



Young Adult Justice 2022:

A NATIONWIDE INVENTORY
OF POLICY AND PRACTICE

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The Center’s mission is to promote fair, informed, effective, and ethical approaches to criminal justice policy and practice through collaborative interdisciplinary research and evaluation, professional leadership development, and targeted projects designed to bring about systemic improvements in Illinois’ criminal justice system.

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A note that the words inventory and scan are used interchangeably to describe this research throughout this report.



Executive Summary

CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA indicates that young or emerging adults – between 18 and 26 years old – are significantly overrepresented in the nation’s criminal legal systems, compared to their share of the adult population. Emerging adults comprise large proportions of caseloads at every stage of contact with these legal systems, experiencing more arrests, probation violations and reincarceration than the general population. Accordingly, emerging adults require a disproportionately large share of criminal justice system resources. Racial and ethnic disparities in system contacts are profound, with Black emerging adults comprising a disproportionate percentage of those arrested and referred to the criminal legal system.*

And because most law, policy and practice was not designed with this population in mind, emerging adults tend to have poorer outcomes than other groups.

The developmental research also indicates that emerging adulthood is unique. For most people, this critical developmental period marks a shift towards adult independence across several domains, including social, financial, and career. This period necessarily involves a degree of volatility as emerging adults develop and explore their adult relationships, goals, and sense of self. While emerging adulthood is largely defined by a shift away from the dependence of childhood and into the independence of adulthood, rapidly developing neuroscience and developmental research show that from a psychological perspective, this period is characterized by many of the same hallmark features of youth as late adolescence: notably, increased risk-taking behavior, diminished foresight, and increased vulnerability to peer influence.

Neuroscience provides an additional piece of the puzzle. Modern research indicates that regions of the human brain responsible for

* JUVENILE LAW CENTER, RETHINKING JUSTICE FOR EMERGING ADULTS (2020), <https://jlc.org/resources/rethinking-justice-emerging-adults-spotlight-great-lakes-region>

decision-making, weighing consequences, and resisting peer pressure, among other executive functions, are not fully developed until a person's mid-twenties.* At the same time, this period is also characterized by heightened brain plasticity, meaning that emerging adults are more likely than fully developed adults to learn from their experiences and change perspectives or behaviors. Emerging adulthood is now widely recognized as the period where a young person is simultaneously more likely to engage in risky behavior and mature out of what the United States Supreme Court called the "transient immaturity" of adolescence.**

Taken together, the criminal justice data, developmental research and neuroscience are clear: to attain positive criminal legal outcomes, bolster public safety, enhance the well-being of communities and support positive individual outcomes, our policies, practices and resources must be designed with emerging adults in mind.

Promisingly, research demonstrates that understanding and focusing on the unique characteristics, strengths, and needs of this age group can lead to positive outcomes for young people and their communities. With proper attention and investment, policy makers and practitioners are in a unique position to keep

emerging adults out of the criminal legal system altogether, and for those in the system, reduce harm and limit barriers to successful return to their communities.

Building on the years-long work of Loyola University Chicago, this scan provides examples of jurisdictions across the country that have implemented law, policy and practice specifically designed to serve EAs in contact with the criminal legal system.***

Several key findings emerge from this research:

- ◆ First, there is growing investment in "system-centric" approaches such as deferred prosecution programs, problem-solving courts, specialized probation, and specialized housing units in corrections facilities. While important and necessary parts of a strong continuum of resources for emerging adults and those working with them, policy makers must note these interventions only reach young people who are already enmeshed in the criminal legal system and cannot provide the preventative or cost-saving measures that front-end interventions can.

- ◆ Second, the majority of "system-centric" approaches have narrow eligibility criteria and/or expansive disqualifying factors and thus may have limited impact on the larger body of emerging adults who may benefit from programming or services.
- ◆ While system-delivered strategies have increased in the past five years, there continues to be significantly less investment in front-end deflection strategies, back-end re-entry supports and programs operated by community-based / not for profit organizations.
- ◆ Lastly, there is a gap in risk/needs assessment for young adults. Modern policy and practice emphasizes the use of structured, validated risk / need / strength assessment tools to gauge the level and type of intervention that a system-involved person may need. However, there are currently no validated assessments designed specifically for emerging adults.

These findings suggest several law and policy implications.

Positive results from community-based and targeted prevention efforts demonstrate that deflecting young people from system involvement altogether helps create and foster safe communities. The overrepresentation of emerging adults at arrest and every subsequent contact point can be addressed in part by community-based approaches that fall outside of the control and dictates of the criminal

legal system itself, and are thus deserving of proportionate investment.

Robust and developmentally-appropriate diversion resources are critical in promoting positive outcomes for young people and communities. Communities have an opportunity to use local data and context to revisit and expand eligibility criteria for existing programs in ways that effectively meet the needs of emerging adults in their communities, ensure that emerging adults are not unnecessarily, categorically excluded and enhance the long term safety and well-being of communities.

Lastly, there is opportunity to expand on traditional risk/needs/responsivity approaches. Addressing the unique needs and characteristics of emerging adults in validated assessment processes, while avoiding the potential to exacerbate or perpetuate racial inequities in legal responses, can help reduce unnecessary supervision and intervention and instead focus needed resources on the young people who most need them.

This scan is intended to provide information to community leaders and decision-makers in order to strengthen the resources available to young adults in their communities.

* Schiraldi, V., Western, B., & Bradner, K. (2015). *Community-based responses to justice-involved youth adults*. Bulletin. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

** See infra, note 1

*** See [Emerging Adults: Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy, and Practice: Loyola University Chicago \(luc.edu\)](https://www.luc.edu/criminal-justice-research)



Introduction

A JUST, SAFE AND EQUITABLE future demands that local and national policy makers, practitioners, advocates, and community leaders understand and act on emerging adults' unique characteristics and needs. Young people between the ages of 18-26 experience disproportionately more arrests, probation revocations, and reincarcerations than the rest of the adult population.

Within this subset, racial and ethnic disparities are profound, with Black emerging adults comprising an outsized percentage of people under some type of system control or surveillance.^{*} There are clear pathways to accelerate the provision of targeted, developmentally tailored programs and resources to emerging adults, and all pathways require recognition of the fact that despite their prevalence on criminal legal caseloads, emerging adults have diminished culpability and incredible prospects for positive change. As demonstrated in this scan, increased recognition of these facts has led courts and legislatures

across the country to extend specialized protections to this age group.

This scan is organized by "contact point," an adaptation of the commonly used "[sequential intercepts](#)" framework, beginning with strategies to deflect young people from arrest and ending with strategies to support people returning to their communities following incarceration. It is important to note that these categories (and thus the programs and strategies described in each section) may overlap. Therefore, as with [Loyola's 2017 national scan](#), this document should be read as a whole to understand the range of strategies, policies and programs jurisdictions across the country are using to improve outcomes when young adults are in contact with or involved in criminal justice systems.

While the scan spans front-end deflection to post-incarceration community re-entry, it is not exhaustive, nor does a program's inclusion in this inventory reflect adherence to an evidence

^{*} JUVENILE LAW CENTER, RETHINKING JUSTICE FOR EMERGING ADULTS (2020), <https://jlc.org/resources/rethinking-justice-emerging-adults-spotlight-great-lakes-region>

based practice model or endorsement of the practices or policies described. It can, however, provide a comprehensive look at the growing movement to tailor criminal legal responses to the unique characteristics, needs and strengths of emerging adults. Because this scan focused exclusively on programs and approaches that were designed for emerging adults, many approaches that serve broader groups of adolescents or older adults are not included.

Research and national trends invite a twofold question: first, how can policy makers and practitioners leverage the unique strengths and characteristics of emerging adults to minimize the criminal legal system's contact with them?

And second, if young adults do become involved in criminal legal systems, how can we help foster fulfilling and safe lives for emerging adults and their communities despite this involvement? The following key findings may help guide local responses to these questions.

First, as compared with "system-centric" approaches such as deferred prosecution programs, problem-solving courts, specialized probation, and specialized housing units in corrections facilities, there is relatively little investment in approaches that are not system run and operated, especially front-end deflection strategies and back-end re-entry

strategies. However, positive results from community-based and targeted prevention efforts demonstrate that deflecting young people from system involvement altogether helps create and foster safe communities. Thus, investment here is critical.

Second, the majority of existing approaches exclude a larger body of emerging adults due to narrow eligibility and expansive disqualifying criteria. For example, many deferred prosecution programs exclude young people with charges categorized as violent, including weapons possession charges, even if the person themselves did not commit harm. Widespread disqualification of certain charge categories may limit the reach and impact of a program. Consequently, there is tremendous opportunity to use local data and context to revisit and expand eligibility criteria for existing approaches.

Lastly, and relatedly, there is no validated risk/needs assessment for young adults, requiring those who rely on such assessments with the option of using adapted assessments designed for juveniles or fully developed adults. This approach runs the risk of net-widening and inaccurately or imprecisely capturing emerging adults' needs and thus decreasing the efficacy of interventions or pulling emerging adults into unnecessarily lengthy or intensive system

involvement. The majority of programs and approaches focused on emerging adults rely on some version of risk/needs assessment, whether formal or informal, which highlights the need for tools and processes that have been developed for and validated with emerging adults and which can mitigate racial inequities in criminal legal responses to young adults. Because many resources are made available to young people only upon or after arrest and significant involvement in the system, a validated tool can both mitigate involvement and more robustly address emerging adults' needs.

Outside of the scan's major findings, there are also numerous, creative ideas from individual jurisdictions. In several states, including Connecticut, California, Massachusetts and Illinois, policy makers are examining jurisdictional boundaries and considering whether emerging adults should be subjected to adult criminal legal structures, or instead included in juvenile court processes. Vermont has adopted legislation to incrementally raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction to age 20. In Michigan and Washington, mandatory life without parole sentences have been abolished for 18 year-olds and those under 21, respectively.* Innovation is possible in every area of the law that touches emerging adults.

Finally, and critically, while examples of law, policy and programming from other jurisdictions can be helpful, the approaches best for any given community or group of emerging adults will rely on local data and context, including policing and prosecution patterns and practices, the local continuum of services and supports and community values and goals. This scan is intended as a resource for communities to reflect on what safety and success looks like in a given community and to explore opportunities to place emerging adults on a path toward safety and well-being.

* See *People v. Parks*, No. 162086, 2022 WL 3008548 (Wash. Jul. 28, 2022); see also *In re Monschke*, 197 Wash.2d 305 (2021)

Deflection from System Involvement: An Area for Further Exploration

While many jurisdictions across the country have developed strategies to deflect adolescents or older adults from arrest and legal system referral, there are few models of developmentally-tailored emerging adult deflection in place. In this context, “deflection” refers to policies, practices, and programs that prevent arrest and court involvement and – if needed – link people to supportive services in the community. Deflection may include strategies to de-escalate law enforcement / young adult encounters, address behavioral health and other crises with community-based resources and, provide for accountability for harmful behavior and address underlying needs without arrest or legal system referral. Deflection is distinguished from “diversion”, which in this context refers to the redirection of a legal case from further processing in the legal system at any point following arrest.

Developmental research indicates that emerging adults may experience and react to law enforcement interactions differently than either older adults or younger teens. Especially in stressful or emotionally charged settings, emerging adults may struggle with emotional regulation, stress management, and behavioral control. Additionally, some emerging adults may be dealing with the onset of serious mental health conditions that neither they, nor their family, have the experience or resources to manage

Arrests and criminal legal system involvement comes with a high price tag – in both human and fiscal terms. Data analyses consistently indicate significant overrepresentation of emerging adults in arrest populations. In short, law enforcement / young adult interactions have high stakes and require specialized skills, training and resources to prevent unnecessary arrests, protect the safety of all involved and link young adults and their families with community based resources when needed.

Given these realities, strategies to deflect emerging adults from arrest, while enhancing community well-being and safety, should be a priority.

However, this scan revealed a lack of deflection strategies and resources for emerging adults. There were no wide-reaching efforts to equip police officers to use developmentally appropriate de-escalation techniques or procedural justice strategies with emerging adults. Programs available to deflect youth from arrest and system referral are not typically available to young people 18 years old or older. And programs available for the general “criminal justice population” have not been developed to address the unique vulnerabilities, needs and strengths of emerging adults.

In light of the lack of developmentally-tailored deflection resources for emerging adults, juvenile deflection models may serve as starting points for the development of emerging adult deflection strategies. Youth-focused models recognize that: 1) An arrest can be a traumatic, stigmatizing and life-altering event for a young person; 2) Arrests create criminal records, which can create lifelong obstacles to education, employment and housing and increase risks of future system contacts; 3) Legal system involvement is costly and system resources should be focused on serious cases; and 4) Racial disparities at the “front end” of our legal systems are profound and must be addressed.

Successful deflection reduces these potential harms while linking youth and families with community-based resources, when needed, outside the legal system. Deflection models focus primarily on treatment and services, rather than criminal legal system involvement, and if developed carefully, they can address the racial and ethnic disparities that are typically most pronounced at arrest. Moreover, by addressing individual and community needs with community-based resources and responses, deflection can preserve scarce law enforcement and criminal legal system resources.

