



Lone Star Justice Alliance: Texas Juvenile Justice Sunset Commission Suggestions

Summary:

This report outlines suggestions for the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) amid Sunset Review, presented by Lone Star Justice Alliance (LSJA). LSJA strongly encourages TJJD to pursue the Texas Model Plan for Reform and the use of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Sequential Intercept Model to lower juvenile detention rates. These models include utilizing community services as an alternative to arresting youth and employing support services to prevent future offenses and arrests. LSJA also proposes the development and regular use of public work groups to discuss concerns and solutions related to TJJD's operation and potential alterations or dissolution.

Background:

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department is currently under sunset review. In accordance with the Texas Sunset Act, most state agencies are reviewed every twelve years to determine if the agency is still needed by evaluating all parts of the organization, such as its practices and mission, and how well the organization can accomplish that mission.

The Sunset of an agency is evaluated by the Sunset Advisory Commission, which consists of 12 members: five senators, five house representatives, one public member appointed by the lieutenant governor and one public member appointed by the speaker of the House. On September 1, 2021, TJJD released their Self-Evaluation Report to the Sunset Advisory Commission for review. This report includes information about the agency, such as key functions, performance, policymaking structure, and funding, in addition to any major issues. The Texas Sunset Commission utilizes public opinion and information from agency staff, policymakers, and reports, among other sources. Through this review process, the Texas Sunset Commission can evaluate TJJD's purpose and its level of success achieving those goals. The Commission's recommendation is then directed to the Texas Legislature and voted on.

Investigations:

Aside from TJJD's effectiveness accomplishing their intended purpose, discussions about current investigations into TJJD facilities are likely to occur. Dating back to October 2020, two

3809 South 1st St., Austin, TX, 78704
Phone: (512) 394-5791
LoneStarJusticeAlliance.org



Austin nonprofits, Texas Appleseed and Disability Rights Texas, requested an investigation into TJJJ practices and alleged injustices.¹ In July 2021, Governor Greg Abbott directed the Texas Rangers to investigate allegations of staff members engaging in illegal behavior. On October 13, 2021, the DOJ announced an investigation into TJJJ's five secure juvenile facilities. The investigation seeks to determine if these facilities offer children "reasonable protection from physical and sexual abuse by staff and other residents, excessive use of chemical restraints and excessive use of isolation," in addition to adequacy of mental health care offered to youth.²

Texas Model for Reform:

Lone Star Justice Alliance endorses the move towards a Texas Model Plan for Reform that right-sizes the juvenile system and brings as many youths home or closer to home as possible. The Texas Model elements, enumerated on the TJJJ website, envisions the following:³

- Keep youth as shallow in the system as possible
- Grow probation resources and preserve local control
- Focus on the needs and risks of youth
- Provide scalable, graduated options to meet youth and system needs
- Commit to the shortest appropriate time period for youth to be in our system
- Have youth stay as close to their community wherever possible according to their best interests
- Infusing trauma-informed care into all TJJJ actions

Keeping youth close to home presents several benefits. First, youth that participated in community-based programs are less likely to reoffend compared to youth in state-run secure facilities.⁴ In fact, youth that were sent to state facilities fared much worse: they are more likely to be rearrested within a year of release, are more likely to be reincarnated within five years of release, and are more likely to commit and be rearrested for committing a felony upon release.⁵ Utilizing community-based services may be more feasible than ever before because of the decreasing juvenile arrest rates.⁶

¹ *Texas Appleseed and Disability Rights Texas DOJ Complaint*, 2020. <https://www.texasappleseed.org/sites/default/files/DOJ-FINAL-COMPLAINT-fin.pdf>

² *Justice Department Announces Investigation into Conditions at Five Juvenile Facilities in Texas*, 2021. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-investigation-conditions-five-juvenile-facilities-texas>

³ "What is the Texas Model?" TJJJ.tx.gov. n.d. <https://www.tjjd.texas.gov/index.php/what-is-the-texas-model>

⁴ Carreon, J., Henneke, E., Kreager, J. *Unfinished Business: Deepening Gains in Texas Juvenile Justice Reform*. Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, May 2015.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Fabelo, T., Arrigona, N., Thompson, M. *Closer to Home: An Analysis of the State and Local Impact of the Texas Juvenile Justice Reforms*. Council of State Governments Justice Center, The Public Policy Research Institute, Texas A&M University, January 2015.



