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Bending the Curve: Reflections on a Decade of Illinois Juvenile Justice Reform

By Diane Geraghty *

I. INTRODUCTION

Over a century ago, Illinois led the way in revolutionizing the world’s approach to juvenile crime by creating a separate system of justice for child and adolescent offenders.1 The new juvenile court was premised on a belief that children and youth are developmentally different from adults and that individualized rehabilitation is the key to reforming youth and enhancing community safety.2 While the juvenile court achieved many individual successes after its establishment, it also suffered from decades of benign neglect, received belated scrutiny from the U.S. Supreme Court, and beginning in the 1980s, came under attack for its failure to respond to the perceived problem of escalating violent juvenile crime.3

The juvenile justice system survived these attacks but not without changes to its traditional mission, jurisdiction, and functioning. In the final decades of the twentieth century, the majority of states, including Illinois, changed their laws to allow more youth to be tried in adult court, amended their juvenile codes to place more emphasis on public safety, and added provisions that emphasized the goal of punishment over rehabilitation.4 The result was that thousands of young people were given lengthy prison sentences in adult facilities and even those who remained in juvenile court were more likely to be dealt with according to principles of retribution rather than rehabilitation.5

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2See David S. Tanenhaus, Juvenile Justice in the Making 6 (2004) (noting that juvenile court advocates were influenced by the emerging field of child development that considered adolescents to be more like young children than mature adults). See also Joan Gittens, Poor Relations: The Children of the State in Illinois, 1818–1990, 37, 105 (1994) (observing that a young offender’s status as an unformed and malleable child was key to the reformers’ decision to create a separate children’s court).
4See generally The Changing Borders of Juvenile Justice: Transfer of Adolescents to the Criminal Court (Jeffrey Fagan & Franklin E. Zimring eds., 2000) [hereinafter Changing Borders] (tracing the evolution of transfer as the principal strategy for responding to increases in juvenile offending and discussing the implications of this trend); Youth on Trial: A Developmental Perspective on Juvenile Justice (Thomas Grisso & Robert G. Schwartz eds., 2000) (exploring a range of juvenile justice issues through the lens of an increased understanding of adolescent development).
5G. Larry Mays & Rick Rudell, Do the Crime, Do the Time: Juvenile Criminals and Adult Justice in the American Court System 67 (2012) (noting the impact of transfer on young persons subject to prosecution in adult court); Patrick Griffin, Legal Boundaries Between the Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems, in From Juvenile Delinquency to Adult Crime 184, 187 (Rolf Loeber & David P. Farrington eds., 2012) [hereinafter Loeber & Farrington]. See also Youth on Trial, supra note 4, at 2 (observing that many states revised their juvenile codes to stress punishment over rehabilitation).
At approximately the same time that these policy changes were being adopted across the country, a new body of science was emerging. For the first time, advances in imaging technology made it possible to study the human brain as it develops from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. Among other things, these studies enabled neuroscientists to validate empirically what the original juvenile court reformers had gleaned through observation and experience—that behaviors typically associated with youthful offending, including impulsivity, risk-taking, undue peer influence, and poor judgment—are closely linked to the immature status of the young brain.

This apparent disconnect between the emergent science of adolescent development and the evolving landscape of juvenile justice policy led the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to establish the Research Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice. The goal of the Network was to examine juvenile justice policies and practices through the lens of rigorous science and scholarship. Over the next several years, the Network published a series of briefs, reports and research papers on issues such as the link between adolescent development and youth culpability, adolescents’ competence to stand trial, and the impact of adult versus juvenile sanctioning. In less than two decades, the work of these and other developmental scientists changed the arc of the American juvenile justice system, transitioning it from one that viewed modern-day youth as a new breed of dangerous criminal to one willing to give young offenders a “culpability-discount” based on an enhanced understanding of the biological, psychological and social distinctions between youth and adults. Most notably, the U.S. Supreme Court relied heavily on the adolescent development literature in striking down the juvenile death penalty, and in severely curtailing juvenile life without parole sentences for youth under age eighteen.

In 2004, motivated by the new brain science studies and the work of its Research Network, the MacArthur Foundation began what would eventually become a $165 million investment in

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9 See, e.g., Laurence Steinberg & Elizabeth S. Scott, Less Guilty by Reason of Adolescence: Developmental Immaturity, Diminished Responsibility, and the Juvenile Death Penalty, 58 AM. PSYCHOL. 1009 (2003). This article was cited by the U.S. Supreme Court in its decision in Roper v. Simmons, invalidating the juvenile death penalty as a violation of the Eighth Amendment’s cruel and unusual punishment prohibition. See Roper v. Simmons, 543 U.S. 551, 569 (2005).
12 Roper v. Simmons, 543 U.S. 551, 569–70 (2005) (invalidating capital punishment for juveniles as cruel and unusual punishment and identifying developmental differences between juveniles and adults as central to its decision to prohibit the execution of persons under the age of eighteen).
juvenile justice reform. The goal of the multi-year, multi-jurisdiction Models for Change initiative was to promote policy and practice reforms that would result in a “more rational, fair, effective, and developmentally appropriate response” to youthful offending. The Foundation began by identifying a set of principles that would guide the work of the initiative, including ensuring fundamental fairness, acknowledging developmental differences between youth and adults, holding youth appropriately accountable, promoting community safety, fostering individual youth potential, and recognizing system and community responsibility. It then selected four “core” states to serve as laboratories for reform. The Foundation’s expectation was that these jurisdictions would produce new evidence-based models of law and practice that could be shared with other states and that would ultimately lead to wholesale juvenile justice reform. Illinois was chosen as a core state on the basis of its strong juvenile justice advocacy community, its existing reform efforts, and its need and readiness for change across various stages of the juvenile justice system.

This Article summarizes how Illinois went about the task of “bending the curve” of juvenile justice systems reform. It begins with a brief overview of the Illinois Models for Change initiative, followed by examples of how Illinois has been able to more closely align parts of its juvenile justice system with the initiative’s core principles. The Article next identifies key lessons that have emerged from the decade-long Illinois experiment. It ends on a note of cautious optimism about the future of juvenile justice reform in Illinois, tempered by recognition that the vagaries of politics, economics and personalities pose an ever-present threat to the long-term sustainability of any major reform effort.