Clearly, designing deflection resources with the unique characteristics of emerging adults in mind is critical. To achieve better outcomes with emerging adults and communities, the criminal legal system should look to behavioral health responses and youth-serving systems and consider similar approaches. Deflection programs must be designed to avoid perpetuating racial and ethnic disparities, and they must further be developed with the developmental research on emerging adults in mind.



Contact Points

Targeted Prevention

Contact Point(s) and Definitions

Targeted prevention efforts focus on individual young adults or groups who have been identified as at significant risk of involvement in the criminal legal system. This section includes programs and strategies which utilize public health or violence interruption strategies to reach young adults in high-crime / high-violence / under-resourced neighborhoods. These programs may overlap with and serve as diversion resources (serving young adults who have been arrested and facing criminal legal system processing) and / or reentry resources (serving young adults who are exiting the criminal legal system, jail or incarceration) or may accompany community corrections (probation or parole) supervision.

While there are potentially hundreds of public health and other prevention programs which serve youth, young adults and adults to prevent offending and improve community well-being, programs included here partner with justice system agencies or actors to reach emerging adults who may be at significant risk of system involvement. Programs which primarily serve young adults through specialized legal structures and programs that serve as alternatives to traditional court processes are described in the *"Specialized Court Processes"* section of this scan.

Overview

Emerging adults, particularly those who live in under-resourced communities across urban, suburban, and rural areas, are uniquely vulnerable to crime, violence, and victimization. Targeted prevention efforts recognize the heightened likelihood of certain groups of emerging adults coming into contact with the criminal legal system, including those aging out of child welfare / foster care or juvenile justice systems and those exiting criminal legal system involvement. Regardless of identification methodology, these efforts focus resources on uniquely vulnerable groups of young adults to prevent criminal legal system contact and involvement. Like deflection, effective targeted prevention can help young people avoid the trauma and collateral consequences of arrest or system referral, utilize scarce resources more effectively and create continuity of care for those aging out of youth-serving systems.

Targeted prevention efforts look different depending on where they are carried out, who spearheads their work, and the communities being served. For example, some programs in communities that experience a high level of gun violence target those young people most likely to engage in and / or be harmed by gun violence. Other efforts focus less on geographic service areas and more on groups of young people who share a specific characteristic, such as those who are aging out of the foster care system. Regardless of individual community or program characteristics, effective targeted prevention requires the cooperation and coordination among multiple levels of government, nonprofit and private sectors and community stakeholders.

Most targeted prevention programs rely on “aggressive outreach” and “relentless engagement” by outreach workers. Some do so with input from system actors such as judges, probation officers, and police officers. Young adults receive a wide range of services and support in these programs, often with an emphasis on wraparound services and case management, mental health and trauma services, education and employment supports and cognitive-behavioral coaching. Program staff

typically receive specialized training in working with emerging adults and have access to specialized resources.

Program providers and system stakeholders report that the young adults they serve tend to need housing supports, help with childcare and parenting and transportation to program sites and economic supports. Without these basic survival resources, it is difficult for young people to attend program activities or to fully engage in the supports available to them. Thus, these needs must be planned for and budgeted for in program design. Program providers also report that including young adults and their families in case planning – and in overall design of programs – is critical in achieving success.

Regardless of the focus population or referral mechanisms, effective programs require the cooperation and coordination of efforts between government entities, the nonprofit and private sectors and community stakeholders. At the individual level, successful targeted intervention requires the inclusion and support of people who are important in a young person’s life, including family members and caregivers, peers, adult supports and community members.

Implementation Notes & Examples

Some programs utilize “outreach workers”, community referrals and other methods to identify and recruit program participants, while others rely on local law enforcement referrals. Sites utilizing law enforcement referral processes should ensure that those approaches do not deepen or perpetuate racial and ethnic disparities or increase unnecessary contacts between law enforcement and young adults.

To the extent that these services and interventions are based on risk and / or needs assessment, the gap in validated, normed assessment tools for emerging adults may affect program design and delivery.

ROCA

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

ROCA is the lead agency for the “[Safe and Successful Youth Initiatives](#)” programs implemented in Lynn, MA, Holyoke, MA, Springfield, MA, Chelsea, MA and Baltimore, MD. Roca focuses its work with young people who are the center of urban violence, all of whom have experienced high levels of trauma, and are often unable or unwilling to engage in more traditional education, employment or behavioral health programs. A voluntary program, Roca’s Intervention Model is an internationally recognized, four-year behavioral health model that intervenes with young people at critical risk to teach them life-saving skills – the behavioral skills they need to stay alive long enough so that they can learn to choose to live. Roca’s intervention is made up of 4 critical components: creating safety and stability through outreach and intensive relationship building; teaching lifesaving skills including cognitive behavioral theory; providing opportunities to practice skills, relapse and repeat through trauma-informed employment, education and life skills programming; and engaging with institutions and systems to support change.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-24 with high risk for justice system involvement
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Sustainable behavioral health outcomes including improved emotional regulation and ability to manage behavioral health challenges, reduced offending/recidivism, employment placement/retention and educational gains
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Local police departments, probation officers, youth services
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban & Suburban (in over 21 communities)
- ◆ **Setting/context:** ROCA is a private community led organization that works alongside criminal legal system actors

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Evaluation data is available
- ◆ **Cautions:** No significant cautions are noted
- ◆ **Special populations:** Young adults who (1) have been previously arrested, (2) have been previously incarcerated, (3) have a history of gang or street involvement, (4) have a history of drug abuse, (5) have prior juvenile probation, or (6) have prior adult probation. Roca’s targeted young people are not ready, willing or able to engage in traditional work or programming

UTEC

MA

UTEC is another lead agency for the SSYI programs implemented in Lowell, MA, Haverhill, MA, and Lawrence, MA. UTEC reaches out to young people who have what UTEC refers to as a “barrier to success.” UTEC performs both outreach in the community and in-reach within correctional facilities in order to recruit young adults and help them assimilate back into their communities. UTEC offers education programs to help participants pass the GED and HiSET tests. UTEC also offers transitional mentor coaching for their participants, and employment placement in three different industries. The employment placement allows participants to earn a wage while also helping them gain valuable employment skills and experience. The program targets young people who have one of the enumerated “barriers to success” and need help in overcoming these barriers.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 17-25 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Employment placement; education enrollment; recidivism reduction; mental health treatment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Local police departments
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** UTEC is a nonprofit organization that works with community leaders and collaborates with, but works independently of, law enforcement

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Evaluation data is available
- ◆ **Cautions:** No significant cautions are noted
- ◆ **Special populations:** Participants must have at least one “barrier to success” including: criminal records, gang involvement, lack of high school diploma or GED, had a child while young, or are expecting to have a child

Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP)

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP) is a high-tech, career focused mentoring program for youth involved with or at risk of becoming involved with the criminal legal system. RAMP is implemented across the country by state and local organizations, and its model uses a combination of group, peer, and one-on-one mentoring. RAMP is focused on helping youth start down a path towards a career in science, technology, and math (STEM), and targets individuals facing barriers to employment such as developmental, emotional, cognitive, or other disabilities.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** The ages of the individuals who may participate vary based on the programs implemented in each city, but they range from young people between 13-25 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Employment training; education enrollment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** RAMP is a part of IEL (Institute for Educational Leadership), a non-profit organization
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** The Institute for Educational Leadership, but the programs implemented in each city are run and operated by local organizations. RAMP works with judges, probation officers, parole officers, and other diversion programs. These actors refer young people who they feel would benefit from RAMP’s services

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** While limited, evaluation data is available
- ◆ **Cautions:** No significant cautions noted
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals who are involved with or at risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system

Right Turn Career-Focused Initiative

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Right Turn is a career-focused initiative that focuses on education, training, and workforce development for young people that are involved with or at risk of being involved with the criminal legal system. The Right Turn program provides youth individualized education, exposure to career opportunities, career preparation, and work-based learning experiences.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people and emerging adults between 16-21 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Employment training; education enrollment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** The Institute for Educational Leadership, but the programs implemented in each city are run and operated by local organizations.
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Community/local organizations

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** While limited, evaluation data is available
- ◆ **Cautions:** No significant cautions noted
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals who are involved with or at risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system.

Chicago CRED

CHICAGO, IL

Chicago CRED is an intensive outreach program that is aimed at reducing gun violence in the South and West side neighborhoods of Chicago. The program is targeted at young men who are at risk of gun violence or gang involvement and are in need of positive adult role models and support systems that they can trust. Specifically, it is aimed at reducing gun violence by 80%. CRED uses street outreach workers to find young men who are at risk of engaging in or being a victim of gun violence. The workers utilize a “relentless outreach” approach in order to gain the young men’s trust and encourage them to participate in the program. Once they are in the program, CRED provides the young men with one-on-one mentoring and trauma counseling, assistance with obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, and assistance with gaining workforce skills and finding a career path.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men who are most likely to engage in or be victims of gun violence.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Employment training; education enrollment; job placement; mental health counseling
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** CRED is a nonprofit organization with a full staff, and it partners with over a dozen Chicago-based nonprofit organizations
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Chicago CRED utilizes local partners to implement its programs in each neighborhood

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Participation is voluntary. Participants are usually approached by mentors on the street, who then utilize a relentless outreach approach in order to establish a relationship with them and gain their trust; no disqualifying factors
- ◆ **Cautions:** No significant cautions were noted
- ◆ **Special populations:** N/A

READI Chicago

CHICAGO, IL

READI Chicago is an outreach program that is aimed at reducing gun violence on the South and West side neighborhoods of Chicago. Participants engage in a one year program where they are given transitional jobs, are connected with cognitive behavioral therapy services, and are provided with wrap-around services to help support them. Eventually, at the end of the program, participants transition into unsubsidized employment with the help of their mentors and other READI Chicago staff members. Young men who are in need of employment, therapy services, and adult mentors who they can trust and rely on.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men who are most highly impacted by gun violence.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Mental health counseling; employment training; job placement
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Heartland Alliance, Illinois Department of Corrections, and Cook County Sheriff's Office. Collaboration primarily centers around identifying program participants.
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Community

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** While limited, evaluation data is available; relentless engagement; no disqualifying factors
- ◆ **Cautions:** No significant cautions were noted
- ◆ **Special populations:** Participants must be significantly impacted by gun violence

More Than Words

BOSTON, MA

More Than Words (MTW) is a job training and youth development program that targets young adults in the Boston area who are in the foster care system, court involved, homeless, or are out of school. Individuals are given a paying job working for MTW's bookstores, either in the physical store or assisting with the online store. Individuals learn customer service, technology, inventory management, and leadership skills. Individuals also work a paid YOU job, which helps them advance their own personal goals and education. After 6-12 months working for the bookstores and working at their YOU jobs, individuals graduate and are provided with 2 years of support from the Career Services Program. Youth receive help exploring career and college options, completing their FAFSA, and drafting resumes and cover letters. Also serves individuals who are foster-system involved, homeless, or out of school.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 16-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Employment skills
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** It is a non-profit organization that is run by a Board of Directors which include individuals from various professional backgrounds; from a retired private investment banker to a retired judge.
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Nonprofit organization

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Evaluation data is available
- ◆ **Cautions:** No significant cautions were found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals who are "court-involved"



Post-Arrest/Pre-Trial Programs

Contact Point(s) and Definitions:

Post-arrest / pretrial strategies focus on emerging adults who have been arrested and referred to the criminal legal system but have not been tried, convicted or found guilty. These programs and strategies vary widely in their underlying philosophy, rationale, and structure. However, they typically take two interrelated forms: specialized supervision and supports while a case is awaiting disposition, and opportunities for diversion/charge dismissal in response to positive program outcomes.

Some programs are geared towards providing emerging adults in pretrial detention with specialized counseling; other programs serve as an alternative to prosecution as a whole; some programs mandate a guilty plea; and other programs allow program participation to take the place of any sort of formal adjudication. Given the wide variety, some of these programs may elsewhere be referred to as “diversion” programs.

These programs may overlap with those providing targeted prevention supports (featured in the prior section of this scan). Programs which primarily serve young adults through specialized legal structures and programs that serve as alternatives to traditional court processes currently under the supervision or jurisdiction of a court are described in the *Specialty Courts and Specialized Court Features* section of this scan.

Overview

Young adults may receive a wide range of services and supports in these programs. As with “targeted prevention” strategies, these programs often provide wraparound services and case management, mental health and trauma services, education and employment supports and cognitive-behavioral coaching. Program staff typically receive specialized training in working with emerging adults and have access to specialized resources. Unlike targeted prevention strategies, these programs primarily serve young adults who are currently under the supervision and oversight of criminal legal systems.

As with targeted prevention programs, service providers and system stakeholders report that basic survival resources – including housing, childcare and economic supports – and help with logistics such as transportation and internet service are needed by many of the young adults served. Without these survival resources and supports, it is difficult for young people to attend program activities or to fully engage in the supports available to them. Thus, these needs must be planned for and budgeted for in program design. Program providers also report that including young adults and their families in case planning – and in overall design of programs – is critical in achieving success.

