the program targets youth ages 14-24 and is designed to improve participants’ success by combining the most promising workforce and juvenile justice strategies. DOL expects to help youth shed the stigma of juvenile records through the use of diversion and record expungement strategies.

This fall the U.S. Departments of Labor and Defense, and the National Guard Bureau, will pilot their highly successful Youth ChalleNGe Model (NG denotes the National Guard) with youth population, especially those involved with the juvenile justice system. ETA anticipates adding an additional five-month job-training component to this model to assist participants in gaining marketable skills. All RExO programs incorporate mentoring, job training in demand sectors, education, legal aid services, and other comprehensive wrap-around services. RExO grants also target high poverty and crime areas and several grantees are located in areas designated as Promise Zones by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Promise Zones build robust partnerships with businesses to create jobs, increase economic security, expand educational opportunities, increase access to quality and affordable housing, and improve public safety.

The DOL Chief Evaluation Office recently published a 60-day notice regarding opportunities for a youth demonstration/evaluation participant tracking system, and expects comments by September 22, 2014. Finally, DOL Secretary Tom Perez will join AG Eric Holder to announce the availability of $5M to fund ten (10) satellite American job centers, residing “behind the fence” in confined facilities. The Department eagerly anticipates future opportunities with OJJDP and other federal agencies.

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

**Maria-Lana Queen***, Housing Revitalization Specialist,* mentioned that HUD published a myth buster, through the efforts of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council, to clarify ex-offender eligible housing opportunities for young adults and youth in transition. HUD is an agency that is friendly to ex-offenders, family reunification, fathers, etc. and is also focusing on youth transitioning into adulthood. HUD has 3,200 public housing authorities around the country, housing thousands of families through public housing and/or Housing Choice Voucher households (Section 8). They are constantly providing tools, resources, and technical assistance to better equip agencies serving a vulnerable youth population. That has included efforts with each agency, such as workforce development and broadband accessibility to communities. Housing authorities are the foundation for reaching this population and she encouraged everyone to contact HUD with ideas to improve coordination of tools and facilities for youth returning to society, and those living in poverty.

**Michigan Department of Human Services**

**Maura Corrigan**, *Director [former Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court]*, explained that Michigan found a way to triple the available funds for juvenile justice reentry by coordinating with their State Vocational Rehabilitation team to address the mental health and learning disability issues impacting juvenile justice youth. They have also partnered with their state Department of Community Health to create a mental health protocol for every youth in residential placement. The goal is to marshal resources as effectively as possible, but sustainability remains the problem when seeking federal grants. Their hope is to cut across the current silos, using a small amount of federal funds, to achieve ongoing funding of juvenile justice reentry issues.

**Alameda County Superior Court, California**

**Trina Thompson**, *Immediate Past Presiding Judge*, opened with the statement that reentry is always a challenge. She mentioned programs in Alameda County that have facilitated reentry through what might be deemed an unnatural partnership … with their fire departments at the city and county level for Alameda and Oakland. The decision was made to work with traumatized youth—initially victims of crimes who subsequently became crime perpetrators themselves—and train them as first responders. The rationale was that these youth might be extraordinarily sensitive to people needing help, especially from crimes. Following an initial introduction into a leadership corps, the youth were transitioned first into EMS then EMT training, and finally enrolled in first-year training into the fire academy. There is an upcoming documentary titled “In the Red” which traces the evolution of these youth, many of whom became tremendous first responders, even successfully completing their first academy.

Equally exciting was the unexpected synergy and partnership that has developed between these youth working side by side with firefighters and the community, and operating in the role of wounded healers. Judge Thompson asserts that youth want to reenter the community, seeing themselves as viable participants and enjoying intergenerational relationships with people of different ages who can guide them in becoming strong members of society. However, after three years of training, it was very discouraging to realize that their felony convictions prohibited matriculation into the fire department. So it was time to think outside the box and find alternative careers where they can utilize those EMT skills, such as football coaches.

