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**Communities of Color Partnership:  
*A Collaborative Case Management Approach  
For High Risk Minority Juvenile Justice Youth*  
Process Evaluation Report  
September 25, 2007**

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**Summary**

Multnomah County's Department of Community Justice (DCJ) continues to examine the issue of minority overrepresentation of youth in the juvenile justice system, with a particular emphasis on African American

youth. African American youth in DCJ's juvenile justice system have shown concerning increases recently in their representation in the overall system in comparison to their representation in the overall population of Multnomah County youth.

As part of the effort to better understand the services and program offered to minority youth, DCJ has created a research design to evaluate different components of the juvenile justice system to determine the processes, service flow and impact on minority youth. DCJ's Communities of Color Partnership (COCP) program is the first program to be evaluated as part of this research design. COCP is a collaborative approach to case management for high risk minority youth who are probation. Using a model where a team of professionals and community members come together and meet to provide culturally specific and appropriate services, the COCP seeks to help youth succeed on probation and in the community by reducing criminal behavior and keeping youth from being committed to a youth correctional facility.

For this evaluation, key stakeholders for DCJ and for the service provider agencies were interviewed regarding the referral, staffing, intake, service delivery, case review and termination process for youth who participate in COCP. The interview data were analyzed for common themes among participants. A sample of 40 youth served in COCP in fiscal year 2006 was selected for analysis. Demographic and descriptive data were collected to provide an overview of the population served. Additionally, a review of the social files and the JJIS chrono notes provided some family and historical background information for the selected sample of youth.

The sample youth were just over 15 years of age at the time they were admitted to the program and over three quarters were male. They had an average of seven criminal referrals at the time of admittance to the program and on average were just over 12 years of age at the time of their first criminal referral. The social files and chrono notes provided context about youth backgrounds and family history. Approximately two-thirds of the sample had indications of being gang involved or gang affected. Over half had a parent with alcohol or drug issues and 44% had a history of domestic violence. Youth also had substantial indications of parental involvement in the criminal justice system, mental health issues, and past or present DHS involvement. Over 20% of these youth already had children of their own with some youth having more than one child.

Key informant interviews with DCJ staff and agency case managers described the process of referral into the program, the staffing and case review process, service delivery, program termination, program successes and areas for improvement. Youth are referred to the program by DCJ Juvenile Court Counselor (JCC) and are eligible to participate in the program if they are assessed as high risk, on probation and identify with the Latino or African American culture. Each of the two provider agencies, Latino Network and SEI, has either weekly or semimonthly meetings where youth cases are staffed for service needs. Usually in attendance at these meetings are case managers, JCCs, other community service providers, other DCJ treatment services staff, OYA and others who are invested in helping provide services to youth.

There was some variation among DCJ staff and case managers in understanding how case plans are completed and when a case is to be reviewed by the committees. Most interviewees thought the program was providing a much needed service to high risk minority youth and were able to recount multiple successes of the program where youth were able to turn their behavior around and succeed on probation. Interviewees also stressed the importance of having culturally competent services for these youth to really make a difference in their lives. There was praise for the work done by the case managers and their dedication to the youth with whom they are working. Case managers not only provide case management but also serve in a mentor capacity to youth. Often they will assist with transporting youth to appointments

or to pro-social activities. Interviewees mentioned that case managers will also use these opportunities to talk with youth about making good choices and moving their lives in a positive direction.

Interviewees cited communication as an on-going issue for both DCJ staff and case managers; many would like to see improvements in this area. Suggestions included communicating about how often youth are being seen and what types of activities are taking place. Some mentioned, that at times, there have been issues regarding follow-up on the part of the case managers and thought that perhaps clarification of roles and responsibilities would help to alleviate the problem. Almost all of those interviewed mentioned the need for on-going training for the case managers to address the service needs for these youth and how to work with high risk juvenile justice youth.

Recommendations for improvement include the following: implementing a clear collaborative case planning process between JCCs and case managers, developing policy and procedures regarding roles and responsibilities with clear and consistent communication, a consistent case review process and finding ways to meet the additional training needs of case managers.

## I. Introduction

A. Needs Statement: Minority youth continue to be over-represented in involvement in the juvenile justice system compared to their overall representation in the general youth population and as compared to

White youth. Nationally, African American youth account for approximately 16% of the juvenile population but represent between 30% to 40% of youth processed at various decision points in the juvenile justice system. It is even more alarming that of the youth admitted to state adult prison, 58% are African American<sup>1</sup>. Involvement as a youth in the juvenile justice system can often lead to further involvement in the criminal justice system as an adult or incarceration. Studies indicate this is disproportionately true for African Americans and in particular, young African American males. Further, continued involvement in the adult criminal justice system can impact their ability to vote and can lower wage earning potential which has cumulative effects on future generations and communities<sup>2</sup>.

The Communities of Color Partnership (COCP) is a service delivery model designed to utilize best practices by building capacity in the community to provide alternatives to custodial care for youth served by Multnomah County's Department of Community Justice. The Communities of Color Partnership is a collaboration between the juvenile justice system and community providers to work with minority youth who are at high-risk for commitment to the State. The program aims to decrease serious delinquency, to help youth become healthy successful adults and to reduce the rate of minority youth commitments to the State.

B. Program Description: Communities of Color Partnership provides specialized, integrated services and case management for minority youth who have been assessed as "High Risk" by the JCP Risk Assessment. The partnership's purpose is to ensure that each youth receives individualized case management and assessment for services<sup>3</sup>.

The target population includes African American and Latino youth, ages 12-19 years who are on probation through Multnomah County Juvenile Court or committed to OYA for residential/out of home care or on parole in Multnomah County. Two lead agencies in the community provide the administration, service coordination and other managerial assistance. These agencies work closely with DCJ and OYA for a "shared case management" approach.

