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I. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition that youth involved in the juvenile justice system thrive best when they are in their own homes and communities, supported by those who love them and who have an interest in seeing them grow and develop into responsible adults. While some system-involved youth may benefit from time-limited, out-of-home care to maximize public safety and other positive outcomes, system staff and partners must always be mindful of the impact that residential placement can have on youth’s development and their ability to maintain positive connections to their families and communities.

Systems interested in producing the best outcomes for youth and communities need to pay particular attention to how youth experience residential treatment—including both the length of time they are away from their homes and social supports, as well as the nature and quality of the services and approaches in the programs themselves. During this time, adults caring for young people have the opportunity to help youth disrupt undesired behaviors, establish new pathways of thinking and seeing the world, and develop the types of skills and pro-social support networks that ultimately will help them succeed. Significant consequences can occur if there is a failure to make the most of this time away.

In February 2019, a robust discussion among participants in a Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) message group developed about how different states were studying or modifying length of stay, with many planning to revisit their approaches to these decisions. CJCA reached out to the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) and The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew), and the three organizations consequently asked juvenile justice administrators if there would be interest in supporting system stakeholders exploring length of stay with a series of multi-state convenings, data analysis coaching and other technical assistance. There was a great deal of interest, and to that end, we have developed the Length of Stay Policy Academy. The goal of the Policy Academy is to guide and support teams from state and local jurisdictions to examine and address policies, practices, and other factors contributing to length of stay in post-adjudication placements and to develop strategic plans to improve outcomes for young people in those placements. The Policy Academy will examine key research findings, case studies, and lessons learned from systems across the U.S., and will challenge participants to commit to strengthening their system practices and policies to ensure that every youth receives what is needed to position them for long-term success.

For this program, length of stay refers to the entire time a youth spends out of his or her home in a custodial status after adjudication, residing in detention pending placement, or in a youth correctional facility, residential treatment facility, residential aftercare program, or group home prior to returning home or being released from custody.

The Policy Academy builds on Pew’s commitment to helping states use data-driven and research-informed approaches to solve challenges in juvenile and criminal justice. The program also rests on the decades of experience of CJJR and the CJCA in delivering high-quality training and technical assistance to juvenile justice systems across the country on research-based and data-driven policies and practices to improve outcomes for youth. Through support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, this opportunity is offered free of charge for up to eight participants per jurisdiction selected.
II. Policy Academy Description

The Length of Stay Policy Academy kicks off with an intensive initial gathering March 23-26, 2020, at The Pew Charitable Trusts’ Washington, DC office. The initial program includes 3.5-days of intensive presentation, discussion, and planning for jurisdictions to examine and address factors contributing to length of stay in post-adjudication placement, and strengthen policies and practices affecting length of stay. Participating teams will engage in discussions with researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, and receive guidance from CJJR, CJCA, and Pew throughout the program to develop and execute an Action Plan to advance system-wide improvements in their jurisdictions.

The full Policy Academy participant group will come back together for two subsequent shorter meetings; one during the fall of 2020, and one in the spring of 2021. These subsequent meetings will be used to share lessons learned, address common challenges and interests, focus on strategic communications, and reflect on and discuss ongoing efforts.

For the initial one-year period of support during the Policy Academy, participants will receive distance technical assistance (TA) from CJJR, CJCA, Pew, and relevant subject matter experts to help them implement their plans and projects. TA will help jurisdictions to develop new policies and practices; identify and advance best practice strategies for adopting them; train staff and stakeholders to promote their buy-in and collaboration; and assess, evaluate, and sustain progress.

The Length of Stay Policy Academy seeks to promote a juvenile justice system that is:

- equitable and fair,
- comprehensive, collaborative, and strength-based,
- therapeutic,
- trauma-informed,
- the least-restrictive necessary for the safety of the youth and the community,
- community-based,
- individualized and developmentally appropriate,
- engaged with families and communities, and encourages positive youth and family experiences and outcomes,
- research-based, and predicated on validated assessments,
- data-informed and outcome-driven.

Each of these principles will be woven throughout the curriculum and activities of the program.

