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**Moving Beyond Youth Prisons:  
Applying Lessons from New York City's Implementation of  
Close to Home to Milwaukee**

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## Key Takeaways

- Collaboration and trust among wide range of partners was key to implementing Close to Home
- C2H was a fundamental reimagining of the system
  - Incarceration to Communities
- Close to Home was **not** a bed-to-bed transfer from NYS to NYC

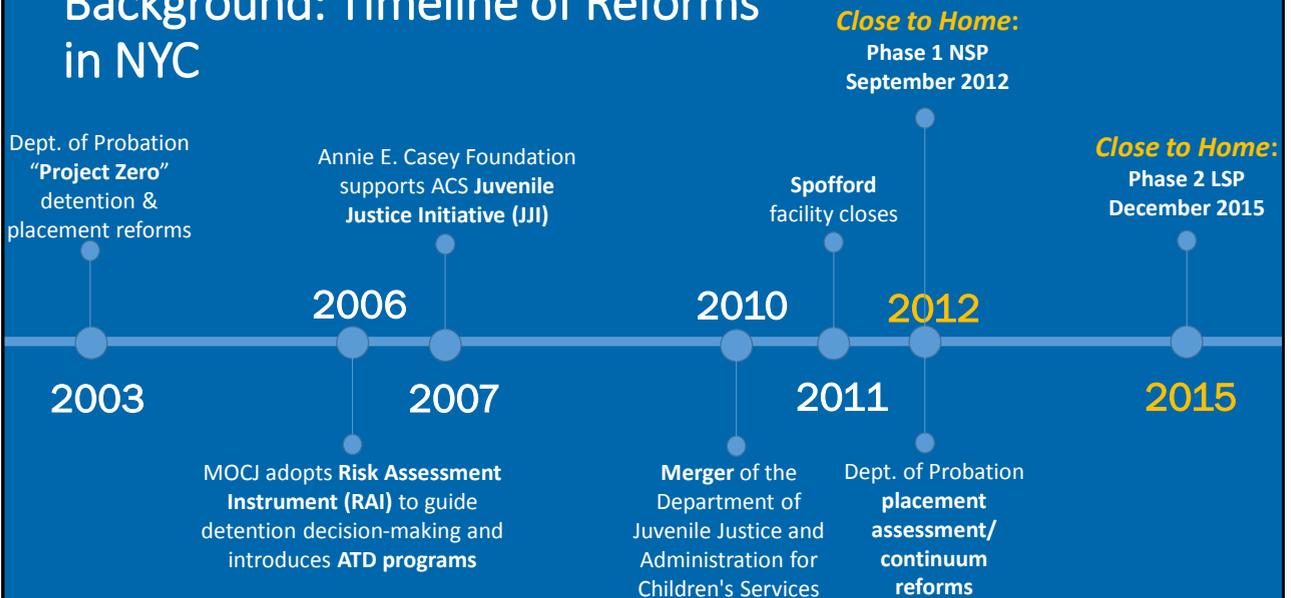
## Background: New York, pre-C2H

- **Mid-1990s:** Start of significant declines in NYC juvenile crime
- **Early 2000s:** Juvenile placements also begin to drop
  - 56 percent decline in youth admitted to state facilities between 2000 and 2008
  - Remaining admissions primarily from NYC
  - 88 percent of state beds were in upstate



Source: Albany Times-Union, October 2010.