Implementation Notes & Examples

By definition, these programs and resources are available only to emerging adults who have been arrested and referred for formal legal system processing, which may create obstacles to education, employment and housing opportunities as well as expose young people to the stigma and trauma of arrest, booking, and charging. Stakeholders should consider making needed resources available to young people and families at earlier stages of contact, without arrest / system referrals.

Additionally, many or most of these programs target “low level” offenses and / or have extensive disqualification factors for participation, including categorical exclusion of certain charge categories or exclusion of people with prior records. Unnecessarily broad categorical exclusions may disqualify large numbers of young people and communities who could benefit from the program and the resources allocated may not have the impact intended.

While services and supports may be helpful to many young adults and communities, stakeholders must protect against “net widening” in the development and implementation of diversion programs. In this context, “net widening” refers to administrative or programmatic changes that result in a greater number of individuals being controlled by criminal legal systems than who would have been otherwise, or young adults being subjected to a longer period of supervision or more intensive oversight than they would be outside the program.

To the extent that these services and interventions are based on risk and needs assessment, the gap in validated assessment tools for emerging adults may affect program design and delivery.

Lastly, stakeholders must avoid disincentivizing or punishing program participation by ensuring that young people who “fail” in these programs are not subjected to harsher legal penalties than they would have otherwise faced.

Lone Star Justice Alliance

AUSTIN, TX

The Lone Star Justice Alliance Transformative Justice programs are community-based, integrated interventions that uses developmentally appropriate approaches to address the underlying factors that contribute to young adults’ involvement with the criminal legal system. In lieu of court adjudication, the alliance provides case management and extensive mental and physical health services through partnerships with local medical centers. Participants are referred by the Dallas County district attorney’s office.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people of all genders, aged 17-24, charged with a felony offense in the adult criminal legal system.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** The program’s desired outcomes are to ensure that young people’s medical, mental health, educational, housing, and income needs are identified through multi-disciplinary teams; that solutions are provided for those needs; and to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Dallas County DA, Texas A&M Public Policy Research Institute, Harvard’s Access to Justice Lab, and the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health
- ◆ **Type of communities:** 99% urban, 1% rural
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Community-based

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** While there is not yet publicly available evaluation data, LSJA has partnered with researchers at the Texas A&M Public Policy Research Institute, Harvard’s Access to Justice Lab, and the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health. Further, the Alliance works to address the underlying needs of the young people it works with.
- ◆ **Cautions:** There is no evaluation data yet, but a randomized control study is forthcoming.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Those charged with felony offenses in the adult criminal legal system

The Choice is Yours Program

PHILADELPHIA, PA

The Choice is Yours Program is an alternative to incarceration and punishment for eligible participants. Young people participate in a one year program where they work towards obtaining their diploma, and they graduate at the end of the program. Upon successful completion, participants have the charges against them dropped, and they are eligible to have their records expunged one year later if all fees are paid and they have no subsequent arrests.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people between 18-30 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Education enrollment, reduce recidivism, incarceration rate reduction
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, Municipal Court and the Defender Association of Philadelphia
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Program is operated out of the Jewish Educational and Vocational Services office, as staff members of JEVS replace probation officers in the role of supervising participants.

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Evaluation data is available through Equal Measure. Participants are rarely if ever kicked out of the program, and any setbacks or requirement violations typically result in sanctions such as writing an essay about the importance of the program, or mandatory attendance at AA or NA meetings. The program emphasizes "relentless engagement" that serves to keep young people in the program
- ◆ **Cautions:** Individuals who have a criminal record with violent offenses are not permitted to participate in the program
- ◆ **Special populations:** Young people must be facing their first drug offense and be facing 1-2 year prison sentences

Cook County SEED Program

COOK COUNTY, IL

The Cook County Supporting Employment and Education Development (SEED) program was created as an alternative to trial and conviction for young adults charged with felony drug distribution. The program offers comprehensive services to help young adults prepare for, obtain and maintain meaningful employment at a living wage and ultimately prevent actions that harm communities.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people between 18-30 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduced jail admissions / length of stay, stable employment, reduced recidivism
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Cook County Safety and Justice Challenge Project, Cook County Justice Advisory Council, Cook County State's Attorney's Office, Office of the Public Defender and Office of the Chief Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County, Heartland Alliance
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Program is operated by Heartland Alliance and serves young adults referred by the stakeholders of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Evaluation data is not available.
- ◆ **Cautions:** Individuals with current charges or prior convictions for violent offenses or weapons offenses may not be permitted to participate in the program
- ◆ **Special populations:** Young people charged with possession with intent to distribute (drug sales) vs. simple possession are eligible. Those with drug treatment needs are referred to other programs and supports.

Young Adult Diversion Program

PENNINGTON COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

The Young Adult Diversion Program in Pennington County allows individuals with limited criminal histories to participate in a program in lieu of pleading guilty and facing a traditional sentence. Participants must complete the requirements of the program they choose to participate in within 3-4 months. If the participants meet the requirements within the 3-4 month timeframe, their charges are dismissed, and if the participant then remains in good standing the following year, the state will not oppose a motion to expunge or clear their record, including the arrest. There is no fee to participate in the program.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people between 18-25 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** The outcomes are highly individualized for each participant depending on their needs (i.e. some may undergo drug therapy while others attend GED classes), and the overarching goal is to reduce recidivism
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Pennington County State's Attorney Office
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban and rural
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Program is operated out of the State's Attorney Office

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** The program is aimed at primarily assisting young adults living on Native American reservations and involves significant records relief provisions
- ◆ **Cautions:** There are significant limitations to who may participate in the program, including the fact that participants must have limited criminal history.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals with limited criminal histories facing misdemeanor and/or low-level felony charges.

AIM Court

DALLAS COUNTY, TX

This program allows people charged with "low level" offenses to receive the tools and resources they need to avoid recidivism. The program provides a curriculum of sanctions, incentives, and rehabilitation, and it also includes rehabilitative services, individualized treatment plans, referrals for housing, education and employment resources, and additional therapeutic support for 9-18 months. Participants may participate in the program on a pre-plea basis. Upon completion, program participants will have their cases dismissed and their charges expunged.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-25 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism, substance abuse treatment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Dallas County District Attorney's Office, Dallas County District Attorney's Office and the 292nd District Court
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban, suburban, and rural
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Program is operated out of the 292nd District Courthouse in Dallas

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** This program dismisses charges and expunges cases upon completion, and it simultaneously addresses young people struggling with substance abuse; some evaluation data is available through the operating court
- ◆ **Cautions:** Individuals facing the following charges are excluded from participating in the program: aggravated felony charges that they have been previously been convicted for or are pending; charges that would require sex offender registry; family violence/abuse charges; a pending, unrelated felony; and anyone currently on probation. Like other programs, these limiting factors reduce the number of people who may greatly benefit from the program
- ◆ **Special populations:** Participants must be facing nonviolent felony charges for the first time

Special Options Services

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

SOS is a program that offers individuals facing nonviolent charges to be released on bail while under strict supervision. Defendants are not required to plead guilty before participating in the program. A major premise of this program is that many young people who become involved in the criminal legal system are in need of appropriate support and access to opportunities for education, training, and counseling that may have been unavailable to them prior to their arrest. The program gives the Court the discretion to offer this benefit of supervision and services to certain young people in cases where pretrial detention or a jail sentence may not be necessary. The program includes frequent contact with the young person; regular communication with family members, treatment providers, and counselors; verification of residence and employment; regular drug testing; and frequent criminal record checks.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** U.S. Pretrial Services Agency for the Eastern District of New York
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-based

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Older emerging adults can be considered on a case-by-case basis
- ◆ **Cautions:** The young person cannot have a criminal history of violent offenses, a lengthy criminal record, or “pose a danger” to society - these limiting factors may exclude those young people who need services most
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals facing non-violent charges, with a nonviolent criminal history

Young Adult Opportunity Program

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

The Young Adult Opportunity (YAO) Program provides selected individuals with intensive supervision in lieu of immediate incarceration. The YAO Program lasts between 12-18 months, and participants are provided with access to employment, counseling, and treatment resources. Upon successful completion, participants may potentially receive a shortened sentence, a reduction or deferral of the charges against them, or dismissal of the charges against them.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-25 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Employment placement, substance abuse treatment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Overseen by U.S. District Judges in the Southern District of New York
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban and suburban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-based

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Some evaluation data is available through the court itself
- ◆ **Cautions:** Individuals cannot have an extensive criminal history and no other cases or active warrants against them. Further, individuals with prior convictions of the following charges are also prohibited from participating: crimes of violence; and firearms offenses. This limitation reduces the number of people eligible for necessary services. Further, some individuals may be required to plead guilty as a condition of their continued participation, which may run counterintuitive to goals of reducing a person’s criminal history
- ◆ **Special populations:** Candidates must have a limited criminal justice history and must not be facing any other charges

Youthful Offender Program

POLK COUNTY, IA

The Youthful Offender Program in Polk County serves young people between 16 – 22 years old who are facing felony charges for the first time, and who additionally do not have a documented record of gang involvement. The program provides an opportunity for young people to have felony charges lowered to misdemeanors and the felony charge removed from their records. It includes a range of services and supervision as well as a partnership with a local community college.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people under the age of 22
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Substance abuse treatment; education enrollment; behavior counseling
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Polk County Attorney's Office-Restorative Justice Center
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban, suburban, and rural
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-based

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Records relief is a primary highlight of this program
- ◆ **Cautions:** Participants are allowed two attempts at scheduling and showing up for a sign-up session and are ineligible after two opportunities where they did not show up. This contrasts with the “relentless engagement” model utilized by other emerging adults services providers to address programmatic violations on an individualized basis. Further, participants may be placed in a “residential facility” for failure to comply or for substance use relapse, and it is unclear the extent to which these facilities mimic jail conditions.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Juveniles waived to adult court on felony charges or young adults facing first time felony charges

PATH Program

LONG BEACH, CA

The PATH Program is a one time class offered to young people charged with minor crimes for the first time. The class is 6 hours, and is meant to help provide job skills and mentoring/educational programs in lieu of facing criminal prosecution.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people between 16-24 years old; 25-26 year olds considered on a case-by-case basis
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Employment placement; development of life skills
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Long Beach City Prosecutor, Long Beach City Council
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Prosecutor's office

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Some evaluation data is available through LA County, and the prosecutor's office created the class in response to data and statistics that showed young adults were chronically underemployed and susceptible to becoming victims of violent crime.
- ◆ **Cautions:** Individuals facing serious, violent offenses are excluded from participating, which limits the number of people who may benefit from such a program. Further, there is a possible financial barrier (\$225 to do the program), and although waivers are available, it is another step that could serve as a barrier to entry and completion
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals must be facing charges for a “minor offense”

Deferred Sentencing Program

DISTRICT COURT OF RHODE ISLAND

The Deferred Sentencing Program is a post-guilty plea program intended to be an alternative to traditional conviction, sentencing, and incarceration. It provides a framework of supervision and services, including: drug and alcohol treatment, mental health counseling, or community service. Upon completion of the program, the presiding judge imposes a reduced, typically non-custodial, sentence.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people between the ages of 18-35
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Employment skills; mental health treatment; drug and alcohol abuse treatment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** U.S. District Court of Rhode Island, Collaborates with defense attorneys, prosecutors, and probation officers
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - district court cases can involve defendants charged with federal crimes from urban, suburban, and rural areas
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-based

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Criteria for entering the program is left purposefully flexible which may include “bubble” cases that would not be taken with more rigid criteria
- ◆ **Cautions:** There are significant limitations to who may participate in the program, including the fact that participants must have little to no prior criminal history. Participants must also plead guilty. When a participant demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to complete the program, they are removed, which runs contrary to successful “relentless engagement” models. The Court may also impose sanctions for lapses such as written assignments, inpatient treatment, curfew, home detention, or incarceration for a few days in lieu of disqualification from the program. Ultimately, program rules focus more on disqualification than on how to keep participants “in.”
- ◆ **Special populations:** Must have little to no prior criminal history.

Middlesex DA's Office Juvenile and Young Adult Diversion Program

LOWELL, MA

The Middlesex D.A.'s Office Young Adult Diversion Program allows young adults to complete a remedial program and/or community service instead of formal prosecution. If the young person satisfies all the requirements in their program, then there will be no further proceedings in the criminal legal system related to their original offense. Programs vary from participant to participant, but they typically include: counseling, education programs, community service, writing letters of apology, remedial measures, and restitution to the victims. If the individual fails to complete the program, then the D.A.'s office may choose to proceed with their arraignment.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people under 26 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Middlesex District Attorney's Office
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Suburban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Program is operated out of the D.A.'s office, but participants are connected with other programs for services, like UTEC

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** This program allows participants to avoid formal prosecution
- ◆ **Cautions:** Diversion is not available for those facing mandatory offenses, offenses involving school-based threats, certain victim crimes, and certain motor vehicle offenses
- ◆ **Special populations:** The offense committed must be a misdemeanor or felony that, if committed by an adult, the adult could be prosecuted in the District Court



Specialized Court Processes

Contact Point and Definitions

This section provides information on specialized legal structures and programs available to emerging adults who have been formally charged as an alternative to a traditional court process to adjudicate their case. These programs and approaches often take the form of specialty courts, where traditional trial processes are replaced or supplemented by programs that are designed to engage a person in services relevant to their needs. The programs and processes in this section reference specialized court processes prior to conviction. Specialized sentencing processes or provisions (which apply after a young adult has been convicted of an offense) are discussed in the “Sentencing” section of this scan.

