



## Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) program

### Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators

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#### Mission

To connect, develop and strengthen youth corrections leaders to maximize their capacities to implement and sustain reforms in their systems that will improve outcomes for youth, families and communities.

#### Vision

“We believe every youth should leave a correctional program in a better place than when he or she came in.”

#### Core Values

- Continuous Learning
- Collaboration
- Rehabilitation
- Parental Engagement
- Supportive Communities
- Diversity

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## Background

In many juvenile correctional and detention facilities, staff regularly utilize isolation or room confinement to manage difficult resident behavior. Research shows, however, that this practice is ineffective and may in fact harm youth, particularly those with histories of trauma who do not have the skills to cope with prolonged separation from others. For example, in “Juvenile Suicide in Confinement: A National Study,” Lindsay Hayes found that approximately 50% of suicides in juvenile facilities occurred while youth were isolated in their rooms, and more than 60% of those youth had histories of room confinement.

Given the growing recognition of the dangers and costs of isolation, juvenile justice agency administrators and facility staff seek strategies to reduce the practice and alternative tools to better guide resident behavior. In March 2015, the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) responded to this need by publishing the “CJCA Toolkit: Reducing the Use of Isolation”, which sets forth a series of action steps juvenile facilities can take to address the issue. The Toolkit’s recommendations stem from research, best practices and lessons learned from jurisdictions that have successfully reduced the use of isolation.

To further support the effort driven by national research and to build upon the momentum generated by the release of the Toolkit, the Center for Coordinated Assistance to States (CCAS) developed the Reducing Isolation in Youth Facilities Training and Technical Assistance (RIYF-TTA) program. This program is designed to assist agency leaders and staff create and utilize methods to reduce the use of isolation in juvenile facilities. The CJCA Toolkit and TTA program was made possible through a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention (OJJDP)



Office of Juvenile Justice and  
Delinquency Prevention



Center for Coordinated Assistance to States

Information publicizing the RIYF TTA opportunity was sent to state youth corrections administrators in April 2015. Potential participants were required to complete and submit a formal proposal to CJCA one month prior to the beginning of the TTA program. Applications were scored using standardized criteria and in May 2015, eight (8) jurisdictions were selected for the first RIYF cohort. To date, CJCA has completed the TTA program with the initial RIYF cohort and is in the process of providing TTA to six (6) additional jurisdictions (Cohort 2). The second cohort began in February 2016 and will conclude the program in November 2016. A list of participating jurisdictions can be found in Appendix A of this brief.

### **Reducing Isolation in Youth Facilities (RIYF) Training and Technical Assistance Program**

The Reducing Isolation in Youth Facilities Training and Technical Assistance (RIYF TTA) program is designed as a distance learning program that is informative, instructional, and interactive. It is administered primarily by CJCA. The program involves a series of intensive training sessions consisting of three webinars; three group technical assistance calls; six monthly calls with individual jurisdictions; and monthly Team Leader check-ins (minimum of six). The webinars and Group TTA calls are led by a panel of content experts whose jurisdictions have demonstrated success in reducing the use of isolation in their youth facilities. A complete list of RIYF experts who provide professional guidance to participating jurisdictions is listed in Appendix B.

In addition to an intensive communication schedule, delivered over the ten-month TTA period, jurisdiction team members meet to develop, revise, and implement their RIYF action plan. All agency leaders have demonstrated a commitment to this effort to reduce the use of isolation in youth facilities.

The RIYF TTA program goals are:

- To increase knowledge regarding the impact isolation has on youths in residential facilities;
- To provide a better understanding of the strategies that can be used to reduce the use of isolation in youth facilities;
- To support a clear direction for producing a strategic action plan designed to reduce the use of isolation in youth facilities; and
- To enhance the number of resources available to support change efforts, including a connection to content experts in the field.

#### **About the Center for Coordinated Assistance to States**

Through funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) and the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) have partnered to form the Center for Coordinated Assistance to States.

The Center for Coordinated Assistance to States (CCAS) manages the delivery of TTA to states, communities, territories, and tribal units looking to improve outcomes for at-risk youth and youth involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

The overall goal of the RIYF TTA program is to assist jurisdictions in developing and successfully implementing a comprehensive work plan to reduce or eliminate isolation. These plans reflect activities in five main areas: 1) Leadership and culture change; 2) Alignment of policies and procedures with the rehabilitative vision, mission and goals of the agency; 3) Development of a restrictive isolation policy; 4) Adoption of positive behavior management strategies; and 5) Alternative tools and training to develop positive, healthy and nurturing relationships with youth. Each jurisdiction receives feedback from expert panelists on their RIYF action plan and is provided technical guidance on system-wide implementation over the course of the TTA program.