Cloud technology is also being viewed as an option to enable children to stay current in their educational studies, based from their originating home schools where they will reenter. Youth Alive and the California Endowment partnered with Drexel University to conduct a formal study about trauma in the community and to identify the specific community resources that would best assist young people. Youth were apparently not utilizing medical services in a normal way so the emergency room became an engagement vehicle, along with information cards detailing community services, self-care, and dealing with complex trauma.

**Massachusetts Trial Court**

**Gordon A. Martin, Jr.**, *Associate Justice [retired]*, responded that juvenile sentences should be short and should have close supervision. Massachusetts has a nonprofit tennis and literacy program called Tenacity that serves over 5,000 Boston students each summer with half- and full-day programs in 27 different camps around the city. This proximity facilitates supervision in the children’s home neighborhoods.

**Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center**

**Michael Thompson**, *Director*, announced the testing of checklists to help state policy makers assess their progress against the ideas posited in the white paper. They will pilot the use of the checklists in a number of states (including Kansas, Nebraska, and Utah) and they will test how states actually measure recidivism (in Pennsylvania, Nebraska, and Tennessee). Mr. Thompson also echoed the sentiments of other Council members to make materials more youth-friendly.

Three years ago, the CSG Justice Center walked the Council through their findings from the Texas study that captivated national attention. Another exciting study of similar magnitude and impact tracks 500,000 Texas youth. Since 2007, Texas has reduced the number of confined youth from 5,000 to current levels of 1,000, representing an 80% reduction. Nancy Arrigona, *SAMHSA, HHS*, has been the lead researcher from his team on this project and the study findings will be released this December. Mr. Thompson expressed thanks to OJJDP and the Pew Charitable Trusts for making this latest study possible.

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** [written announcement]

* The first nationally representative data on sexual orientation was released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the 2013 National Health Interview Survey: a National Health Statistics Report on the sexual health and orientation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) populations. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr077.pdf>
* The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (the Forum) published America’s Young Adults: Special Issue, 2014. Comprised of 22 federal agencies, the Forum highlighted data trends and snapshots of the education, health, and well-being of young adults ages 18-24, as they transition to adulthood. <http://childstats.gov> and <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/index.html>
* New online courses for teen pregnancy prevention programs were released by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Family and Youth Services Bureau for reproductive health educators and other youth service workers: Creating a Safe Space for LGBTQ Teens and Adolescent Development. <http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/online-training>
* The ACF Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program released its first report from the Personal Responsibility Education Program Multi-Component Evaluation on States’ Implementation of Evidence-Based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs. The report was based on data collected through telephone interviews with state grantee officials in 44 states and the District of Columbia. <http://teenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov>

**Closing Remarks and Meeting Adjournment**

**Administrator Listenbee** was pleased with the participation and energy of attendees, especially given the different meeting format. He thanked everyone for a highly informative and engaging discussion and promised OJJDP follow up on many of the exciting strategies discussed. He encouraged participants to share thoughts about further collaborations that will draw the attention of the various constituencies to the multitude of resources on juvenile justice reentry that are available for distribution. Mr. Listenbee turned the meeting over to the Council Designated Federal Official Kathi Grasso.

**Ms. Grasso** invited the Council members and Federal staff for a brown bag lunch following the meeting to continue an informal conversation, convening in the Executive Conference room at 12:30 pm. She expressed appreciation for everyone’s contributions to the meeting, with special mention of the following:

* OJJDP staff and contractors – Amy Solomon, Kellie Dressler, Ellen Williams, Shanetta Cutler, Robin Delany-Shabazz;
* The Concentration of Federal Efforts resource team – Marshall Edwards, Joyce Mosso-Stokes, Daryel Dunston, Debbie Jeffers, Francesca Stern;
* OJJDP technology specialists – Juan Sutton, Paul Filiatreault, Andre Roberts;
* OJP administrative and building support services staff – Stephanie Marshall, Martha Jackson; and
* the many OJP/OJJDP colleagues and interns who volunteered their time to make the event a success.

**Meeting adjourned: 12:05 pm**