II. MODELS FOR CHANGE

A. Initiative Overview

One of the potential strengths and persistent challenges of the American juvenile justice system is that it is highly fragmented. Laws, leadership structures and resources differ from state to state and from local jurisdiction to local jurisdiction. This diversity allows responsiveness to

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14 See MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, MODELS FOR CHANGE: A CALL FOR ACTION 3 (2013), http://modelsforchange.net/publications/517 (summarizing the goals of Models for Change and highlighting progress in achieving them over the course of the initiative).
15 See Background, MODELS FOR CHANGE, http://www.modelsforchange.net/about/Background-and-principles.html (last visited February 10, 2016) (identifying principles that framed the Models for Change Initiative).
16 Id. The four core states were Illinois, Pennsylvania, Louisiana and Washington.
17 See PATRICK GRIFFIN, MODELS FOR CHANGE 2008 UPDATE: GATHERING FORCE, 3 (2008), http://modelsforchange.net/publications/105 (providing an overview of the philosophy and structure of the Models for Change initiative, including the decision to focus on a small number of states and the role of the lead entity in each core state). To assist in the process of model development and diffusion, the MacArthur Foundation established a National Resource Bank made up of technical assistance providers with expertise and experience in both subject matter areas and in strategic change. As the Models for Change initiative drew to a close, several Resource Bank members were reorganized into a set of Resource Center Partnerships, with a goal of providing juvenile justice stakeholders with ongoing technical support and training around issues of mental health, indigent defense, dually involved youth, and status offenders. See BENJAMIN CHAMBERS & ANNIE BALEK, BECAUSE KIDS ARE DIFFERENT: FIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFORMING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM 4 (2014).
18 See ILLINOIS, MODELS FOR CHANGE, http://www.modelsforchange.net/about/States-for-change/Illinois.html (last visited Feb. 2, 2016) (hereinafter MODELS FOR CHANGE) (noting that Illinois established the nation’s first juvenile justice system and referencing systems improvements that suggested that Illinois was poised to accelerate the pace of reform as a core Models for Change state).
local needs and priorities, but it also hinders the creation of a broad-based vision of what a model juvenile justice system should look like and impedes the development of a universally-agreed upon blueprint for achieving that vision. Illinois is a good example of the fragmentation that complicates systems change. As a state, it is geographically, economically and socially diverse, made up of 102 large and small counties and literally hundreds of municipalities.19 Its juvenile justice system is largely county-based, with the exception of certain state agencies, including those responsible for child welfare, juvenile corrections and human services.20

Recognizing the diversity represented in the four core states, the MacArthur Foundation left it to each state to identify its reform priorities. To ensure a focused approach to systems change, the Foundation recommended that states center their work around no more than three principal “targeted areas of improvement.”21 Because of the Foundation’s institutional commitment to racial equality, each state was asked to address the pervasive problem of disproportionate minority contact as one of its subjects.22 After consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, the Illinois’s Models for Change initiative selected three areas of concentration: adjusting the jurisdictional boundaries of the juvenile system to reflect the developmental differences between youth and adults; promoting community-based alternatives over secure confinement; and reducing the over-involvement of youth of color in the justice system.23

The principal responsibility for managing reform efforts in each Models for Change state was delegated to a “lead entity” selected and supported by the Foundation.24 In Illinois, Loyola University Chicago’s Civitas ChildLaw Center was chosen for this role. Over the next decade the Center, working with a small steering committee, solicited proposals from and oversaw the work of sixteen public and private sub-grantees from around the state.25 Grants supported a range of


21 See JASON ZIEBENBERG, MODELS FOR CHANGE: BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR JUSTICE REFORM, 7 (2006), http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/models_for_change.pdf (defining targeted areas as intervention points that have the potential to improve the overall effectiveness of the juvenile justice system).


23 GRIFFIN, supra note 17, at 12.

24 See 2010 OVERVIEW OF MODELS FOR CHANGE: SYSTEMS REFORM IN JUVENILE JUSTICE (Nov. 2010), http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/291 [hereinafter 2010 OVERVIEW] (describing the Foundation’s grant making strategy as including selection of a lead grantee organization in each core state to work with key stakeholders to plan and implement targeted reforms).

activities, including building local juvenile justice governance structures, supporting the use of evidence-based programming and decision-making, promoting restorative justice practices, improving data capacity and transparency, and educating stakeholders on the importance of adolescent development in fashioning juvenile justice policy. Collectively, these Models for Change efforts fundamentally altered the way in which Illinois responds to youthful offending.

B. Major Reforms

1. Right-sizing the Juvenile Justice System

i. Raising the Age

One of Illinois’ most significant achievements over the last decade was passage of a bill that raised the age of juvenile court original jurisdiction from seventeen to eighteen. Although Illinois was one of only a small number of states that treated all seventeen-year-olds as adults, the pathway to raising the age turned out to be surprisingly difficult. Opponents included a small cross-section of prosecutors, probation officers and judges who worried that adding seventeen-year-olds to the juvenile system would create unmanageable caseloads, consume a disproportionate proportion of already stretched resources, and potentially exert a negative influence on younger youth in the system.

In 2008, the Illinois General Assembly agreed to allow seventeen-year-olds charged with misdemeanors to be returned to juvenile court. This approach made Illinois the only state in the country to have a bifurcated system in which seventeen-year-olds charged with a misdemeanor went to juvenile court while those charged with a felony were tried as adults. After the law was changed, and at the urging of “raise the age” advocates, the Illinois legislature charged the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, the state’s federally-mandated state advisory group, with studying the impact of the new “raise the age” legislation. The Commission undertook a rigorous exploration of the issue by compiling research, analyzing data, conducting practitioner interviews, and tracking data on the potential effect of moving all seventeen year olds into the juvenile justice system. The end result of these cumulative efforts was the adoption of legislation that returned all seventeen year olds to the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

ii. Limiting Automatic Transfer

One of the consequences of the “get tough” on juvenile crime movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s was to increase the number of youth subject to transfer to the adult criminal justice system. Illinois was one of the forerunners in the movement to expand the number and type of

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26 See Models for Change, supra note 18 (discussing a representative sample of Illinois Models for Change grantees and their work).


