

# **BUILDING BRIDGES**

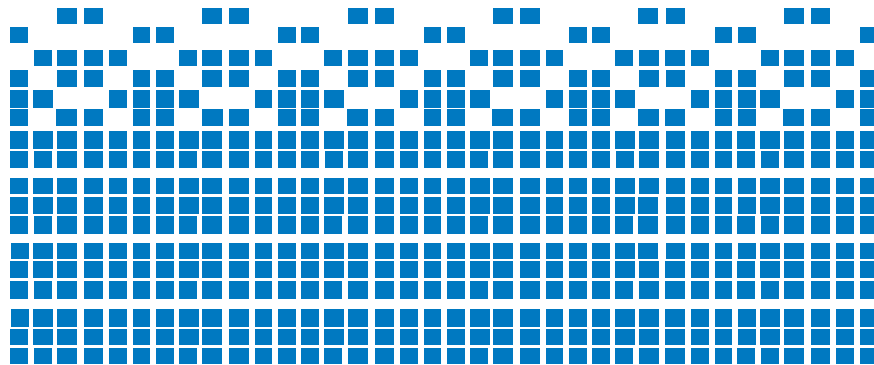


**Between Your Community and Your Court**

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**A HANDBOOK FOR  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Court and Community Collaboration within  
Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System





## SPECIAL THANKS

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Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers

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# Introduction

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The Court and Community Collaboration Committee has prepared this handbook under the direction of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers to fulfill the vision that communities and juvenile courts throughout the Commonwealth will work together to achieve the goals of Balanced and Restorative Justice. This handbook details how community members and organizations can take an active role in juvenile crime prevention through this partnership.

The solution to crime prevention does not lie solely with the police, the courts or the probation offices. It is the community stepping forward to assist those parties in carrying out their duties that can prevent crime. Communities can also help support victims while working to reintegrate the offenders, and can assume active roles in helping victims define the harm and the appropriate responses to repair the harm.

Courts and communities throughout the Commonwealth should seek more ways to partner and expand the concepts and principles of a Balanced and Restorative Justice System, an approach that promises to increase positive outcomes for all those involved.

**Children grow up in communities, not programs.** Community organizations, faith communities, and schools have intensive long-term contact with children and can have positive influences on them. A child develops not only through services but also through support and opportunities provided by his/her community.

The Court, in turn, has the responsibility to collaborate with the community. It is our pleasure to provide this handbook to assist both the courts and the communities in achieving this goal. It is hoped that the implementation of the recommendations contained in this handbook will enable us to build on our past successes, and continue our progress in improving positive outcomes for communities, victims and juvenile offenders.

Addie Beighley  
Chairperson, Court and Community Collaboration Committee





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Order by Phone: Weekdays, 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.





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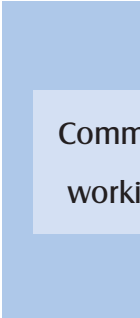






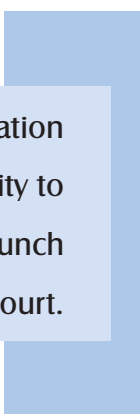
## An **Invitation** to Collaborate with Juvenile Court

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Communities all across Pennsylvania are actively working to reduce juvenile crime and violence.

PENNSYLVANIA'S VISION  
FOR THE FUTURE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE  
IS ONE THAT INVOLVES  
EVERY COMMUNITY,  
ASSISTS ALL VICTIMS,  
SUPPORTS ALL FAMILIES, AND  
HELPS ALL JUVENILES TO  
BECOME RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS.



The Court and Community Collaboration Committee invites you and your community to use this handbook as your guide to launch active and ongoing alliances with juvenile court.



## Overview of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System: Balanced and Restorative Justice

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Previously when a crime occurred, the court system was concerned primarily with who committed the crime, which laws were broken, and how to punish offenders to ensure they didn't reoffend. Today juvenile justice wants to ensure that in addition to not committing more crimes, offenders learn to assume responsibility for their actions and become productive citizens.



Since 1995, state legislation has changed how the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system delivers its services. It is called "Balanced and Restorative Justice," which is really the merging of two concepts.

First, the court system adopted a "balanced approach." Juvenile court personnel recognize the offender, the victim and the community as equal clients who should all benefit from their interactions with the court.

