Module 9:

Building Community Capacity for Juvenile Justice Reform

“Justice Reinvestment was developed as a public safety mechanism to downsize prison populations... and re-allocate savings ... in minority communities disproportionately harmed by the system and culture of harsh punishment... In spite of its successes, JRI has been unable to reduce correctional populations and budgets below the historically high levels which persist today. Nor has it steered reinvestment toward the communities most weakened by aggressive criminal justice policies.”

- Ending Mass Incarceration: Charting a New Justice Reinvestment
Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

1. Define a community capacity building approach to juvenile justice reform

2. Distinguish between juvenile justice approaches that simply provide services and those that genuinely build community capacity

3. Apply a community capacity building lens to program planning and implementation
The Cycle of Incarceration in Communities of Color

1. Under-resourced & dis-organized communities
2. Youth crime & delinquency
3. Public Fear
4. Reactive Policy & Laws
5. Economically-driven prison enterprise
6. Sensational Crime

- Media Coverage
- “Something must be done!”
- Political Pressure

Economically-driven prison enterprise

Youth crime & delinquency

Reactive Policy & Laws

Public Fear

Under-resourced & dis-organized communities
Reversing The Cycle of Incarceration in Communities of Color

Organized communities Accessing Resources

Reinvestment of Funding from Prisons to Community Resources

Youth doing well in community programs

Progressive Policy & Laws

Community Support Mainstream Sympathy

GOOD PRESS

- Media Coverage
- “Something must be done!”
- Political Pressure
Community Capacity Building for Juvenile Justice reform is a *structured* and *intentional* process that involves training and equipping the stakeholders most affected by youth crime and delinquency (youth, families, and neighborhood organizations) to be primary responders to youthful misbehavior.
Community Capacity Building is a philosophy built on a different paradigm of how the justice system and the community relate to one another.
Essential Components

- Brings the resources of *directly affected communities* to bear on the most challenging juvenile justice populations
- Strengthens the *ability of local communities* to take care of youth in their neighborhoods
- Develops meaningful *collaborative partnerships* between system and community stakeholders
Benefits of Building Community Capacity

- More meaningful partnerships between system stakeholders and community members.
- Improved family engagement and family participation in juvenile justice reform.
- An increase in community-based diversions and alternatives to incarceration for youth.
- A reduction in juvenile detention admissions and out-of-home placements.
- A reduction in Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and racial disparities.
- A decrease in juvenile recidivism and better long-term life outcomes for youth.
More Benefits of Building Community Capacity

• It enhances public safety

• Young people continue to get support (and informal supervision) long after their formal juvenile justice involvement ends

• The community learns to take preventative measures before young people have formal juvenile justice involvement

• You get support for entire families, including siblings

• A much broader cross-section of the community (CBOs, faith-based organizations, businesses, etc.) takes responsibility for young people.
An Example of Community Capacity Building

South Bronx Community Connections

What are some ways this initiative built community capacity?
The Four “P”s of Community Capacity Building

- To determine whether juvenile justice reform initiatives are indeed building the ability of communities to effectively serve youth in the justice system requires looking at these system-community partnerships through a specific lens – *the lens of community capacity building*. 
The Four “P”s of Community Capacity Building

- **PLACE**: the extent to which services are delivered in the most impacted *neighborhoods* and by local *community* stakeholders

- **PROCUREMENT**: the extent to which *funding* reaches local community organizations

- **PLANNING**: the extent to which local community stakeholders play a *leadership* role in shaping and designing juvenile justice initiatives

- **PROGRAMMING**: the extent to which community stakeholders are involved in creating and developing interventions that are *culturally* appropriate and *neighborhood* specific
The Community Capacity Building Grid

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EXERCISE: Applying the Community Capacity Buildings Lens

- **What specific strategies, if any, did they employ to build community capacity? How did these strategies build community capacity?**

- **If it did NOT build community capacity, what are some modifications that could have been made to address community capacity building**
**CORE VALUES**

- **Youth Leadership**: a commitment to treat young people as assets and to build their leadership skills through strengths-based programming.

- **Family Engagement**: a commitment to engage family members as the most important assets in a young person’s life and to build the leadership skills of parents through peer coaching and support.

- **Community Engagement**: a commitment to engage other local grassroots faith and neighborhood organizations as collaborative partners, and to build their capacity through sharing financial resources, knowledge, and decision-making power.

- **Credible Messengers**: a commitment to training and hiring community members who have experienced and overcome the same challenges currently faced by youth and families in the justice system.
**Examples of Programs that Build Community Capacity**

- **Positive Youth Development**: providing funding to local faith and neighborhood organizations to engage system-involved youth in community improvement projects with pro-social peers.

- **Parent Peer Coaching**: employing parents whose children have been involved in the juvenile justice system as *Parent Peer Coaches* for families currently navigating the system.

- **Learning Communities**: *bringing together system and community partners to analyze data, design programs, and develop policy*

- **Credible Messenger Mentoring**: hiring formerly system-involved community members to serve as mentors for youth in the juvenile justice system.
Community Engagement

- Young people in crisis are sending out a distress signal that requires systems and communities to respond together

S.O.S.
Community Capacity Building

- **STRATEGIC**
  - Focused on specific target populations in specific neighborhoods at specific decision-making points

- **OPERATIONALIZED**
  - Facilitated by an organized decision-making process that builds in planning, evaluation, and ongoing training

- **SUSTAINED**
  - Funded at appropriate levels on an ongoing basis