III. Pre-Work and Initial Gathering

The engagement of participating jurisdictions will begin with a gap analysis and targeted pre-work and data collection to be completed ahead of the Policy Academy. Pre-work will include activities such as sharing and summarizing the jurisdiction’s statutes governing release authority, as well as identification of areas of need which will be updated after the first program gathering as teams move toward their Action Plans. These activities will allow teams to begin to assess their current policies and practices, identify initial goals for addressing length of stay, and enable the fine-tuning of Policy Academy curriculum to align with the status of participating jurisdictions.
Each module in the initial meeting focuses on practices for youth in post-adjudication custody of the juvenile justice system (i.e., detained pending placement and in residential placement). The curriculum includes the following modules:

**Module 1: Positioning Youth for Success: Addressing Length of Stay**
Juvenile justice system reform efforts have focused on redesigning the system to position youth for the best chance of success by applying evidence-based practices that have been shown to reduce recidivism and increase positive youth outcomes. To do so, system administrators and policymakers need to know answers to questions like, “Do longer lengths of stay affect recidivism?” This module will include experts who will bring such research to the discussion so that participants can consider what it means for their systems as they pursue public safety, accountability, and healthy youth development. Presenters will also introduce the drivers that contribute to length of stay and promising implementation strategies.

**Module 2: Critical Data Collection: Understanding What Drives Length of Stay and Targeted Solutions**
Accurate and adequate data are necessary for understanding how youth enter the juvenile justice system, the factors that keep them in the system, and the factors that can ease or delay their departure from the system. These data are critical to shaping policies and practices that focus on maximizing a youth’s time while involved with the system while diminishing the negative impacts of prolonged exposure to the system. This module will use jurisdictional case studies to address:

- Identifying and defining baseline measures for length of stay.
- The importance of gathering demographic data to measure and track potential disparities in the system and the potential unintended consequences of system reform, including juvenile transfers to the adult system and increasing racial and ethnic disparities.
- Developing system performance measures to alert system leadership about progress made and areas requiring more intensive attention.
- Methods for reporting and sharing data with system stakeholders to highlight system successes as well as the continued need for support and resources.

**Module 3: Opportunities and Anticipated Challenges in Leading a System Improvement Effort on Length of Stay**
This session will be an interactive, facilitated conversation among participants, where each participating team can discuss individual jurisdictional drivers, surface potential issues, and begin a discussion about buy-in for its Action Plan. This conversation will continue on the final day of the program, concluding in an interactive session on steps needed to operationalize the changes teams envision.

**Module 4: Controlling Length of Stay at the Point of Entry: Who Stays at All, and How Do Agencies Decide?**
Many juvenile justice agencies with custodial responsibilities for youth have the authority to decide when youth may be released. Some agencies begin to exercise this authority at the time of youths’ arrival, determining at intake or after assessment whether some youth are more appropriately served in community-based care. During this session, leaders from two jurisdictions will share their agencies’ approaches to using their release authority to determine which committed youth need to stay in placement and which they will serve in other settings.
Module 5: Using Assessment Tools and Processes to Drive Post-Disposition Decision-Making
The use of reliable and valid assessment instruments is vital for the juvenile justice system to serve youth appropriately and achieve positive outcomes. This module will highlight the importance of risk and needs assessments, individualized treatment planning and coordination of care, and the matching of youth to services that address their risk and needs. Additionally, participants will discuss the importance of eliminating delays and tracking timely completion of assessments and treatment plans to avoid unnecessarily lengthening stays. This module will also address the challenges associated with the proper use of assessment tools to connect youth to appropriate services and treatment modalities while in placement and examine how decision-making tools can impact the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system.

Module 6: Effective Programming and Treatment Services
To successfully respond to youth at the highest risk of recidivating, an array of services and placement options must be available to meet youth’s varied needs both while in post-adjudication residential placement and to support timely return to the community. To this end, this module will address:
- Appropriate dosage and scheduling that balance developmental needs with targeted recidivism reduction.
- The roles and responsibilities of facility staff and treatment staff in helping youth successfully meet their treatment requirements.
- Factors to determine what portion of the youth’s treatment plan can safely take place in the community, rather than requiring the youth to remain in placement to complete treatment prior to release.
- Continuity of treatment and aftercare upon return to the community.
- Engaging youth, families, and communities at the facility to enhance programming and support re-entry.

