



THE JUVENILE COURT JUDGES' COMMISSION'S 2023 YEAR-END REVIEW OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) was proud to share our many accomplishments throughout 2023 in last month's *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice* newsletter. This month the JCJC highlights its Information Technology Division (ITD) with an in-depth list of that program area's 2023 year-end accomplishments. This retrospective looks at last year's accomplishments followed by a preview of the exciting path forward for the ITD in 2024.

Below is a comprehensive year-end review of ITD's accomplishments in 2023:

- 1,725 Help Desk requests were received and resolved. The five most common types of requests received and resolved in descending order involved performance issues related to the Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System (PaJCMS), general data entry practices, the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory™, the Keystone Login, and the Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI).
- 251 ITD requests were completed including 141 reports and 88 enhancements or fixes to PaJCMS.
- 20 projects were completed including five projects related to data cleanup and/or validation for research purposes, e.g., the PaDRAI revalidation study; three PaJCMS projects, e.g., gender identity; and three reports projects, e.g., the forthcoming 2023 Outcome Measures Report.
- Four quarterly and two interim PaJCMS updates were released. The ITD emphasized this quarterly schedule to improve the quality of our release management. Release management standardizes and streamlines the software development, implementation, and evaluation processes. Highlights in this year's releases included upgrading our servers, expanding the auditing process available to juvenile probation department administrators, implementing recommendations by the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers' (PCCJPO) PaDRAI Committee regarding mandatory detention decisions, incorporating calendar entries and other information for detention-only youth, and adding gender identity and preferred name on the juvenile face sheet as recommended by the PCCJPO Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Committee.

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- Two virtual and one in-person JCJC Technology User Groups were held. These workshops continue to play an important role in disseminating information and gathering input from end users. Discussions included a sneak peek at the “new” PaJCMS, the PaJCMS Services module, the roadmap that transforms data into dashboards, and the availability of custom PaJCMS reports for juvenile probation departments.
- The PaJCMS’s uptime was 99.8%, the iDashboards’ uptime was 99.9%, and the Common Pleas Criminal Court Case Management System’s (CPCMS) data sharing uptime was 99.9%. These exceptional uptimes allow end users to do their important work knowing unexpected interruptions to the applications are rare.
- The ITD made organizational adjustments as part of our ongoing commitment to improve work processes, including the addition of a Business Analyst.

It should be noted that collaboration with our juvenile justice system partners helped us achieve the ITD’s many accomplishments this year.

The way forward for the ITD in 2024 is best described by three pathways: the ongoing improvement of existing software applications, the innovative development of new software applications, and the integration of these applications with each other when necessary. Consequently, the ITD first expects its technologies to be on the cutting edge of computer and information science and juvenile justice research and practice. Additionally, these technologies will enhance and expand the available data and software that assists juvenile justice professionals in their work with justice-involved youth. Second, the ITD recognizes that software development does not occur in a silo. Therefore, the JCJC’s juvenile justice system partners, including end users, will keep playing a critical role in many ITD projects. Finally, the ITD will continue to complete related activities that support the efficient, effective development and usage of the JCJC’s software applications as determined via quality assurance, quality improvement, and quality control.

Below is a comprehensive review of ITD’s planned activities in 2024:

- Continue to reorganize the ITD in our ongoing commitment to improve work processes.
- Develop a proficiency application for outcome measures that captures the professional development associated with Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy activities.
- Develop a juvenile probation and service provider data sharing application that expands the former Pennsylvania Academic, Career and Technical Training Alliance database with other useful data fields, tools, and outcome measures that further strengthen the linkages between juvenile justice system partners.
- Finish the rewrite of the “new” PaJCMS. The “new” PaJCMS features better administrative capabilities (e.g., auditing and error logging), enhanced data sharing functionalities, and responsive design.
- Finish the implementation of the archiving project. This project will increase the performance of PaJCMS as archived records are transferred to a separate, accessible database.
- Implement geocoding into the “new” PaJCMS and introduce applications that use geospatial data. These additions will allow for real-time data visualizations presented from not only the existing countywide and statewide perspectives, but also the census tract and zip code viewpoints.
- Implement the Keystone Login for the JCJC Event Management System. This change will allow end users to use a single login across our two highest profile software applications.

