

Creating a Continuum of Care: National Models & Promising Practices

Focus Area: Supporting youth in their communities with a multi-faceted, flexible and highly individualized wraparound approach

Model: Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.

Youth Advocates Programs, Inc. (YAP) is a nationally recognized, nonprofit organization committed to the provision of community-based alternatives and out-of-home care through direct service, advocacy and policy change. YAP works with more than 19,000 youth and families annually in 23 states and the District of Columbia in over 100 communities.

YAP works with youth and families involved in the Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare, Behavioral Health and Education systems. Their work with system-involved youth helps states move youth from formal system involvement and into effective approaches that support the youth in the community. Services are individualized for the youth and the family but usually include care management, 24/7 crisis intervention services, skill development, education, and vocational work.

#40th Fridays: Check out this compilation of stories about how YAP has had an impact and changed lives.

http://www.yapinc.org/Portals/2/Documents/PS/40th%20Fridays%20Compilation_reduced.pdf

YAP practices a “no reject, no eject” policy with all of its programming. All kids are accepted and served. The other central tenets of their delivery models are:

- **Individualized Plans:** Plans are based on the unique needs, strengths, culture, and preferences of families.
- **Family Focused:** Parents and caregivers are engaged as partners and integral to service delivery success.
- **Strength Based:** Seeks to build upon strengths and assets that already exist.
- **Neighborhood Based Recruitment:** Staff are recruited who live in the same communities as the families served.

Outcomes: Since its founding in 1975, YAP has collected and analyzed data on client outcomes involved in the juvenile justice system. Starting in 1995, YAP began regular external evaluations on their programming. Most recently, a 2014 report from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice studied 2,523 juvenile justice referred YAP cases between the ages of 11 and 18 years old.¹ Analyses indicate that enrollment in YAP is associated with an increase in the number of youth living in their community and a decrease in the number of youth in secure confinement. Additionally, 90% of the discharged individuals were not arrested while enrolled in YAP. A University of Maryland analysis focused on 369 youth in YAP’s Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Maryland’s programs showed that juvenile justice problems were significantly reduced during the time that youth received YAP services.²

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has recognized YAP’s Tarrant County Advocate Program in Texas as a best practice model for alternatives to secure detention and confinement for youthful offenders.³ The Annie E. Casey Foundation has recognized YAP for outstanding contributions to detention reform by a community-based organization.⁴

See more at: <http://www.yapinc.org/>.

¹ YAP Facts (April 2014). Research and Evaluation Center, Part of the Research Consortium of John Jay College, New York. Retrieved at: <http://www.yapinc.org/outcomes>.

²Juvenile justice Concerns High at Intake and Decrease with Service from YAP (2014). University of Maryland Division of Services Research, University of Maryland. Retrieved at: <http://www.yapinc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Fact%20Sheets/UMD%20Brief%20-%20JJ%20Concerns.pdf>

³ John Kelly (March 2015). *Positive Youth Justice, Part Three: Tarrant County Advocate Program, Texas*, Chronical of Social Change. Retrieved at: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/analysis/positive-youth-justice-part-three-tarrant-county-advocate-program-ft-worth-texas>

⁴ Annie E. Casey Foundation (November 2015). Foundation Honors YAP for Outstanding Contributions to Detention Reform. Retrieved at: <https://www.aecf.org/blog/foundation-honors-yap-for-outstanding-contributions-to-detention-reform/>