

**NC Department of Public Safety
Governor's Crime Commission**

**JUVENILE JUSTICE PLANNING COMMITTEE – Funding Priorities
Report September 3, 2020**

1. Raise the Age Implementation

Continued implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act (S.L. 2017-57), otherwise known as “Raise the Age,” requires process changes, program expansion, and infrastructure support to effectively implement the increase in the age of juvenile jurisdiction. In short, the significant influx of 16 and 17-year old’s into the juvenile system has involved dramatically changing the juvenile system’s capacity and approach, and as such all juvenile serving agencies, including local entities, are continually involved in planning and implementing “Raise the Age”.

Locally, solutions range from providing training to law enforcement on working with juveniles to offering crisis and assessment placement solutions as an alternative to detention. The referral and/or provision of services for the emerging adult populations of (1) at-risk youth and (2) juvenile justice involved youth are key to preventing recidivism and further penetration into the court system. Needed intervention strategies within the continuum of services continue to be community specific or require multi-county agreements to accomplish basic, core programming for juveniles.

Programming under this priority is funded with the intended outcomes of reducing juvenile delinquency, providing prevention services including diversion and re-entry programming, reforming secure custody practices by separating juveniles from adults, offering a continuum of services including alternatives to detention, and supporting efforts to build and operate effective prevention programming.

Other programming ideas include:

- Interagency training, conferences and workshops to comply with “Raise the Age”
- Funding to support additional attorneys, social workers, investigators and secretarial services for juvenile public defender offices
- Funding to support juvenile prosecution by providing funds for prosecutors, investigators and clerks for juvenile prosecution offices
- Funding to support multisystemic therapy services for delinquent juvenile

2. School Justice Partnerships

The Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act (S.L. 2017-57), aka “Raise the Age,” requires the creation of School Justice Partnerships across North Carolina. The Governor’s Crime Commission will prioritize grant requests that create safer school environments by creating

more effective alternatives to suspension or the filing of juvenile petitions for minor discipline problems. These practices have been shown to do more harm than good at changing student behavior. Effective alternatives such as Teen Court, crisis and assessment services, academic coaches, school-based community service and restitution, and restorative justice practices could be funded under this priority. In addition, local communities who need support to coordinate the planning process associated with the school justice partnership could be funded under this priority.

3. 2021 Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED), formerly referred to as Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

Students of color are more likely to be disciplined, suspended, and expelled from school as compared to their white counterparts. Similarly, as compared to white youth, youth of color are less likely to be diverted, more likely to be held in secure detention, and are overrepresented at key points throughout the juvenile justice system, as described in the 2019 NC DMC Assessment Study. The Governor’s Crime Commission supports efforts to reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) in the juvenile justice system, previously referred to as Disproportionate Minority Contact – DMC). Moreover, as the “Raise the Age” statute has been implemented in North Carolina, the impact of this legislation on youth of color is still being determined. In keeping with our commitment to reduce racial and ethnic disparities and promote racial equality, grant applications are sought that address these issues. Applicants for funding from the RED/DMC program priority must measure and explain how their project aims to reduce disparities and/or promote racial equity.

4. 2021 Children’s Justice

Funding under this priority is intended for systems change to improve the handling and outcomes of cases of child maltreatment in North Carolina. Programs which may be funded include those which are designed to:

i. Improve Investigative, Administrative, and Judicial Handling of Cases, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim’s family and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused.

A.1. Transform the way children and families who enter the court system are treated, by creating a “trauma-informed” courthouse:

- Support the dissemination of best practices, including procedures to limit the number of people in a courtroom during each hearing.
- Support the creation of family friendly waiting rooms.
 - ✓ Partnership with local libraries to allow books to be checked out
 - ✓ Book donations
 - ✓ Age appropriate toys