Texas Juvenile Justice Department Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR):

In TJJD's LAR for FY2022 and FY2023, the department requests correlated with needs to fully adopt the Texas Model.⁷ TJJD is requesting funding for:

- Probation prevention and intervention efforts and IDing trauma
- Increasing and expanding resources
- Successful reintegration programs
- Better pay for staff
- New facilities to better serve youth with mental health needs, intellectual challenges, and gender-specific programming

Additionally, TJJD explained changes they have made to incorporate the Texas Model, including training to better understand the needs of youth and educating staff on the best responses.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Sequential Intercept Model (SIM):

LSJA suggests that the sunset process look at best practices for reducing detention levels to align with best practices. We recommend beginning with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). This model helps leaders and agencies "work together to identify strategies to divert people with mental and substance abuse disorders away from the justice system into treatment."⁸ The Intercept Model's steps are below. Recommendations for juvenile justice reform are included under each corresponding intercept.

Intercept 0: Community Services

Involves opportunities to divert people into local crisis care services. Resources are available without requiring people in crisis to call 911, but sometimes 911 and law enforcement are the only resources available. Connects people with treatment or services instead of arresting or charging them with a crime.

⁷ Texas Juvenile Justice Department

⁸ "The Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)." SAMHSA.gov. June 24, 2021. <https://www.samhsa.gov/criminal-juvenile-justice/sim-overview>



1. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department recommends early intervention programs that focus on the identification of trauma in juveniles as early as possible within the justice system, a cost-effective way to avoid large costs of healthcare, incarceration, foster care, and other needs.⁹
2. The Texas Model Plan for Reform:
 - a. Recommends early identification of youth with risk factors, which is critical to a future juvenile justice system that includes as few youth as possible. This can be achieved through various prevention programs that educate youth and their families about risk factors (including the effects of childhood trauma) and community resources available to them. The programs also empower them to advocate for themselves, help develop resilience and protective factors, and place the juveniles on a positive path to better lives, with reduced interaction with the juvenile justice system.¹⁰
 - b. Recommends early intervention for youth at the lowest end of the system, who are formally referred but have behaviors or needs at the time of referral that may be met by existing resources in the community without attention from the court. Participation in these programs may assist with early identification of emerging mental health needs and referral for appropriate treatment.¹¹
3. The Lone Star Justice Alliance recommends an examination of treatment options, services, and programs available to 17- to 25-year-olds in the community as alternatives to incarceration, including behavioral health alternatives, substance abuse treatment options, and the funding to support these programs. LSJA suggests making recommendations for best strategies to address the developmental needs of young adults in the Texas criminal justice system, and the funding strategies to incentivize expanded use of this programming.¹²
4. In their article *Unfinished Business: Deepening Gains in Texas Juvenile Justice Reform*, Jennifer Carreon et al. recommend that Texas increase coordination between systems that serve youth and families, such as child protective services, mental health services, and the education system. This includes support for schools to keep young people in

⁹ Sunset Self-Evaluation Report. September 2021

¹⁰ Texas Model Plan for Reform. Texas Juvenile Justice Department, October 2020.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Lone Star Justice Alliance Proposed 87th Legislative Session Interim Charges. Lone Star Justice Alliance. December 2021.



their classrooms, addressing young people’s behavioral health challenges in their homes, and helping families to keep young people at home.¹³

5. In the American Institutes for Research’s (AIR) report, *El Paso County, Texas Juvenile Probation Department Individualized Training and Technical assistance*, AIR recommend forming school-justice partnerships to reduce school-based arrests and court referrals. Alternative approaches to student arrests have the potential to address student behavior, hold students accountable, keep students out of court, and lead to better outcomes for all involved.¹⁴
6. In their article *Building a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System for Everyone*, Stephanie Shaw and Amelia Vorpahl:
 - a. Encourage the integration of youth, family, and community voices into decision-making through collaborative councils with courts, behavioral health service providers, and other relevant stakeholders. They reference the Texas Building Bridges Initiative, which establishes partnerships between families, treatment providers, and policymakers to ensure that services and supports are family-driven, culturally competent, evidence-informed, and aligned with research on sustained positive outcomes.¹⁵
 - b. Endorse the reform of juvenile justice practices to decriminalize so-called “status offenses,” which include non-illegal behaviors like truancy or breaking curfew. They reference the example of North Dakota’s decriminalization of all status offenses and creation of a new category called “child in need of services” to create a pathway to refer youth to services outside the court system.¹⁶
 - c. Push for the promotion of prearrest diversion opportunities, including developing culturally specific diversion pathways and responses. They cite Florida’s establishment of a civil citation program for youth who commit misdemeanor offenses, where they will receive a simple warning or civil citation instead of being arrested; as a part of this effort, Florida measured diversion opportunities by race and gender. Of first-time eligible arrests in 2021, 69