29 Kollmann, supra note 27.


31 See generally Kollmann, supra note 27 (detailing the process used to comply with the Commission’s legislative directive).

32 Public Act 98-0061 (2013) (codified as amended at 705 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. 405/5-120 (West 2015)).

33 See Changing Borders, supra note 4 and accompanying text.
cases subject to transfer.\textsuperscript{34} Prior to 1982, Illinois judges made individualized decisions as to whether a child should be tried and sentenced as a juvenile or as an adult.\textsuperscript{35} That year the Illinois General Assembly adopted “automatic transfer” legislation that required fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds charged with certain felonies to be prosecuted in adult court.\textsuperscript{36} These automatic transfer provisions were later expanded to include, among other things, drug offenses committed within 1,000 feet of a school or public housing.\textsuperscript{37}

National research conducted in the wake of the movement to transfer large numbers of juvenile cases to adult court consistently found that adult prosecution results in poorer outcomes for communities and individual youth.\textsuperscript{38} Youth who are tried in the adult system, for example, have higher recidivism rates for more serious crimes than do those who remain in juvenile court.\textsuperscript{39} In addition, automatic transfer laws have a disproportionate impact on youth of color. A report on transfer in Cook County, Illinois between 1999 and 2000, for example, found that of the 363 youth who were transferred to criminal court for drug offenses, 99.2 percent were minority youth.\textsuperscript{40} This same study also revealed that the majority of youth subject to automatic transfer were charged with drug violations.\textsuperscript{41} After members of the Illinois General Assembly were provided with these data, they amended the state’s transfer laws to return original jurisdiction over drug cases to the juvenile court.\textsuperscript{42} A follow-up study concluded that the removal of drug cases to juvenile court reduced the number of youth tried in adult court by more than two-thirds.\textsuperscript{43} Moreover, returning drug cases to juvenile court jurisdiction neither increased the number of new delinquency petitions nor the number of drug cases transferred to adult court by juvenile court judges.\textsuperscript{44} The net result of the drug transfer legislation was that hundreds of youth of color were no longer subject to trial and sentencing in the adult criminal justice system.

After passage of the drug rollback law, Illinois advocates continued to push for an end to all automatic transfer. Even after passage of “raise the age” legislation returning seventeen-year-olds to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, each year large numbers of youth were subject to the state’s automatic transfer laws.\textsuperscript{45} Faced with this ongoing reality, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative, a Models for Change grantee, issued a new report examining adult prosecutions of Cook County youth in the years 2010-2012.\textsuperscript{46} That study highlighted the ongoing disproportionate

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Id.} at 7.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Id.} at 6.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{See JASON ZIEDENBERG, DRUGS AND DISPARITY: THE RACIAL IMPACT OF ILLINOIS’ PRACTICE OF TRANSFERRING YOUNG DRUG OFFENDERS TO ADULT COURT} 8 (2001), http://www.justicepolicy.org/research/2059 (citing \textit{ELIZABETH KOYO, THE STATUS OF AUTOMATIC TRANSFER TO ADULT COURT IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS} (Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender ed., 2000)).
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Id.} at 9. Two-thirds of all youth transferred in Cook County during this period were transferred for a drug offense, while only twenty-six percent were charged with a violent offense.
\textsuperscript{42} Public Act 94-0574 (2005) (codified as amended at 705 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. 405/5-130 (10) (West 2015)).
\textsuperscript{43} KOYO, \textit{supra} note 34, at 11.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{See infra} note 46 and accompanying text.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{KANAKO ISHIDA, AUTOMATIC ADULT PROSECUTION OF CHILDREN IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, 2010 – 2012}
impact of Illinois’ automatic transfer laws. Of the 257 juveniles automatically transferred during the time of the study, eighty-three percent were African-American, while only one Caucasian youth was automatically transferred. The push to eliminate automatic juvenile transfer in Illinois received a boost when Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, citing the new study and its impact on minority youth, threw her support behind the abolition of transfer. Ultimately this public-private partnership was successful in securing passage of a bill that significantly curtails the use of automatic transfer in Illinois. Specifically, the legislation eliminates automatic transfer for all fifteen-year-olds and limits the legislative transfer of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to the most serious offenses.

2. Reduced Reliance on Secure Confinement

In the early days of the Models for Change initiative, youth who were sentenced to a term of secure confinement were sent to one of eight youth facilities operated by the Illinois Department of Corrections. Juvenile reform advocates were concerned about the lack of developmentally appropriate treatment and services for young people imprisoned in a system built and run for adults. As a result of their efforts, in 2006 the state legislature uncoupled youth corrections from the adult system and established the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. At the time, the new Department’s average daily population was approximately 1,400 youth, with predictions that the number would grow significantly in the future. Instead, as a result of a series of several mutually-reinforcing changes in Illinois law and policy, the Department’s census has been reduced by one-half. That number is expected to decline further as a result of recent legislation limiting commitments to the Department.

i. Redeploy Illinois

An initial step in the effort to reduce Illinois’ reliance on secure confinement was the establishment of a pilot program known as Redeploy Illinois. Prior to the Redeploy initiative, if a sentencing judge sent a youth to the state-run juvenile corrections system, the state would be responsible for all costs associated with his or her commitment. This approach created a perverse
incentive to send youth away from their families and communities to receive services, but it also contradicted research findings that community-based sanctioning can be less costly and more effective than institutional care.

The goal of the Redeploy Illinois initiative is to keep and treat youth in their own communities rather than committing them to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. To accomplish this goal, Redeploy sites receive state funds to develop and support a range of services for local youth at risk of incarceration, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, counseling, life skills education, family services, and crisis intervention. In return, local jurisdictions must agree to reduce significantly the number of youth they send to state facilities. A study evaluating the first five years of Redeploy Illinois pilot sites found that youth prison commitments in those jurisdictions had been cut in half. Based on these data, Redeploy Illinois was expanded to other jurisdictions in the state and assigned a line item in the state’s budget. According to a recent annual report, since its inception Redeploy Illinois has reduced overall commitments to secure confinement by fifty-three percent and diverted over 1,200 youth away from the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, saving nearly $60 million in unnecessary incarceration costs.