## Background: Timeline of Reforms in NYC



## Lesson #1: Turn Crisis into Opportunity

- Sound the alarm
- Partner with advocates
- Leverage political will

## Sounding the Alarm: System in Crisis

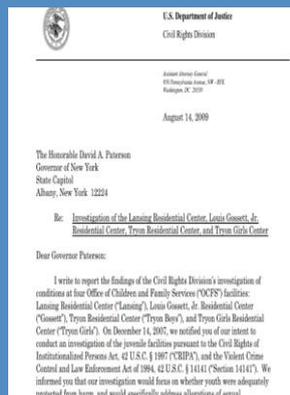
2006

Human Rights Watch/ACLU report  
on girls in OCFS



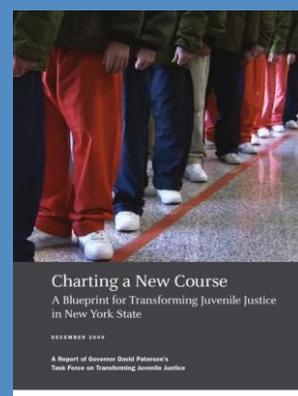
2009

DOJ/Legal Aid Report and  
Litigation on OCFS Facilities



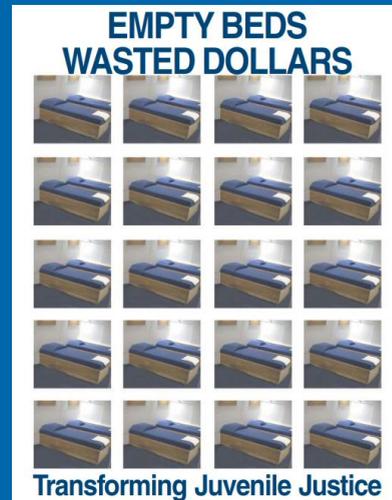
2008-2009

Task Force on Transforming  
Juvenile Justice  
in New York State



## Partnership with Advocates

- Strategize with agency officials
- Organize and coordinate key partners
- Raise voices of youth
- Meet with elected officials



## Leverage Political Will

*"You have juvenile justice facilities today where we have young people who are incarcerated in these state programs who are receiving . . . treatment that has already been proven to be ineffective; recidivism rates in the 90 percentile. The cost to the taxpayer is exorbitant. For one child, over \$200,000 per year..... I understand, the importance of keeping jobs...especially in upstate New York. I also understand that that does not justify the burden on the taxpayer and the violation of civil rights of the young person who is in a program that they don't need where they're not being treated, hundreds of miles from their home just to save state jobs...."*

*-NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo,  
in his 2011 State of the State address*

*"The facilities run by the State are relics of a bygone era, when troubled city kids were stripped from their families and shipped to detention centers in remote rural areas. We know there is a better way to help these kids get their lives back on track, while also saving taxpayers millions of dollars. We simply cannot continue to support a system that has some of the highest recidivism rates in the country. New York City should be allowed to use these resources to further develop its juvenile justice program, which already has had success in helping young people turn their lives around, and better protecting the community."*

*-NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, 2010*

## Lesson #2: Plan for the System You Want

- Establish a vision
- Align processes, policies, and programs with system vision
- Listen to the numbers

### Establish a Vision

- Involve a broad group of stakeholders
- Review promising practices
- Understand your current population

**Roca**  LESS JAIL, MORE FUTURE.



Wayne County

# Align Processes with System Vision: Dispositional Decision-Making

## SDM MATRIX

| MOST SERIOUS CURRENT ARREST CHARGE  | LIKELIHOOD OF RE-ARREST (PER YLS ASSESSMENT)                         |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|   | HIGH OR VERY HIGH  | MODERATE   | LOW   |
| <b>CLASS I: A, B felonies (violent &amp; non-violent), violent C felonies</b>                 | <b>BOX #1</b><br>Out of Home Placement <sup>1</sup>                  | <b>BOX #2</b><br>Out of Home Placement or Alternative to Placement   | <b>BOX #3</b><br>Alternative to Placement or Probation. (To Be Specified) |
| <b>CLASS II: Non-violent C felonies, violent D felonies</b>                                   | <b>BOX #4</b><br>Out of Home Placement or Alternative to Placement   | <b>BOX #5</b><br>Alternative to Placement or ESP (Level 3 Probation) | <b>BOX #6</b><br>Level 1 or 2 Probation                                   |
| <b>CLASS III: Non violent D, All E felonies, misd assault and misd weapons possession</b>     | <b>BOX #7</b><br>Alternative to Placement or ESP (Level 3 Probation) | <b>BOX #8</b><br>Level 1 or 2 Probation                              | <b>BOX #9</b><br>Level 1 Probation or CD                                  |
| <b>CLASS IV: A misdemeanors except assault and weapons and all B misdemeanors<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>BOX #10</b><br>Level 1 or 2 Probation                             | <b>BOX #11</b><br>CD or ACD  | <b>BOX #12</b><br>ACD or short term one time consequence or Dismissal     |

**MANDATORY CONSIDERATIONS:**

1. Must consider CD or ACD for youth with no unsealed priors. Decision is based on the circumstances of the case.
2. If case goes to trial, use finding offense.