¹³ Carreon, J., Henneke, E., Kreager, J. *Unfinished Business: Deepening Gains in Texas Juvenile Justice Reform*. Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, May 2015.

¹⁴ American Institute for Research, *El Paso County, Texas Juvenile Probation Department Individualized Training and Technical Assistance*, American Institute for Research. 2020.

¹⁵ Shaw, S., Vorpahl, A. *Building a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System for Everyone*. Council of State Governments Justice Center, February 28, 2022. https://csgjusticecenter.org/2022/02/28/building-a-more-equitable-juvenile-justice-system-for-everyone/?mc_cid=f0461b38f5&mc_eid=06c475d4db

¹⁶ Ibid.



percent of Black, 71 percent of Hispanic, and 62 percent of White youth were diverted.¹⁷

- d. Endorse the establishment of non-law-enforcement response for youth in crisis, such as youth mobile crisis teams, which they state can reduce emergency department visits and prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system. They reference Connecticut’s funding of regional youth mobile crisis teams that are deployed to homes, schools, and other community locations to provide in-person crisis stabilization services and linkage to ongoing care.¹⁸
7. The TJJD Sunset Commission’s recommendations regarding increasing TJJD’s (1) appropriations, (2) renewing the focus on decentralization and regionalization, and (3) encouraging diversion within and cooperation between counties will be satisfied with this Intercept’s recommendations that emphasize early intervention done at the community level.

Intercept 1: Law Enforcement

Involves diversion performed by law enforcement and other emergency service providers who respond to people with mental and substance use disorders. Allows people to be diverted to treatment instead of being arrested or booked into jail.

1. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department recommends:
 - a. An equity adjustment in salaries and parity with the C pay scale for law enforcement officers, in order to increase recruitment for these positions and slow attrition.¹⁹
 - b. An enhancement to the Office of the Inspector General’s human trafficking investigation capacity by hiring additional investigators to collaborate with TXDPS, TXOAG and TABC human trafficking teams and units throughout the state, including proactive efforts to meet with potential parolees before release.²⁰
 - c. A replacement to Office of the Inspector General fleet vehicles that were not able to be replaced during Fiscal Year 2019-2020 biennium because of state budget cuts associated with COVID-19. Replacement and additional vehicles would improve responsiveness, timeliness of investigations, and oversight.²¹

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Sunset Self-Evaluation Report. September 2021

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.



2. In their article *Building a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System for Everyone*, Stephanie Shaw and Amelia Vorpahl:
 - a. Endorse the strategy of ensuring that police and school resource officers (SROs) are trained in youth development, mental health, anti-racism, and trauma response. As an example, they reference Kansas' requirement that School Resource Officers are trained in adolescent development, mental health, diversity, youth crisis intervention, substance use prevention, trauma-informed responses, and other evidence-based practices in school policing that explicitly aim to minimize student exposure to the juvenile justice system.²²
 - b. Recommend establishing limits on use of force for youth to prevent causing physical and emotional harm. They bring up that a few major city law enforcement agencies, including Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Miami, Nashville, New York, and others, prohibit the use of tasers on children unless there is an imminent threat to safety.²³
3. Shaw and Vorpahl's recommendation to be better trained "in youth development, mental health, anti-racism, and trauma response" may be related to some degree to the Sunset Commission's recommendations that the legislature "update TJJD's statute to reflect the requirements of the person-first respectful language initiative" and TJJD crafting more appropriate responses.²⁴
4. This Intercept (in addition to Intercept 3, discussed shortly) will also add clearer guidance on the interaction between LEOs and those they serve, impacting juvenile probation officers and perhaps even allow for more specifically trained personnel capable of providing youth-centered treatment and services.

Intercept 2: Initial Court Hearings/Initial Detention

Involves diversion to community-based treatment by jail clinicals, social workers, or court officials during jail intake, booking, or initial hearing.