Overview

This scan indicates that specialized court processes focused on emerging adults are spreading quickly. These approaches can include employing developmentally tailored legal procedures, processes, and language; engaging court / system personnel with specialized knowledge and skills, utilizing restorative justice practices and avoiding conviction if the intervention is successful. These alternative courts can utilize positive aspects of problem-solving courts, namely, identifying and addressing individual needs and strengths and building responsive support for the young person, rather than focusing exclusively on the offense.

These specialized court strategies encompass a wide variety of structures, goals and legal approaches. Some mandate a guilty plea; and other programs allow program participation to take the place of any sort of formal adjudication.

A number of emerging adults alternative courts shift away from an adversarial legal process entirely and instead focus on the needs of the defendant and the factors that may have influenced their involvement with the criminal legal system. For example, one program forgoes traditional court proceedings, conducts a needs assessment, and then mandates participation in services. Another program utilizes a “restorative justice” model to emphasize the needs of the community, as well as a “peacemaking” program that uses trained facilitators to mediate conversations between the defendant and victim.

Young adults may receive a wide range of services and supports in these programs. These programs may blend a specialized court process with intensive services, such as case management, mental health and trauma services, education and employment supports and cognitive-behavioral coaching. Court personnel (including judges) and program staff typically receive specialized training in working with emerging adults and have access to specialized resources.

Service providers and system stakeholders report that basic survival resources – including housing, childcare and economic supports – and help with logistics such as transportation and internet service are needed by many of the young adults served. Without these survival resources and supports, it is difficult for young people to attend program activities or to fully engage in the supports available to them. Thus, these needs must be planned for and budgeted for in program design. Program providers also report that including young adults and their families in case planning – and in overall design of programs – is critical in achieving success.

Implementation Notes & Examples

By definition, these programs and resources are available only to emerging adults who have been arrested, referred for formal legal system processing and face trial or court processing – albeit in a structure ostensibly designed for young adults. Thus, the legal records produced prior to referral may create obstacles to education, employment and housing opportunities as well as expose young people to the stigma and trauma of arrest and court involvement. Given the challenges created by arrest and court records, timely expungement or other forms of records relief are important components of successful programs.

Many specialized court processes require a plea of guilty prior to court participation. When assessing these alternatives, it is important to note whether the young person is waiving their rights as a condition of participation and what the implications of those waivers may be for a participant.

Further, many of these programs target “low level offenses” and / or have extensive disqualification factors for participation, including current excluded offenses and / or exclusions for young people with prior arrests or convictions. Unnecessarily broad categorical exclusions may disqualify large numbers of young people and communities who could benefit from the program and the resources allocated may not have the impact intended.

And while the type of services and supports provided in a specialized court process may be helpful to many young adults and their families, stakeholders should be cautious of net widening. In this context, “net widening” refers to administrative or programmatic changes that result in a greater number of individuals being controlled by criminal legal systems than who would have been otherwise, or young adults being subjected to a longer period of supervision or more intensive oversight than they would be outside the program.

To the extent that these services and interventions are based on risk assessment, the gap in validated assessment tools for emerging adults may affect program design and delivery.

Lastly, stakeholders must avoid disincentivizing or punishing program participation by ensuring that young people who “fail” in these programs are not subjected to harsher legal penalties than they would have otherwise faced.

Given these concerns, as well as the expense and effort required to implement specialized court processes, alternative courts require significant thought, consideration, and resources to maximize impact and mitigate potential pitfalls.

Cook County Community Court

COOK COUNTY, IL

The Cook County community courts aim to resolve conflict through the use of restorative conferences and peace circles involving young people charged with crimes, victims, family members, friends, and other individuals affected by the participant's crime. Participants must repair the harm caused by their crime, which may involve participating in community service. If a participant is suffering from a substance abuse problem, then they are referred to a program to address it. The goal of the court is for participants to acknowledge the impact of their offenses, empathize with victims, and make restitution.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-26 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Recidivism reduction; substance abuse treatment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Circuit Court of Cook County, Cook County State's Attorney
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - courts are located in Chicago
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Community courts are operated out of youth centers in the neighborhoods they serve

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** These courts are undergoing a 3-year evaluation to determine outcomes/replicability
- ◆ **Cautions:** Excludes young people facing a violent felony or misdemeanor charge as well as young people with a "violent" criminal history. This may exclude participants who most need an alternative approach.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Participants must have a nonviolent criminal history, with current nonviolent felony or misdemeanor charges.

Second Chance Community Improvement Court

DALLAS, TX

Second Chance Community Improvement Court (SCCIC) is an alternative to traditional court and incarceration for people charged with nonviolent offenses. Individuals participate in a 9-18 month program where they develop job skills, attend mental health counseling, attend substance abuse counseling, and perform community service. Participants must ultimately choose to pursue an education or find a job, and upon completion of the program, the participants' records are expunged.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young adults between 17-30 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Dallas County Public Defender's Office, Dallas County State's Attorney, District Court
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban and suburban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Operated out of a community organization's office

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** A four-year evaluation was commenced in 2019;
- ◆ **Cautions:** The program limits the types of cases that it accepts, and excludes violent felonies
- ◆ **Special populations:** Must be facing charges for a misdemeanor or a nonviolent felony

Young Adult Court

BROOKLYN, NY

The Young Adult Court (YAC) is an alternative for traditional court proceedings and prosecution for young adults facing misdemeanor charges. A needs assessment is performed on each participant, and participants then participate in social intervention programs based on the results of the assessment. Participants are also given information about other intervention services that they may partake in voluntarily.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce Recidivism, Education Enrollment, Mental Health Treatment, Substance Abuse Treatment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Brooklyn District Attorney's Office
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Operated out of the Brooklyn Criminal Court

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** No exceptional highlights were found
- ◆ **Cautions:** Excludes young adults facing charges related to domestic violence, driving while intoxicated, sex crimes, or crimes relating to vehicle and traffic law
- ◆ **Special populations:** Must be facing misdemeanor charges that are not resolved at arraignment.

Young Adult Court

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The Young Adult Court (YAC) is an alternative to traditional incarceration for young adults facing criminal charges. This YAC allows a much more broad range of participants compared to other YAC's. Each participant is assigned to a specially trained clinician who provides trauma-informed services, and participants are provided with intensive case management and therapeutic assessments. Participation typically lasts about 1 year. The YAC refers participants to programs to help them gain job skills, attain their GED, and receive mental health counseling or substance abuse treatment.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, job training, education enrollment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Office of the District Attorney; Office of the Public Defender; Department of Public Health; Adult Probation Department; Department of Child Support Services; San Francisco Police Department
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Operated out of Superior Court of California - County of San Francisco

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Evaluation data by the superior court of California is available; priority given to those facing felony charges
- ◆ **Cautions:** A range of offenses are excluded
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals facing misdemeanor and felony charges, but priority is given to those facing serious felony charges.

Young Adult Court

LOCKPORT CITY, NY

The Lockport Young Adult Court (LYAC) Program aims to reduce recidivism of young adults through “intense” supervision, education, treatment, and judicial monitoring of Court participants. The program links participants to programs, including family counseling, educational and vocational training, anger management, substance abuse counseling, mental health counseling, “first offender” programs, and others.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Late adolescents and emerging adults between 16-21 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Center for Court Innovation
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Suburban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Operated out of Lockport City Court

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** This approach offers a range of different services
- ◆ **Cautions:** To participate, young people waive important rights, such as the right to a speedy trial and consenting to all searches of their home. The program also uses language that can be read as framing involvement with the criminal legal system as equivalent to moral failure.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals facing charges for non-violent crimes.

Red Hook Community Justice Center

BROOKLYN, NY

Red Hook Community Justice Center (RHCJC) is a community court operated out of Brooklyn that handles cases traditionally heard in criminal, civil, and housing court. RHCJC takes a restorative approach to justice, using sanctions and services to address the needs of the community. It also offers a peacemaking program facilitated by trained volunteers which enables those affected by a dispute to discuss and reach an agreement about restitution and repair. Participants in the community court are referred to drug treatment services and other counseling services. Sentences often include drug or alcohol treatment, anger management counseling, mediation, GED courses, and youth groups.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people; no specific ages noted
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** The Center for Court Innovation, Collaborates with the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office and the Office of Court Administration
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Operates out of an old community church in Brooklyn

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Employs a restorative
- ◆ **Cautions:** Excludes Individuals facing charges for serious, violent crimes.
- ◆ **Special populations:** None found

San Francisco Behavioral Health Court

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The San Francisco Behavioral Health Court is a mental health court that aims to connect individuals with serious mental illness to community treatment services. In most instances the individual does not need to enter a guilty plea before participating. Individuals are connected with mental health providers who provide intensive care and case management to them. Providers focus on the individual's diagnosis and psychosocial needs rather than the criminal charges.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people over the age of 18 diagnosed with Axis I mental illness; Individuals charged with, convicted of, or on probation for a misdemeanor or felony offense where the behavior that led to the offense was connected to the mental illness.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism and address mental health needs
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, police department, Adult Probation Department, and the Department of Public Health
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban and suburban - San Francisco County
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Operated out of the Superior Court of California

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** The young person does not need to plead guilty first, and the program makes explicit links between mental health and crime
- ◆ **Cautions:** No notable cautions were found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Individuals with previous felony convictions, facing domestic violence offenses, elder abuse offenses, weapons offenses, or other serious offenses may only participate with the consent of the DA's Office

Emerging Adult Court of Hope ("EACH")

HAMPDEN COUNTY, MA

The Emerging Adult Court of Hope is a program in Hampden County, Massachusetts that diverts eligible young people into a 12 to 18-month program that includes an individual care plan that involves education, behavioral modification therapy, substance abuse counseling, and, if needed, career training. The young person must first plead guilty to their underlying offense, but successful completion of the program could lead to the erasure of the conviction from their records.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Recidivism reduction
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** A team consisting of judges, ADAs, defense attorneys, service providers, case managers work with the young person
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban and suburban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Facilitated through the District Attorney's Office

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Includes the possibility of conviction erasure/records relief; each case is managed by a team of individuals including court stakeholders and service providers
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data
- ◆ **Special populations:** N/A

Young Adult Court

DOUGLAS COUNTY, NE

The YAC is a problem solving court that is an alternative to traditional sentencing for young men and women who are facing a felony charge. The program provides participants with rehabilitative services administered by multidisciplinary agencies. Services include education programs, job training programs, and mental health counseling. The goal of the program is to address all of the participants' criminogenic factors in order to help them transition into normal society. Participants who successfully complete the program have their felony charges dismissed.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Education, job training, mental health
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Judge Stratman, dedicated court coordinator; dedicated problem solving court officer, dedicated state's attorney, public defender's office, and county re-entry assistance program staff
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-run

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Unlike other courts, re-entry staff are involved in cases to assist program participants in transitioning after program completion; programming is tailored to individual needs and progress, allowing for flexibility in time spent in the program
- ◆ **Cautions:** Requires a guilty plea; the burden is on the emerging adult to advocate for their own eligibility: counsel must contact the county attorney's office within 10 weeks post-arrest to be considered; exclusionary criteria is vast, including exclusion on the grounds of not having a social security number, which could disproportionately impact EAs who are undocumented
- ◆ **Special populations:** Charged with a felony



Sentencing

Contact point(s) and Definitions

"Sentencing" refers to the formal legal consequences associated with a conviction after a person either pleads guilty or is found guilty by a judge or jury. A sentence can take a range of forms, including fines, probation, jail or prison. For purposes of this section, sentencing protocols and approaches will most often refer to the extent to which a young person's age and relative maturity are considered whether they will be incarcerated, how long they will be incarcerated or whether they are eligible for any alternative to incarceration. This section provides information on processes and criteria applied to emerging adults upon conviction of an offense. Specialized court processes available to emerging adults prior to conviction are discussed in the "Specialty Courts and Specialized Court Features" section of this scan.

Overview

Most emerging-adult specific sentencing approaches are “youthful offender” provisions or laws that allow judges to utilize a specialized sentencing scheme outside of the normal range for the offense. In these laws, young age is considered a “mitigating factor,” meaning that it serves to reduce what might otherwise be a higher sentence for an older, and presumptively more mature person.

The age range is not uniform across these provisions and does not always match the full range (18-26) of emerging adulthood. Some youthful offender statutes only apply to young people up to age 21, others 22 or 23, and still others under 25. Further, many of these statutes exclude certain offenses such as “high level drug crimes,” capital offenses in states that still have the death penalty, and sex offenses. Most of these statutes are not retroactive, which means that they do not apply to people who had already been sentenced before the law was passed, and will only apply to those sentenced in the future.