### ii. No Less Restrictive Alternatives

By carefully examining several years of Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice commitment data, Models for Change advocates were able to determine that judges were committing a significant number of youth to the Department for nonviolent misdemeanor and felony offenses. In 2010, for example, over half of all commitments fit into these offense categories. Armed with of state fiscal systems that make it less expensive for local jurisdictions to send youth to state-run secure facilities and citing Illinois’ Redeploy Illinois program as an experiment in using financial incentives to keep youth in their home communities rather than sending them to state facilities).

56. See Shaena M. Fazal, Safely Home: Reducing Youth Incarceration and Achieving Positive Youth Outcomes for High and Complex Need Youth Through Effective Community-Based Programs, 5 (2014) (citing research suggesting that community-based alternatives are less expensive and yield better results than secure confinement); Nancy A. Marion, Community Correction in Ohio: Cost Savings and Program Effectiveness 3 (2002) (asserting that community corrections alternatives are substantially less expensive than secure confinement and appear to result in less recidivism). But see Nancy Marion, Effectiveness of Community-based Correctional Programs: a Case Study, 82 THE PRISON J. 478, 485-93 (2002) (finding that recidivism rates for individuals who successfully completed a community corrections program and those who were sentenced to prison were similar). See also The Potential of Community Corrections to Improve Safety and Reduce Incarceration, VERA INST. OF JUSTICE 8–9 (2013) (warning that, as prison commitments decline, the positive results of community corrections are threatened by growing caseloads, diminishing resources, and a lack of adequate training for corrections personnel).

57. See 730 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. 110/16.1(A) (West 2015) (identifying the purpose of the program as deinstitutionalizing juvenile offenders by establishing a continuum of care in local communities).

58. See Redeploy, supra note 54 (explaining that Redeploy counties are obligated to reduce their commitment rates by a minimum of twenty-five percent).


this data, advocates were successful in supporting new legislation designed to ensure that judges consider alternatives to incarceration before committing youth to the Department of Juvenile Justice.64 Illinois law now requires that juvenile court sentencing judges be provided with detailed information on a youth’s background, family, and strengths as well as challenges.65 In addition, probation officers or other court personnel must detail for the court the types of services that are available in the community, the specific services that a youth was offered, and why those services were unsuccessful.66 Finally, judges must make a finding on the record that commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice is the “least restrictive alternative” based on the evidence presented to the court. A study on the impact of this legislation found that it has already contributed to the overall reduction of youth committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice.67 In light of declining commitments to the state’s youth prison system, Illinois’ governor has announced plans to identify up to three additional facilities to close, with a goal of further reducing the state’s reliance on secure confinement and saving Illinois taxpayers millions of dollars.68

3. Other System Improvements

In addition to right-sizing the juvenile court system by raising the age of jurisdiction, limiting automatic transfer, and ensuring that only the most serious offenders are eligible for placement in a secure setting, Models for Change partners also undertook efforts to improve how the juvenile justice system functions and to protect the procedural rights of system-involved youth. An important example of this effort was passage of a bill that requires early access to counsel for youth who are arrested and detained awaiting trial.69 The legislation gives youth a statutory right to the appointment of a lawyer immediately upon the filing of a petition and provides that no detention hearing may be held until after the accused has had a meaningful opportunity to consult with his or her attorney.70 As a result, young people entering the system are now able to receive informed advice about their case at the front end of the process and their attorneys have access to the information they need to prepare for their clients’ detention hearings and cases.

Another system improvement under Models for Change has been the increased use of objective screening and assessment tools to identify and treat mental health problems among youth in the justice system. It is estimated that between sixty-five and seventy percent of detained youth suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder.71 Failure to identify such a disorder impedes the

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64 Public Act 97-0362 (2012) (codified as amended at 705 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. 405/5-750(1) (West 2015)).
65 Id.
66 Id.
67 JACOBS & CLARK, supra note 63. In at least one reported appellate opinion, a judge’s commitment order was reversed when the judge failed to affirmatively consider whether there was an appropriate community-based alternative to commitment. In re Raheem M., 1 N.E. 86 (Ill. App. Dist. 2013).
69 Public Act 95-0846 (2009) (codified as amended at 705 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. 405/5-415 (West 2015)).
70 Id.
71 See GINA M. VINCENT, SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT IN JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS: IDENTIFYING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS AND RISK OF REOFFENDING 1 (Tech. Assistance P’ship for Child and Family Mental Health, ed., 2012) (citing research showing that between sixty-five and seventy-five percent of justice-system involved youth have at least one diagnosable mental health need); SARAH HAMMOND, MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS 4 (Nat’l Conference of State Legislatures, ed., 2007) (noting that of the seventy percent of juveniles who have a mental
rehabilitative process and, in more serious cases, can lead to self-harm or harm to others, including staff and other youth.\textsuperscript{72} As a result, juvenile justice and health practitioners have long advocated for the early identification of mental disorders in youth.\textsuperscript{73} In order to promote identification of possible mental disorders among justice-involved youth, and at the urging of juvenile justice and behavioral health advocates, an early Models for Change activity brought Illinois stakeholders together to learn about the prevalence of mental health disorders among delinquent youth and to inform them about the availability of scientifically-validated tools for screening and assessing a youth’s mental health needs. As awareness of the mental health needs of system-involved youth grew, the use of mental health screening and assessment practices increased around the state.\textsuperscript{74} At some point, however, practitioners noted that some youth were unwilling to participate in mental health evaluations out of a concern that their disclosures might be used against them in their juvenile court cases.\textsuperscript{75} The Illinois General Assembly adopted legislation that bars the use of a juvenile’s statement or other incriminating information as evidence of guilt at trial if the statement was made as part of a behavioral health screening, assessment, or treatment program.\textsuperscript{76} As a result of these efforts, today the use of mental health screening and assessment instruments such as the MAYS\textsuperscript{i}-2 have become routine in many of the state’s detention centers, probation departments, and service provider programs.\textsuperscript{77} In addition, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice now screens all youth for mental health disorders when they enter the system.\textsuperscript{78} The Department uses the results of the screening to decide on a youth’s classification and placement and to develop a mental health treatment plan when necessary.