**DISCRETIONARY OVERRIDES:**  
POs have discretion to recommend either a more or less restrictive option than the grid provides. However, all overrides - up or down - must be submitted with justification for approval to the PO's supervisor and Borough Director

<sup>1</sup> All placement related processes will be handled by ACS  
<sup>2</sup> Many of these cases should be adjusted at intake

Shaded boxes represent youth who are eligible for DOP's and ACS's ATP programs

# Align Processes, Policies, and Programs with System Vision: Continuum of Responses

Non-Secure Placement

|                               | Probation Level 1   | Probation Level 2   | Probation Level 3  | ATP 1  | ATP 2   | ATP 3   | ATP 4  | Non-Secure Placement   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| <b>ACD/DC</b>                 | Contact: 1 meeting per month for 1 <sup>st</sup> 6 months plus referral to services as needed. Also 2 collateral and phone contacts per quarter. Home contacts as needed. | Contact: 2 meetings per month plus referral to services as needed. 6 additional contacts per quarter (phone and field visits regarding case plan), including at least 1 home visit. | Contact: Begins with 6 personal contacts and 8 collateral contacts per month. Contact levels gradually decrease over time. Possibility for added curricula TBD, plus referral to services as needed. | Day and/or evening program for youth disconnected from school, followed by level 3 probation after a transitional planning phase prior to completion of program. | An "advocate" from within the youth's own community who works with specific youth several times per week. Followed by level 3 probation after a transitional planning phase prior to completion of program. | Highly intensive level of probation (5 wkly contacts incl. Sat. work group; life coaching model) focused on promoting change in participants so they can fully participate in society and forge successful transition into adulthood. | In-home, evidence-based treatment modalities, including FFT, MTFC & MST, followed by level 3 probation after a transitional planning phase prior to completion of program. | Residential facilities for youth placed into ACS custody as a disposition of their case. Services include youth care, education, social work and case mgmt services, social skills instruction, access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, coord. of health care and public safety measures. |
| Avg. Duration: 6 mos – 1 year | Avg. Duration: 1 year or less   | Avg. Duration: 1 year   | Avg. Duration: 1-2 years   | Avg. Duration: 6 months  | Avg. Duration: 6 months   | Avg. Duration: 1 year   | Avg. Duration: 6 months  | Avg. Duration: 6-7 months  |

Source: "Re-Envisioning Juvenile Justice in New York City," NYC Dispositional Reform Steering Committee

## Listen to the Numbers

- Like Milwaukee, NYC engaged in a forecasting process to determine where youth should be placed
- Despite low numbers, the City contracted for more beds than needed.
- Ultimately, procurement made it easier to shed beds

## Align Processes, Policies, and Programs with System Vision: Rethinking Residential Care



Photos provided by New York City ACS

## Align Processes, Policies, and Programs with System Vision: Rethinking Residential Care

- Adoption of a “No-Reject, No-Eject” policy with potential contracted providers
- Importance of housing C2H residential at ACS
  - Philosophical underpinning that supports and protects youth
  - Access to different preventive funding streams (including Title IV-E)

## Designing a New System: Key Questions

- ✓ What is our vision for youth and families?
- ✓ If we had robust alternatives, who really needs to be in a facility and why?
  - ✓ How many beds do we really need?
- ✓ What policies and practices should we put into place that support our overarching vision and values for the system?
- ✓ Which agencies are best-suited to oversee the system we envision for youth and families?
- ✓ Who should we engage and partner with in this process to make the new system effective?

