

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO REFORM STATE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

The *National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice Systems* is a multi-year initiative to accelerate the pace of juvenile justice policy reforms throughout the country. In 2011, this Campaign supported reforms to save taxpayers money, improve public safety, lower recidivism, and at the same time improve the outcomes for delinquent youth and their families in contact with the juvenile justice system. These reforms included:

- Keeping youth out of criminal and juvenile justice system;
- Increasing availability and access to effective alternatives to juvenile incarceration; and
- Changing the way youth are treated to reflect developmental differences from adults.

THE FUNDERS' COLLABORATIVE TO REFORM STATE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Foundations and individual donors can join the Funders' Collaborative by providing financial support for reform efforts. Working within the philanthropic community, the Collaborative has begun to:

- Engage funders in campaign planning, selection of priority states, and mutual learning;
- Magnify the impact of individual donor efforts through collective action;
- Support new and existing state-focused coalitions; and
- Connect statewide policy reforms to local community efforts and larger national initiatives.

The Funders' Collaborative meets quarterly to: select states suggested for reform campaigns; brief existing and new donors; and review campaign updates and interim progress reports. Current funders include: The George Gund Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The New York Community Trust, and the Tides Foundation.

CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

Public Interest Projects

Public Interest Projects (PIP) is a public charity that specializes in helping foundations and individual donors develop and execute collaborative grant-making strategies. PIP is the home for the Funders Collaborative. It administers grants made by participating funders and contracts with M+R Strategic Services to manage state-based campaigns.

M+R Strategic Services

M+R Strategic Services (M+R) is a national campaign firm headquartered in Washington, D.C. with branch offices in four states. M+R has extensive experience designing and executing national and state policy campaigns. M+R's staff works with advocates and consultants in each state to craft campaigns including communications, outreach and organizing, and public policy advocacy to foster change.

M+R:

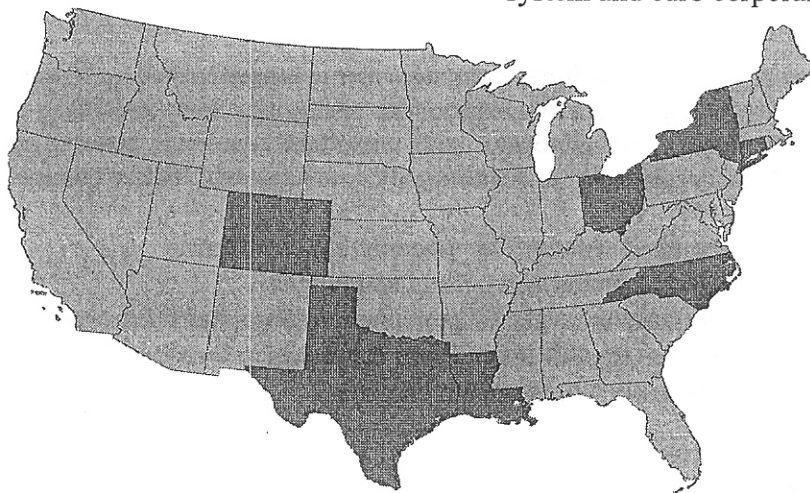
- Develops the Campaign's national strategy for juvenile justice reform;
- Identifies states that are poised to undertake reform campaigns;
- Works with state-based advocates to craft and implement appropriate reform agendas;
- Hires consultants to enhance the capabilities of these advocates to accelerate reform; and
- Staffs and participates in Funders' Collaborative meetings.

STATE INITIATIVES

The Campaign's work in 2011 centered on building successful juvenile justice policy reform initiatives in seven states: Colorado, Connecticut, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas. Between January and June, the Campaign hired and managed two dozen seasoned professionals who helped implement reform efforts in each of these states. They worked closely with judges, legislators, law enforcement officials, and advocates from across the political spectrum to capitalize on reform opportunities. Most of the campaigns achieved or succeeded in advancing the goals of in-state advocates.

2011 STATE JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Colorado:** Created a bi-partisan Task Force of state legislators charged with developing proposals for the 2012 session that would reduce the number of youth referred to the justice system as a result of school disciplinary and law enforcement practices.
- **Connecticut:** Maintained funding to implement an increase in the age of court jurisdiction to 17, require court orders for admitting a juvenile into detention, and require school districts to accept credits youth received while in the juvenile justice system.
- **Louisiana:** Created a study commission to make recommendations regarding the governance, structure and target population for a Louisiana Families in Need of Services (FINS) system in 2012, and to draft the necessary legislation.
- **New York:** Closure of youth facilities that eliminated 376 beds, agreement on criteria to determine facility closures and increased funding for more cost-effective community-based alternative to detention and incarceration programs. New York placed special emphasis on financially incentivizing counties to design and run appropriate alternative placement programs.
- **North Carolina:** Built strategic support for a "Raise the Age" bill that was advanced and will likely be considered in the 2012 short legislative session.
- **Ohio:** Invested money from closed juvenile facilities into evidence-based community services, grant judges more authority to release youth from secure facilities, revise certain mandatory sentences for youth, allow for youth to return to the juvenile system when they have been tried as an adult, adopt state uniform competency standards, and review and recommend ways to address youth mental health needs.
- **Texas:** Supported the merger of youth correction and probation agencies with language and bill amendments aimed at changing the operations and culture of a new Department of Juvenile Justice that would prioritize alternatives to incarceration and policies that produce positive outcomes for youth. Also, the new policies would reduce the number of youth in alternative education programs, slow the flow of truants into the system and curb corporal punishment.



For more information about *The National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice Systems*, please contact:
Susan Stamler at sstamler@mrss.com or (917) 438-4636