III. FIVE LESSONS LEARNED

As the above examples of changes to Illinois’ juvenile justice system suggest, over the course of a decade Models for Change and its partners were able to achieve significant reforms in mental health services. Many have co-occurring disorders such as substance abuse and one in five suffers from a debilitating mental illness.\textsuperscript{72} Vincent, supra note 71, at 1–2 (discussing the short and longer term benefits of mental health screening as including immediate identification of youth at risk of suicide as well as helping to identify appropriate longer-term services). See also David Murphey, Megan Barry and Brigette Vaughn, Mental Health Disorders, CHILD TRENDS (Jan. 2013). http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Child_Trends-2013_01_01_AHH-MentalDisorders1.pdf (citing suicide risk and self-harming behaviors in adolescents with mental health disorders and recommending early identification and treatment as strategies for reducing such behaviors).

\textsuperscript{73} See, e.g., Thomas Grasso, Adolescent Offenders with Mental Disorders, in JUVENILE JUSTICE: THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN 143-59 (2008) (advocating for improved methods for identifying youth with mental health disorders at all stages of the juvenile justice process and greater use of community-based networks to provide mental health services whenever possible).

\textsuperscript{74} The Author served as the director of the Illinois Models for Change initiative from 2005–2015 when the Foundation ended its involvement in juvenile justice reform. In her role as director, she was responsible for overseeing all aspects of the initiative, including substantive programming, administration and grants management. She also co-chaired the Illinois Juvenile Justice Research Consortium and is a member of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council.

\textsuperscript{75} Id.

\textsuperscript{76} Public Act 96-1251 (2011) (codified as amended at 705 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. 405/5-401.5 (h) (West 2015)).

\textsuperscript{77} See Vincent, supra note 71 (describing the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument – Version 2 (MAYS\textsuperscript{i}-2) as a self-reporting fifty-two-question instrument that measures a variety of symptoms, including suicide ideation).

how the state responds to youthful offending. The following discussion seeks to capture key lessons of the Illinois Models for Change experience in hopes that they may be useful to those who, in the future, may take up the challenge of “bending the curve” in the direction of a fairer and more effective justice system.

A. Create a Critical Mass

As Illinois observed the centennial of the world’s first juvenile court in 1999, there was little doubt that the state’s juvenile justice system had strayed from the ideals that had animated the original juvenile court movement.79 A climate of mistrust prevailed among system stakeholders after a bruising fight between proponents of a “get tough” approach to juvenile crime and those who advocated for strengthening the existing juvenile justice system.80 State leadership was weak and uncoordinated, existing improvement efforts were siloed, data systems were antiquated, and there was little understanding of the deep end of the system. Nonetheless, even prior to Models for Change there were individuals and organizations working on juvenile justice reform in Illinois.81 Their activities brought about important changes to the state’s juvenile justice landscape and also influenced the Foundation’s decision to name Illinois as a core Models for Change state.82 What these efforts lacked, however, was a reform locus around which to build a comprehensive juvenile justice change agenda. By designating a single entity to oversee reform efforts and by identifying and supporting a small number of state and local grantees, Models for Change was able to pull together the various strands of work already taking place around the state and create a platform from which to launch new systemic reform initiatives.

A key Models for Change strategy for building an ever-widening network of public and private partners was to facilitate knowledge and relationship-building through cross-communication and collaboration.83 The opportunity for stakeholders to work together around a set of shared objectives was especially important given the fact that what is typically referred to as the juvenile justice “system” is in reality a collection of many individuals and entities, often with differing perspectives, responsibilities and resources. The Models for Change initiative employed a variety of approaches for bringing these diverse groups together, including holding a One Hundred Leaders’ Summit, joining forces with other entities to sponsor statewide conferences that featured national and local presenters, publishing and distributing materials highlighting the work and accomplishment of Models for Change grantees and others, mobilizing grassroots campaigns for legislative change, and creating linkages among local jurisdictions confronting similar challenges.84 Models for Change partners also engaged in public education efforts, providing state

79 See Ralph A. Gabric, Band-Aids Won’t Cure The Juvenile Justice System, 85 Ill. B. J. 156 (1997) (decriing the rise in juvenile crime and Cook County’s overburdened juvenile court and citing the need for better and more coordinated services for system-involved youth).
80 See Alma Tolliver, Juvenile Justice on the Brink of Another Failed Reform: Where Do We Go From Here?, 24 S. Ill., U. L. J. 569, 577–85, 590 (2000) (citing to 1998 amendments to the Illinois Juvenile Court Act that increased the punitive orientation of Illinois’ juvenile justice system and calling for a greater emphasis on delinquency prevention).
82 See MODELS FOR CHANGE, supra note 18 and accompanying text.
83 See GRIFFIN supra note 17, at 12 (noting that the key Illinois strategies for promoting reform included “research, public education and advocacy, leadership development and support for collaboration, training, and local planning and experimentation.”).
84 Id. at 12-14.
policy-makers with background briefings on topics such as adolescent development and alternative policy options, and making use of media to inform the public about a range of juvenile justice topics. The net result of these collective efforts was to create a magnifier effect that steadily increased the visibility and volume of juvenile justice reform efforts in the state and ultimately led to many of the changes described above.85

B. Identify Points of Leverage

Any effort to improve outcomes for victims, communities and youthful offenders by improving the fairness and functioning of the juvenile justice system is a complex task that requires a comprehensive understanding of how the system is organized and operates and the roles played by multiple stakeholders, including judges, lawyers, policy-makers, law enforcement, probation and correction officers, service providers, families, and community members. To further complicate matters, because every state’s justice system has its own unique structure and culture, there is no cookie-cutter approach to developing strategies that will be successful across all jurisdictions.

