



Comments of the National Center for Victims of Crime Regarding the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

1. OJJDP should promote a Positive Youth Development approach in prevention/intervention of juvenile delinquency and juvenile victimization.

In making grants to prevent delinquency, reduce recidivism, and address victimization, OJJDP should promote a Positive Youth Development approach. This approach builds teens' abilities and opportunities to contribute in positive ways in their schools and communities and helps build the resilience of victimized youth by focusing on their strengths and empowerment. Using this approach, OJJDP should support the development and replication of youth-led initiatives, peer education, and youth advisory councils.

2. OJJDP should promote screening of at-risk and delinquent juveniles for victimization history.

Because teen victimization has been linked to an increased risk of perpetration, and teen and child victimization have been linked to substance abuse problems, depression, and poor school performance, at-risk and delinquent juveniles should be screened for prior victimization.

3. OJJDP should promote juvenile access to quality victim assistance services, as well as trauma-informed mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Because screening for victimization is only effective when responsive services are provided, OJJDP should promote broad access to victim services and trauma-informed care for juveniles.

4. OJJDP and the Administration should convene a task force on victims of juvenile offenders.

We urge the new Administration to convene a task force on victims of juvenile offenders to identify points in the juvenile justice system where victims can be more fully included. The task force should work to balance the rehabilitative mission of juvenile justice and the dignity of adjudicated youth with the dignity, safety, and restoration of the victims of their crimes. Such a task force should include representatives of victims' rights groups, juvenile courts, advocates for adjudicated youth, and other stakeholders.

5. OJJDP should promote the use of victim advocates for victims of crime within juvenile detention facilities.

Because of the continued occurrence of sexual and physical violence, as well as other criminal acts, within juvenile detention facilities, facilities should revise incident response protocols to include the involvement of a trained victim advocate to provide



support, safety planning, and options counseling to victims of crimes occurring within those facilities.

6. OJJDP should promote safety assessment and planning as part of re-entry preparations for juveniles leaving custody.

Because of the risks of family and community violence facing many incarcerated youth upon re-entry, trained victim advocates should be involved in conducting safety assessment and planning for youth leaving custody or transferring between facilities.