Module 7: Effective Behavior Motivation Approaches at the Facility
How facility staff incentivize and respond to youth behavior can significantly impact the way that youth experience the program, including their length of stay and ongoing access to important treatment and programming. To this end, it is essential that staff implement strength-based approaches to behavior motivation, all within an environment that is conducive to positive youth development. This session will highlight:
- Core principles of effective behavior motivation and how responses to youth behavior can extend length of stay.
- Facility-based policies and programs designed to motivate positive behavior, including points and levels systems that feature incentives, mastery of skills, and ongoing recognition of desired behavior.
- Disciplinary responses to negative behavior that are fair, timely, consistent, and incorporate skill-building and restorative approaches.
- Strategies designed to understand and address the root causes of youth behavior (e.g., behavioral assessments and support plans) and incorporate trauma-informed practices.
- Avoidance of practices (e.g., disciplinary room confinement, use of fixed restraints and chemical agents) that cause harm, lengthen stay, and negatively impact staff-youth relationships, especially for certain populations of youth (e.g., youth of color, youth with mental health disabilities, LGBTQI and gender non-conforming youth).
Module 8: Supporting Youth Reentry: Focus on Family and Community Readiness and Cross-System Collaboration

Continued support during transition out of post-adjudication residential placement, and upon return to the community, is crucial to long-term success. Accordingly, this module will address:

- Developing timely and comprehensive reentry planning for youth returning from placement.
- Engaging families throughout the reentry process.
- Providing continued supports once a youth is released from custody via a supervision model that prioritizes engagement and permanency, and incentivizes positive behavior.
- Engaging system partners to support youth and families (e.g., child welfare, education, behavioral health).
- Building a continuum of community-based services and programs to support appropriate and timely release.
- Incentivizing and supporting community providers to serve youth effectively.

Module 9: Leading a System Improvement Effort on Length of Stay

This moderated panel session will highlight case studies from two jurisdictions that have successfully reduced length of stay, along with lessons learned. The interactive discussion will focus on key components of leading culture change, including messaging to staff and stakeholders, giving staff necessary tools and supports to meet new expectations, and reinforcing values and principles through clear policy, training, and quality assurance.

Module 10: Operationalizing Impact

Using facilitated group discussion, this module will explore each team’s plan to shape lengths of stay for juvenile justice-involved youth that are designed to achieve positive outcomes, and how the team will monitor efforts to ensure effective practices. This module will also examine approaches for establishing a quality assurance system and a culture that supports continuous quality improvement.

Presenters will include (additional presenters to be added):

- Shay Bilchik, J.D., Director, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform
- Kristi Bunkers, Director of Juvenile Services, South Dakota Department of Corrections
- Susan Burke, Executive Director, The Carey Group; Former Director, Division of Juvenile Justice Services, Utah Department of Human Services
- Kelly Dedel, Ph.D., Juvenile Justice Consultant, One in 37 Research, Inc.
- Mike Dempsey, Executive Director, Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators; Former Director, Division of Youth Services, Indiana Department of Correction
- Monique Marrow, Ph.D., Juvenile Justice Consultant/Trainer, Youth Trauma and Justice Solutions
- Heidi Mueller, Director, Illinois Department of Juvenile Services
- Edward Mulvey, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Director of the Law and Psychiatry Program, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
- Dana Shoenberg, J.D., L.L.M, Senior Manager, Public Safety Performance Project, The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Michael Umpierre, J.D., Deputy Director of Juvenile Justice System Improvement and Communications, Senior Research Fellow, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform
- Yamanda Wright, Ph.D., Senior Data and Policy Specialist, Crime and Justice Institute
III. Action Plan and Later Activities
As a critical part of the Policy Academy, teams will develop an Action Plan laying out what they hope to accomplish through participation in the training and technical assistance package, and what aspects of the length of stay in their systems they seek to tackle. The Action Plan should be a detailed, concrete proposal that each team will have dedicated planning time to develop and refine throughout the initial gathering, and then finalize once they return home. Participants will receive facilitated support from Policy Academy presenters and partners during Policy Academy gatherings as well as through remote technical assistance that will include conference calls with both individual teams and the cohort as a whole, ongoing individual distance consultation with subject matter experts, and webinars on topics of interest.

