



MICHIGAN CENTER *for* YOUTH JUSTICE

Creating Transformative Schools



student
advocacy
center

of MICHIGAN

A School Justice Conference

**STAY TUNED FOR
MORE INFO!**

Spring School Justice Conference Postponed!

The Michigan Center for Youth Justice recently announced an in-person conference energized around **Creating Transformative Schools**, meant to take place on Wednesday, May 24, 2023.

In light of the ongoing school safety discussions in Lansing and across Michigan, we believe that the conference planning team needs to be expanded and the focus of the event be re-assessed. MCYJ will seek to collaborate with as many partners as possible to create the most impactful conference that we can.

We hope to reschedule the conference for the fall of 2023. Please stay tuned via our e-communications for more information.

Enhancing Juvenile Court Diversion in Michigan

Diversion is a community-led approach founded on principles of youth well-being and restorative justice that serves as a successful alternative to traditional court involvement. In most cases, diversion programs cost less, are more effective at reducing recidivism, and avoid the harms that could result from formal court supervision.

While most communities in Michigan offer some form of diversion from juvenile court involvement, it is not the default option in every county. Youth with similar offenses may be offered diversion or traditional juvenile court process solely based on where they live. The use of screenings and assessments to determine risk levels, diversion eligibility, and inform treatment decisions are inconsistent across Michigan counties and non-existent in others. The lack of consistency in diversion processes and practices can lead to unequal treatment for youth, which disproportionately impacts youth of color, and is a missed opportunity to identify and address underlying issues before formal court supervision.

Additionally, the Child Care Fund (CCF)—the primary statewide juvenile justice funding source—requires a court referral and the provision of intensive supervision, which makes it challenging for jurisdictions to fund and support pre-court or pre-arrest diversion programs. To address statewide issues with diversion, the [Michigan Task Force on Juvenile Justice reform](#) approved several recommendations, including requiring a validated risk screening tool and a validated mental health screening tool to inform diversion and consent calendar decisions.

The Task Force also recommends expanding the CCF so local courts and tribes can use funding as they see fit for pre-arrest diversion and eliminating “intensive” requirements so counties can match supervision/services to the youth’s risk level. Moreover, the Task Force suggests expanding the Diversion Act so that all offenses—except for the most serious ones—are eligible for pre-court diversion based on established local criteria and the use of a risk screening tool.

MCYJ fully supports the Task Force recommendations and will advocate for them as legislative reforms this year. The legal system must be the option of last resort when responding to youthful misbehavior, and all communities should provide opportunities for young people to learn from their mistakes, repair harm to victims, and address needs with treatment and resources instead of punitive measures. Youth-serving systems must acknowledge adolescent development research and invest in front-end diversion.

With the Task Force’s recommendations and legislative reforms, Michigan can become a leader in youth diversion and improve the overall well-being of its youth.

To learn more about diversion, check out the Sentencing Project’s report: [Diversion: A Hidden Key to Combating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice](#).

Join MCYJ’s Team!

MCYJ is seeking to hire a part-time, contractual Individual Giving Manager to join our small, hardworking team. This integral position will work closely with the current development team to provide leadership and oversight for MCYJ’s major gifts and annual campaign strategies to ensure we meet or exceed annual revenue targets for individual giving.

We are looking for a dynamic candidate with a Bachelor’s degree or commensurate experience, five to seven years of experience in fundraising or transferrable related skills, and a proven track record in soliciting and closing gifts.

Please share within your networks or [click here](#) to view the full position description.

“The Table” Returns for Season 2

MCYJ's podcast, "The Table: Conversations on Youth Justice [<https://miyouthjustice.org/thetable>]," is back! In our February episode, Husain Haidri discussed the origins of juvenile public defense, described what a public defender is and does, addressed some objections to the public defender system, and offered solutions to serious problems. At the end of the episode, there's also an update on juvenile life without parole in Michigan.

To hear the whole episode, click [here](#) or search for "The Table: Conversations on Youth Justice" wherever you find your podcasts!

Ep 2 - The Juvenile Public Defense System of Michigan



New Tool-Kit on Supporting Rural Youth and Families

MCYJ is excited to share a new tool-kit created by [The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy](#) (CJJR), in partnership with the [American Institutes for Research](#) (AIR), entitled *Common Problems, Common Solutions: Looking Across Sectors at Strategies for Supporting Rural Youth and Families Tool-Kit*. This tool-kit highlights obstacles rural communities face in avoiding juvenile justice involvement for young people and solutions for attaining the best outcomes for youth and their families who become justice-involved. Specifically, this tool-kit provides ideas for serving youth in the context of their communities, including:

- Accessing services (e.g., overcoming transportation, distance, and technology barriers);
- Meeting needs for specialized services and overcoming provider shortages;
- Providing positive activities and preparation for employment; and
- Overcoming resource limitations.