As the criminal legal system continues to recognize that emerging adults are psychologically and socially distinct from adults, some legislatures have pursued reform around resentencing for people who are incarcerated and were emerging adults at the time of the offense they were convicted of. Specifically, reform efforts have centered on young people who were between the ages of 18-24 when they were arrested for the crime that they were ultimately convicted of. In late 2020, the District of Columbia passed the Second Look Amendment Act, which established that after serving 15 years of time, a person may file a motion in the original

sentencing court for sentence reduction. A similar bill was introduced in the State of Florida, though the effort ultimately died in Spring of 2020. Both of these efforts sought to expand resentencing provisions that were previously only available to people who were juveniles at the time of the offense for which they were convicted.

While some emerging adults sentencing structures are embedded in statute, courts across the country are increasingly considering claims under both the United States and their respective state constitutions challenging lengthy sentences imposed on emerging adults. State courts in Connecticut, Kentucky, New Jersey, Illinois, and Washington, have applied the reasoning of the United States Supreme Court in *Roper*, *Graham*, *Miller*, and *Montgomery* to invalidate extraordinarily long sentences for young adults even where no such statutory protection exists. The United State Sentencing Commission has also published a report and sentencing guidelines regarding “youthful offenders” - young people 25 years old and younger - who are sentenced in the federal system. The report can be found [here](#).

Examples

Alternative Sentencing Planner (ASP) Program

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The Alternative Sentencing Planner (ASP) model is a case referral model run by the San Francisco District Attorney's office. Under this model, prosecutors refer cases to the ASP, who is staffed by social workers with expertise in non-carceral, evidence-based programs. The social workers then develop a detailed case review and assessment to develop sentencing recommendations and, if alternatives to incarceration are appropriate, a detailed case plan.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people of all genders between the ages of 18-25 who have been convicted of a crime and whose case has been referred to ASP by the DA
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Provide alternatives to incarceration where possible
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** San Francisco DA's office, state-employed social workers
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - San Francisco
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Researchers estimated a 6 to 19 percent decrease in ASP participants' rate of reoffending over two years, as compared to statistically matched control groups.
- ◆ **Cautions:** No cautions were found for this approach
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adults between 18-25 years old

Youthful Offender and other EA Sentencing Statutes

VARIOUS STATES

Michigan: Holmes Youthful Trainee Act (MICH. COMP. LAWS §762.11 et seq.)

Michigan allows people convicted of crimes 17-23 years old to seek "youthful offender" status if they plead guilty. Certain high-level drug offenses, sex offenses and capital crimes are excluded. If probation is successfully completed, charges are dismissed without entry of a record of conviction and records are sealed.

Virginia: Indeterminate Sentencing of Young Offenders (Va. Code An. § 19.2-311)

Virginia statute allows judges to impose, with the agreement of the young person charged with a crime, a specialized term of indeterminate commitment to the Department of Corrections in lieu of a longer sentence or other penalties. The court is required to also impose a suspended sentence of confinement, to be held in abeyance. Under this law, the department is required to provide specialized housing and rehabilitative services; the parole board is required to regularly evaluate program participants for readiness for release. Eligible young people are under 21 years old at the time of the offense, charged with an offense other than murder and related crimes, and deemed "capable of returning to society as a productive citizen following a reasonable amount of rehabilitation."

Oklahoma: Delayed Sentencing Program for Young Adults (22 OK Stat. §22-996 et seq.)

Oklahoma has created, by statute, a Delayed Sentencing Program for Young Adults 18 - 21 years old who have been convicted of a felony offense and have not been previously convicted of two or more felonies. Certain serious and violent offenses are excluded from the program. The program allows the court to delay sentencing for 120 days to allow the Department of Corrections to prepare a detailed report (which then

serves as a presentence investigation) regarding the individual's security risk and "rehabilitation needs." The plan can recommend incarceration and placement with ODOC, probation supervision, halfway house or "any combination needed" to address the defendant's risks and needs. Program participants receive a range of services, including cognitive-behavioral programming, education and vocational services and anger management resources and, upon release from confinement, reentry supports. Upon successful program completion, the court can suspend or reduce the remaining sentence.

Alabama: Youthful Offenders (ALA CODE §§15-19-2 to -7)

Alabama statute allows courts to identify a person charged with certain offenses committed during their "minority" (defined by the Alabama Supreme Court as those under the age of 21) to be designated as "youthful offenders." If so designated, the person must waive right to a jury trial and is subject to a trial "separate" from public criminal trials. Statements made during the determination of youthful offender status are not admissible as evidence of guilt. Upon conviction, the court has specialized sentencing options, including probation, fines or commitment to the Board of Corrections. Victims have a statutory right of notification of the possibility of youthful offender status. The statute establishes confidentiality of youthful offender records, creates specialized registration and notification provisions for sex offenses and provides that convictions under the statute shall

not serve as a bar to public employment or professional licensure.

California: Youth Offender Parole (CA Penal Code §3051)

Effective January 2016, California state law requires the state's Board of Parole Hearings to review the "parole suitability" of any prisoner who was under the age of 23 at the time of a "controlling offense" leading to incarceration. The statute provides timelines for these reviews (during the 15th, 20th or 25th year of incarceration, depending on original sentence) and requires the review to provide a "meaningful opportunity to obtain release." The statute further provides that the board "shall take into consideration the diminished culpability of juveniles as compared to that of adults, the hallmark features of youth, and any subsequent growth and increased maturity of the individual.

Florida: Youthful Offender Sentencing (FLA STAT §§958.011-.15 (2016))

In Florida, when a person 18 - 21 at the time of sentencing has been found guilty or pled guilty to a felony offense, the court may sentence that person as a "youthful offender." (Capital offenses are excluded, as are people who have received a prior youthful offender designation.) Some states couple specialized sentencing provisions with options to commit young adults to specialized corrections facilities or programs. See Virginia and Colorado statutes, as examples. This designation allows specialized sentencing options, including probation supervision for up

to six years, incarceration in a specified facility (including a "residential facility") or a "split sentence" of both incarceration and probation supervision totaling up to six years (but not to exceed the penalties otherwise available for the offense of conviction.)

Georgia: Youthful Offender Act (GA Code §42-7-1 et seq.)

Georgia law allows courts to recommend sentencing of young offenders, age 17 - 25, to a designated facility within the Georgia Department of Corrections. GDOC may accept or reject this recommendation. These facilities are required to provide specialized rehabilitative services.

Hawaii: Young Adult Defendants Program (§706-667)

Hawaii statute defines a young adult defendant as one who is less than 22 years old at the time of the offense and has not been previously convicted of a felony. Murder and attempted murder offenses are excluded from eligibility. If sentenced to more than 30 days incarceration, a young adult defendant can be committed to a specialized program of the Department of Public Safety to receive "as far as practicable, such special and individualized correctional and rehabilitative treatment as may be appropriate to the young adult defendant's needs." The statute further provides for an indeterminate term of imprisonment of up to 8 years for a Class A felony, 5 years for a Class B felony and 4 years for a Class C felony, with release authority

vested with the parole authority. The statute also provides for these young people to be incarcerated separately from "career criminals, when practicable."

New Jersey: Young Adult Offenders (NJ Stat. Ann §2C:43-5 (1979))

New Jersey statute provides that any person who is less than 26 years old at the time of sentencing and who has been convicted of a non-excluded offense may be sentenced to an indeterminate term and the Youth Correctional Institute or the Correctional Institute for Women.

North Carolina: N.C. Gen. Stat. § 15A-145.2

This North Carolina statute applies to offenders under the age of 21 at the time of the offense, who have been charged with various drug offenses for the first time, and have been sentenced to probation. Individuals who meet the criteria may have their records relating to the offense expunged once their sentence is discharged or if the proceedings against them are dismissed. They must petition the court and attach: (1) an affidavit that they have been of good behavior during their probation; (2) two affidavits from individuals who know them that state the individual's character and reputation are good; (3) and a consent form consenting to a background and criminal record check.

South Carolina: Judge William R. Byars Youthful Offender Act
S.C. Code Ann §24- 19-10 et seq.

South Carolina statute creates a “youthful offender” designation which includes juveniles transferred to adult jurisdiction and young adults 17- 24 years old (with specified charges). Upon conviction, a court may utilize a specialized sentencing scheme for youthful offenders, which includes suspended sentence / probation, a 60-day “observation period” with the Department of Corrections or indefinite custody with the Department for a period not to exceed six years. The statute further provides that youthful offenders sentenced under the act shall be held in minimum security institutions that provide “essential varieties of treatment.” Young offenders may be subject to conditional release and supervision at any time.

West Virginia: Young Adult Offenders
(W. VA Code §25-4-1 et seq.)

West Virginia State statute gives explicit authority to the Department of Corrections to establish Centers for Housing Young Adult Offenders who “are amenable to discipline other than in close confinement, and to give better opportunity to young adult offenders for reformation and encouragement of self-discipline.” West Virginia courts may commit young adults 18 - 23 years old at the time of the offense (or younger than 25 at the time of sentencing) who are convicted of certain offenses to the Corrections department for housing in such a Center for 6 - 24 months. This process requires the DOC to accept a young person into the program. Upon successful completion, participants may be eligible for probation. Unsuccessful participation may result in resentencing the individual. Each Center is required to establish programs for education, recreation, employment and counseling.

Resentencing Reform Legislative Efforts

Second Look Amendment Act (Enacted)

In 2019, the Council of the District of Columbia passed the Second Look Amendment Act. This Act expands the Incarceration Reduction Amendment Act of 2016, which allows a person to file a motion in the original sentencing court for a reduction of their sentence, after serving 15 years in prison, if the “controlling offense” was committed before the person’s 18th birthday. This Act expands the eligible age range to include young people ages 18-24 years old. People who are incarcerated are allowed to re-petition if their motions are denied, although 3 years must pass between motions.

Second Look Act (Proposed and Died)

In 2019, a Florida State senator introduced a bill that expanded resentencing eligibility for people who were aged 18-24 at the time of the offense. Existing law only allows for young people under the age of 18 at the time of the offense to petition for resentencing. However, the bill died in March 2020.



Community Corrections/ Probation

Contact Point and Definitions

This section of the scan includes specialized supports, resources and strategies for working with emerging adults who have been convicted of an offense and sentenced to probation in lieu jail or prison. Items in this section may be provided directly by probation departments or by community-based organizations with varying degrees of coordination with probation departments. (While the term “community corrections” can encompass parole supervision and services for people leaving prison, those strategies are addressed in the Re-Entry Resources section of this scan.)

Overview

Probation, also known as community corrections, refers to a sentencing alternative to jail or prison. Rather than serving the sentence while incarcerated, a person on probation remains in their community subject to specific conditions and under the supervision of a probation officer. Probation officers are public employees charged with monitoring these conditions, engaging the probationer in various services and interventions and enforcing other requirements established by the court or by probation systems.

Probation programs were developed to serve as an alternative to incarceration and reduce offending by engaging those on probation in education, substance abuse, employment training, housing assistance, and other services, depending on the probation department, conditions of the sentencing court, resources available and individual circumstances. Recent analyses have indicated an overuse of probation across the country, subjecting people to unnecessary surveillance, stigma, destabilization and incarceration for non-compliance and exacerbating racial inequities and disparities. With these findings in mind, carefully designed and delivered probation services can be an important part of a continuum of interventions that divert young people from unnecessary incarceration and toward community-based supervision and supports.

Many factors make high-quality, carefully tailored probation services an important sentencing option for young adults. Foremost, the sentence can prevent unnecessary incarceration and can be coupled with a range of services and resources. Probation services can also foster relationships between young adults and their communities and link them with restorative justice opportunities. Today, most jurisdictions have either “juvenile” probation programs or “adult” probation programs, with few resources designed to address the unique needs and build on the considerable strengths of young adults.

In a handful of communities across the country, however, probation departments are recognizing the important developmental, social, economic and functional differences between emerging adults and younger adolescents or older adults on probation. Some of these probation approaches feature probation officers who are specially selected and trained to work with young people, and/or are assigned reduced caseloads so they may spend more individualized time on each young person. Others focus on specialized programming for young adults under probation supervision.

Some jurisdictions, such as San Francisco, take a comprehensive approach to include many of these interventions: gender-responsive programming, housing assistance, trauma-informed service delivery, and culturally-tailored services. By contrast, other programs may focus on a primary type of intervention, such as job readiness, mental health or restorative justice.

Several probation programs utilize “restorative justice” with young adults. In this context, restorative justice strategies include those that focus on repairing harm caused by the person on probation as well as addressing the harm that young person has experienced. At its best, these restorative approaches are cognizant of emerging adult characteristics and can serve as a developmentally tailored opportunity to learn, practice and experience empathy, repair harm caused and experienced by young adults and create accountability within communities through voluntary, non-coercive participation.

One of these probation programs brings community members together in “restorative justice circles” over a months-long period to address harmful behavior committed by the person on probation. In another program, once the probation department refers a case to the program, the program must receive consent from the victim in order to move forward with addressing the harm caused to them.