## Lesson #3: Be Thoughtful about Implementation and Culture Change

- “Staffing up” can be challenging
- Invest in training and education of stakeholders
- Respond to and troubleshoot challenges

## Implementation Challenges

### Quick implementation:

5 months from passage of state law to opening of first NSP facilities

### Experience Gap:

Some providers inexperienced with juvenile justice population

### Programmatic Limitations:

Limited options to address non-compliant youth

Some providers struggled with fidelity to the models being used

## Responding to and Troubleshooting Challenges

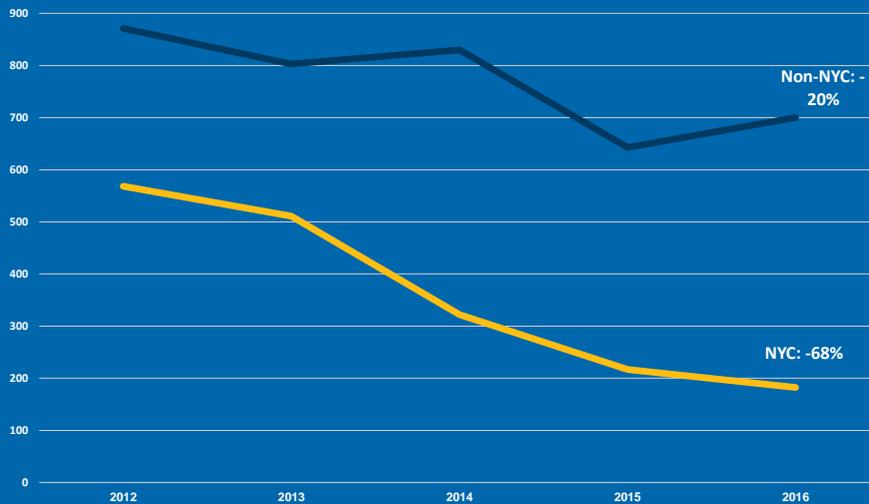
- Agency-created forums for key parts of the process
  - DOP established borough implementation teams to monitor dispositional process changes across city
  - ACS convened providers to track progress around approach used in facilities
- Deputy Mayor convened small group to track response to AWOLs, following initial problems with NSP
- DSRC was re-established as the City's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee to keep stakeholders apprised of work

## Lesson 4: Track and Report Progress

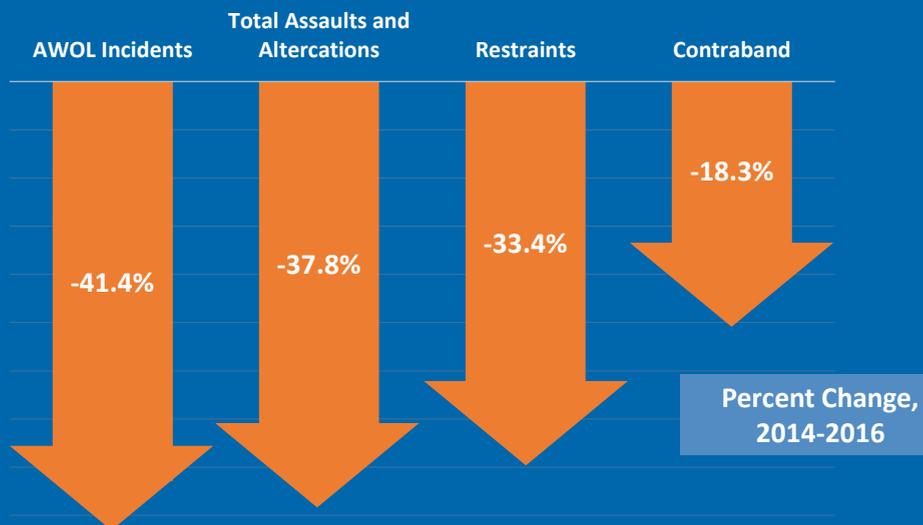
### *Key Indicators*

- Use of placement and community-based programs
- Changes in facility experience and practices
- Focus on youth development, family engagement, and education
- Impact on public safety
- Impact on racial disparities

## Placements in New York City Declined Faster than in Rest of State between 2012 and 2016



## Management Performance Measures, Changes between 2014-2016



Source: NYC Administration for Children's Services, 2018 and Close to Home Annual Report, 2016-17

