

October 2021

## Youth Justice Practitioners and Reform Advocates Gather in Nashville, Tennessee for National Symposium

On September 8-10, 2021, in the heart of downtown Nashville, the RFK National Resource Center hosted the Transformation of Youth Justice Symposium and Training Institutes for over 300 multi-disciplinary professionals and youth-serving stakeholders representing more than 30 states. The three-day event which was co-sponsored by the State Justice Institute (SJI) included 25

workshops, 5 plenaries, and 6 Training Institutes, providing participants with research-based and evidence-informed practical reforms that can be replicated and applied within state and local jurisdictions.



The event emphasized the importance of peer-to-peer learning and collaboration to identify common challenges and solutions that lead to meaningful, sustainable and measurable policy and practice change. Several presenters from local and state jurisdictions highlighted successful and replicable actions, approaches, policies, and procedures that support advancing improved outcomes for our nation's youth and families.



Chyrl Jones, Acting Administrator for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, offered [virtual remarks](#) on September 8 stating "I am confident you will leave this event with a clearer understanding of how to inspire hope and provoke

change within your jurisdictions so that every child has the opportunity to realize the kind of future that we dream about for our own children."

The Symposium and Training Institutes could not have been possible without the unwavering support of our partners, presenters, and volunteers and, most importantly, the participants and their dedication and commitment to improving outcomes for all children and young people.

Stay tuned to learn more about future RFK National Resource Center [events](#).

### Testimonials from Participants

*"Every session was valuable, all of the presenters were amazing. I truly enjoyed all of the knowledge I gained, but more so being surrounded by so many others who want to see positive change for children."*

*"The information was relevant, timely and useful. I received some excellent technical advice and motivational support."*

*"I most appreciated the opportunity to network with professionals genuinely committed to working with youth in a way that aligns with research-based best practices."*

## Partnerships between RFK National Resource Center and YOU

We are always excited to celebrate the opportunity to continue to promote positive outcomes for youth and families by partnering with you in your jurisdictions. The work that is being contemplated and initiated in the following jurisdictions demonstrates the commitment on the part of these professionals to accept the challenge to make a more fair, developmentally appropriate, and research-driven system to support the futures of youth and

## Innovation Center for Youth Justice at JMU



On September 9, 2021 at the Transformation of Youth Justice Symposium in Nashville, the RFK National Resource Center and James Madison University announced the creation of the Innovation Center for Youth Justice. Consistent with the mission to prepare students to lead positive change and innovation, and who are provoked to be dynamically engaged in human services and social sciences across national and international borders, this unique, one-of-a-kind, Innovation Center will feature national and international field-based practice and policy innovation; a ground-breaking, new undergraduate minor degree program; partnerships with prominent juvenile justice leaders; and collaborations with renowned researchers and scholars, to advance reforms in the juvenile justice and affiliated youth serving systems.

These pillars of activity will form a unique partnership between our two enterprises to become the home to a center of activity to meet the challenge for engagement and innovation in the positive transformation of youth justice for students, professional practitioners, researchers, and state and national leaders.

The operational principles that will drive the Innovation Center for Youth Justice will include:

- Accountability without criminalization
- Alternatives to justice system involvement
- Individualized response based on risk/needs assessments
- Confinement only when necessary for public safety
- Commitment to fairness and equity
- Awareness of disparate treatment
- Family engagement

Through the ICYJ and our partnership, we will lead innovation and change to positively impact hundreds of thousands of youth through prevention, early intervention, and behavior change approaches within our communities and youth justice system across the country for many years to come.

**Visit Our Online Resource Library!**

children.

- Growth Focused Case Management is now being explored by probation and court leadership in Hancock County, Ohio
- Bifurcated Disposition process is being looked at by Hennepin County, Minnesota as their Probation leadership explores a potential site visit to the Fairfax County, Virginia juvenile court
- Wayne and Saint Clair counties in Michigan are exploring the opportunity to partner with the RFK National Resource Center to conduct Probation System Training and/or technical assistance process
- Interaction with our most highly represented group of colleagues from the state of Idaho to advance their ongoing commitment to improve diversion, probation, and court practices

All of our publications and tools are made available on our website to support jurisdictions undertaking reform, with or without technical assistance. Our Online Resource Library is designed to provide a user-friendly experience for accessing our practical and informative resources, as well as presentations and materials from our events.

To access all of our resources, please visit:  
[rfknrcjj.org/resources](http://rfknrcjj.org/resources)

Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice uses proven models, frameworks, tools, resources, and the best available research to serve local, state, and national leaders, practitioners, and youth-serving agencies to improve system performance and outcomes for youth involved with the juvenile justice system. RFK National Resource Center focuses primarily on youth with prior or current involvement in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (dual status youth), the review and improvement of juvenile probation systems, and the use of a model framework to address the state and national laws and policies governing the exchange and sharing of data, information, and records for youth and families. To learn more about us and how we can serve your jurisdiction, please visit [www.rfknrcjj.org](http://www.rfknrcjj.org).

***Every Child Deserves a Childhood***

Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, an affiliate of Perkins, is a private, non-profit licensed child welfare agency providing community-based services, education, foster care and adoption, residential treatment, and juvenile justice programming to individuals and families in crisis. Our programs are focused on helping children and adolescents deal with past hurts, develop self-esteem, and have a chance for a brighter future as contributing members of society. All that we do at RFK Children's Action Corps is based on the belief that every child deserves the chance to lead a happy, healthy, and productive life. For more information and to get involved, visit [www.rfkchildren.org](http://www.rfkchildren.org).

[LEARN MORE](#)