**RIYF-TTA Program Consulting Agencies**

- California Division of Juvenile Justice
- Indiana Division of Youth Services
- Massachusetts Department of Youth Services
- Oregon Youth Authority
- West Virginia Division of Juvenile Services

**RIYF TTA Program Evaluation Highlights**

As part of CJCA’s commitment to data driven decision-making and as part of OJDDP grant requirements, CJCA developed a comprehensive plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the first RIYF TTA program cohort. The evaluation strategy includes three components: 1) Output measures; 2) Client satisfaction survey; and 3) Intermediate level outcome measures. The evaluation results indicate much satisfaction from program participants and suggest promising results in terms of longer term outcomes (i.e. reduction in the rate of isolation, and length of time youth are housed in isolation or room confinement). Highlights from the RIYF TTA program evaluation of the initial cohort are provided below.

**1) Output Measure Results**

Output measures were collected as a simple way of providing a “snapshot” of jurisdiction participation as well as products developed during the ten-month TTA program. During the last two months of the program, technical guidance focused on having jurisdictions develop activities to sustain progress made during the RIYF implementation phase. Jurisdictions were asked to generate sustainability activities, which represent practical ways to ensure progress made through the RIYF initiative is maintained over time and that outstanding action items are implemented in a timely manner.

**2) RIYF Participant Satisfaction Survey Results**

In order to capture essential information regarding the TTA experience, CJCA created a 23 question, five-point Likert Scale questionnaire to be completed by program participants (Team Leaders and Team Members). The electronic survey was voluntary and aimed to measure the degree of success in meeting jurisdiction needs as well as the quality of the technical support provided; the structure of the TA calls; and suggestions for improving the RIYF TTA program. A total number of 39 participants

**Output Measures**

- Total # of team members in monthly meetings = **72**
- Total # of monthly calls with RIYF teams = **44**
- Total number of sustainability ideas generated by jurisdictions = **51**

(Team Leaders and Team Members) across seven jurisdictions completed the survey. A summary of some of the highlights is provided below.

### Group TTA Calls

- 100% of survey respondents reported overall satisfaction with the three Group TA Calls.

### Monthly Calls with Individual Jurisdictions

The survey results indicate positive reviews on the monthly calls with individual jurisdictions. The following are some of the highlights:

- 100% of Team Leaders and 97% of all survey respondents reported that the monthly meeting structure, format, and content were helpful.
- 100% of Team Leaders reported the RIYF Project Manager was “very helpful” in linking them to specific resources for their jurisdiction.
- 100% of all survey respondents reported the RIYF resource folder was helpful.
- 100% of Team Leaders reported they felt “very satisfied” or “mostly satisfied” with the level of support provided through the TA process; 98% of all survey respondents reported they were satisfied with the level of support provided.

### Influence of RIYF TTA Participation

The results of the client satisfaction survey indicate that participating in the RIYF TTA program had a strong positive influence on actions taken by jurisdictions.

**100% of all Team Leaders (N=8) reported the RIYF initiative influenced:**

- Their decision to revise the agency or facility mission or vision statements.
- Their decision to revise agency or facility policies and/or procedures.
- The way they interact with or use data related to isolation (i.e. adopting additional measures, reviewing isolation data more regularly, and using data to better understand youth and facility culture).

**88% of Team Leaders (N=8) reported they:**

- Increased the number or enhanced the types of trainings offered as a result of the RIYF initiative
- Adopted new methods of staff recognition

- 75% of all survey respondents (N=39) stated they adopted at least one new treatment approach as a result of RIYF.
- 75% Team Leaders (N=8) stated they increased the frequency of trainings as a result of their participation in RIYF.

### 3) Intermediate and Long Term Outcomes

Seven of the eight RIYF jurisdictions actively use Performance-based Standards (PbS). These jurisdictions were asked to submit data on four measures related to isolation from the April 2015, October 2015, and April 2016 PbS data collection periods. These measures are: rate of isolation; average duration of isolation; percent of incidents terminating in four hours or less; and percent of incidents terminating in eight hours or less.