Against this backdrop, one of the first tasks of the Illinois Models for Change initiative was to survey the state’s juvenile justice system for the purpose of identifying opportunities for reform as well as potential threats to reform efforts. After conducting this “environmental scan,” it quickly became apparent that a primary pathway to progress might lie through the legislative process. Several Models for Change partners had a sophisticated understanding of how the legislature works and an existing record of success in advancing a progressive justice agenda. In addition, there were members of the General Assembly who were willing to champion reform legislation even when the odds against passage seemed unfavorable. Finally, successive governors from both parties either affirmatively supported juvenile justice reform or at least were not inclined to veto bills that made it to their desks.86

Against this backdrop, participants in the Illinois Models for Change initiative chose to pursue a legislative strategy as part of the state’s overall juvenile justice improvement plan.87 This early decision to work for change through the legislative process led to many of the state’s most consequential system improvements.88 One advantage of this approach is that adoption of a single piece of legislation can lead to immediate changes with far-reaching effects.89 A corollary lesson,
however, was that passage of a new law does not automatically result in its successful implementation. For that reason, Models for Change partners affirmatively sought out opportunities to inform justice system personnel about newly-enacted laws, to answer questions about the legislation, and to suggest practical implementation strategies. Another effective post-adoption effort was to conduct follow-up studies to measure the effect of new legislation. In several cases these studies turned out to be important opportunities for laying the groundwork for subsequent policy and practice changes.90

C. Focus on Local Communities

In addition to promoting statewide “top-down” reform efforts, the Models for Change initiative invested heavily in supporting systems change at the local level where juvenile crime occurs and where it most directly affects individual victims, offenders, family members, and the community. Recognizing that local leaders are in the best position to understand their communities’ unique problems and needs, five geographically-diverse jurisdictions ranging from large urban locales to small rural counties were selected to receive modest grants to identify and implement proposed reforms in their own local jurisdictions.91 Some of the most successful and replicable models of systems improvement grew out of work done in these sites.

One example of how the work carried out by local Models for Change sites has impacted the larger juvenile justice field arose in connection with their collaborative efforts around the issue of adolescent domestic battery. Nationally, it is estimated that up to one-quarter of youth charged with assault or battery are accused of having acted violently against a family member, often a parent.92 In Illinois, three local Models for Change jurisdictions (Cook, DuPage and Ogle Counties) independently observed that a disproportionate number of the youth in their detention centers were charged with battery in the home.93 They also noted that traditional juvenile justice interventions did not appear to be effective when dealing with this group of young offenders.94 Because these jurisdictions were regularly brought together to report on their reform efforts and to share experiences and observations, they decided to work together to better understand the issue of adolescent domestic battery. After extensive review of local data, state domestic violence laws, and programs in other jurisdictions, the three sites together developed and tested new models for working with families in crisis, with a goal of diverting many of these youth from the justice system entirely.95 The three jurisdictions collaboratively identified and built a continuum of care for

90 See, e.g., supra notes 38–42 and accompanying text.
91 The five Illinois counties and organizations that were selected as Illinois Models for Change pilot sites were DuPage County, Ogle County Juvenile Justice Council, Children’s Home Association of Illinois (Peoria), Second Judicial Circuit, Youth Outreach Services (Cook). See MEASURABLE PROGRESS, supra note 25.
92 See Linda L. Baker, Alison J. Cunningham, and Kimberley Harris, Violence Within Families and Intimate Relationships, in JUVENILE JUSTICE: ADVANCING RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE 224 (Francine T. Sherman & Francine H. Jacobs, eds., 2011) (citing research on high levels of abuse and victimization experienced by many youth charged with household violence). Most of these youth have been exposed to various forms of maltreatment and violence in their young lives. Id. at 224–28. See also Francine T. Sherman, Justice for Girls: Are We Making Progress?, 59 UCLA L. REV. 1584, 1602–03 (2012) (citing a rise in girls’ arrests for assault for home-based violence, with sixty percent of such arrests for violence against a parent).
94 Id. at 5.
95 Id.
families and youth affected by domestic violence, including safety planning and crisis intervention services. The sites also developed a “typology” designed to help practitioners better understand the dynamics of family crisis and identify workable intervention strategies. In an effort to diffuse the knowledge gained by the Illinois sites to other jurisdictions, the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project, a Models for Change National Resource Bank member, recently conducted a cross-site validation study of the typology tool developed by the three local sites and, based on the results, published a manual that is now available for use by states and local jurisdictions across the nation.

Another benefit of focusing reform efforts at the community level is that such an approach showcases local talent and creates a leadership ladder by which knowledgeable and experienced practitioners and decision-makers who have an “on the ground” perspective can move into positions of greater authority and influence. This has been the case in Illinois, where several individuals who originally worked on local Models for Change initiatives later were tapped for state and national leadership positions, including membership on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice, a group charged with advising the President and Congress on juvenile justice matters. In their new roles, these Illinois change agents are in a position to share Illinois’ experience and expertise with other jurisdictions and to suggest new initiatives for Illinois that have worked in other jurisdictions.

D. Collaborate, but Advocate

A core principle of the Models for Change initiative was that systems reform requires the active involvement and cooperation of system stakeholders. This approach was grounded in an understanding that only those who occupy positions of authority within government have the ability and resources needed to actually change laws, policies and practices. In furtherance of this philosophy, many Illinois Models for Change partners worked diligently to identify and build collaborative relationships with stakeholders across the justice system and other systems, including education, child welfare and mental health. In some cases this was a relatively straight-forward task, largely consisting of identifying potential system allies from around the state, establishing regular channels of communication, and undertaking activities or projects that advanced common goals. These activities varied and included conducting research, collecting and sharing data, writing reports, identifying alternative policy and practice approaches, organizing coalitions, volunteering to undertake tasks normally performed by public employees, and securing alternative resources. In other cases, especially where advocates and systems’ representatives traditionally held differing views on crime and delinquency, collaboration required targeted efforts to identify places where the interests of both groups intersected and to establish respectful working

96 See HARTNETT, supra note 93, at 9–16 (describing the steps taken in each of the three jurisdictions to improve responses to adolescent domestic battering).
97 Id. at 7–9.
relationships aimed at advancing those limited areas of compatibility. In the end, Illinois’ success in achieving significant reforms at the state and local levels over the last decade is a testament to the wisdom of the MacArthur Foundation’s vision of insider-outsider cooperation and to the transformational power of public/private partnerships.

Nonetheless, one can legitimately ask whether many of the changes that Illinois has made to its juvenile justice system would have taken place without a strong cadre of juvenile justice advocates consistently pushing for reform and accountability from the outside.\textsuperscript{101} The reality for all system reform efforts is that while some system partners have a genuine desire to improve the functioning of their programs and are open to working with anyone who shares their common goals, other system representatives are hesitant to work with “outsiders” for a number of reasons, including philosophical differences, political considerations, a natural resistance to change, consuming workloads, and/or a fear of criticism.\textsuperscript{102} Ultimately, a key takeaway to emerge from Illinois’ experience is that reform efforts are rarely an either/or proposition, and that meaningful change is most likely to occur when non-state actors continuously exert pressure on public systems headed by strong, forward-looking leaders who are committed to quality improvement and who are willing to institutionalize reforms in the units of government over which they hold sway.

