

Policy Considerations: Re-entry/Transition Planning

The intent of this policy consideration is to evoke discussion within your jurisdiction regarding best practices and key elements to include in policies and procedures. Jurisdictions should consider these policies in the context of their unique juvenile justice system structure; state and local mandates; risk tolerance level; and other individual needs.

Throughout the policy considerations the acronym “PP” is used. This stands for “policy and/or procedure.”

General

- The PP clearly states the purpose/intent of policy and/or procedure and how it links to the agency mission (i.e. Research shows planning for re-entry increases youth’s likelihood of success – school/work engagement, recidivism, etc.)
- The PP includes basic information such as:
 - Name of policy and/or procedure owner (department, position, title)
 - Clear definitions of all key concepts related and that appear in policy and/or procedure (i.e. transition plan, re-entry meeting, transition team, etc.)
 - References to other relevant agency policies, state administrative rules, federal mandates, and agency forms related to the specific policy and/or procedure
- The PP will be available to staff for review.
- The PP reviewed for revision/modifications at least annually.

Team and Structure

- The PP establishes a team primarily responsible for identifying, coordinating, and facilitating progress of the youth’s reentry needs (i.e. re-entry team, Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)).
- The PP specifically identifies members of the re-entry/transition team (i.e. Case Manager, Clinician, Substance Abuse Counselor, education staff, etc.).
- The PP provide clear expectations regarding how often the team will meet (i.e. monthly).
- The PP outlines a progressive schedule for reviewing/discussing each youth’s re-entry plan based on when youth arrived to the program (i.e. monthly to bi-monthly/weekly as youth approaches release).
- The PP requires attendance be taken at re-entry and/or transition plan meetings and requires a representative participate in the meeting in the event the primary committee member is unable to attend.
- The PP directs where to document re-entry/transition discussion and decisions (i.e. youth case file) and who is responsible for this documentation.

Planning for Re-Entry and Transition

- The PP clearly defines the scope and definition of re-entry (i.e. Re-entry begins when youth enters the facility and ends when a youth has successfully transitioned into his/her community and the case is closed).

- The PP requires a formal transition plan to address main areas including: Education, employment, housing, health care (medical, mental health, substance use), family relationships and/or community resources, to name a few.
- The PP requires a formal transition plan to be generated a minimum of 90 days before release and states who is responsible for developing the plan.
- The PP requires the transition and re-entry plans be developed with input and cooperation of youth and family/individual youth will be placed with upon release.
- The PP includes coordinating re-entry plan development with additional resources and agencies (for example: child welfare system), especially for youth placed outside their previous home.
- The PP requires transition and re-entry plans use language that is easily understood and clearly outlines behavioral requirements/expectations – including specific criteria for release.
- The PP requires a copy of the transition plan be provided to youth and family and directs who is responsible for ensuring this task is completed.
- The PP requires specific staff to engage the youth’s local community as part of transition planning (i.e. supports for youth such as local church, community school personnel, Boys and Girls Club, etc.)
- The PP requires staff to work with families to schedule medical and mental health appointments that will take place in the community prior to youth leaving the facility.
- The PP requires staff to support and facilitate the engagement of the families throughout the youth’s stay for the purposes of developing, strengthening, and maintaining family and pro-social relationships that promote successful reentry to the family and community.
- The PP requires an upper-level manager to review, provide feedback, and approve transition plan at designated points in the youth’s stay (for example: 120 days and again 30 days before youth is released).
- The PP requires family visits (via video or in person visits) a minimum of monthly for 3-4 months prior to release.
- The PP requires the facility (if legally permitted – i.e. community residential programs, transition camps, etc.) to allow for home passes as one factor in preparing readiness for release.
- The PP states that all youth have access to a program of release preparation prior to release. The programs of release include, but not limited to: programming addressing education, employment, life skills, housing, family issues; individual counseling focusing on youth’s needs; family counseling sessions; and if allowable, graduated furloughs.
- The PP requires that youth and parent/guardian are provided with a copy of the developed plan.
- The PP requires a written medical summary to maintain continuity of care when a youth is release.

School

- The PP requires staff to plan, prepare and coordinate youth’s transition to community educational program (for example: school, vocational program).
- The PP requires youth to visit the community school where she/he will be attending prior to release (if permitted by school administrator).

- The PP describes who will be responsible for coordinating this pre-release school visit and at what point in the youth's stay this will occur.
- The PP designates a staff member to ensure youth is dressed appropriately for the pre-release school visit.
- The PP designates a staff member (i.e. transition specialist) to follow-up with youth within the first week of release and monthly thereafter.
- The PP requires facilities to have system in place that ensures youth will be able to attend the community school the day after release from the facility (i.e. youth enrolled prior to release or immediately upon release).
- The PP requires transfer of school records prior to or upon youth's release.

System Level: Re-Entry Committee

- The PP establishes a Re-Entry Task Force and/or a Re-Entry Committee for the purposes of increasing collaboration among community and agency supports; assessing current re-entry services and expanding services provided; identify barriers to youth re-entry; develop solutions; etc. for the purpose of fostering seamless transitions back into the community for youth (and decreasing recidivism).
- The PP details who is responsible for facilitating these meetings and identifies specific committee membership (i.e. Office of X, Division Y, external partners such as law enforcement, etc.).
- The PP describes how often these groups will convene, whether meeting minutes will be taken, and how they will be distributed and to whom.
- The PP directs Reentry Task Force partnerships be established by Memorandum of Understanding, as needed.
- The PP requires committee to develop measures to help track whether processes related to reintegration are working and whether committee and youth are meeting desired outcomes.
- The PP requires the task force (or the committee) to develop a strategic plan specifically addressing re-entry.
- The PP directs the task force or committee to conduct a detailed review of the reentry strategic plan a minimum of twice a year.