1. In their article *Building a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System for Everyone*, Stephanie Shaw and Amelia Vorpahl recommend raising the minimum age of prosecution to keep young children out of the juvenile justice system and refer to the 15 states that have

²² Shaw, S., Vorpahl, A. *Building a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System for Everyone*. Council of State Governments Justice Center, February 28, 2022. https://csgjusticecenter.org/2022/02/28/building-a-more-equitable-juvenile-justice-system-for-everyone/?mc_cid=f0461b38f5&mc_eid=06c475d4db

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report, *Texas Juvenile Justice Department Office of the Independent Ombudsman*.

[https://www.sunset.texas.gov/public/uploads/2022-](https://www.sunset.texas.gov/public/uploads/2022-05/~Texas%20Juvenile%20Justice%20Department%20and%20Office%20of%20the%20Independent%20Ombudsman%20Staff%20Report_5-26-22.pdf)

[05/~Texas%20Juvenile%20Justice%20Department%20and%20Office%20of%20the%20Independent%20Ombudsman%20Staff%20Report_5-26-22.pdf](https://www.sunset.texas.gov/public/uploads/2022-05/~Texas%20Juvenile%20Justice%20Department%20and%20Office%20of%20the%20Independent%20Ombudsman%20Staff%20Report_5-26-22.pdf)



passed laws prohibiting children younger than 10 from being processed in juvenile court.²⁵

2. In their article *Unfinished Business: Deepening Gains in Texas Juvenile Justice Reform*, Jennifer Carreon et al. recommend that Texas reduce the number youth going into the adult system. This means “raising the age” to bring 17-year-olds into the juvenile justice system. It also means narrowing certification and determinate sentencing statues to keep more young people in the juvenile justice system.²⁶
3. The Lone Star Justice Alliance suggests:
 - a. A study of the fiscal cost of raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 17 to 18, both at the state and county levels, making sure to include the cost savings from transfer of 17-year-olds out of adult state and local facilities. The study should include the current capacity to house 17-year-olds in existing facilities. It should also identify any barriers to adding this population to local juvenile programs and facilities, in particular, Texas’ use of juvenile pre- and post-adjudication detention, with an analysis of how Texas’s overall youth placement, pre-adjudication detention, and commitment rates compare to national averages.²⁷
 - b. An examination of the Texas Penal Code’s definition of “duress” and determine if the current language is sufficient to provide an affirmative defense to survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence. They suggest making recommendations for best strategies to avoid the criminalization of survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence for the crimes of their abusers.²⁸
4. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department recommends a requirement for juvenile courts to consider the results of a validated risk and needs assessment prior to ordering a TJJD commitment, a critical step in understanding the needs of a youth in order to design a plan for that youth, including treatment for any physical, mental and behavioral health concerns.²⁹

Intercept 3: Jails/Courts

²⁵ Shaw, S., Vorpahl, A. *Building a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System for Everyone*. Council of State Governments Justice Center, February 28, 2022. https://csgjusticecenter.org/2022/02/28/building-a-more-equitable-juvenile-justice-system-for-everyone/?mc_cid=f0461b38f5&mc_eid=06c475d4db

²⁶ Carreon, J., Henneke, E., Kreager, J. *Unfinished Business: Deepening Gains in Texas Juvenile Justice Reform*. Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, May 2015.

²⁷ Lone Star Justice Alliance Proposed 87th Legislative Session Interim Charges. Lone Star Justice Alliance. December 2021.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Sunset Self-Evaluation Report. September 2021.



Involves diversion to community-based services through jail or court processes and programs after a person has been booked into jail. Includes services that prevent the worsening of a person's illness during their stay in jail or prison.

1. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department recommends salary adjustments and appropriate pay for direct-care staff, which would allow TJJD to better recruit and retain those positions.³⁰
2. The Texas Model Plan for Reform recommends sufficient funding to build or acquire smaller facilities that will enable youth with intense needs to be served in environments that better meet their individualized needs for treatment and supervision while enabling the 5 existing facilities to lower their populations.³¹
3. In their article *Unfinished Business: Deepening Gains in Texas Juvenile Justice Reform*, Jennifer Carreon et al. recommend that Texas expand independent oversight and provide more protection for youth in local juvenile corrections facilities. Expanding the jurisdiction of the OIO so that it can investigate local juvenile corrections facilities, making the OIO responsible for PREA audits, removing the OIO's funding from the province of TJJD so that it becomes fiscally independent, and increasing the OIO's funding so that it can succeed in a broader mission: keeping young people out of harm's way.³²
4. In their Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department:
 - a. States that the #1 priority is tending to youth with high mental health needs, which composes about 5% of Texas youth. Because of staffing issues, resources must be shared between these high-need individuals and others on the campus. These youth need a very high level of supervision as they have higher risks of suicidal behavior and violent incidents. TJJD recommends new facilities, dedicated for committed boys with the most severe mental health issues, with a 1:4 staffing ratio and 1:2 ratio in the crisis stabilization center.³³
 - b. Recommends a new facility for girls with a staffing ratio of 1:6. Girls in the juvenile justice system tend to have high levels of trauma, with 91% having 4 or more adverse childhood experiences. 36% of these girls are of clear concern for

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Texas Model Plan for Reform. Texas Juvenile Justice Department, October 2020.

³² Carreon, J., Henneke, E., Kreager, J. *Unfinished Business: Deepening Gains in Texas Juvenile Justice Reform*. Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, May 2015.

³³ Penkoff, K., Haight, K., Jarjoura, R. El Paso County, Texas Juvenile Probation Department Individualized Training and Technical Assistance. American Institutes for Research, August 2020.



potential sexual exploitation, while 55% are of possible concern. Girls in secure facilities engage in minor rule violations at a rate 66% higher than average and are twice as likely to assault staff. 63% of girls in secure facilities have been placed on suicide alert—about twice the percentage of TJJD secure youth overall.³⁴

5. In their Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department recommends:
 - a. A 48-bed facility for boys 14 years old or younger, with a staffing ratio of 1:4. These youth are about twice as likely to assault youth or staff, commit major rule violations, and engage in minor rule violations, and thus need a higher level of supervision than is standard.³⁵
 - b. A 48-bed secure location designed to meet the needs of boys with the greatest intellectual difficulties, with a staffing ratio of 1:6. This secure location would allow for a more dedicated focus on the educational needs of these youth, as well as a more tailored approach that makes TJJD treatment programs more accessible. Currently, 5% of TJJD’s total population are intellectually disabled and an additional 17% are intellectually impaired.³⁶
 - c. An additional secure 48-bed facility for girls, which would ensure that all girls have greater access to gender-specific programming.³⁷
6. The Texas Model makes several recommendations pertaining to youth engagement:
 - a. The engagement of youth in activities that activate the body and competitive spirit. Regularly scheduled, high-effort exercise can lift the moods of youth, though it should be followed by a regulating activity in order to balance energy and emotional levels. Additionally, more moderate exercises, such as casual walking or stretching, can improve the moods of youth as well as their interpersonal skills by providing them an opportunity to socialize.³⁸
 - b. Participation in mindfulness and calming activities, including breathing exercises. Furthermore, the model recommends kindness activities, which direct the imaginations of youth toward positive thoughts and feelings.³⁹

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ The Texas Model: Youth Engagement. Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

³⁹ The Texas Model: Youth Engagement. Texas Juvenile Justice Department.



- c. Engaging in specific activities which activate and maintain certain parts of the brain, including exercises in proprioception, often called the “sixth sense.” Proprioception involves the body’s ability to sense movement, action, and location, as well as their own body position. These types of exercises can be mentally grounding for youth and inform their sense of posture and equilibrium/balance. Another helpful type of activity in a similar vein are bi-lateral brain activities; bi-lateral movements increase the hemispheric connections of the brain, which fosters communication between each side of the brain. These exercises have the potential to increase an individual’s ability to understand sensory information and more quickly make positive decisions.⁴⁰
 - d. Youth benefit from regular coaching. Coaches may provide youth with ideas and motivation for facing common challenges and obstacles. The model also provides a general outline for best coaching practices.⁴¹
 - e. Finally, the model recommends art as a form of therapy for youth. Engaging in art can lower stress levels, improve contentedness, and provide an outlet for self-expression for youth. The Texas Model emphasizes a focus on emotional benefit, not artistic results.⁴²
7. This Intercept’s (in addition to Intercept 1, mentioned previously) recommendations will add clearer guidance for the interactions between LEOs and those they serve, something that would impact juvenile probation officers and even allow for more specially trained personnel capable for providing youth-centered treatment and services.
 8. The Sunset Commission recommends a host of reforms to make the TJD Board more responsive and proactive. Although Intercept 3 focuses mainly on empowering the OIO to undertake oversight duties of facilities, the reasoning behind this Intercept can be applied to reshaping the board and the training those that sit on it have.