- Support training on how a parent’s own trauma history impacts his/her experience with investigative and judicial systems and ability to engage in services.
 - Support trainings on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and resiliency.
- A.2. Support efforts to reduce trauma to children appearing in court proceedings:
- Develop trauma informed tools (video, booklet) to explain court processes and court preparation for the child victim and their adult support persons, including mental health providers.
 - Ensure video testimony technology is easily available throughout the state and provide training for attorneys, judges and clerks on availability and use of video testimony technology.
 - Support training for law enforcement, judges, clerks, and attorneys on issues specific to child testimony including identifying the intellectual, linguistic and emotional maturity of the child and identifying appropriate courtroom modifications for the child.
- A.3. Support improved integration and collaboration between Child Fatality Review Teams, Local Child Fatality Prevention Teams and Community Child Protection Teams, the State Child Fatality Prevention Team and the Child Fatality Task Force.
- A.4. Support efforts to create a culturally responsive court:
- Trainings on how racial, cultural, social, and economic differences may impact a person’s reaction to the court system.
 - Trainings that enhance the ability of law enforcement and court personnel to effectively identify and meet the social, cultural, and linguistic needs of child victims and their families.
 - Ensure sufficient interpreters and translators.
 - Ensure resources and information available to English speaking population is available to non-English speaking population (videos, booklets, forms).
- A.5. Support involvement of law schools and other graduate programs in the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases through:
- Law Clinics that represent parents or children (consistent with G.S. 7B-601),
 - Evaluation of programs and practices, and
 - Publications on practice improvements such as tool kits or concept papers.
- A.6. Identify, support and promote agencies who provide training and classes on recognizing, responding to and reporting child abuse and neglect:
- Training for school personnel including school administrators and School Resource Officers on child abuse signs and symptoms, including signs of maltreatment that may be overlooked and/or explained, and training on mandatory reporting laws.
 - Peer counseling models that include child abuse and neglect signs and symptoms and understanding mandatory reporting laws.
 - Training for likely reporters and responders around special population victims such

as children with disabilities and LGBTQ+ youth.

- A.7. Support statewide efforts of Child Advocacy Centers
- Training, technical assistance and specialization of local CACs
 - Expansion and development of CACs in underserved counties.
- II. Support the efforts of the multidisciplinary workgroup to standardize forensic interviews of children who have been abused or neglected through: 1) Implementation of Forensic Interviewing Standards; 2) Implementation of Statewide Training and Peer Review System; and 3) Growth and Enhancement of CAC's and Local Child Welfare Capacity.
- III. Support of Experimental, Model, or Demonstration Programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure procedural fairness to the accused;**
- B.1. Support the efforts of the Conference of District Attorneys' to provide dedicated staff, training and resources for child abuse and neglect cases.
- B.2. Support efforts to expand the multidisciplinary approach to parent representation in civil abuse, neglect and dependency cases including the use of social workers and parent peer partners as part of the parent attorney's resources.
- B.3. Increase the use of data to improve judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases.
- B.4. Increase the use of technology to increase efficiencies in child abuse and neglect cases:
- Allow service by publication via internet
 - Allow court participation via internet (Skype, WebEx, etc.) for children, therapists, incarcerated parents
 - Allow parties to check upcoming court dates
- IV. Reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children, which may include those children involved in reports of child abuse or neglect with a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, from child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.**
- C.1. Support the creation of a state-wide hotline to report possible child abuse, neglect or trafficking.

- C.2. Continue to support procedures and protocols, to include local administrative orders, which allow the sharing of information between agencies:
- Support the development of technology necessary to allow file sharing between agencies.
 - Support integrated data systems among local courts, child welfare agencies, and other child welfare system stakeholders.
- C.3. Support legislation to mandate the use of the child advocacy centers for sexual abuse and severe physical abuse investigations when available.
- C.4. Support legislation, policies or protocols that address the responsibilities of and participation in court cases involving child abuse and neglect by regional LME/MCOs.
- C.5. Support the creation of a uniform training curriculum for School Resource Officers to include:
- Child abuse signs and symptoms, including signs of maltreatment that may be overlooked and/or explained away.
 - Issues pertinent to special population victims such as children with disabilities and LGBTQ+ youth.
 - Mandatory reporting laws.
- C.6. Support legislation and policies that increase the use of permanency mediation and other dispute resolution techniques in abuse, neglect and dependency cases.
- C.7. Support legislation and other efforts to address NC Tribes' concerns in abuse and neglect cases.