JUVENILE COURT JUDGES' COMMISSION UPDATES

LANETTE TAN RETIRES FROM JCJC



Lanette Tan retired from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) after her dedicated service to the agency since 1988. Working at the Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research (CJJT&R) at Shippensburg University, she excelled as a Quality Assurance Supervisor for 18 years. In 2019, Lanette was promoted to an Information Technology Analyst, where she spent the remainder of her career providing technical assistance to the Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System end users, developing best practices documents around business procedure and policy, and serving as liaison between the JCJC and key stakeholders on many projects. During her employment with the JCJC, Lanette obtained her bachelor's degree in social work from Shippensburg University and interned with the university on Balanced and Restorative Justice initiatives. In addition, Lanette spent many hours training her successors. It is not an easy task transferring so many years of knowledge to others.

Lanette is already enjoying time with her children and grandchildren. Also, during her retirement, she plans to spend quality time gardening and shopping with her mother and time with her husband, Mike, camping and boating at the lake. Congratulations to Lanette on a well-deserved reward. We wish her many years of a healthy, happy, and active retirement!



COUNTY SPOTLIGHT



WELCOME CHIEF AMANDA YURKY INDIANA COUNTY

On October 16, 2023, Amanda Yurky was appointed as the Chief Probation Officer in Indiana County by President Judge Thomas M. Bianco. She fulfills this role for both adult and juvenile probation services.

Amanda received her bachelor's degree in criminology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2002. Shortly after graduating, she began working for the Indiana County Probation Department in the Pre-Sentence Investigation Unit. Over the years, Amanda shifted positions throughout the department, from a community line officer to supervisor of the Field Unit. In 2022, Amanda was promoted to the position of Deputy Chief of Operations. In addition to her current role, Amanda participates in her county's Suicide Task Force, Intervention Committee, Criminal Justice Advisory Board, and Parole Board.



Outside of the office, Amanda enjoys traveling, camping, reading, and spending time with family and friends. She has a 17-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter who keep her busy and are growing too quickly.

MCKEAN COUNTY BOONDOCS PROGRAM

Submitted by John Bickford, McKean County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

The McKean County Boondocs Program completed its 33rd year in August 2023 with seven youth successfully completing the program. The Boondocs program was started in McKean County in 1991 by the McKean County Juvenile Court in conjunction with the Juvenile Probation Department to provide both delinquent and dependent youth aged 14-18 with an opportunity to complete community service while also learning the value of putting in a hard day's work. Since the program's commencement, over 400 youth have participated in the program and worked on a variety of projects; most of these projects have been focused on stream rehabilitation for erosion control and habitat enhancement. The program has endured over the years due to the hard work of dedicated youth participants, staff members, and court personnel, along with support from a variety of community members and organizations.

For twelve weeks during the summer of 2023, the Boondocs participants worked at two separate work sites that were suffering stream bank erosion. Daily activities included both moving rocks and logs by hand and securing these materials in place with rebar along eroded streambanks. The participants moved over 70 tons of rock by wheelbarrow and hauled and pinned approximately 30 logs ranging from 15 to 25 feet in length. The youth quickly learned the importance of



working as a team to accomplish daily tasks. Youth participating in the program have the ability to be paid up to 240 hours through a long-established work experience agreement between McKean County Juvenile Probation and the McKean County CareerLink office. Youth who may owe money in the form of restitution, fines, or fees are provided with the opportunity to use the money they earned to take responsibility for the financial costs they may have incurred to victims or to the court.

Along with the employment experience the youth gain, they also participate in other programming during the course of the summer. These programs include career exploration/mentoring, money management, and resume building provided by staff from CareerLink and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition, youth complete community service at the annual county fair and participate in Victim/Community Awareness Curriculum and weekly cognitive behavioral programming utilizing Forward Thinking Workbooks, along with other evidence-based practices curriculum.

The conclusion of the program includes a graduation ceremony and luncheon held at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford where the youth are recognized for their accomplishments. This program is attended by youth and their families, county and court personnel, and community stakeholders. Highlighting the youths' stream projects through pictures and a video presentation generally leaves attendees with a great appreciation for the work these youth were able to accomplish and hopefully will serve as positive reinforcement by motivating the youth to continue to work hard in other areas as they move through life.



FIRE FATHERHOOD PROGRAM THROUGH GOODWILL OF SOUTHWESTERN PA

“Want to be the best DAD ever?”

The FIRE Fatherhood Program is a community service offered by Goodwill® of Southwestern Pennsylvania in Allegheny County. The program offers fellowship with other fathers in a friendly setting. The program is funded by a grant and is open to fathers or father figures, age 18 years or older, with a child 24 years old or younger who reside in Allegheny County. The participants volunteer to be in the program. The group works on topics such as family trauma, effective communication, men’s health, finances, problem solving, and most importantly provides a support group. The fathers work with the program up to 27 hours. They receive gift cards as incentives while in the group: \$25 for the attending the first group, \$50 halfway through the program, and \$125 upon completion of the program. The fathers can continue to receive case management and referrals to other services up to a year after completion. The FIRE Fatherhood Program helps fathers become better role models through self-improvement. Even though this program is limited to Allegheny County fathers, the program could be developed anywhere to help men or women become better parents.