Youth are referred to the program by their Juvenile Court Counselor and each case is reviewed by the committee composed of treatment providers, Oregon Youth Authority, DCJ treatment services staff, an educational advocate, JCCs, case managers and the COCP lead agency program managers. After cases are accepted for intake, they are assigned a case manager. Cases are reviewed by the committee at weekly or semi-monthly meetings.

Services are provided through a Community Support Network that includes a comprehensive range of culturally competent community-based agencies and treatment providers. These programs provide educational and vocational services, counseling, mental health and addiction treatment, mentoring and other services in a culturally appropriate setting designed to strengthen a youth's pro-social connections to the community and maximize his or her community supports. Youth are assigned to a case manager who assists with connecting the youth to tutoring, family counseling or other relevant services as needed to help the youth be successful on probation or parole.

## II. Evaluation Strategy

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<sup>1</sup> National Council on Crime and Delinquency. (2007). *And Justice for Some: Differential Treatment of Youth of Color in the Justice System*. Oakland, CA. pg. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Mauer, M. (1999). *The Crisis of the Young African American Male and the Criminal Justice System*, The Sentencing Project, Prepared for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights April 15-16, 1999. Washington DC. p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Program Description information obtained from DCJ's website: <http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/dcj/jdsdgdangresources.shtml#communities>

This primary focus of this evaluation was on the operational process of the program and to document client flow of the Communities of Color Partnership (COCP) program. Informant interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including DCJ management, Juvenile Court Counselors, lead agency staff and case managers. Data from juvenile social files and chrono notes in JJIS were collected, coded and entered for analyses. These data provided some family and social history context for the youth in our evaluation sample. Analyses included basic social and criminal descriptives of the target population.

### III. Sample

#### Target Population Served

For the purposes of this report, when doing comparisons between the youth served by the two agency groups, youth will be referred to by the agency from which services were received. The majority of youth served by Latino Network are Latino and the majority of youth served by SEI are African American. However, there have been cases where an African American/Multi-Cultural youth was served through Latino Network because they associated or identified more with Latino culture.

A random sample of twenty youth served by each agency and who were admitted to COCP in Fiscal Year 2006, for a total of 40 youth, were selected for this evaluation. Latino Network provides oversight and case management services for youth who identify with Latino culture and SEI, Inc. is the administrative agency for case managers who serve youth who identify with African American culture. SEI also employs a youth tracker who assists with tracking youth and resource development.

Table 1 below provides demographic and descriptive data for the entire evaluation sample as well as by agency.

**Table 1. Target Population Served**

	All Youth (n=40)		SEI (n=20)		Latino Network (n=20)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	9	23%	4	20%	5	25%
Male	31	77%	16	80%	15	75%
<b>Average Age of First Criminal Referral</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>
	40	12.70	20	12.15	20	13.25
<b>Average Age at Admittance</b>	40	15.69	20	15.47	20	15.90
<b>Average Number Criminal Referrals prior to Admittance</b>	40	7.03	20	8.65	20	5.40

This sample of youth was just over three-quarters male, had an average age close to 16 years of age and an average of seven criminal referrals at the time of admittance to the program. The average age of first criminal referral was almost 13 years of age. A notable difference is that SEI youth, on average, had their first criminal referral at a younger age and had a higher number of criminal referrals prior to admit to COCP

as compared to Latino Network youth. At the time of admit to the program, 55% of Latino Network youth had four or more total criminal referrals compared 90% of SEI youth.

The overall average length of stay in the program was 298 days with a range of a minimum of 28 days and a maximum of 602 days. Latino Network youth had an average length of stay of 330 days. The average length of stay for SEI youth was about two months shorter at 269 days. Thirty-one percent of the youth who had exited the program were open for more than a year.

### **Social File and Chrono Data Analysis**

JJIS chrono notes were reviewed for all 40 youth in the evaluation sample and the social files for 39 youth were reviewed for data regarding a youth's family background and history. One youth social file could not be located. Table 2 provides the results of this data collection. A copy of the data collection form used for collecting data from the social files can be found in Appendix A.

The data in the table reflect only data that Research staff were able to confirm either through the JJIS chrono notes or from the social file. However, the actual prevalence of youth within these different categories could be higher as social files and chronos vary in terms of quality and completeness of information. These data are meant to provide a general overview of the family and youth history and backgrounds. Youth inclusion in any of these categories is an indication that at some point during the youth's involvement in juvenile justice the item was positively endorsed in the file or chrono.

- The social file and chrono review provided confirmation that 67% of the youth in the sample were gang involved or gang-affected.
- There were fifteen youth (38%) who had at least one parent involved in the criminal justice system.
- Seven of those youth (18% of the sample) had confirmation that both parents were or had been involved with the criminal justice system.
- Over 50% of the youth had indications of a parent with alcohol or drug use issues.
- 44% of the youth in the sample had a family history of domestic violence.
- Of the 12 youth with an indication of the father living in the home, 11 were Latino Network youth.
- There were 15 youth with indications of mental health issues. Of these, 10 were SEI youth.
- Of the 16 youth with indications of past or present DHS involvement, 12 were youth served by SEI.
- Over 20% of the youth already had children of their own with some youth having more than one child.

The social file and chrono review reveal that the youth served through COCP have family histories and backgrounds that have contributed to their high risk status as a juvenile offender and provides strong argument for youth in need of multiple services and programming.