Success in reducing the use of isolation hinges on leadership support and culture change. It requires reducing staff use of isolation as a punishment or as the primary response to youth’s negative behaviors and creating a culture in which they employ alternative tools when working with youth in crisis. In order to capture this culture shift towards using alternatives, a reasonable span of time is needed to implement new responses to youth behavior before measuring the degree of success. Because jurisdictions began the RIYF implementation process in August 2015, a few weeks prior to the October PbS data collection month, April 2015 data represent baseline data. These data were compared with April 2016 (shown below). As part of the longer term evaluation study, data from the October 2016 data collection period will be collected and analyzed. This data will allow CJCA to draw stronger conclusions regarding the impact of implementing a focused plan to reduce the use of isolation.

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**Comparison of April 2015 and April 2016 PbS Data**

*Rate of Isolation*

- Approximately 71% of facilities (N=14) decreased the rate of isolation (defined as isolation, room confinement, segregation/special management unit use per 100 person days of confinement).

*Average Duration of Isolation*

- Approximately 29% of facilities (N=14) decreased the average duration of isolation, room confinement, and segregation/special management cases in hours.

*Percent of Isolation Incidents Terminating in Four (4) Hours or Less (youth is returned to the general population)*

- 42% of facilities (N=12\*) increased the percent of isolation, room confinement, segregation/special management unit cases terminated in four hours or less.

*Percent of Isolation Incidents Terminating in Eight (8) Hours or Less (youth is returned to the general population)*

- Approximately 33% of facilities (N=12\*) increased the percent of isolation, room confinement, segregation/special management unit cases terminated in eight hours or less.

\*Two facilities had no incidents of isolation and therefore were not included in this calculation.

*Although eight jurisdictions participated in the first RIYF cohort, the following results represent data from five jurisdictions. One jurisdiction does not participate in PbS; one jurisdiction began using PbS in October 2015 and therefore could not be included in the analysis because no comparison data were available; and data from one jurisdiction could not be obtained.*

## Applying the Results

Consistent with CJCA’s commitment to ongoing quality improvement, CJCA has modified the TTA approach with the second RIYF cohort based on the results of the RIYF evaluation. Suggestions for improvement offered by RIYF program participants in the initial cohort, has prompted positive TTA program changes, including, but not limited to:

- Increasing the interaction and discussion among team members during monthly individual meetings. The RIYF Project Manager will now offer participating jurisdictions an option to participate via telephone or through the computer. Connecting through the computer will allow documents to be presented visually.
- Providing greater access to additional resources. A shared resource folder was created to house over one hundred documents related to this effort of reducing the use of isolation. All RIYF participants in the first and second cohorts have access to this folder. The RIYF Project Manager will continue posting additional resources to this folder as they become available. In addition, CJCA has added two additional webinars to the TTA RIYF program.
- Staying connected with the first RIYF cohort post-TTA program completion. The RIYF Project Manager will contact each Team Leader of those jurisdictions participating in PbS in November 2016, following the October PbS data collection period.

A copy of this brief can be found on the CJCA website at <http://cjca.net> under the “Resources” section. For more information about the RIYF contact Ned Loughran of CJCA or the RIYF Project Manager, Sharon Pette of Effective System Innovations (ESI) at [sharon@rapidesi.com](mailto:sharon@rapidesi.com).

### Appendix A: Jurisdictions Participating in the RIYF TTA Program

#### **RIYF Cohort 1** (May 2015 – Feb. 2016)

- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice
- Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- Minnesota Department of Corrections, Red Wing Correctional Facility
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services – OJS
- Nevada Department of Health and Human Services – DCFS
- South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice
- Washington Juvenile Justice & Rehabilitation Administration
- West Virginia Division of Juvenile Services

#### **RIYF Cohort 2** (Feb. 2016 – Nov. 2016)

- Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice
- Los Angeles County Probation Department (CA)
- Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department (AZ)
- Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services
- Montana Department of Corrections, Youth Services Division
- Siskiyou County Probation Department (CA)

**Appendix B: RIYF Expert Panelists**

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Juvenile Justice

- Teresa Perez, Associate Director of Facility Operations

Indiana Department of Corrections Division of Youth Services

- Christine Blessinger, Executive Director
- Marc Kniola, Facility Program Director

Massachusetts Department of Youth Services

- Peter Forbes, Commissioner
- Nancy Carter, Director of Residential Operations
- Ruth Rovezzi, Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Support Services

Oregon Youth Authority

- Fariborz Pakseresht, Director
- Clint McClellan, Assistant Director of Facility Services
- Erin Fuimaono, Chief of Operations, Facility Services
- Nick Sotelo, Youth Development Coordinator, Facility Services
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West Virginia Division of Juvenile Services

- Stephanie Bond, Director
- Stacy Rauer, Regional Director