Each team should identify a point of contact and assign a coordinator (this may be the same person) to help organize the work and keep the team on track. It is our expectation that this role may constitute as much as 25% of an FTE for a mid-level manager.

As noted above, in order to finalize their Action Plans, participants will refine the strategic plan created at the end of the Policy Academy once they return to their communities. A one- to two-page Action Plan Summary is due approximately one month after the Policy Academy. The final Action Plan outlining key deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties (5-8 pages) is due approximately three months after the Policy Academy. While support for the Action Plan will occur over one year, the jurisdiction’s transformative activities will likely require an ongoing, iterative process.

The teams will return to Washington, DC for two subsequent gatherings in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, to share notes on progress, develop skills and plans for effective communication about change and direction, and explore supplemental topics relevant to their projects.

IV. Cost for Participation
Through the support of Pew, participant travel, lodging, and meals during meeting times for up to 8 team members, as well as on-site activities, conference venue and materials for three convenings, and one year of distance consultation and technical assistance are provided at no cost.

Note that while funding support for the convenings is only available for up to 8 team members, jurisdictions are permitted to include up to 10 individuals in their teams. If participants wish to bring teams of 9 or 10 individuals, they will be responsible for covering all lodging and travel-related expenses of the additional 1 or 2 members.

V. Selection Criteria
A total of 5 multi-disciplinary teams composed of up to 10 members will be selected for participation in the Policy Academy. Each team must include representatives from the following constituencies:

**Required Team Members** (*please contact us if you have questions or concerns about these categories)*:
- Juvenile Justice Agency director or most senior juvenile justice leader in the jurisdiction
- Clinical/Treatment Director
- Data Manager/Analyst (a senior-level individual with understanding of the jurisdiction’s juvenile justice system activities and current data collection capacity, as well as operational knowledge of data, performance measurement, and quality assurance)
In addition to the required team members, participating jurisdictions may wish to include the representatives listed below.

**Other Potential Team Members:**
- Judge
- Prosecutor/Defense Attorney
- Facility Director
- Facility Principal/Education Leader
- Facility Operations Manager
- Reentry Manager/Transition Planner
- Child Welfare Representative
- Legislative and/or Executive Representative (e.g., Legislator/Legislative Staff, Representative from Governor’s Office/County Executive’s Office)

The Policy Academy will be open to all jurisdictions, but preference will be given to those applicants who compile teams that most directly control decisions regarding release. Similarly, while we welcome both state and local applicants, or some combination thereof, preference will be given to teams that are in the best position to impact length of stay. While the recommendations detailed above regarding potential team members should guide team composition, the exact composition of the teams, including differences in state and local job titles, will depend on the jurisdiction applying. Further, any significant differences from the guidance provided should be explained clearly within the application. The strength of team composition will also be considered within the context of the goals of the team. Successful applicants will propose teams composed of individuals who hold decision-making authority within their agencies and the ability to influence the successful implementation of the Action Plan.

**VI. Application Guidelines**
Applications will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. on Friday, November 15, 2019 (in the applicant’s local time zone). Applications must be completed online at:

In order to apply to the Policy Academy, you will be required to create a Submittable account. Once you have created an account, you will be asked to provide your Contact Information, Demographic Information, Biography, and Personal Statement. Additionally, if you have been designated to submit essay responses on behalf of your team, you will be prompted to upload your essay responses via Word document. (Each team is asked to submit just one set of essay responses.)

Once you have submitted your application, you should receive an email confirmation within 24 hours. If you do not, please contact us at jjreform@georgetown.edu.

**KEY DATES**

**Application deadline:**
Friday, November 15, 2019
at 11:59 p.m.
(in applicant’s time zone)

**Notification of acceptance:**
Mid-December 2019

**Policy Academy Events:**
- Convening #1
  - March 23-26, 2020
- Convening #2
- Fall 2020 (Dates TBD)
- Convening #3
- Spring 2021 (Dates TBD)
VII. Application

**PART I: Contact Information, Professional Biography, and Personal Statement**
All applicants are asked to provide a short professional biography suitable for sharing with other participants. In addition, each applicant is asked to provide a statement of one paragraph describing the reason that the individual wishes to participate in the program, and the role that the individual expects to have in the jurisdiction’s efforts to address length of stay.