**Table 2. Youth Social File and JJIS Chrono Review**

**Social File and Chrono Notes Review**

**COCP Youth**

	n	%
Youth gang involved or gang affected	26	67%
Youth history of running away	20	51%
Youth history of mental health issues	15	39%
Parent involvement in criminal justice system (past or present)	15	39%
Parent currently in prison or jail	4	10%
Parent history of drug or alcohol use	20	51%
Family history of domestic violence	17	44%
Family history of sexual abuse	3	8%
Family history of child abuse	12	31%
DHS involvement with family (past or present)	16	41%
Parent employed (past or present)	24	62%
Parent or guardian physically or mentally disabled	8	21%
Youth has siblings	36	92%
Siblings involved in the criminal justice system	13	33%
Stable living environment (not moving often, few evictions)	24	62%
Biological father living in home	12	31%
Stepfather living in home	9	23%
Parents don't speak English	16	41%
Youth has expressed thoughts or attempts of suicide	8	21%
Females who have been pregnant	2	5%
Youth is a parent	8	21%

#### IV. COCP Process and Client Flow

##### Key Informant Interviews: DCJ Staff

Key informant interviews were conducted with the two DCJ Community Justice Managers responsible for overseeing COCP and with eight Juvenile Court Counselors (JCC) regarding the process of referral, intake and case management of youth in COCP. The JCCs selected for interviews were selected due to their experience with COCP youth. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed for themes. A primary focus of the interviews was to gain a better understanding of the overall process for the COCP. A secondary focus was to learn about what was working well and where improvements could be made. A list of interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

Overall, everyone interviewed provided a similar description of the process of referral, intake, review and termination for the program. The process is depicted in Figure 5 below.

##### *Referral and Staffing Process*

The referral process is initiated by the JCC who submits a referral to the DCJ Program Manager for review. The DCJ Program Manager will ensure the youth is placed on the agenda for staffing by the COCP Committee. For the SEI staffing process, the youth will attend and JCCs will also try to have a parent or family member present. The Latino Network intake process does not include the youth or the parent. Opinions varied about having the youth and the parent involved in the intake process.

Several of those interviewed reported that it was beneficial to have the youth and parent involved in the process. In addition, they believed that it helped youth and families to understand that there were people there who wanted to help with services or support. JCCs prepped the youth and the families about the process beforehand so they would have an idea of what the process would be like. Listed below are some of the comments regarding the staffing process.

*Most of them are very happy...I think a lot of parents are like, "Wow, I felt like I was by myself and I can't believe there all are these people who want to help us."*

*...the mother was very proud of her son, that he did not lose it, that he didn't lose his temper,... he held it together. So it was actually good, she could see him in a more positive light that she didn't see him in before.*

*...we try and get the parent on board and say right from the beginning that it's a team effort. We find it more useful and you get the kid's buy-in.*

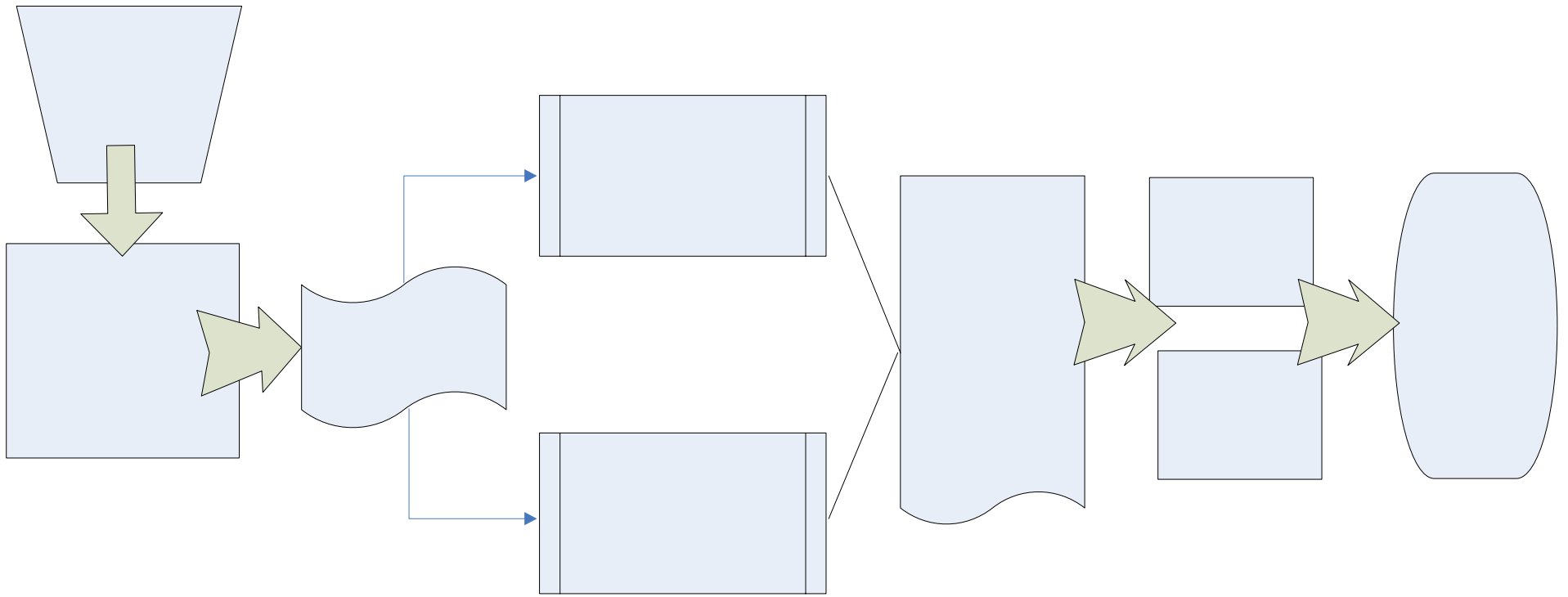
*I think they feel great when they walk out because they have all these services that they think may happen, and I think that's what's the highlight about it, because you hear all the positives and then you got all the culturally specific people around the table.*

This belief was not shared by others who commented that the situation was uncomfortable and intimidating for the youth and the family. They also mentioned that not having the youth and family present allowed the group to more freely discuss the needs and history of the family. The comments below reflect some of the other interviewee's responses about the staffing process.