Intercept 4: ReEntry

Involves supported reentry back into the community after jail or prison to reduce further justice involve of people with mental and substance use disorders. Involves reentry coordinators, peer support staff, or community in-reach to link people with proper mental health and substance use treatment services.

1. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department recommends:

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.



- a. A 5 percent increase in the state share of juvenile probation costs, in order to stabilize funding and give county probation departments the ability to focus on building new resources with less concern about financial sustainability.⁴³
 - b. Crisis mental health stabilization services for county probation departments that would have allowed for immediate support for youth in suicidal or other crises.⁴⁴
 - c. Increased funding for probation departments in order to allow them to pay competitive rates for contract care and residential programs, enhancing options for youth.⁴⁵
 - d. An increase in local and regional interagency collaboration to better meet the needs of youth with mental health issues.⁴⁶
 - e. A change in probation appropriation structure, reorganizing funds into fewer appropriation strategies with more diverse allowable expenditures, particularly commitment diversion and mental health expenditures, which would give probation departments flexibility to fully utilize resources and serve more juveniles at the local level.⁴⁷
2. The Texas Model Plan for Reform recommends that counties receive predictable, sustainable funding to build local and regional resources. The state funds 64% of adult probation costs but only 25% of juvenile probation costs. Improved access to funds and resources for youth with mental health or other significant issues will allow smaller departments to meet needs through emergency funds and regional approaches.⁴⁸
 3. The Lone Star Justice Alliance recommends:
 - a. An examination of the current Texas criminal justice system policies and practices regarding 17- to 25- year-olds, specific to probation, parole, state jail confinement, and discharge from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or county jail. It also recommends a review of any gaps in services that may be causing this population to recidivate and suggests making recommendations to improve the state's response to the needs of this population in order to lower revocation, re-arrest, and re-incarceration rates.⁴⁹

⁴³ Sunset Self-Evaluation Report. September 2021

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. Texas Juvenile Justice Department, October 2020.

⁴⁹ Lone Star Justice Alliance Proposed 87th Legislative Session Interim Charges. Lone Star Justice Alliance. December 2021.



family housing issues that could result in youth's potential homelessness, family reunification services to address familial discord, parenting skills classes, education for the family regarding the youth's intellectual and/or physical disability, and/or the youth's mental health issues.⁵³

- b. Programming for juveniles placed in residential treatment and diverted from TJJD commitment through the RDA grant to maintain and reinforce the practical application of skills learned as they transition back into their communities.⁵⁴
2. The Lone Star Justice Alliance recommends an examination of treatment options, services, and programs available to survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence in institutional settings, on community supervision, on parole, and in community-based programs. LSJA suggests making recommendations for best strategies to address the needs of survivors in the Texas criminal justice system.⁵⁵

System-Wide Recommendations: The Texas Model Plan for Reform recommends greater flexibility in how state funds can be used, which will allow each of the 165 departments to better tailor their approaches toward local needs.⁵⁶

1. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department recommends an update to information technology systems, as the ones currently in place are obsolete and require intensive management.⁵⁷
2. In their report regarding El Paso County, the American Institutes for Research recommend holding roundtable discussions, which may include youth and families impacted by justice system involvement, local representatives of child and family serving systems, school personnel, local law enforcement representatives, among other stakeholders. These discussions can ensure that stakeholders are aware of recent policy changes, are engaged in local planning and implementation efforts, and understand the roles and responsibilities of all involved.⁵⁸
3. In their article *Building a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System for Everyone*, Stephanie Shaw and Amelia Vorpahl endorse the practice of analyzing key data to understand

⁵³ Sunset Self-Evaluation Report. September 2021

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Lone Star Justice Alliance Proposed 87th Legislative Session Interim Charges. Lone Star Justice Alliance. December 2021.

⁵⁶ Texas Model Plan for Reform. Texas Juvenile Justice Department, October 2020.