\textit{E. Be Bold}

One of the benefits of systems reform over project or program-based approaches is that it allows reform agents to identify and tackle the largest problems in a system rather than focusing exclusively on improving smaller pieces.\textsuperscript{103} This global approach requires reformers to study and understand the entire system and to develop clear goals around outcomes that realistically can be achieved, measured and communicated. Having a bold vision, however, does not mean that change will come easily. Often major shifts in policy require a change in culture, and culture change takes time. In Illinois, some of the state’s most significant achievements were the product of incremental approaches that involved small steps toward a larger goal. Illinois’ ability to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction and eliminate most forms of transfer, for example, each began with a discrete effort to collect and analyze relevant data.\textsuperscript{104} Data is important not only because of what it can reveal about the nature and scope of an issue, but also because it provides an objective basis for fashioning workable policy recommendations and for lending credibility to calls for systems change.\textsuperscript{105} An approach that proved effective in Illinois for responding to skeptics of change was

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\textsuperscript{101} Although Illinois \textit{Models for Change} grantees did not engage in litigation, some Illinois agencies were required to change their policies and practices as a result of lawsuits brought by other reform advocates. See, e.g., M.H. v. Monrail, Case No. 12CV8523 (N. Dist. Ill. 2012), http://www.law.northwestern.edu/legalclinic/macarthur/projects/treatment/documents/ProposedNoticeofSettlement.pdf (in which a class action lawsuit challenging Illinois’ juvenile parole revocation was settled); R.J. v. Jones. Case No. 1:12-cv-7289 (2012), http://www.aclu-il.org/rj-v-bishop22/ (settling a suit challenging conditions, services and treatment in Illinois’ Department of Juvenile Justice).


\textsuperscript{103} See Kathleen Shaw, \textit{Challenges in Evaluating Systems Reform}, 1 \textit{THE EVALUATION EXCHANGE} 1, 2 (1995) (distinguishing systems reform where the ultimate goal is to improve the lives of those affected by the system from smaller-scale program improvement initiatives).

\textsuperscript{104} See supra note 23 and accompanying text; supra note 46 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{105} See Florencio (Larry) Ramirez, \textit{Juvenile Delinquency: Current Issues, Best Practices, and Promising Approaches}, AM. BAR ASSOC. (2008),
to recommend that decision-makers appoint a task force or some other independent body to study an issue and report its findings and recommendations within a specified period of time. This strategy ensured that the proposed reform remained on the table and increased the likelihood that system decision-makers would have confidence in the reliability of recommendations made by an entity that they themselves had identified.

F. Plan for Sustainability

All reform efforts, no matter how successful, risk losing ground unless affirmative steps are taken to sustain them over time. New priorities, changes in leadership, loss of funding, and inertia all pose threats to the momentum and political will that allowed change to occur in the first place. There are, nonetheless, measures that can be taken to secure policy and practice advances and continue the process of reform. Research suggests that strong leadership and the active involvement of key stakeholders can cement existing reforms and accelerate the pace of change going forward. How leadership and system engagement are built and nurtured, however, depends in part on the governing structures and culture of each state. Illinois, for example, does not have a tradition of active stakeholder membership organizations focused on juvenile justice issues. As a consequence, those involved in the Models for Change initiative realized that it would be essential to establish new leadership structures that could steward system improvement efforts after the MacArthur Foundation exited the field of juvenile justice.

Responding to this need, a key group of thought-leaders and decision-makers came together to form the Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council. The Council, co-chaired by two Illinois Supreme Court Justices and the Director of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, is made up of over seventy stakeholders from across the state, including judges, probation and law enforcement officers, prosecutors, defenders, service providers, academics, and youth advocates. The Council meets quarterly to learn about the latest research, identify system strengths and weaknesses, and establish priorities for change. To date, Council members have focused their efforts on improving the state’s approach to data collection and analysis, strengthening the role of families in the justice system, identifying effective diversion strategies, and improving the delivery of mental health and substance abuse services. By working together to learn about issues faced by juvenile justice policy-makers and front-line workers, members of the Leadership Council are building a knowledge base and establishing relationships that build on the foundation formed by Models for Change.

To aid the work of the Leadership Council and advance the state’s goal of grounding its juvenile justice system in evidence-based knowledge, Illinois has also established a
complementary statewide volunteer organization, the Juvenile Justice Research Consortium.\textsuperscript{109} Chaired by faculty from three of Illinois’ leading universities, the Consortium identifies and shares policy and practice-relevant research, sponsors a regular statewide forum for juvenile justice researchers and data managers, and helps develop and support an annual research agenda.\textsuperscript{110} The Consortium’s work in turn aids members of the Leadership Council to better understand and assess the effectiveness of reform initiatives taking place across the state.

IV. WITHER THE FUTURE?

As the MacArthur Foundation’s Models for Change initiative draws to a close after a decade of work in Illinois, there is reason for optimism that the climate of change that has built up over the last several years will remain a potent force in the ongoing need to produce better outcomes for victims, offenders and communities. Success in this regard, however, is not assured. For one thing, Illinois is in the midst of an historic financial and political crisis. As a consequence, in the last few years there has been steady erosion in the capacity of community-based agencies to provide high quality, evidence-based services to children and youth in the justice system.\textsuperscript{111} Many agencies have been forced to reduce programming and some have closed their doors.\textsuperscript{112} Others are on the verge of bankruptcy. In addition, rumors of public agency consolidation continue to swirl amid growing worries that the overall budget for human services will be significantly reduced. These concerns overlap with chronic concerns about Illinois’ patchwork of community-based programming which relies on diverse funding streams and which too often operates without significant accountability or evaluation. To make matters worse, Illinois’ deteriorating financial situation is also threatened by the steady decrease in federal funding to support state and local juvenile justice reform initiatives.\textsuperscript{113}

The reduction in community-based services is of particular concern to the juvenile justice system, where much of the impetus for reducing reliance on secure confinement has been motivated by research indicating that community-based alternatives are preferable to incarceration.\textsuperscript{114} If community corrections and treatment services continue to disappear, will