*"It's a meeting where the youth and family meet at one end of the table, and there's a very loooooong, extended intimidating group of people at a large table, a room full of strangers,...the majority of the people they don't know and they're talking about them...And how intimidating and shameful, I think, to be plopped into a room full of strangers and talk nice"*

*"...there's a lot of feeling bad and then trying to make them speak in front of a group people they don't even know and then they have to hear things that they are uncomfortable with themselves and to have other people hear those things."*

Figure 5. COCP Service Flow



JCC makes  
referral to the  
program

*"...we're [the Concilio] able to really openly talk about everything, all the issues, negative, positive, whatever, and then we can take it as a smaller unit to the family, and say this what we've assigned this person, here's what we want to work with."*

The staffing process includes the following: a review of the youth's Court Report, JCC case discussion and identification of needed services or assessments, case manager assignment, identification of responsible parties for carrying out case plan objectives and coordinating contact information. Several of those interviewed mentioned they would like written documentation of what is decided at the staffing meeting, particularly given the volume of discussion at these meetings.

### ***Case Planning***

Understanding of the case planning process varied quite a bit among those interviewed. Most JCCs reported that a case plan was supposed to be developed as part of the process, however, how that happened and who was responsible for it happening was unclear. Some interviewees reported sharing their probation case plan with the COC case managers. Others indicated it was something worked on with the COC case manager or that it was the case manager who was responsible for putting together a case plan. Most JCCs reported not receiving a copy of a COC case manager case plan and some questioned whether or not case plans were completed. Selected comments regarding the case plan process are quoted below.

*"...within 30 days the case manager and the JCC have to write up a [case plan]..Before, {agency} had a case plan, we had a case plan and it was too confusing for the kid and family. I asked {agency} to dump their case plan and use our case plan. So the problem is that the Counselors and the case managers aren't getting together as much as they should."*

*"I've usually done a case plan for my kids...I will sit down and tell the case manager what the goals that I have, the kid has for himself, the parents have, the court has and sort of combine those two case plans together."*

*"The mentor/case manager and the JCCs are supposed to sit down and do the case plan. That has never happened...even though I've asked sometimes and it never did happen."*

The service contract for the COCP agencies indicates that within 90 days of intake the case managers will work with JCCs to "create a strength-based, culturally appropriate case plan that contains measurable objectives and activities designed to achieve those outcomes." The format is to be the same as the one used by the department's JCCs. Site visits recently conducted with both provider agencies revealed that one agency did not have any case plans in their files and the other agency did have some case plans in their files although most were in an inconsistent format.

### ***Services Provided***

Both agencies subcontract case managers for COCP; SEI also employs a tracker. According to those interviewed, case managers also often play a mentor role as well for youth. The tracker is someone who can help locate a hard to find youth or will also just check in with a youth on a routine basis. One of the goals of the COCP is to provide assistance, support and services to minority youth that are culturally competent and appropriate. Most interviewees mentioned that the services listed were done within the context of being culturally appropriate to youth being served. Case management services for COCP youth might include any of the following:

- Educational advocacy
- Psychological Evaluation or Alcohol & Drug Assessment
- Assistance with obtaining a job
- Assistance and support for attending Alcohol & Drug Treatment
- Transportation to appointments
- Help with paperwork to obtain services
- Mental Health or Family Counseling
- Flex funds assistance for clothing or other vouchers
- Connection to other community resources

Case managers were also mentioned as providing assistance with helping youth maintain school attendance, visiting youth in detention or in shelter care, taking youth to community centers, checking in with the youth by taking them to a meal or out for a haircut and providing on-call support for the youth or the parent when needed. Listed below are examples of interviewees' opinions about services provided by cases managers.

*"To give the kid, to help the family with resources in the community. To be able to connect with the different resources in the community that may not be available to them, or they may not perceive it's available to them."*

*"...can go and have him get the ID to get the job. You know we may pay for the ID but he will actually physically take the kid to the DMV to the ID, or he'll come here or able to meet him somewhere and the case manager will go with him to make sure he's at that meeting."*

*"... if they need some sort of mental health or psychological evaluation done, if they need educational advocacy, or they need to be placed into a youth home...it's really kind of above and beyond what are their basic needs for probation."*

### **Case Review Process**

The service contract for the COCP agencies indicates that cases will be reviewed at least once every 90 days. While case reviews do occur at the SEI and Latino Network meetings, it was unclear from the interviews how and when cases were selected for review. It was mentioned by one interviewee that cases were reviewed by the SEI group every 90 days. Another interviewee mentioned that the Latino Network group reviewed their cases on a monthly basis. Several of the JCCs who were interviewed discussed having attended a review or been notified about a review but were unaware that the review process was to be conducted either monthly or every 90 days.

Reviews are conducted by the case managers. The JCC is notified of the review and is often present. According to interviewees, reviews are done to determine the overall progress of the case, to review professional roles and responsibilities and note what services the youth has received or is still in need of receiving. It was also mentioned that progress reports for SEI youth are now sent to the JCCs on a monthly basis as part of a recently implemented process to improve communication. A few of the interviewees reported recently receiving one or two of these reports. The following quotes were selected from the interviews about the case review process.

*"They set up, they have reviews, I've only had one review for both my kids the whole time since [last] August...I didn't get asked any questions. The case manager talked about what the youth had told him that weekend. He hadn't seen the youth for a month and he never said that, he just talked about how he and the youth were connected."*

*"I think they're occurring about every 2-3 months. Some of that depends on how often the group is meeting."*

*"They do review status every week, so with case managers, we have time at the end of the meeting where they'll take reports from case managers and see where kids are, but actual scheduled reviews...ours is just every meeting they do a kind of review."*

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

A clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the providers and the case managers is essential to the success of the program. Interviewees suggested that clear written definitions of roles and responsibilities are needed. Some JCCs believed it was part of their role to help case managers understand what the JCC expects of them. Others indicated that they would like to have more clarification on what they should expect from the case manager in terms of their involvement with the youth. Additionally, a few people mentioned that case managers might benefit from further clarification about the difference between their role and the role and responsibilities of the JCC. Interviewees also expressed some confusion about whether the role of COCP was to provide a case manager and case management services or a mentor or a combination of both. Interviewee quotes about roles and responsibilities are listed below.