Contact the program for more information:

Phone: 1-877-499-3526

Email: fatherhood@goodwillswpa.org

[FIRE Fatherhood - Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania \(goodwillswpa.org\)](http://goodwillswpa.org)

JANUARY IS NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORSHIP

Submitted by Abigail Wilson, Director, PCCYFS Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Education Services

Many service providers in Pennsylvania offer mentorship across disciplines, including child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, and education services. Generally, in juvenile justice, mentors are matched with youth to reduce recidivism and work toward the success of the youth. The success stretches across a variety of demographic groups and program methods such as cross-age peer, one-to-one, group, and school- and community-based (DuBois, 2021). Mentoring programs are also a natural way to educate the community about juvenile justice and other services by pairing community members with youth.

Mentoring programs and services are leading strategies in the United States to prevent negative outcomes and build resilience among at-risk youth (DuBois, 2021). Studies have found that connecting youth in the juvenile justice system to mentoring programs has been successful for both preventing and reducing delinquent behavior (DuBois, 2021). For example:

- The [Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol](#) (SPEP™) identifies 14 therapeutic services associated with recidivism reduction, which includes mentoring under the counseling service type.
- CrimeSolutions, an initiative of the National Institute of Justice which reviews justice-related practices and programs for evidence of their effectiveness, has rated mentoring as “effective” for “reducing delinquency outcomes” (DuBois, 2021).

Mentoring services have been promoted through opportunities for funding and grants. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), for example, provides the largest amount of federal funds for mentoring programs and awarded nearly \$1 billion in grants to mentoring organizations from FY 2008 to FY 2019. Between FY 2017 and FY 2019, OJJDP-funded programs recruited 95,000 new mentors and served more than 600,000 youth nationwide.

The Lehigh County Youth Justice Advisory Board (YJAB) is a youth-led program for teens/young adults ages 14-28 with current or previous involvement with the juvenile justice system, in either probation or a diversionary program. The mission of the YJAB is to create positive change within the juvenile justice system by offering youth the opportunity to discuss their life experiences in order to identify ways to improve the system. The YJAB youth welcome the idea of mentoring. The older youth in YJAB take a natural approach to mentoring the younger youth as members are more comfortable with speaking to others about their past struggles. In turn, the board members have formed a strong bond with each other throughout the past year as many of their meetings have had a team-building focus.

Juvenile probation departments can reach out to their [local service providers](#) to learn more about the availability of mentorship services in Pennsylvania. While not always explicitly advertised, many service providers offer mentoring programs and services in some form.

References

DuBois, D. L. (2021). Mentoring programs for youth: A promising intervention for delinquency prevention. National Institute of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.flabgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Mentoring-Programs-for-Youth-A-Promising-Intervention-for-Delinquency-Prevention.pdf>.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

February

- 6 SPEPT™ Level 1 Learning Community - Virtual
- 13 Developing a Positive Mindset - Virtual
- 13 SPEPT™ InfoCom - Virtual
- 22 Empathy and Resilience: Understanding Trauma and Its Effects - Virtual

March

- 5 Equity, Wealth, Race, and Racism in the Justice System - Virtual
- 7 Trauma-Informed Approach: Understanding Trauma and Its Impact - Virtual
- 11-13 EPICS Training for Juvenile Probation Officers - State College
- 14 Ethics, Confidentiality, and Legal Standards - Virtual
- 20 Graduated Response Coordinator Learning Community - Virtual
- 21 Autism and the Brain - Virtual
- 26-27 Officer Safety and Well-Being - State College
- 27 Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships: The Importance of Recognizing Abuse - Virtual

April

- 3 Enhancing Probation Services: The Importance of Social Support Systems - State College
- 9 How to Win at Any Relationship - Virtual
- 15-19 (and May 13-17) Juvenile Probation Officer Academy - Camp Hill
- 16 Family Engagement - Effective Strategies for Engaging Youth and Families - State College
- 18 Let's Keep It Balanced (and Restorative): Trauma-Informed Strategies for Meeting Victims' Needs - Mechanicsburg
- 23-24 SPEPT™ Level 1 Specialist Training - Virtual

For full schedule and registration information, please visit www.jcjcjems.pa.gov.