⁵⁷ Sunset Self-Evaluation Report. September 2021

⁵⁸ *Texas Appleseed and Disability Rights Texas DOJ Complaint*, 2020. <https://www.texasappleseed.org/sites/default/files/DOJ-FINAL-COMPLAINT-fin.pdf>



where racial inequities exist and developing targeted plans to address their drivers. They reference Connecticut's ongoing development of a dashboard to identify racial inequities across its juvenile justice system and plan to use this information to inform ongoing reforms.⁵⁹

Work Groups:

LSJA suggests utilizing work groups to analyze the effectiveness of each of SAMHSA's intercepts. Individuals can sign up for work groups based on their interests and plan to meet regularly. LSJA is happy to facilitate or assist in coordinating these work groups as needed.

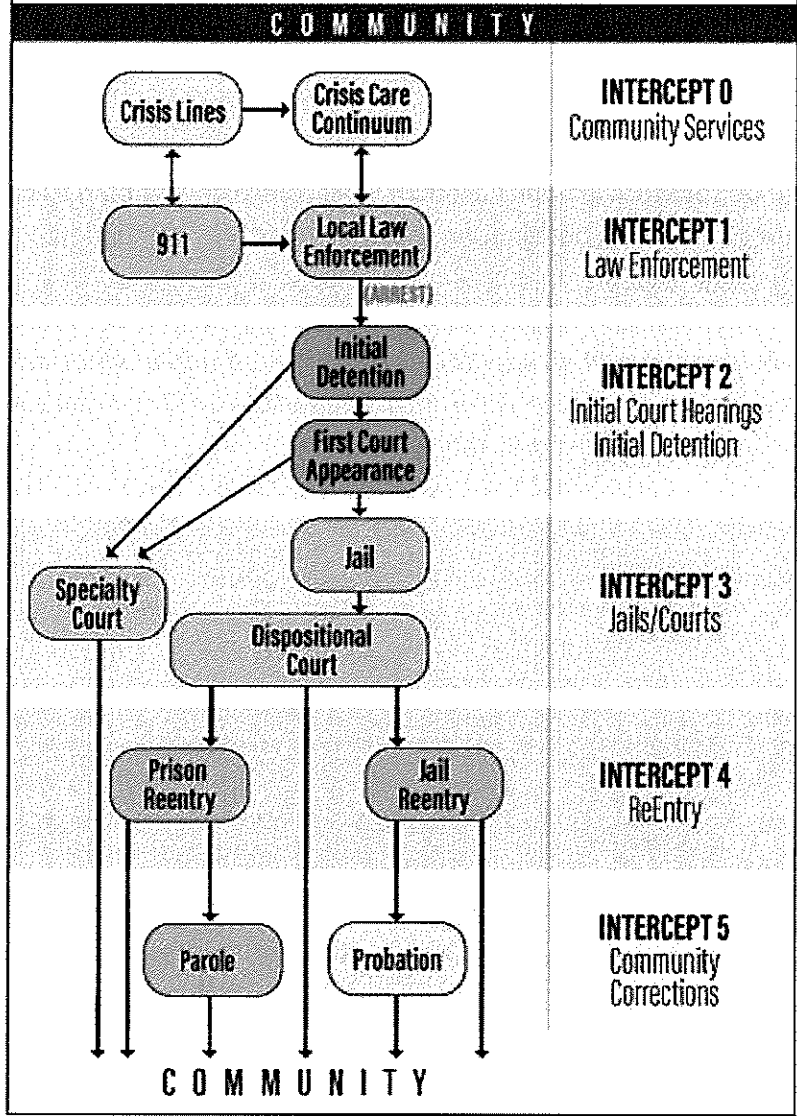
At this point, I think the best way to formulate these work groups is with Microsoft Forms. That way, interested individuals can fill in why they are interested and in what areas they would like to participate. We can send out the form in a newsletter and also have a link on the LSJA website. I am open to other suggestions, though. -Lexi

Appendix A: SAMHSA'S GAINS Center, Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)

⁵⁹ Shaw, S., Vorpahl, A. *Building a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System for Everyone*. Council of State Governments Justice Center, February 28, 2022. https://csgjusticecenter.org/2022/02/28/building-a-more-equitable-juvenile-justice-system-for-everyone/?mc_cid=f0461b38f5&mc_eid=06c475d4db



SAMHSA's GAINS CENTER



3809 South 1st St., Austin, TX, 78704
Phone: (512) 394-5791
LoneStarJusticeAlliance.org