*"I also think they need to also define what they're willing to do. What do they feel like their role is?...So really, I think the roles need to be defined each case and I think flexibility on both sides is key to helping work with the families."*

*"...it's real important that the roles are defined of who does what. And it is really kind of different on each case...I think sometimes it looks great and it's defined and I think sometimes with newer counselors and stuff, it's not as defined."*

*"I think our case managers do an excellent job at being a case manager and not a JCC and establishing a relationship with the kid because they need to get that trust level."*

### ***Culturally Competent Services***

Interviewees were asked how the COCP was providing culturally competent or culturally specific services. Respondents talked about the importance of minority youth connecting with positive minority adult figures, having minority youth receive culturally appropriate assessments or evaluations, connecting youth with culturally specific services in the community and the comfort level that youth and families sometimes have in working with someone who they feel is culturally similar to themselves. The following are interviewee quotes about the impact of culturally competent services.

*"I think big impact is seen in that people of color working with our families and youth in the community. There's also people of color that can do different types of evaluations...I think sometimes mainstream evaluations don't fit our kids."*

*"So I think one of the things that we do really, really good is making sure kids are hooked up with culturally competent services, through the case manager, to the psychological evaluation, whatever our mental health needs are."*

*"...culturally, they know what the family is going through, and sometimes the chaos of the family may be chaos for one person, but it may be normal, culturally speaking, for some people. And I think the case managers understand that..."*

### ***Exit from the Program***

Interviewees were asked to explain their understanding of the criteria for exiting a youth from the program. A common sentiment was that a youth is exited from the program at the time of probation ends or if they are committed to a youth correctional facility. Others mentioned that a youth may also be exited from the program if they are not engaging with the case manager or services. Youth may be exited from the program if they are doing well, have met their program goals or if their risk level has dropped. The comments below are examples of interviewees understanding about the program exit process.

*"I've never had them exited unless they were sent to MacLaren or off probation. Most of the time, the kid's about to get off of probation...I can't really think of a time where they pull out, mostly it's through the duration of his probation."*

*"I think that's still being defined. If the child has been out of contact with the Case Manager for a long time and is quote, stable."*

*"...there is a discussion about termination of that case. For example, all services have been provided, the youth has now perhaps transitioned back to their home, the youth is no longer in needed of service."*

A current concern about the program is the need for a wait list because caseloads are full. Program staff have been having discussions to review the criteria and process for exiting a youth from the program, especially youth who may not be engaging, in order to admit youth who are on the wait list.

### ***Positive Program Aspects***

Interviewees were asked to describe some of the positive aspects of the program. Responses included the following: providing transportation to youth to get an ID or apply for a job, providing after hours support to the youth and family in a time of crisis, or simply that minority youth are receiving culturally relevant and specific services. Other interviewees described particular instances where they felt the program really made a difference with a youth. This included citing specific case managers and how they worked well on different cases.

*"...I've seen kids that were probably on the road to go to the youth correctional facility, get turned around, because they were placed at the youth home, they had the case management piece, they had mental health, drug and alcohol, all these services provided either through the youth home or in their own home, that have successfully completed probation and not ended up at the youth correctional facility."*

*"...I got a young man who's about to go into the job corps and I had a mentor who helped get all the paperwork, helped him get it organized."*

*"I've seen it be successful first hand with my kids...I think there are great benefits to it, and it's culturally specific which is not something we have a lot of. There's not a lot of black programs around that are dealing with our type of youth..."*

### ***Areas for Improvement***

While all interviewees reported positive aspects to the program and most agreed culturally specific services are essential, there were numerous comments about what could be done to improve the program. Four areas for improvements were mentioned consistently by the interviewees. These areas included training for case managers, increased collaboration as defined as better communication, follow through and documentation about contact with youth and improvements to the case plan process. Each area mentioned will be addressed separately.

#### Training for Case Managers

The majority of interviewees indicated that they did not have much information about the training the case managers received prior to working with COCP youth. They were aware some case managers had previous social work experience or experience working with community programs. They also mentioned that some case managers are certified as alcohol or drug counselors. Several interviewees remarked that training about specifically working with high risk juvenile justice youth might be beneficial for the case managers. They believed case managers could also benefit from more training in other areas as well and thought this was especially important for newer case managers.

A couple of interviewees described an all-day training put on as a joint effort with DCJ and the lead agencies was held last fall to go over topics such as identifying alcohol and drug use, mandatory reporting, education programs and advocacy, and overview of gang behavior. One interviewee noted, however, that they had hoped for higher attendance by the case managers. An additional training is being discussed for this fall to review expectations, roles and responsibilities and how to engage youth.

Interviewee quotes about training needs and issues are listed below.

*"...some of the motivational interviewing concept stuff that we're being trained on, I think it would be helpful for people to see this is how we interview kids- this is how...we don't want to just lock them up for every single time- this is how we deal with them."*

*"...they could benefit from some training on how to present in court when they're speaking, that would be helpful."*

*"There are a couple of new workers that...are trying to learn and I think they can use, I'm hearing from them on what they've reported, they can use some help with, "What do I do in this situation when a kid's not responding?"*

#### Communication, Follow-Through and Documentation

Communication between the JCCs and the case managers was often mentioned as an on-going issue. There was some confusion about the expectations regarding communication by the case managers to the JCCs about the level of contact with youth. JCCs talked about how communication typically happens via email, by phone or through face to face meetings but that it varied from case manager to case manager.

Respondents also mentioned that the level of communication between case managers and JCCs seemed dependent on how much of a relationship the case manager had with the JCC.