## Close to Home Outcomes through a Youth Development Lens

### Education: NYC DOE *Passages Academy* (2016-2017 school year)

- Average of 9.3 credits earned
- Passed 91% of their classes
- 93% of C2H middle school students promoted at least one grade level
- Almost half of C2H students who took NYS Regents passed
- 80% of C2H students with a disability who took a Regents exam passed

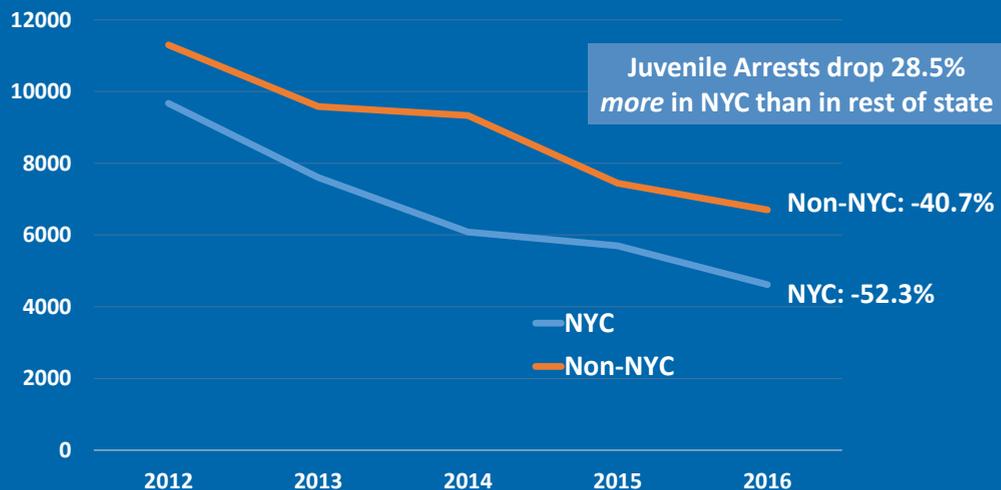
### Family

- 76% of youth transitioned to parent; 5% to other family member and 1% to guardian

### Engagement in pro-social activities

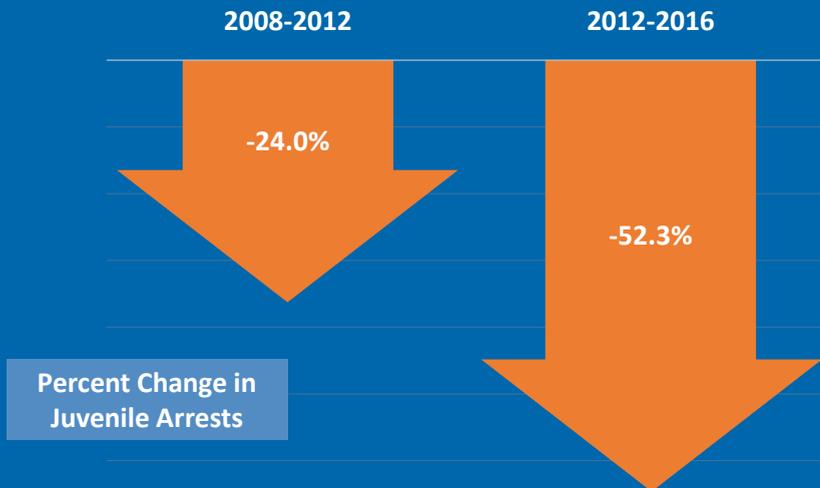
- 91% of youth who transitioned from C2H were enrolled with community-based programs.

## The *Close to Home* Era: New York City Leads in Declining Juvenile Arrests



Source: New York City Police Department (NYPD) and DCJS Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) System

## The decline in juvenile arrests double after enactment of *Close to Home*



Source: New York City Police Department (NYPD) and DCJS Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) System

## Racial disparities persist, despite lower numbers

- 90 percent of C2H ATP and residential admissions were youth of color
- In 2018, C2H LSP admissions were 100 percent youth of color

## Final Thoughts

- Be bold and innovative – watershed moments don't come around every day
- Collaborate and partner with advocates and communities
- System reform is not a one-time process, be prepared to evolve over time



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## Thank You!

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