JCJC Graduate Education Program Virtual Open House

February 29, 2024 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Juvenile probation officers and juvenile justice service providers please join this open house to learn more about the JCJC Graduate Education Program. During this hour long event, the JCJC will share more information about the program including the application process.

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://ship.zoom.us/j/91208303188>

Meeting ID: 912 0830 3188

Passcode: 758839

(Mobile) 1-646-558-8656 US (New York)



Key Program Features:

- Nationally recognized program, taught by highly qualified and experienced faculty.
- Free tuition and lodging provided by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission.
- A hybrid 33-credit program.
- Summer coursework fully online and 3 face-to-face weekend sessions during the fall and spring semesters.
- A cohort-based program designed to enhance professional networking across the Commonwealth.
- Practical courses designed for juvenile justice professionals with an emphasis on evidence-based practices.

Apply Now!



Program Contact: Sonya Stokes at systokes@ship.edu



For program information,
visit:

www.jcjc.pa.gov/Program-Areas/Graduate-Education

JCJC GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

What advice would you give anyone considering the JCJC Graduate Education Program?

The advice I would give to anyone considering applying for the JCJC Graduate Education Program would be, GO FOR IT! Don't wait for the "perfect time," the perfect time is now, and, in the moment it crosses your mind. It won't be easy but with dedication and drive you'll get the job done. Going back to graduate school was very challenging for me as a full-time employee and a first-time expectant mother but with purpose and motivation I graduated, and I will forever cherish my accomplishment.

**Breanna Britton-Roman – Class of 2021
Dauphin County Juvenile Probation Department**

2024 JCJC AWARDS COMMITTEE

On January 24, 2024, the JCJC Awards Committee convened to discuss this year's James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice Professional and Youth Award Programs. The 2024 Awards Committee includes existing members Justin Popovich, Committee Chair and Bradford County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer; Mary Jo Battle, Erie County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer; Michaella Mowers, Westmoreland County Victim/Witness Advocate-Juvenile Probation Officer II; Nelton Neal, Allegheny County Juvenile Probation Supervisor; Kevin Perlucke, Luzerne County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer; Mark Rhoads, Forest County Chief Probation Officer; Amy Warner, Philadelphia County Deputy Director; Abigail Wilson, Pennsylvania Council of Children Youth and Family Services Director of Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Education Services; Angel Stewart, JCJC Director of Administration and Grant Programs; and Keysla Rodriguez, JCJC Juvenile Justice Quality Assurance Specialist. In addition to the current members, the Awards Committee welcomed new members: Richard Ackerman, Franklin County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, and Krystle Kowalczyk, Sullivan County and Wyoming County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer.

During the meeting, the Awards Committee reviewed the 2023 Professional and Youth Award Programs and discussed changes and improvements for 2024. In preparation for distribution, the Committee reviewed and updated the award nomination forms, which will be made available in the upcoming months. They also selected the theme for this year's Youth Awards Program as **"The Real Story: My Battle, My Strength."** Youth entering the Creative Expression Contest are to submit mixed media (e.g., poster, video, or audio) or written submissions based on their interpretation of this year's theme. The Awards Committee will reconvene this summer to select the professional and youth award winners.

Please note: all previous professional award submissions that were not winners in their category may be resubmitted for consideration.



Back row from left to right: Abigail Wilson, Mark Rhoads, Richard Ackerman, Nelton Neal, Kevin Perlucke, Justin Popovich.

Front row from left to right: Keysla Rodriguez, Amy Warner, Michaella Mowers, Angel Stewart.

MYTH



VS.

FACT



The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission is pleased to introduce a new monthly series, "Myths vs. Facts," which will address common misconceptions of the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system. Using a combination of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System data and scholarly research conducted by the field more broadly, this series will provide data-driven facts on all topics juvenile justice.

This month's inaugural installation addresses a common myth surrounding detention use in the Commonwealth. Future iterations of this series will address myths surrounding topics like the use of diversion, graduated responses, and out-of-home placement, as well as more general principles of evidenced-based best practice.

MYTH

Youth with little risk to community safety across the Commonwealth are being detained arbitrarily and for minor infractions.

FACT

Less than half of counties across the Commonwealth have a youth in secure detention. In general, only those youth who pose the greatest threat to community safety are detained.