Interviewees talked about their frustration at a lack of communication and follow-through by some case managers. This lack of communication creates a barrier to JCC knowledge of services the case managers deliver to the youth. One tool to facilitate collaboration and communication has been developed by the JCCs. Some JCCs tell the case managers when they are meeting with the youth in hopes that the youth, the JCC and the case managers will all be present during this meeting. Some case managers do attend these meetings and use them as an avenue for making contact with the youth. However, JCCs mentioned that others repeatedly have not taken advantage of meeting the youth at their office.

To further facilitate collaboration, JCCs would like to see more documentation from the case managers regarding their contact with youth. JCCs suggested more consistent progress reporting which documents the number of contacts, dates of contacts and what services were provided.

The following quotes are indicative of the JCCs frustration regarding the communication and follow-up issues.

*"He says that he can't reach the youth, but I've set up meetings. The kid meets with me at the same time every week..."*

*"I'm really reluctant to refer any more youth because I feel like it's a set up. I bring this youth to a meeting where there's all these people that say they're going to support you and you never see all these people again and they don't even see their mentor again."*

*"...it's more difficult to deal with a case manager than not to have a case manager at all. Because I was tracking the case manager to find out what they were actually doing..."*

*"When they're not doing their part, what message are we sending to the kids? What are we saying? We're telling you we're going to provide this service and we don't do it."*

The system of payment for case managers was mentioned as a possible contributing factor to some of the problems. Case managers are sub-contracted for their services through the provider agency and many also have employment in addition their case management duties for COCP. Case managers are allowed a certain number of billable hours per month and some respondents wondered if this might affect how much a case manager contacts or sees a youth each month. One person believed that case managers can only receive payment for actual contact with a youth which results in a high level of case manager frustration when a youth no-shows; under this system, case managers would not receive any compensation for their efforts. JCCs referenced knowing some case managers were working more hours than they were billing for simply because they loved what they do and they wanted to be there for the youth.

### **Site Visit Interviews with Provider Agency Staff and COCP Case Managers**

Site visits with SEI, Inc. and Latino Network were recently conducted as part of the contract compliance process. These site visits included interviews with four agency administrators, nine case managers and one

youth tracker. They were asked questions similar to the questions asked of DCJ staff about the program process, what was working well and where improvements could be made. A copy of the site visit interviews questions can be located in Appendix C. DCJ staff conducted the site visits and the interviews. While these interviews were not taped, DCJ staff made notes during the interview process and interview results were typed up immediately following the interviews.

### ***Intake, Case Planning, Coordination, Discharge & Aftercare***

It was consistently reported, during site visit interviews, that youth are referred by the JCC and cases are staffed and reviewed at the lead agency committee meetings. There was a lack of consistent understanding regarding case plan development. The majority of respondents cited case plans coming from Judges' orders with input from the JCC. Case Managers and youth in some cases are expected to engage in the case planning process; interviewees did not agree as to frequency of case reviews. Answers included twice a month, every thirty to sixty days, every 45 days and every 90 days. It was agreed that various systems do come together to plan collaboratively and that the reviews are helpful for coordination. There were mixed reactions about how coordination works between agencies; some believed more effort should be made by others and some believed it was important to take the initiative in coordinating with others.

Documentation is another area in which respondents had inconsistent beliefs; some cited documentation as being very important and others said documentation was not a huge focus. It was reported that the length of time in the program varies for each youth, but typically when a youth finishes probation he will be exited from the COCP program. Interviewees also cited lack of engagement in the program as a reason to exit youth however, youth can be accepted back into the program when they are ready. The most common desirable outcome cited in the interviews was no new law violations. Aftercare is seen by the majority of respondents as mostly informal with the over-riding philosophy that the relationship and resources will continue informally in many cases.

### ***Service Delivery***

Interviewees were consistent in describing the Communities of Color program as a community-based case management mentoring service for high-risk youth who are African American and/or Latino. Many reported that services are highly individualized, tied to the juvenile probation requirements and guided by the Juvenile Court Counselor. The Case Managers and Trackers provided numerous examples of the different roles they take with youth and families, such as advocate, mentor, coach, surrogate parent, transporter and crisis contact. Case Managers bring years of experience and skills to the job. They believe their work takes them to the youth's home to work with parents, to the school to work with teachers and to the community to help support and guide youth in a positive direction.

### ***Staff Training***

Case managers were aware that the COCP contract does not factor in training costs and the agencies have limited fiscal resources to devote to Case Manager professional development. It was shared that much of the training is on the job and at workshops or conferences. Case Managers reported that they do not use a curriculum and spoke to the contribution of their knowledge base in delivering services to the youth. There was consensus in the belief that since JCCs refer youth to treatment the need for case managers to be knowledgeable about best practices is reduced. Nevertheless, some Case Managers are very involved in getting to know treatment providers and assessing the programming to which youth are referred.

### ***Program Successes***

Interviewees were asked about what they saw as the successes of the program. Some talked about specific cases when youth were able to turn their behavior around and are now thriving in the community. Provider agency staff and case managers believe successes have come in the form of helping youth and families build healthy relationships, reuniting families, and helping youth form pro-social ties to community. On a broader level, some interviewees talked about the impact they have on the community at large. They cited the fact that the continued existence of the COCP as a successful tool in helping to stop the cycle of criminal behavior by providing advocacy for youth and families.

### ***Areas for Improvement***

The most frequently cited area for improvement was more resources for the program. Respondents reported that increased resources would permit the hiring of more staff and provide case managers with opportunities for training. Communication was also mentioned as an area that needs to be addressed, particularly in the need for cross communication between JCCs and case managers regarding individual cases. One agency does not compensate case managers for out-of-pocket expenses that may be incurred as a result of activities that are engaged in with youth on their caseload.