Some emerging adult probation programs focus on job readiness and employment specifically. In one program, private sector businesses pay for initial job training and referral costs, and upon successful completion by program participants, the government reimburses those businesses. In another program, participants receive vocational training that focuses on construction certification; after being trained, participants then build low-income housing for 1-2 years.

As noted in other sections of this scan, service providers and system stakeholders report that basic survival resources – including housing, childcare and economic supports – and help with logistics such as transportation and internet service are needed by many of the young adults served. Without these survival resources and supports, it is difficult for young people to attend program activities or to fully engage in the supports available to them. Thus, these needs must be planned for and budgeted for in program design. Program providers also report that including young adults and their families in case planning – and in overall design of programs – is critical in achieving success.

Service providers working with emerging adults on probation (or otherwise engaged in the criminal legal system) also report that – in addition to the formal program interactions and assisting with survival resources – helping their clients navigate system contacts and address legal issues are critical. Examples included encouraging and coordinating compliance with probation conditions, appearing at court hearings and understanding court processes. Recognizing and planning for these needs is also an important part of program design when serving emerging adults.

A growing number of jurisdictions have either piloted or expanded innovative emerging-adult specific approaches to community corrections in recent years. Carefully developed and delivered, specialized probation strategies can provide young adults with services and supports that help them navigate and exit the criminal legal system successfully.

Implementation Notes & Examples

While a probation sentence can be a critical alternative to incarceration for emerging adults, community corrections resources are available only to emerging adults who have been arrested, referred for formal legal system processing and convicted of an offense. Thus, the legal records produced prior to referral may create obstacles to education, employment and housing opportunities as well as expose young people to the stigma and trauma of arrest and court involvement. Given the challenges created by arrest and court records, timely expungement or other forms of records relief are important components of successful programs.

Additionally, even high-quality probation programs present a significant lag between the incident or incidents giving rise to the young person's court involvement and the provision of needed supports and services due to the time required for resolution of the legal process. The developmental research suggests that a delay in identifying and meeting the needs of adolescents and young adults can result in poor outcomes for young people and their communities. (The lag in providing supportive services to young people on parole is likely to be even more pronounced.) Stakeholders should consider options for more timely supports to young people, especially those most vulnerable or at risk.

Some probation programs may also be available only to those with "low level offenses" and / or have extensive disqualification factors for participation, including current excluded offenses and / or exclusions for young people with prior arrests or convictions. Unnecessarily broad categorical exclusions may disqualify large numbers of young people and communities who could benefit from the program and the resources allocated may not have the impact intended.

Conversely, while the type of services and supports provided by specialized probation or parole programs may be helpful to many young adults and their families, stakeholders should be cautious of net widening, in the development and implementation of community corrections programs. In this context, "net widening" refers to subjecting a greater number of young people to probation or parole oversight in order to access resources than who would have been otherwise or subjecting young adults to a longer period of probation or parole supervision or more intensive oversight than they would be outside the program.

The lack of validated assessment tools for emerging adults may present a particular challenge to effective probation and parole strategies. In recent decades, probation and parole systems have moved to a "risk / need / responsivity" model to direct resources to the highest risk or need clients, to tailor specific services to those clients, to deliver interventions most likely to reduce criminal offending and to identify and build on strengths and protective factors of the young people they serve. As discussed in the Risk Assessment section of this scan, applying tools, language and constructs designed for younger adolescents or for older adults can result in misalignment of resources and supports for young adults, which can in turn result in poor outcomes.

And, as with all interventions provided by criminal legal systems, stakeholders must avoid disincentivizing or punishing program participation by ensuring that young people who "fail" in these programs are not subjected to harsher legal penalties than they would have otherwise faced. Research suggests that bolstering emerging adults' "intrinsic motivation" and relying on incentives for positive behaviors, rather than relying on punitive responses, are more likely to produce positive outcomes for young adults and their communities.

Arches Transformative Mentoring Program

NEW YORK, NY

The Arches Transformative Mentoring Program is a group mentoring intervention that delivers intensive group mentoring sessions using an Interactive Journaling (IJ) curriculum based on cognitive behavioral therapy principles. Arches mentors are people with backgrounds and characteristics similar to the populations they serve. Participants typically take 6-12 months to complete the program, which consists of 48 group sessions and four IJ course books.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men ages 16-24 and on probation
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce racial inequities between Black and white men and establish a comprehensive community-based continuum of care for young people in contact with the criminal legal system
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** New York City Department of Probation and Mayor's Office
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - NYC
- ◆ **Setting/context:** 13 sites across all 5 NYC boroughs

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Evaluation data for Arches completed by the Urban Institute from 2015-2017, shows that Arches participants were less likely to be reconvicted of a crime than members of the comparison group, and it was particularly successful for young people ages 17 and younger.
- ◆ **Cautions:** This program only serves men
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men

Hidalgo County Emerging Adult Strategy

EDINBURG, TX

The Hidalgo County (Texas) Emerging Adult Strategy (HCEAS) is a voluntary, specialized probation caseload. The program is between 6-18 months long, depending on the type of case, and it includes cognitive behavioral treatment, substance abuse treatment, specialty court, probation officer meetings, and incentives/sanctions. The program is phased in the following order: preliminary recovery (for those struggling with substance abuse); behavioral adjustment; maintenance and support; and transitional phase. A key aspect of the program is the use of numerous rewards for exemplary conduct, including reducing and waiving fees, gift cards, and early termination.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people aged 18-25 who have been convicted of either felony or misdemeanors.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduced recidivism and reduced probation revocation for emerging adults
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Hidalgo County Community Supervision & Corrections Department
- ◆ **Type of communities:** 95% urban, 5% rural
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-based

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** While no evaluation data was found, information indicates that a randomized, controlled study in collaboration with George Mason University is forthcoming. Another highlight is that this program has substance abuse programs.
- ◆ **Cautions:** This approach may be limited by its heavy reliance on a monetary and gift incentive schedule for completion of each phase of the program. The programs' promotional materials also use language such as "risk takers" and "poor decision makers" to describe program participants.
- ◆ **Special populations:** N/A

Pay for Success Referral Program

DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION, STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Pay for Success Referral Program - The Pay for Success Referral Program is a partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Probation and the Executive Office of Administration and Finance that allows for the Department to provide referrals to ROCA for participation in its programming.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men aged 17-24 who have been determined to be high risk either by the Department of Probation using ORAS or the State of Massachusetts using an actuarial risk screening tool developed for the project. Participants are young men on probation or exiting the Department of Juvenile Services, the Department of Corrections or under the supervision of the Massachusetts Probation Services or the Massachusetts Parole Board.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduction in days of recidivism and increases in quarters of employment earning more than \$1,000.
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, Massachusetts Department of Probation, Massachusetts Parole Board, the Hampden, Essex, Suffolk and Middlesex Sheriff's Departments, the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, Youth Services, Inc., and Roca
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - Boston Area
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Probation and Reentry

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** This program promotes private-sector/business/community engagement with young people transitioning out of the criminal legal system
- ◆ **Cautions:** Limitations of this program include the fact that private-sector third parties front all initial costs, so sustainability issues may arise. The "Pay for Success" program model is initially funded through the private sector, and if/when a third-party evaluates its success, then the state of Massachusetts will pay the private sector funders back. Available data for randomization is challenging.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Must be labeled "high risk"

CHOICE Program

DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION, STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

CHOICE Program

CHOICE is a comprehensive 18-month specialized probation and recidivism re-education program. It requires young people who are on administrative and supervised probation to meet with a specific officer, attend educational and job training programs as well as appear before a specific judge. The initiative features a three-pronged approach: intensive probation supervision and an in-court compliance component; education (attend high school or successfully complete the HiSet/GED) exam; and job training.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people aged 18-26 years old who are on probation at BMC-Roxbury.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Increased education and employment for young people on probation.
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Boston Municipal Court (Roxbury Division)
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - Boston/Roxbury
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-based

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Addresses the barriers that young people without a high school equivalent degree may face.
- ◆ **Cautions:** One limitation of this program/approach is that it appears to rely heavily on charismatic leaders for its sustainability, including Roxbury PO Edith Alexander and Judge Dashiell. No evaluation data is available.
- ◆ **Special populations:** N/A

Evolution Program

DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION, STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Evolution

Evolution is a six-week restorative justice initiative and a collaborative effort with Roxbury Court's 18-month CHOICE Program. Instructors facilitate Restorative Justice Circles which provide an opportunity for community members to come together to address harmful behavior in a process that explores harms and needs, obligations, and necessary engagement.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people who are designated as “youthful offenders” between the ages of 18-24 years old.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism among young people in this age group.
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Roxbury Court CHOICE program
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - Boston/Roxbury
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-based

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Restorative justice components
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Must be in the CHOICE program

Transitional Age Youth Unit

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The TAY Program includes 10 specialized probation caseloads through the Specialized Service Division of the San Francisco Adult Probation Department. The program uses the COMPAS assessment to build risk/needs/responsivity case plans and targets education, housing problems, records relief, employment readiness and job opportunities, including city employment.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people ages 18 – 25 who are considered “high risk” and reside in San Francisco neighborhoods that are targeted as “hot zones” by San Francisco PD
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Education, housing, employment readiness, and job opportunities
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** San Francisco Adult Probation Department - Specialized Services Division
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - San Francisco
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court/municipality-based through the San Francisco Adult Probation Department

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** One noteworthy feature of the program is that it includes gender-specific strategies, trauma-informed approaches and culturally-targeted services.
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found; a limitation of the program is that it relies on what SFPD calls “hot zones” which could perpetuate labels of criminality for certain areas by legitimizing those labels.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Must be considered “high risk” and reside in specific neighborhoods

Multnomah County Justice Reinvestment Program

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR

MCJRP is a collaborative effort, led by the Oregon Judicial Department, to improve the assessment of young people convicted of crimes in Multnomah County, Oregon. Each person sentenced to “MCJRP Conditions” will continue to be assessed and—depending on risk and needs—placed in a “High,” “Medium,” or “Low” supervision structure. Phase I supervision of each group includes a higher level of supervision than traditional probation for that risk/needs level for 120 days with wrap-around services which includes housing and mentoring.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people convicted of crimes who are under 25 years old.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Develop alternatives to incarceration, reduce prison usage, and provide connections to education, housing, healthcare, and employment for young people.
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Oregon Judicial Department and Steering Committee (made up of representatives from “public safety partners”: local citizen representatives, law enforcement, district attorney’s office, Oregon judicial department, community justice, defense, victim’s rights representatives, treatment services)
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Multnomah County spans both urban and rural communities
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-based: Oregon Judicial department with support from a community-based steering committee

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** A noteworthy feature of the program is that its oversight is the Multnomah County Justice Reinvestment Steering Committee, which is made of a diverse set of community members. Further, this program aims to develop alternatives to incarceration and reduce the use of carceral solutions for young people.
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found
- ◆ **Special populations:** N/A

Young Men’s Initiative

NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION

The Young Men’s Initiative is a specialized probation program operated by the New York City Department of Probation. Probation staff receive targeted training in developmental science, Positive Youth Development strategies and cognitive behavioral interventions, and work in pairs to create a “circle of care” with the young person and his support systems and motivate positive change.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between the ages of 16-24 years old on probation
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Varying, depending on one of the various programs under its purview, but outcomes include: educational gains, career readiness, connection building between young people and communities, and mentorship.
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** New York City Department of Probation
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - New York City
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-Based - NYC Department of Probation

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** This program utilizes data-driven developmental approaches as well as creates a “circle of care” that addresses young peoples’ need for consistent, positive adult presence.
- ◆ **Cautions:** The approach is limited by the fact that it exclusively serves men. No evaluation data was found.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Young men between the ages of 16-24

Common Justice

NEW YORK, NY

Common Justice operates the first alternative-to-incarceration and victim service program in the United States that focuses on violent felonies in the adult courts, using a restorative justice approach that is run by the Vera Institute of Justice. In cases in which young people convicted of crimes would otherwise be incarcerated, the program seeks to repair the harm caused to the victim, hold young adults accountable for harmful behavior and build or rebuild relationships within the community. The victim must consent before a case can go through Common Justice, and programming focuses both on the needs of the person who caused harm, and the needs of the person who was harmed. The former includes wraparound services, and the latter includes restorative justice measures. The program identifies prospective cases through defense attorneys, prosecutors, and by a systematic review of all new indictments from the court calendar.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Late adolescents and emerging adults (ages 16 to 26) and those they have harmed.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Repair the harm caused to the victim, hold young adults accountable for harmful behavior and build or rebuild relationships within the community
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Vera Institute of Justice
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban - New York City
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Community/nonprofit-based with referrals from the district attorney.