[View Tool-Kit](#)

State Funding Available for In-Home Care Programming

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is taking action to provide in-home services to justice-involved youth in rural areas as an alternative to placement in residential facilities. **Applications for the In-Home Rural Care grant must be submitted by March 10th. To learn more, click [here](#).**

Additional Job Opportunities in Justice Reform

A partner of MCYJ, [Safe & Just Michigan](#) (SJM), a Michigan-based organization that works to reduce the harm caused by crime and unnecessary incarceration, is hiring for two positions.

Safe & Just MI is seeking a policy advocacy manager and communications specialist to join their team of highly skilled professionals. Their staff includes nine seasoned experts with broad expertise ranging from journalism to policy and legislative strategy, decades of lived experience with the justice system, and much more. Read the descriptions below and see if working with SJM would suit you well!

- The [policy advocacy manager](#) is a unique opportunity to work directly with the executive director and lobbying team to advance critical criminal justice reforms in Michigan. They are working diligently to advocate for bail reform, sentencing reform, and removing barriers faced by people with a criminal record.
- The [communications specialist](#) is a member of their communications team and is responsible for the daily internal and external communications, primarily focusing on original text, photograph, and video content creation.

The logo for Safe & Just Michigan is displayed on a solid blue rectangular background. The text "Safe & Just" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font, with the ampersand "&" being significantly larger than the other characters. Below this, the word "Michigan" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

Safe & Just Michigan

Recent Report Explores the Broad Consequences of Justice System- Involvement

The [National Governors Association](#) (NGA) recently [released a new report](#) entitled "*Strategies to Address the Needs of Juveniles Impacted by Collateral Consequences*". The report provides valuable insights into the breadth of challenges faced by youth in the juvenile justice system. It offers policy strategies for governors' offices to consider (the data-driven recommendations of the Michigan Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform were highlighted as an example).

According to the report, youth involved in the juvenile justice system often face a wide range of collateral consequences beyond detention, including restrictions on their ability to obtain housing, employment, and educational opportunities. These consequences can significantly negatively impact their ability to recover and become productive citizens.

To better understand the scope of collateral consequences faced by justice-involved youth, the NGA conducted a series of learning calls and hosted a virtual roundtable with national, state, and local subject-matter experts. The roundtable discussions highlighted key policy strategies for addressing this issue, including developing a non-punitive, community-based, trauma-informed approach that key stakeholders support.

The report also highlights the challenges and barriers that policymakers face when addressing these broad consequences and proposes policy options for state leaders to mitigate their adverse effects. These options include encouraging stakeholder collaboration, building consensus, and proposing legislation that addresses specific collateral consequences through targeted policies or comprehensive reform.

To read the full report, [click here](#).

Youth Justice in the News

- [Youths allegedly doubled and tripled up in juvenile jail cells](#)
- [Additional beds needed for Michigan's juvenile justice system](#)
- [Opinion | Michigan needs a statewide approach to reform juvenile justice](#)
- [Voices of Youth: Building a restorative future for Washtenaw County's juvenile justice system](#)



Pictured above: MCYJ youth board member Fonseca Bagchi. Read more about his interest in juvenile justice reform in the article above.

Upcoming Events

Collaborating for Change: Addressing the Intersections Between Juvenile Justice and Youth Homelessness

Coalition for Juvenile Justice

March 7th, 2023; 3-4 p.m. EST. Learn more [here!](#)

Forum on Juvenile Justice Reform

The League of Women Voters of Washtenaw County

Rescheduled from February 23rd to March 9th, 2023; 4135 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. Learn more [here!](#)

Cultivating Caring Communities in Schools: Tools for Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline Webinar

National Juvenile Justice Network

March 9th, 2023, 1:00 p.m. ET. Learn more [here!](#)

National Conference of Juvenile Justice

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

March 19-22nd, 2023, Renaissance Dallas Addison Hotel, Addison, TX 75001. Learn more [here!](#)

Common Problems, Common Solutions: Looking Across Sectors at Strategies for Supporting Rural Youth and Families Tool-Kit Virtual Session

Center for Juvenile Justice Reform

March 28th, 2023, 1-2:30 p.m. ET. Learn more [here!](#)

Coalition for Juvenile Justice 2023 Annual Conference

Coalition for Juvenile Justice

May 24-26th, 2023; Marriott Marquis, Washington D.C. Learn more [here!](#)

Our Vision: a fair and effective justice system for Michigan's children, youth and young adults.

Our Mission: we work to advance equitable youth justice policies and practices that protect young people and help them achieve their full potential.

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