Second, "restorative justice" makes it a priority for offenders to accept responsibility for the harm they have caused and to take action to repair the harm done to victims and communities.



The juvenile justice system, communities, victims, offenders, and families/guardians all have roles in achieving the three goals of Balanced and Restorative Justice:

- Community protection
- Accountability
- Competency development.

These roles are defined within each of the three goals on the following pages.





# New Roles in Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System

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## Community Protection

The public has a right to a safe and secure community, including protection from known offenders.

### COMMUNITY ROLE:

- Provide input to justice system regarding public safety concerns.
- Share responsibility for offender control and integration.
- Create support systems for victims.
- Create balanced and restorative opportunities for victims.

### JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ROLE:

- Ensure that offenders are properly supervised in the community.
- Ensure that offenders' time is structured in productive activities.

### VICTIM ROLE:

- Provide input to the juvenile justice system about their safety concerns and perspectives of needed offender monitoring.

### OFFENDER ROLE:

- Remain crime free and abide by conditions of probation.
- Become involved in competency building and restorative activities.
- Avoid situations that may lead to further offenses.

### FAMILY/GUARDIAN ROLE:

- Set clear behavioral expectations in conjunction with juvenile court.
- Monitor the child's behavior and peer relationships.

## Accountability

When a crime occurs, a debt incurs. Offenders should make every effort to assume responsibility for their actions and to restore losses suffered by victims.

### COMMUNITY ROLE:

- Provide opportunities for programs and processes that allow offenders to repair the harm caused by their actions.
- Provide opportunities for valued community service and paid work experience for offenders.
- Create informal support systems for victims.

### JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ROLE:

- Find productive ways to ensure that offenders repay victims and complete other restorative requirements.



#### VICTIM ROLE:

- Provide information about financial, physical and emotional impact of the crime.
- Provide input regarding accountability sanctions for offenders.

#### OFFENDER ROLE:

- Actively work to restore victims' losses.
- Participate in activities that increase empathy with the victim and victims in general.

#### FAMILY/GUARDIAN ROLE:

- Ensure the child works to restore victims' losses.
- Fulfill court-ordered obligations for parent/guardian participation in community service, restitution, and other activities.

### **Competency Development**

Offenders should leave the juvenile justice system more capable than when they entered.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE:

- Partner with juvenile justice system in developing opportunities for youth to make productive contributions to the community while learning positive civic and other values.

#### JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ROLE:

- Identify community resources that build on youths' strengths and interests in a way that demonstrates competency.
- Provide supports for offenders' successful completion of activities.

#### VICTIM ROLE:

- Build awareness of the impact of crime through impact statements and victim impact panels.

#### OFFENDER ROLE:

- Become actively involved in activities that make a positive contribution to the community while building life skills to actively restore victims' losses.

#### FAMILY/GUARDIAN ROLE:

- Assist the court in assessing the child's strengths, interests, and skills.
- Participate in parenting education, training or other activities as directed by the court.

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Adapted from *Balanced and Restorative Justice in Pennsylvania: A New Mission and Changing Roles within the Juvenile Justice System*, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, March 1997 and *Balanced and Restorative Justice: Program Summary*, OJJDP. NCJ 149727.



# Benefits of Community and Juvenile Court Collaborations

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## FOR COMMUNITIES...

- Assume responsibility for their community's future and improve the quality of life within the community
- Participate in and support the juvenile justice system and victims
- Become more connected and experience a stronger sense of community, including increased safety
- Assist juvenile offenders to become contributing, law-abiding citizens and integrate into their community
- Create formal and informal support systems for victims

## FOR VICTIMS...

- Provide opportunities to voice the harm they have incurred
- Receive increased community and court responsiveness to their needs
- See offenders taking responsibility for their actions and actively repairing the harm they have caused
- Receive assistance from community-based support systems
- Participate in the justice process

## FOR OFFENDERS...

- Develop empathy for the victims of their offenses and for all victims
- Pay back their victims and communities for the harm they have caused
- Develop positive and appropriate relationships with others in their communities
- Learn competency skills, e.g., social, educational, employment
- Integrate into their communities as contributing, responsible and law-abiding citizens

## FOR COURTS...

- Expand potential for fulfilling goals of Balanced and Restorative Justice, including more opportunities for youth competency development and accountability, and increased public support for community supervision of juvenile offenders
- Provide viable means to include victims as stakeholders
- Provide assistance and support for the juvenile justice system
- Gain greater understanding of communities and reduce traditionally experienced isolation from communities



## What Can My Community and I Do to Participate?

Individuals, businesses, institutions, and community agencies can participate in Balanced and Restorative Justice in the following ways.