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\item\textsuperscript{109} Id.
\item\textsuperscript{110} Id.
\item\textsuperscript{111} Letter from Hon. George Timberlake’s, Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission Chair, to Illinois governor and members of the legislature expressing concern over cuts to community-based services, https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27896/documents/By_Division/DCHP/IJJC/ILJuvenileCommissionBudgetLetter.pdf.
\item\textsuperscript{113} Between 2002 and 2015, federal appropriations for juvenile justice declined by more the half, raising concerns that some states may no longer see a benefit in accepting funds that require compliance with federal policies. See Gary Gately, Federal Juvenile Justice Funding Declines Precipitously, JUVENILE JUSTICE INFORMATION EXCHANGE (Feb. 12, 2015), http://jjie.org/federal-juvenile-justice-funding-declines-precipitously/.
\item\textsuperscript{114} See Public Act 99-0258 (2016) (to be codified as amended at 705 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. 405/5-805). Supra note 49 and accompanying text. Acting on this bipartisan support, members of Congress recently introduced the federal
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judges and other policy-makers be willing to forego committing youth to detention and the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice? And even if local options remain, will they be consolidated into a network of large agencies that may be forced to offer cookie-cutter services rather than tailoring interventions to the unique needs of individual youth?\textsuperscript{115}

Another concern about Illinois’ ability to sustain its progress relates to the cyclical nature of reform in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. As Thomas Bernard observed in his seminal research, the history of juvenile justice has been marked by swings between lenient approaches to juvenile crime followed by more punitive policies grounded in public concern about rising crime.\textsuperscript{116} The Models for Change initiative both benefited from and contributed to a national willingness to re-examine the harsh approach to crime that took hold in the waning decades of the last century. This trend has accelerated over time as political conservatives, once foes of leniency in the criminal and juvenile justice systems, have joined forces with traditional reformers in a bipartisan call to end high incarceration rates and to increase community-based responses and diversion options.\textsuperscript{117} While this alliance is likely to hold during times of unprecedented low crime rates, one wonders whether it will persist against the inevitable headwinds that will develop when crime statistics once again trend upward.

Another challenge for Illinois is the uncertain status of sustainability efforts as the MacArthur Foundation ends its juvenile justice reform work. The resources provided by the Foundation have allowed a diverse set of Models for Change grantees to focus their energies on targeted areas of improvement, to develop collaborative relationships at the local, state and national levels, and to institutionalize reform through policy and practice.\textsuperscript{118} Inevitably some of that focus and energy will be lost without Models for Change at the state’s reform core. To date, however, the majority of former state and local grantees have found alternative sources of funding and continue to be actively involved in systems improvement, many working in partnership with other jurisdictions and individuals involved in Models for Change.\textsuperscript{119} The Foundation’s far-sighted emphasis on sustainability in recent years has increased the likelihood that the momentum that has been built around juvenile justice reform will continue into the foreseeable future.

V. CONCLUSION


\textsuperscript{115} See JEROME G. MILLER, LAST ONE OVER THE WALL 226 (2d ed. 1998) (lamenting Massachusetts’ decision to award service contracts to large private agencies at the expense of smaller, more nimble (and less stable) organizations under then-Governor Dukakis).

\textsuperscript{116} BERNARD & KURLYCHECK, supra note 3, at 3–4.

\textsuperscript{117} See Bill Keller, Prison Revolt, THE NEW YORKER (June 29, 2015) (commenting on political conservatives’ support for reform initiatives such as raising the age of juvenile court jurisdiction, reducing incarceration, and strengthening re-entry efforts).

\textsuperscript{118} See 2010 OVERVIEW, supra note 24.

\textsuperscript{119} See, e.g., Press Release, Cook County Juvenile Justice System Leaders Pledge Support for Rehabilitation Over Incarceration (Feb. 19, 2015), http://static1.squarespace.com/static/542e05b9e4b079760440ce0t.54e655b1e4b0f92fe96b43/1424381361304/JJ +Commitment_news+release_Feb19.pdf (announcing adoption of a set of juvenile justice principles by Cook County government and civic leaders).
Illinois has changed the fundamental trajectory of the state’s juvenile justice system over the last decade thanks in large measure to the MacArthur Foundation’s investment in juvenile justice reform and to the commitment, hard work and perseverance of public and private partners. Although much has been accomplished, there is still much work to be done before Illinois can be said to have fulfilled the vision of the founders of the juvenile court. Fortunately, there are already strong indications that Illinois is prepared to build on the knowledge, relationships and momentum that has built up in the state over the last decade. Recently, for example, an expanded group of public and private stakeholders has come together with a goal of ending juvenile courtroom shackling and the use of solitary confinement, eliminating punitive juvenile sex offender registries, developing more effective interventions with unique populations such as girls and LBGT youth, providing greater confidentiality protections for youth who successfully leave the justice system, and improving mechanisms for the collection and analysis of data. There is also a well-spring of support in Illinois for expanding the use of evidence-based restorative justice practices across the entire continuum of the juvenile justice system. Finally, Illinois has been at the forefront of a national conversation that asks whether young people in the eighteen to twenty-four age range should be treated more like juveniles than adults given the developmental research that increasingly suggests that this age group has not yet achieved full maturity.120

As states such as Illinois tackle these and other remaining challenges, their work will be informed by the legacy of the Models for Change initiative. That legacy includes a clear statement of principles, multiple toolkits and other resources, access to experts, and most of all, an example of how individuals and organizations can work together to envision new and better ways of holding youth accountable for their crimes without destroying their chances for responsible citizenship as fully mature adults.

120 See, e.g., Vincent Schiraldi and Bruce Western, Time to Raise the Juvenile Age Limit, CHI TRIBUNE (Oct. 6, 2015) (advocating for new approaches to young adults in the criminal justice system based on developmental brain research); Rolf Loeber, et al., Overview, Conclusions, and Key Recommendations, in Loeber & Farrington, supra note 5, at 350–51 (citing European examples of jurisdictions that have separate courts or sentencing schemes for emerging adults). See also LAURENCE STEINBERG, AGE OF OPPORTUNITY 215–16 (suggesting that the current line of demarcation between adolescence and adulthood should be rethought in light of recent human development research).