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Unlike many other programs, Common Justice not only allows, but focuses specifically on violent felonies, which are widely under-represented and excluded from traditional programming.
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found; such data would be useful for more programs such as this to gain traction across the country.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Those convicted of violent felonies

YouthBuild USA Offender Project

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

This program serves as an alternative to incarceration and/or a reentry resource that has a dual focus on education and vocational training (usually construction), and it is run/funded by the Department of Labor and YouthBuild USA sites nationwide. Participants build low-income housing while also participating in other supportive activities, education and employment preparation for anywhere between 9-24 months.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people between the ages of 16 - 24 years old who have been convicted of a crime.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Education and employment preparation.
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** United States Department of Labor and YouthBuild USA
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban, suburban, and rural - nationwide
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Nonprofit/non-court run

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Cost evaluation is available: Cohen and Piquero (2015) conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the YouthBuild Offender Program and found that per participant, the program costs between \$13,000 and \$24,00 with benefits ranging between \$174,000 and \$281,000.
- ◆ **Cautions:** While the program focuses on employment preparation, it does not indicate whether there is a consistent “on-ramp” to permanent employment for the young people who complete the program
- ◆ **Special populations:** Young people between 16-24 years old

Young Adult Diversion Court

KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MI

YADC is a 6-8 month program that works with individuals who are on probation and who have been sentenced for a criminal charge under a diversion statute. Participants set their own goals with the help of YADC staff, and they attend weekly programming, which has a different theme each week. Each participant must complete a Service Learning Project. A SLP is a long term project that participants undergo in an area that is meaningful to them. Participants contact local non-profits, learn what their mission is, and develop a project to help fulfill its mission. Upon successful completion of the probationary period, the initial charge will be dismissed and made non-public on participants' criminal record.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between the ages of 17-20 on probation
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** The program's mission is to work alongside young adults to create a network of support that not only fosters successful attainment of their diversion and teaches valuable skills to use as they move forward in life
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Probation Officer, Program Assistant, YADC Judge, Speak It Forward staff, Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services staff, and County Health & Community Services department staff
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-run diversion program

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Upon completion, the original charge will be dismissed and the criminal record will be non-public
- ◆ **Cautions:** None found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adults between the ages of 17-20 on probation

Young Adult Drug Court

BONNEVILLE COUNTY AND JEFFERSON COUNTY, ID

The YAC is an alternative to incarceration provided for young adults charged with crimes categorized as nonviolent. Participants are sentenced to the YAC after their trial and are placed on probation while they complete the 2-year program. Participants are provided with services to help them prepare for their future when they are done with the program. Services include assisting them in obtaining their GED, job training programs, and counseling.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Education, job training, and mental health
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Judiciary
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban (Bonneville County) and Rural (Jefferson County)
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Court-run program

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** No noteworthy highlight found
- ◆ **Cautions:** The program is two years long, which could inadvertently lengthen the amount of time a young person spends under surveillance and extend the period of time where they experience collateral consequences
- ◆ **Special populations:** Charged with felony or misdemeanor and involved in drug court



Corrections-Based Approaches

Contact point(s) and Definitions

This section includes specialized programs or housing units for emerging adults within jails or prisons. These approaches are ostensibly designed to reduce trauma to incarcerated emerging adults, improve their quality of life while incarcerated, enhance facility safety and / or improve the outcomes of people upon release. Corrections-based approaches are not widespread in the United States, but have been developed both for pre-trial incarceration in jails and post-conviction sentences in prisons. Prison-based approaches are more widespread than those in jails.

Overview

The data on emerging adulthood and incarceration is clear: Young adults are significantly overrepresented in jails and prisons. Racial disparities in incarceration of young people are profound. And most emerging adults sentenced to prison will return to their communities. The developmental science is also clear: incarcerated young people are likely to miss out on important social, emotional, economic and developmental milestones that set the stage for healthy adulthood. Without developmentally tailored supports and services, incarceration can be especially devastating for emerging adults, their families and their communities. Specialized corrections-based strategies seek to mitigate these harms and position young adults for successful return home.

Newer corrections-based programs emphasize a variety of supports and services for young adults, including mental health and trauma-responsive services, family engagement efforts, parenting and child care supports, education and employment resources and positive reinforcement models. At the state level, numerous departments of correction, primarily in the Northeast and either led or inspired by the Vera Institute of Justice, have created housing units specifically for emerging adults. Many of these units include mentorship opportunities with older people incarcerated in the same facility, group counseling, educational and other opportunities, and a greater degree of physical freedom than the general population. The majority of these programs are not only voluntary, but utilize an application process, due to the limited number of spaces available.

Limited jail-based programming seems to be provided to emerging adults either awaiting trial or sentenced to a jail term. As jurisdictions nationwide reduce the use of pretrial incarceration, fewer emerging adults may be held in jails before trial. However, those who held pretrial may be incarcerated for extended periods of time, magnifying the need for developmentally tailored approaches. This scan identified two jurisdictions (Cook County and Washington DC) with specialized programming and / or housing for young people held in jails.

Implementation Notes & Examples

Currently, there is a lack of gender responsive supports for incarcerated young people. Because young men comprise the majority of prison admissions in the United States, these specialized emerging adults corrections models focus primarily or exclusively on the needs of young men and/or young fathers. There do not appear to be a comparable number or range of programs for incarcerated young women and/or young mothers. This scan identified only one specialized housing unit in the country designed for young women, located at York Correctional in Connecticut. The scan identified no specialized corrections programs for transgender and/or nonbinary incarcerated young adults.

By definition, corrections-based programs provide resources late in a young person's involvement with the criminal legal system. The harms of incarceration are also well-documented, even when corrections staff and facilities employ the highest-quality and most humane interventions possible. Corrections-based programs are also extraordinarily expensive as compared to community-based supports, and research suggests that they are also less likely to be effective than community-based interventions.

Taken together, the research is clear: While specialized corrections programs are critical for emerging adults who are incarcerated, consistently providing high-quality, developmentally tailored supports in lieu of incarceration is more likely to achieve positive results for individual young people, their families and our communities.

Young Men Emerging Unit

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Young Men Emerging Unit at the D.C. jail was inspired by similar Vera Institute-affiliated specialized housing units at other correctional facilities. It employs a mentorship model that pairs younger and older men who are incarcerated at the jail, a behavior tracking system, and it requires that residents obtain their GED. Interested residents can also take higher education courses. The unit emphasizes facility aesthetics and compensates residents for completing work detail.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between 18-25 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Recidivism reduction through providing structure, developing trust, and creating a “sense of accountability” within a therapeutic and rehabilitative environment
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** District of Columbia Department of Corrections
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - district-wide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Employs a mentorship model with older people incarcerated in the same facility
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men

SAVE Program

COOK COUNTY, IL

The SAVE Program is a group and individual counseling program that offers cognitive behavioral therapy to young men incarcerated at Cook County Jail. Participation has no bearing on the participants' criminal cases, but it is aimed at helping them address underlying trauma and preparing them to eventually return to society. Connections they make with social workers continue upon their release, and participants are assisted in finding stable housing and employment in their neighborhoods.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adult young men between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Conflict resolution skills; recidivism reduction; housing; employment placement; anger management
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Cook County Sheriff's Department
- ◆ **Type of communities:** Urban and suburban Cook County
- ◆ **Setting/context:** The program is implemented in Cook County Jail

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Some evaluation data is available through Cook County
- ◆ **Cautions:** The program is not meant to help incarcerated individuals who already have a diagnosed mental illness
- ◆ **Special populations:** N/A

Vera Institute of Justice, Restoring Promise Programs

OVERARCHING INITIATIVE

Six states have undertaken carceral reform under the guidance of the Vera Institute of Justice and the MILPA Collective: Massachusetts, Connecticut, South Carolina, and soon to be Colorado, Idaho, and North Dakota. The initiative is named Restoring Promise, and it aims to disrupt harmful prison practices and policies through collaborative research, narrative change, and technical assistance. The initiative exposes and teaches stakeholders about new approaches and daily routines; retrains staff; partners with people in prison (especially those serving long sentences); and implements a restorative justice model that reframes conflict as opportunity. While each Restoring Promise unit dictates their own programming, Vera and MILPA provide technical assistance, training, research, data collection, and strategic planning.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Varies based on correctional facility; trains corrections stakeholders
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Disrupt harmful prison practice and policies
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Various state departments of correction, Vera Institute of Justice
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facilities
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Models and replicates research-backed best practices
- ◆ **Cautions:** None found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Specific to correctional facility

P.A.C.T. Unit, Middlesex House of Correction

BILLERICA, MA

The P.A.C.T. unit at Middlesex is voluntary, and participants engage in group check-ins with staff in addition to pursuing continuing educational opportunities, and exercise programming. In contrast with numerous “traditional” carceral settings, participants can move freely in communal areas 16 hours a day and are permitted contact visits with family members.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Recidivism reduction
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Massachusetts Department of Corrections, Middlesex Sheriff’s Office, and the Vera Institute of Justice
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Evaluation data is available, and initial studies have found that participation in P.A.C.T. has improved outcomes for participants: 37 percent of young adults from the P.A.C.T. unit were approved for parole, whereas 13 percent of emerging adults in the general population of Middlesex Jail and House of Correction were granted parole during this same period.
- ◆ **Cautions:** None found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men

P.E.A.C.E Unit, South Bay House of Correction

BOSTON, MA

The P.E.A.C.E unit at South Bay is voluntary, and participants are offered programming in the following areas: education, job training, developing skill sets, individual/group counseling, attitudinal changes and conflict resolution.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between 18-24 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Breaking the cycle of incarceration by focusing on education, job training, and psychological/interpersonal skills
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Massachusetts Department of Corrections and the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Officers are trained in restorative justice techniques
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found regarding outcomes for P.E.A.C.E. unit participants
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men

Emerging Adults Fathers Unit

MA

While this unit is not open yet, the Emerging Adults Fathers Unit will focus on building fathers' parenting skills and will encourage interaction between fathers and children using video conferencing, emails, and possibly even texting via phones. The state will help cover the cost of transportation for children to make in-person visits.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between ages 18-24 who are also fathers
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Encourage the bonds between incarcerated young fathers and their children as a means to support their rehabilitation
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Massachusetts Department of Corrections and the U.S. Department of Justice
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** The state will assist in covering transportation costs
- ◆ **Cautions:** The state provides no similar programming for mothers
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult fathers

T.R.U.E. Unit, Cheshire Correctional

CHESHIRE, CT

The T.R.U.E. unit at Cheshire Correctional focuses on family engagement, self-expression, peer support, personal growth and development, and education and career readiness. The program also employs a mentorship program with older people who are serving sentences of life without parole.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between the ages of 18-25
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Recidivism reduction
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Connecticut Department of Corrections and the Vera Institute of Justice
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Employs a mentoring program
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men

W.O.R.T.H. Unit, York Correctional

NIANTIC, CT

The W.O.R.T.H. unit for young women at York Correctional was designed to mirror the T.R.U.E. unit at Cheshire Correctional. The young women are housed with female mentors away from the general population, participate in group counseling, and engage in various activities.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young women between the ages of 18-25 convicted of nonviolent offenses
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Recidivism reduction
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Connecticut Department of Corrections and Vera Institute of Justice
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** The program is the only one in the nation for young women
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult women

Restoring Promise Unit, Turbeville Correctional

TURBEVILLE, SC

The Restoring Promise unit at Turbeville provides educational and vocational training and therapeutic programming, mentorship opportunities with older people who are incarcerated in the same facility, and more open physical spaces.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Emerging adults (17-25 years old) and convicted under the South Carolina Youthful Offender Act
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Reduce recidivism and “restore and center the dignity and humanity of incarcerated people”
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** South Carolina Department of Corrections and Vera Institute of Justice
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Mentorship opportunities with older people who are incarcerated in the same facility
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adults (17-25 years old)

Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility (RYOCF)

RACINE, WI

The Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility is a specialized correctional facility for young adults.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between 18-24 years old who were committed to the DOC through adult courts
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Enhanced educational and vocational skills
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Wisconsin Department of Corrections
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Includes a wide range of offenses, including sex offenses
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data was found. Additionally, the facility maintains a segregated housing unit (SHU) to isolate young people
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men (18-24 years old)

Young Adult Offender Program, Mountain View Youth Development Center

CHARLESTON, ME

The Young Adult Offender Program at the Mountain View Youth Development Center includes an individualized case plan to address risks and needs, and it requires participants to complete a high school diploma or GED program.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between 18-25 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Recidivism reduction
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Maine Department of Corrections
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** No specific highlights of this approach were found
- ◆ **Cautions:** It appears that this facility was converted in 2015 to also include a traditional adult correctional population (over 25 years old). Further, no evaluation data or information regarding any type of specialized programming was found.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men

Anthony Corrections Center

NEOLA, WV

ACC is a voluntary, minimum security facility for emerging adults who are awaiting sentencing. Participants receive a suspended sentence if they opt in, and available services focus on education and employment preparation/skills, including programs in culinary services, auto repair, construction and other trades. Participants who successfully complete the program return to the committing court for consideration of a probation sentence. Participants who do not successfully complete can be subjected to the initial sentence imposed.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men and women between the ages of 18-25 who have been convicted of a felony and are awaiting sentencing
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** No relevant information regarding outcomes was located
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** West Virginia Department of Corrections
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Serves both young men and women
- ◆ **Cautions:** While participants receive a suspended sentence, they are still detained in a secure facility that does not count towards time served if they are discharged from the program. Further, completion of the program does not guarantee a sentence of probation.
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men and women

Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility

MILES CITY, MT

Pine Hills Youth Correctional is a juvenile detention center, but it was expanded to include young men between the ages of 18-25 convicted of nonviolent offenses, and the facility is adapting current juvenile programming to serve young adults. The facility uses a cognitive behavioral approach that also integrates job readiness training and career development. Additionally, the young people are provided mental health and substance abuse treatment and life skills training.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young men between 18-25 years old convicted of nonviolent offenses
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** Recidivism reduction
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Montana Department of Corrections
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** There seems to be an active effort to adapt juvenile-specific resources to a young adult population
- ◆ **Cautions:** No evaluation data has been found
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adult men (18-25 years old)

Young Adult Offender Program (YAOP) at Pine Grove Correctional Facility

PINE GROVE, PA

State Correctional Institution Pine Grove features an intensive mental health program as well as substance abuse treatment and adult basic education. Generally, there is very little information about the program or facility or the programming it offers.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people between 15-20 years old
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** For young people to “mature in a nurturing environment”
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide corrections facility
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Corrections

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** Early evaluation data from 2002 showed that there was not a correlation between program completion and “social change,” but participants did self-report perceived improvement in attitudes and outlook
- ◆ **Cautions:** There is a general lack of information regarding the unit’s curricula, participants, and outcomes beyond the 2002 study. Further, the age cut-off is 20 years old, well below that of the emerging adult range. Lastly, the facility states that the environment is “nurturing,” but there is little evidence that the facility is different from a traditional secure facility
- ◆ **Special populations:** Emerging adults (15-20 years old)

Youthful Offender System (YOS)

PUEBLO, CO

YOS is a detention facility for young adults in Colorado that is separated from the general prison population. Although YOS self-identifies as a sentencing alternative, it is a secure detention facility. The facility has a phased structure, that is split into the following: intake, diagnostic, and orientation phase; highly structured educational and vocational phase; emphasis on independent living phase; and release from the facility for community supervision.