### ACTIVITY

Develop support systems for victims in your community

Develop programs and services for juvenile offenders in partnership with juvenile court

Promote safety in your community

### EXAMPLES

- Provide ongoing support to victims, e.g., child care, meals, transportation, phone calls and/or visits
- Organize restoration services response teams, e.g., repair damaged property, refer to crime repair groups and/or resources for repair supplies and services
- Provide referrals to support resources, e.g., victim advocacy services, victim support groups, neighborhood crime watch, counseling within faith-based and other support systems
- Volunteer through your local victim advocates, e.g., victim advocacy, victim offender mediation, victim impact panels, victim impact classes
- Sponsor community service work, e.g., construction, graffiti removal, voter registration, food bank, park and playground clean up
- Provide employment opportunities that promote world of work skills while offenders pay back financially (restitution) for the harm they have caused
- Volunteer in mentoring programs, educational programs, work-related and life skills programs
- Organize community action groups that address crime in your neighborhoods
- Participate in your neighborhood crime watch
- Partner with juvenile court in monitoring and supervising youth on probation



And, every community member can express  
hospitality every day – Say “Hello” to children  
and adults in your community today.

ACTIVITY

Support court-related activities within your community

Nurture the youths in your community and assist neighborhood families

EXAMPLES

- Participate in community youth aid panels, youth commissions, and community justice panels
- Provide opportunities for juvenile court professionals to work within schools, e.g., school-based probation
- Develop opportunities for juvenile court professionals to work within community settings, e.g., volunteer work with community organizations, participation in crime prevention activities
- Volunteer one-to-one with youth, e.g., tutor, mentor, coach a sports team, participate in dramatic arts
- Support youth activities, e.g., pay a membership fee for a child, attend a youth’s graduation whose parent(s) are unable to attend
- Participate in cross-generational activities, e.g., foster grandparents, artists in schools, retirees volunteering in youth programs
- Baby sit for a single mother, share a holiday dinner, or donate needed items to family-serving agencies
- Donate in-kind services and goods, e.g., technical expertise, building space, staff volunteers on company time
- Sponsor community projects that improve the quality of family life, e.g., housing rehabilitation, food banks





# Next Steps:

## We Are Interested! Where Do We Begin?

### 1. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

- Call your local Juvenile Probation Office or contact Susan Blackburn at the following number: 717-477-1411
- See the following websites:
  - [www.pachiefprobationofficers.org](http://www.pachiefprobationofficers.org)
  - [www.jjc.state.pa.us](http://www.jjc.state.pa.us)

### 2. BECOME A COMMUNITY PARTNER WITH YOUR JUVENILE COURT

- Discuss ways you can become involved in alliances with juvenile court.
- Take into consideration the needs and interests of both your community and juvenile court.
- Develop an action plan.
- Include all stakeholders who should be involved, including individuals, programs and/or agencies, juvenile court.

### 3. SPREAD THE WORD

- Start with “Who and What you Know” in your community.
  - Include individuals, programs and agencies with whom you do business and socialize.
  - Community groups, e.g., neighborhood development corporations, Chamber of Commerce
  - Business owners
  - Faith communities
  - Fraternal organizations, e.g., Rotary Clubs, Lions, Elks
  - Alumni associations
  - Schools
- Join the community/court advisory committee (if your court has one).
  - Identify natural new alliances (individuals, programs and agencies already involved in community activism and change or that currently sponsor youth and family-oriented programs).
  - Actively promote and support your community’s alliances with juvenile court.



## Glossary

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**Accountability** – Offenders understand the harm caused by their offenses, assume responsibility for that harm, and take actions to repair the harm.

**Balanced Approach** – Stresses that justice is best served when the community, the victim and the offender receive balanced attention and tangible outcomes from their interactions with juvenile court.

**Community** – A group of people living in the same locality and under the same government. A group of people having common interests.