### **Observation of COCP Intake and Review Meetings**

DCJ Research and Evaluation staff attended a total of three SEI staffing and review meetings and three Concilio Somos el Futuro (Latino Network) staffing and review meetings. Both groups meet at the King Facility to review current cases, present new cases and refer cases for service delivery to culturally competent service providers. SEI meets weekly on Tuesdays and Concilio meets every other Thursday.

Present at the meetings are DCJ Community Justice Managers who oversee the program, the directors and/or program managers of both agencies, case managers, JCCs and an OYA representative. Depending on the youth to be discussed, there may be a MST counselor, an A/D treatment provider, a mental health counselor and an educational advocate. SEI also has the youth tracker in attendance. Both meetings begin with introductions and an opportunity for all those present to review the court report and familiarize oneself with the case(s). The SEI meeting is facilitated by the SEI program manager and the Concilio meeting is facilitated by Latino Network's program manager.

The intake process for both agencies begins with a review of court reports. One of the differences between the SEI and Concilio meetings is the required attendance of the youth at the SEI meeting. Parents are encouraged but not required to attend. The Concilio meetings do not require the presence of either the youth or family. The youth and parent were only present for one SEI intake meeting observed by Research and Evaluation and at times appeared uncomfortable and perhaps did not fully understand the process. In both meetings, the JCC presents a case and the group discusses what services would best serve the needs of the youth. Additional meetings attended by R&E staff did not have any intakes by the SEI committee as the current caseloads were at maximum capacity; work done by the committee at that time included reviewing cases to close so that additional youth on the wait list could be admitted.

After new cases are presented, the meeting focus turns to review. The youth and parents are not present at the Concilio for the review process but they are encouraged to come for the review process at SEI. A parent was present at one of the three review meetings observed by Research and Evaluation. This parent was involved in the discussion and open to new ideas regarding how to treat her son's drug and alcohol problem. Several people mentioned RAD as an option and the mother seemed eager for her son to try it. She expressed concern that if her son were sent to Maclaren or Hillcrest he would not improve; staff

assured her that they wanted to help keep her son from going to OYA. The review process is an informal discussion with case managers, treatment providers and JCCs providing information on what has and has not been effective with the youth under review. JCCs, however, were not always present at the reviews. Neither meeting had written documentation to support decision making, task assignments or timelines.

After the case review process, the facilitators provide updates and new information that may be helpful to those in attendance. At this time, case managers have an opportunity to staff their cases. The facilitator also answers any questions or brings up issues regarding billing hours for case managers. After questions have been answered, the meeting is adjourned.

## **VI. Report Conclusions**

Communities of Color Partnership program was designed to be a collaborative approach to case management for high risk minority youth who are probation. Using a model of a professional team and community members coming together to provide culturally specific and appropriate services, the COCP seeks to help youth to succeed on probation and in the community. The program aims to reduce criminal behavior and to keep youth from being committed to a youth correctional facility.

The sample of youth identified for this evaluation indicates that this program is serving the target population. The program is providing services to high risk African American, Latino youth or multi-cultural youth who identify with African American or Latino culture. All youth are on probation and have an average age of just over 15 years of age. There are also some differences between the youth served by SEI and Latino Network. SEI youth, on average, had their first criminal referral at a younger age than Latino youth and they also had, on average, more overall criminal referrals.

A review of youth social files and JJIS chrono notes collected additional data on youth characteristics, family background and history. Data from these sources reveal that COCP youth enter with many characteristics and family histories which have been proven to be risk factors for juvenile delinquency.

Key informant interviews with DCJ managers and Juvenile Court Counselors provided information about the COCP that was remarkably similar to that of the staff at SEI and Latino Network. Respondents were in agreement regarding the COCP client flow through the program. Interviewees were in agreement in terms of referral practices and service provision. There was little agreement however regarding case planning policies, procedures and practices. All of the interviewees agreed that providing culturally competent and appropriate services was important for many minority youth. This competency extends to the case managers and respondents believed in supporting this requirement through skill training for case managers for working with high risk juvenile justice youth. Case manager performance received mixed reviews from respondents. These mixed reviews could be attributed to communication, documentation and collaboration issues in which expectations have not been clearly explicated. Suggestions for improvement also included the need to clarify roles and responsibilities for case managers and JCCs in terms of service delivery to COC youth.

## **VII. Recommendations**

There is universal agreement that the increase in minority over-representation in the juvenile justice system indicates the needs of high risk minority youth must be addressed. The Communities of Color Partnership

and the work done for this report seek to assist in addressing the issue of minority over-representation and how to best meet the needs of these youth. The primary question to be answered, however, is: Are we serving this population of youth in the manner that will produce the most desirable outcomes? The purpose of this evaluation is not to say whether or not COCP is accomplishing that goal. However, the findings in this report can serve to describe what is currently being done and to inform where changes can be made to maximize our efforts. Based on the information gathered for this evaluation, the following recommendations are suggested:

