

Council of State Governments Justice Center work in Colorado

In May of 2018, Governor Hickenlooper established the Colorado Improving Outcomes for Youth (IOYouth) Task Force in partnership with CSG Justice Center. The work resulted in the following recommendations:

1. Expand juvenile diversion programs in Colorado and establish a statewide policy and guidelines for diversion. There is also a subset in the recommendation to allocate a block grant all judicial districts. Currently, the Division of Criminal Justice serves about 15 judicial districts and this grant would extend to all 22 judicial districts. Another recommendation for the bill would be to establish a statewide definition of diversion.
2. Develop clear criteria for detention eligibility in order to limit secure detention for juveniles who pose a risk of harm to others or risk of flight from prosecution when community-based alternatives are insufficient to mitigate this risk.
3. Target CYDS resources more efficiently by focusing resources on juveniles most at-risk of secure detention in order to reduce admissions to secure detention and prevent over supervision in the community.
4. Select and adopt a validated risk and needs assessment tool to inform court decision making and establish policies to require and support the use of the tool.
5. Establish statewide standards for juvenile probation across Colorado that are aligned to research-based policies and practices.
6. Improve the effectiveness of community-based services for youth on probation and parole.
7. Expand the use of kinship care for juvenile justice involved youth in detention and commitment and under consideration for out-of-home placement.

These seven policy recommendations will be translated into legislative language and introduced in the 2019 legislative session.