**PART II: Essay Questions**
Teams should prepare one joint submission of the essay questions and designate one team member to upload/submit the completed document. Responses to the essay questions (Part II) must be uploaded as a Word document. While the length of responses to each question may vary, the total length of all essay question responses combined should be no longer than 5 single-spaced pages.

1. What does your team hope to achieve by participating in this Policy Academy? This response should reflect the goals of the entire team rather than individual members. When describing your goals, please provide any relevant data regarding the issues your jurisdiction seeks to address.
2. Please share:
   a. Which organization/agency has legal release authority in your jurisdiction?
   b. Which organizations/agencies have influence over release authority, and how do they influence release?
   c. What types of post-adjudication facilities are used to serve youth in your jurisdiction (i.e., agency-operated vs. contracted, level of security, etc.)?
3. Do you have the ability to collect data on length of stay, including:
   a. Trends in LOS over time
   b. Total LOS per commitment (from disposition to return home, capturing total time away from family)
   c. LOS by placement
   d. Time youth spent awaiting placement
   e. Placement disruptions (ejection from placement, runaways, time outs)
   f. Number and types of placement per commitment
4. Does your jurisdiction have the ability to break down the data in question 3 by committing offense or violation, demographics, geography, and/or risk level?
5. Please describe past or ongoing reform efforts aimed at improving juvenile justice system performance, reducing recidivism, addressing factors that contribute to length of stay, and/or improving outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system that members of your team have undertaken individually and/or collectively at the organizational level. (Note that there should be at least one example from the past two years, and the example should include how these reforms were implemented/sustained.)
6. Please discuss any previous or ongoing reform efforts your team has initiated or participated in that required partnerships with other agencies, systems, community groups, families, or constituents as well as any existing structures that promote ongoing stakeholder collaboration/coordination. To the extent that you have local and state representation on your team, describe how the team will work together to implement the Action Plan at a local level.
7. Please share any efforts/reforms that have been made in the past two years to improve race equity in your jurisdiction, including efforts within your facilities. Include successes and challenges in these efforts, and how you intend to prioritize the advancement of race equity in your efforts to develop your project.
8. Please describe your team composition, specifically including the role and importance of each team member in terms of your team’s overall goals. Please also share if there are other key leaders who are not included on the team, but will need to buy into or support your team’s efforts to impact length of stay in your jurisdiction.

VII. About the Partners

Center for Juvenile Justice Reform
CJJR supports leadership development and advances a balanced, multi-system approach to reducing juvenile delinquency that promotes positive child and youth development, while also holding youth accountable. A central component of CJJR’s work is the provision of dynamic training and technical assistance programs designed to support system officials, partners, and stakeholders at the state, tribal, and local government levels to advance balanced, multi-system approaches to service delivery and system improvement. Housed in one of the most prestigious universities in the country at the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, the Center is in a unique position to provide strong and sustained national leadership in identifying and highlighting the research on policies and practices that work best to reduce delinquency and achieve better outcomes for this nation’s children. To learn more about CJJR’s work, visit http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/.

Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators
The Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) is a national non-profit organization, formed in 1994 to improve local juvenile correctional services, programs and practices so the youths within the systems succeed when they return to the community and to provide national leadership and leadership development for the individuals responsible for the systems. CJCA represents the youth correctional CEOs in 50 states, Puerto Rico and major metropolitan counties. CJCA fulfills its mission through educational activities and programs as well as research and technical assistance projects. To learn more about CJCA, visit http://cjca.net/.

The Pew Charitable Trusts
The Pew Charitable Trusts is a global research and non-profit organization dedicated to improving public policy, informing the public, and invigorating civic life. For more than 12 years, Pew’s public safety performance project has helped states advance data-driven, fiscally sound policies and practices in the criminal and juvenile justice systems that protect public safety, ensure accountability, and control costs. To learn more about the project, visit pewtrusts.org/publicsafety.