**Community Protection** – The public has a fundamental right to safe and secure communities and must be protected during the time the offender is under juvenile justice supervision.

**Community Youth Aid Panels/Youth Commissions/  
Community Justice Panels** – A small group of citizens who conduct public, face-to-face meetings with offenders convicted of primarily non-violent and minor offenses. Board members discuss with the offender the nature of the offense and its negative consequences, and agree on specific actions the offender will take to make reparation for the crime.

**Community Service** – Work performed by an offender for the benefit of the community that offers a way to hold an offender accountable to repair some of the harm caused by his or her criminal actions.

**Competency Development** – Juvenile offenders should leave the jurisdiction of the court more capable of being productive and responsible citizens in their community than when they entered.

**Court** – A person or persons whose task is to hear and submit a decision on legal matters.

**Faith Community** – A group of people who subscribe to a particular theology as expressed in specific sacred writings (Bible, Torah, Koran, etc.) and in doctrinal statements of belief.





## Glossary

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**Family Group Conferencing** – A process for bringing together the people most affected by a crime (the victim, the offender, and the family, friends, and key supporter of both) to decide the resolution of a criminal incident. A trained facilitator leads the group to discuss how they have been harmed and how the harm might be repaired.

**Juvenile Offenders** – Youths between the ages of 10-17 who commit unlawful acts (crimes) and incur obligations to the victims and communities they harmed.

**Restitution** – A process by which offenders are held accountable for the financial losses they have caused to the victims of their crimes. Restitution payment is the sum of money paid by the offender to the victim to balance this monetary debt.

**Restorative Justice** – Gives priority to repairing the harm done to victims and communities, and offender accountability is defined in terms of assuming responsibility and taking action to repair the harm.

**Victim Impact Class** – An educational program designed to teach offenders about the human consequences of crime. Offenders learn how crime affects the victim and the victim's family, friends, and community, and how it also affects them and their own families, friends, and communities.

**Victim Impact Panels** – A forum for crime victims to tell a group of offenders about the impact of the crime on their lives and on the lives of their families, friends, and neighbors. The offenders of the victim presenters are not present.

**Victim Offender Mediation** – A process that provides interested victims an opportunity to meet their offender, in a safe and structured setting, and engage in a mediated discussion of the crime with the assistance of a trained mediator.

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Some definitions adapted from *Restorative Justice On-Line Notebook*,  
[http://ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/rest-just/ch5\\_toc.htm](http://ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/rest-just/ch5_toc.htm)





## Resources

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"Achieving Balanced and Restorative Justice in Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System"—Video with accompanying booklet

*Balanced and Restorative Justice: Program Summary*, OJJDP, NCJ 149727

*Restorative Justice: Principles, Practices and Implementation, 2001*, Training Curriculum, National Institute of Corrections Academy, U.S. Department of Justice, [www.nicic.org](http://www.nicic.org)

*Restorative Justice On-Line Notebook*, <http://ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/rest-just>

The National Balanced and Restorative Justice Project, Florida Atlantic University, Suite 613, 111 East Las Olas Blvd., Askew Tower, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33304 (tel) 954-762-5668 (fax) 954-762-5626 (e-mail) [barj@fau.edu](mailto:barj@fau.edu) <http://www.barjproject.org/>

The Juvenile Justice Enhancement Training Project, The Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research, Shippensburg University, 1871 Old Main Drive, Shippensburg, PA 17257-2299 (717)-477-1411







MISSION STATEMENT  
FOR  
Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System



**“JUVENILE JUSTICE:  
COMMUNITY PROTECTION;  
VICTIM RESTORATION;  
YOUTH REDEMPTION.”**

**Community Protection** refers to the right of all Pennsylvania citizens to be and feel safe from crime.

**Victim Restoration** emphasizes that, in Pennsylvania, a juvenile who commits a crime harms the victim of the crime and the community, and thereby incurs an obligation to repair that harm to the greatest extent possible.

**Youth Redemption** embodies the belief that juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania have strengths, are capable of change, can earn redemption, and can become responsible and productive members of their communities.

Furthermore, all of the services designed and implemented to achieve this mission and all hearings and decisions under the Juvenile Act—indeed all aspects of the juvenile justice system—must be provided in a fair and unbiased manner. The United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions guarantee rights and privileges to all citizens, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, national origin or handicap.