- 1) *The Target Population-* Research suggests that youth with the highest risk to become chronic offenders or to become deeply entrenched in the criminal justice system are youth who enter the system at an early age with multiple risk factors. Some of those interviewed suggested that not all high risk minority youth need to be referred to COCP as they may have needs that are best served in an alternate manner. To the extent this is true, DCJ should consider reviewing the policy of referring all high risk minority youth to COCP. DCJ should further consider the inclusion of low or medium risk minority who might benefit from this program before they become high risk.
- 2) *Case Planning-* The process of developing and following a case plan tailored to the needs of individual youth is essential to ensuring youth are being served in a manner that best meets their needs. There was much variation in the answers of those interviewed about how and when case plans are completed. It is recommended that a draft case plan be written during the initial intake meeting and copies distributed to the JCC and the case manager. A finalized case plan should be completed within 30 days of intake as specified in the contract and should be created collaboratively with the JCC and the case manager. This does not exclude including input from the youth about what goals to include in the case plan. It would be beneficial to have a specified format for the case plan similar to the one used by JCCs as part of their probation case plan. The overall probation case plan as completed by the JCC should not be the only case plan used. Instead, the probation case plan and case plan for COCP should be completed as a joint document by the JCCs and the case managers. Copies of the case plan can be given to the JCC and the case manager and stored in each youth file. Case managers should be responsible for updating the progress towards each of the goals in the case plan and provide this as an update to the JCC every 30 days as outlined in the contract. Further, it is recommended that updated case plans include dates, times and content of the case manager's contact with the youth. In this way, the case plan becomes a "living" historical document of the youth's experience in the program. This type of document would help alleviate some of the communication issues that were mentioned during the interviews. It would also provide documentation of the work being done. After an improved process for case planning has been implemented, DCJ program managers and SEI and Latino Network administrators should conduct a review within six months to ensure that this process is occurring as outlined and that lapses in the process are being addressed.
- 3) *Case Review Process-* DCJ and Program Administrators need to ensure that case reviews are routinely done for all youth at 90 days after intake and every 90 days following until the case is closed. Ideally, written documentation of the progress of the youth under review along with any new recommendations for services would be completed before the end of the meeting and copies distributed to the JCC and to the case manager for their files. Timely and routine case reviews will help ensure that progress is being made towards the case plan goals.

- 4) *Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations*- It is recommended that DCJ and Program Administrators provide written policy and procedures to all case managers about what their role is in relation to JCCs and within the juvenile justice system. This written documentation should also include the case manager's specific responsibilities. Expectations regarding contact standards and regarding communication with the JCC can be outlined in writing for case managers and for JCCs. Further, DCJ should provide clear documentation to JCCs about their role in relation to case managers and what the department's expectation is regarding the collaborative case planning. Preferably, newly hired case managers would receive this as part of a formal orientation and initial training for working with the program.
- 5) *Training* - The need for additional training was mentioned by most of the people interviewed for this evaluation, including the case managers. It is recommended that DCJ and Program Administrators along with input from JCCs and case managers work together to assess the training needs and work towards a solution for providing training that has been designated as required. The experience and knowledge base of case managers is wide and varied; perhaps case managers can help provide training for other case managers. Any trainings conducted by DCJ should include an invitation to case managers. Mentoring has been mentioned as a key aspect of this program. There is abundant literature available about mentoring and mentoring strategies which is easily accessible. This literature could be distributed among case managers and later discussed as a means to developing specific guidelines and strategies for mentoring COCP youth.

### **Acknowledgements**

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## Appendix A

### Social Files Data Collection Sheet

1. Parental involvement in the criminal justice system?
  - a. Mother Y N M
  - b. Father Y N M
2. Currently in prison or jail?
  - a. Mother Y N M
  - b. Father Y N M
3. History of domestic violence? Y N M
4. History of drug and/or alcohol use?
  - a. Mother Y N M
  - b. Father Y N M
5. History of sexual abuse in the family? Y N M
6. History of child abuse in the family? Y N M
7. DHS involvement with the family?
  - a. Past Y N M
  - b. Current Y N M
8. Parents employed?
  - a. Mother Y N M
  - b. Father Y N M
9. Parents/guardian disabled?
  - a. Physical Y N M
  - b. Mentally ill Y N M
10. Youth has siblings? Y N M
11. Siblings involved in the criminal justice system (past or current)? Y N M
12. Stable living environment (no motel, shelter, eviction notices)? Y N M

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13. Father living in home?                        | Y | N | M |
| 14. Stepfather/partner living in home?            | Y | N | M |
| 15. Parents speak English?                        | Y | N | M |
| 16. Youth expressed thoughts/attempts of suicide? | Y | N | M |
| 17. If female, has youth been pregnant?           | Y | N | M |
| 18. Is youth a parent?                            | Y | N | M |

## Appendix B

### JCC Interview Protocol- COCP Evaluation

- 1). How do you decide when to refer a youth to COCP?
- 2). Please describe the referral and intake process.  
How/when is the case plan completed?
- 3). What services do youth receive through COC?
- 4). How are roles and responsibilities defined for DCJ staff and COC staff?
- 5). What kind of training do COC case managers receive?
- 6). How is youth progress or youth contact with COC case managers or other issues communicated to JCC's? How often?
- 7). Please describe the review process.
- 8). How is this program providing culturally competent services to our youth?
- 9). At what point is a youth exited from the program?
- 10). How does COC contribute to positive outcomes for youth?
- 11). What are some the successes of the program?
- 12). What are the areas for improvement?

## Appendix C



Department of Community Justice

Quality Systems and Evaluation Services

## COMMUNITIES OF COLOR PROGRAM SITE VISITS: SEI AND LATINO NETWORK

### Staff questions:

1. Describe the following for a typical client:
  - a. staffing with MDT
  - b. referral process
  - c. intake process
  - d. assessment process, including needs assessment
  - e. case planning/case review
  - f. coordination with other agencies
  - g. a/d treatment for eligible clients
  - h. aftercare
  - i. discharge planning/exit criteria
2. What kind of services do youth receive through COCP?
3. How are the roles and responsibilities defined for DCJ staff and COC staff?
4. What types of training do you receive annually?  
PROBE: How were you trained on criminogenic factors?
5. How do you maintain knowledge of the community's substance abuse treatment services and with self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc. in order to be able to make informed referrals?
6. How do you maintain current knowledge of culturally appropriate services, best practices and outcomes achieved by your referral sources?
7. How do you monitor and document your client's progress once they have been referred?
8. How do you monitor and document client outcomes?
9. Is there a back-up plan in place in case of case manager unavailability?
10. Talk about your skills, ability, training, experience, etc. that you think make you uniquely able to work with African/American or Latino kids.
11. How does COC contribute to positive outcomes for youth?
12. What are some of the successes of the program?
13. What are some of the areas for improvement?