Key Characteristics

- ◆ **Target population:** Young people of all genders who have been convicted of violent felonies. Young people who are subject to juvenile sentences are ineligible.
- ◆ **Outcomes sought:** The primary goal is successful re-entry and reduced recidivism for participants.
- ◆ **Key stakeholders:** Colorado Department of Corrections
- ◆ **Type of communities:** N/A - statewide
- ◆ **Setting/context:** Correctional Facility

Special Notes

- ◆ **Highlights:** No best practice/highlights to encourage replication were identified.
- ◆ **Cautions:** The primary limitation of this program is that it describes its own purpose as punishment, rather than rehabilitation. No evaluation data was found, either.
- ◆ **Special populations:** The young person must be between 14 and 17 years old at the time of conviction and sentence, or 18-19 at the time of the offense and sentenced before their 21st birthday.



Re-entry

Contact Point(s) and Definitions

In this scan, “re-entry” broadly refers to systemic or community-based supports for people returning to their communities after incarceration in jail or prison. Re-entry can refer to preparation for successful re-entry (“pre-release”) as well as post-release supports that can break the cycle of re-arrest / reincarceration. The community-based reentry programs listed in this scan may be coordinated to varying degrees with community corrections / parole systems supervising young adults who have been released from incarceration.

Overview

As discussed in the Corrections section of this scan, emerging adults are incarcerated at much higher rates than their representation in the general population. Racial disparities in incarceration of young people are profound. And most emerging adults sentenced to prison will return to their communities.

The developmental research also indicates that incarcerated young people are likely to miss out on important social, emotional, economic and developmental milestones that set the stage for healthy adulthood – including educational milestones, employment experience and the development of interpersonal relationships and support networks. Specialized corrections models have been developed in some communities to mitigate these harms. But developmentally-tailored reentry supports are equally important in ensuring that young adults leaving incarceration return home successfully.

This scan revealed that, prior to 2018, there were few re-entry resources dedicated to emerging adults. Despite the clear need for emerging adult-specific re-entry resources, such as specialized reentry preparation and post-release supports, there has been a relative dearth of these types of resources.

Since 2018, United States Department of Labor and their Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) funding has significantly increased the number and types of reentry programs available for young people ages 18-24. REO programs, which may be operated by local governments and municipalities as well as community-based organizations, receive funding to add, expand or continue reentry services specifically for young adults. Several of these cohorts feature a “peer-learning” model, where grant recipients engage in a community of practice and develop best practices collaboratively. While sustainability may be a concern with federal funding,

REO, Young Adult Reentry Partnerships (YARP), and Pathway Home grants have spanned both the Trump-Pence and Biden-Harris administrations.

Because these reentry resources are relatively new, many of these programs are still in development. Thus, the information in this section of the scan is not as robust or complete as in other sections. This information should be used as an indicator of jurisdictions, agencies and communities working to develop or provide reentry supports for emerging adults leaving incarceration.

As noted in other sections of this scan, service providers and system stakeholders report that basic survival resources – including housing, childcare and economic supports – and help with logistics such as transportation and internet service are needed by many of the young adults served. Without these survival resources and supports, it is difficult for young people to attend program activities or to fully engage in the supports available to them. Thus, these needs must be planned for and budgeted for in program design. Program providers also report that including young adults and their families in case planning – and in overall design of programs – is critical in achieving success.

Implementation Notes & Examples

As with corrections-based programming, reentry supports occur late in a young person's involvement with the criminal legal system. Additionally, the harms created by incarceration – even when corrections systems employ the highest-quality and most humane policy and practices available – are well-documented and create obstacles to successful community reentry. Incarceration is also costly and utilizes resources that may have more impact if directed to community-based resources. Thus, while specialized reentry supports are needed for those young adults who are incarcerated, investment in high-quality, developmentally tailored alternatives to incarceration are more likely to achieve positive results for individual young people, their families and our communities. To learn more about the challenge and promise of re-entry in municipalities for residents of all ages, review [this landscape scan](#).

Young Adult Re-Entry Partnership (YARP)

A PARTNERSHIP UNDER THE RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM (REO) RUN BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) program run by the Department of Labor provides funding (authorized as Research and Evaluation under Section 169 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014) for system-involved youth and young adults who were formerly incarcerated. REO's goal is to develop strategies and partnerships that facilitate the implementation of successful programs at the state and local levels that will improve the workforce outcomes for this population. These projects are designed to test the effectiveness of successful models and practices found in community and faith-based environments and other government systems that have not been tested for their adaptability in the public workforce system.

Under REO, the Young Adult Reentry Partnership (YARP) awards \$25 million to organizations to provide education and employment training to young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 who left high school before graduation, or are currently or have been involved previously with the juvenile or adult criminal justice system. The grant recipients range from large, multi-state organizations

such as Goodwill Industries, to small nonprofits such as the "It's My Community" Initiative in Oklahoma City.

One common feature of REO/YARP awardees is that the grantee themselves will sub-contract with other service providers. Consequently, one YARP grantee may themselves fund several specific programs. The organization of this catalog reflects this by only listing the primary grantee. One trend of the YARP program is that over time, fewer (but larger) grants are awarded to fewer grantees, who then sub-contract with service providers across their state or region.

2021 YARP Awardees

- ◆ Safer Foundation (Chicago, IL)
- ◆ Workforce, Inc. (Indianapolis, IN)
- ◆ Goodwill Industries, International (Rockville, MD) - 2021, 2020, and 2019
- ◆ STRIVE International, Inc. (New York, NY) - 2021 and 2018
- ◆ Pathstone Corp. (Serves Indiana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Virginia, and Vermont) - 2021, 2020, 2019, and 2018
- ◆ Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America Inc. (National) - 2021, 2020 and 2018

2020 YARP Awardees

- ◆ Latino Coalition for Community Leadership (Bakersfield, CA) - 2020 and 2019
- ◆ Goodwill Industries International (Rockville, MD)
- ◆ National Urban League (Chicago, IL)
- ◆ PathStone Corp. (Serves Indiana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Virginia, and Vermont)
- ◆ Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America Inc. (National)

2019 YARP Awardees

- ◆ The Dannon Project (Birmingham, AL) - 2019 and 2018
- ◆ National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (Chicago, IL)
- ◆ AMIKids, Inc. (Tampa, FL)
- ◆ Little Rock Workforce Development Board (Little Rock, AR)
- ◆ Playa Vista Job Opportunities and Business Services (Playa Vista, CA)
- ◆ Youth Policy Institute - (Since closed / discontinued.)
- ◆ Gang Alternative, Inc. (Miami, FL)
- ◆ The Osborne Association, Inc. (Bronx, NY)
- ◆ Social Enterprise and Training Center (Schenectady, NY)
- ◆ Center for Community Alternatives (Syracuse, NY)
- ◆ Mohawk Valley CC (Utica, NY)
- ◆ County of Westchester, on behalf of Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board (Westchester-Putnam, NY)
- ◆ Towards Employment (Cleveland, OH)
- ◆ It's My Community Initiative, Inc. (Oklahoma City, OK)

- ◆ SE Works, Inc. (Portland, OR)
- ◆ Knoxville Leadership Foundation (Knoxville, TN)

2018 YARP Awardees

- ◆ Family Health International (FHI 360) - Oversees and facilitates the *Compass Rose Collaborative*
- ◆ STRIVE International, Inc. (New York, NY)
- ◆ Structured Employment Economic Development Corporation (SEEDCO - National)
- ◆ Institute for Educational Leadership (Washington, D.C.)
- ◆ American YouthWorks (Austin, TX)
- ◆ Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (Urbana, IL)
- ◆ City of Lawrence, Division Merrimack Valley WIB (Lawrence, MA)
- ◆ CLC, Inc. (Fort Worth, TX)
- ◆ Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow (Las Vegas, NV)
- ◆ Friendly House, Inc. (Phoenix, AZ)
- ◆ SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc. (Houston, TX)
- ◆ Siouxland Human Investment Partnership (Sioux City, IA)
- ◆ The WorkPlace (Bridgeport, CT)
- ◆ Total Action Against Poverty in Roanoke Valley, Inc. (Roanoke, VA)
- ◆ TRWIB, Inc. (Pittsburgh, PA)
- ◆ Urban League of Rochester, NY, Inc. (Rochester, NY)
- ◆ Workforce Development Board of Herkimer, Madison & Oneida Counties (Utica, NY)

Compass Rose Collaborative

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

The Compass Rose Collaborative is a project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to improve the education and employment outcomes of young adults, ages 18 through 24, after involvement in the U.S. criminal legal system. The collaborative supports young participants in partner organizations by: implementing a program model that focuses on providing young adults with: 1) support services, including assistance obtaining housing, clothing, food, transportation and counseling; 2) legal services; 3) work readiness, preparation and job placement; and 4) educational services. The Collaborative also utilizes a peer-learning model to document and replicate effective practices in communities.

The collaborative is developing a young adult leadership council with program participants who will provide a youth voice to the program, and it is also developing a pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship curricula that will launch across the United States to train young people for youth-serving roles and that will transition participants to careers such as case managers, mentors, and childcare workers.

The following municipalities and organizations are a part of the Collaborative

- ◆ City of Albany Department of Youth and Workforce Services (Albany, NY)
- ◆ City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department (Los Angeles, CA)
- ◆ CommunityWorks, Inc. (Colorado Springs/Denver, CO)
- ◆ Greater Louisville Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Louisville, KY)
- ◆ Mayor's Office of Employment Development (Baltimore, MD)
- ◆ Office of Workforce Development's Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) Division (Boston, MA)
- ◆ Our Piece of the Pie, Inc. (Hartford, CT)
- ◆ Phoenix Youth and Family Services, Inc. (Southeast Arkansas)
- ◆ St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (St. Louis, MO)

Emerging Examples

- ◆ PowerCorpsPHL's TRUST (The Road to an Ultimate Successful Transition) program pilot supports young adults as they transition from incarceration/supervision toward careers or education. A subset of the highly successful [PowerCorpsPHL](#) program in Philadelphia, PA, TRUST aims to provide holistic yet flexible opportunities to engage in workforce development programming catered to those managing the varied pressures and expectations of life post-incarceration.
- ◆ Camden County, NJ is piloting a Restorative Justice Hub specifically for young adults returning from incarceration. This Hub is a part of a four city investment from the state of New Jersey that supports holistic, cross-system support for young adults that aims to ease their transition and center healing.



Conclusion

Given the field of young/emerging adult justice is ever evolving, this scan represents the landscape at the time of its most recent edit. Programs, policies and initiatives that support developmentally and emotionally appropriate supports for young adults are continually being piloted, implemented and evaluated. As advances are made, as does the hope that young adults will become more likely to be deflected from justice system involvement all together. In addition to what is outlined in this report, thought leadership including- but not limited to- the resources and initiatives below are integral in advancing Young Adult Justice:

- ◆ [Columbia University's Emerging Adult Justice Project](#)
- ◆ [The Juvenile Law Center](#)
- ◆ [Citizens for Juvenile Justice](#)
- ◆ [Harvard Kennedy School](#)
- ◆ [Youth Advocate Programs](#)
- ◆ Illinois Emerging Adults Policy and Practice Network

If you have a young adult justice program, policy or initiative to share, email justiceinitiatives@nlc.org.



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