The following is a snapshot of the population of youth who were held in secure detention on January 9, 2024:

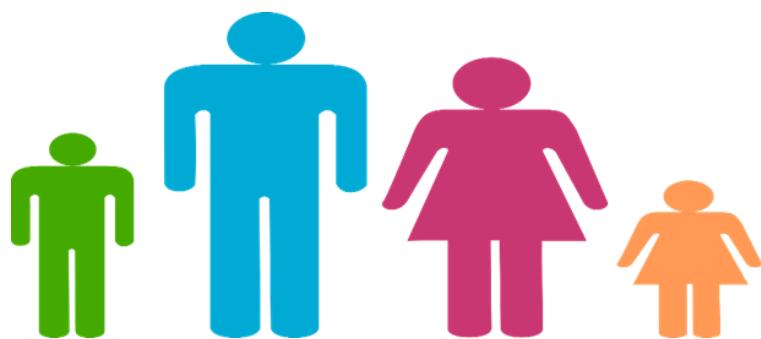
- A total of 349 youth from just 28 counties were in secure detention.
- The most common detention section codes used to justify the detention admission were Section 100 codes, which authorize detention based on the serious nature of the alleged offense. Approximately 32% of admissions were detained under one of these codes. The top three 100 detention section codes utilized were Section 114 – Use or Possession of a Firearm (9%); Section 103 - Robbery (5%); and Section 120 - Violation of an Alternative to Detention (ATD) (4%).
- 53% of detention admissions for the possession of a firearm under Section Code 114 were the result of mandatory county policies.
- Approximately 1 in 6 youth were detained under Section Code 501, which authorizes detention post-disposition pending transfer to placement.

Additionally, Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI) data from 2023 was examined.¹

- In 2023, 11,360 PaDRAIs were completed. A total of 2,011 (18%) PaDRAI assessments completed scored the youth to be detained. Only 50% of these assessments actually resulted in a detention admission. The remaining 50% were either placed on an ATD or released to the community. Furthermore, only 5%² of all PaDRAI assessments completed in this time period resulted in an override to detention.

¹Beginning on 1/1/2023, all PaDRAI-using counties were instructed to assess all youth with a written allegation rather than just those youth who were being considered for detention.

²[Best practice](#) dictates that a jurisdiction's aggravating override to detention rate be 15% or less.



April 16, 2024
Hyatt Place,
State College
9am – 4pm

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

The Family Involvement Committee is proud to present a workshop designed to introduce Juvenile Probation Officers to the foundational principles of FAMILY ENGAGEMENT. Participants will be provided strategies to effectively engage families in all stages of supervision and through all JJSES activities from intake to case closure. This workshop will also provide guidance on effectively introducing and utilizing resources to include *A Family Guide to Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System* and the interactive *Parenting Workbooks*.

The workshop will conclude with a panel comprised of justice-involved family members, youth, and family advocates, who will share their unique perspectives and experiences engaging with the Juvenile Justice System. Participants will hear first-hand from family members with lived experience, who will provide honest insight on their involvement, reactions, struggles, and successes navigating our juvenile justice system.

This workshop is ideal for all Juvenile Probation Officers, Supervisors, and those individuals a department may wish to identify as a Family Engagement Coach. Coaches can be helpful with a department's effort to ensure families have the opportunity to engage in all aspects of supervision and will leave this workshop with examples to share with their departments.

Register in JEMS

www.jcjcjems.pa.gov



Host: National Partnership for Juvenile Services

Date: April 15-17, 2024

Location: Live! Hotel, Baltimore, MD

Goal: Improve youth access to resources and therapeutic tools that enhance the youth’s long-term success using technology.

Forum Overview: Educational programs within congregate care settings have begun to utilize devices to connect with external support services (continuing education, supplemental academic programming, etc.). While some residential and community-based services are providing youth with tablets to better connect with community and family supports as well as clinical tools, many are uncertain about how to overcome the cyber security risks. This forum will share the most current approaches to safely provide access to youth, to monitor and manage risk while improving outcomes for youth.

Audience:

- Juvenile Justice Residential & Secure Care Service Providers
- Juvenile Probation Chiefs
- Community-Based Service Providers
- Clinical Directors
- Alternative Education Administrators
- Agency IT Directors (or their delegates)
- Others Interested in the Implementation & Utilization of Technology in JJ Settings

Conference Registration:

Participant: \$249
Exhibitor: \$2,000

More Information:

Event Planner: Abby.Schrum@npjis.org
Program Chair: Wayne.Bear@npjis.org



NATIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements are reprinted from JUVJUST, an OJJDP news service:

OJJDP LAUNCHES 50TH ANNIVERSARY WEBSITE

OJJDP has created a [new webpage](#) to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA). Signed into law September 7, 1974, the JJDPA established OJJDP to support local, state, and Tribal efforts to improve the juvenile justice system.

Visit the webpage throughout the year for a range of resources, including a legislative timeline, virtual library, list of past OJJDP Administrators, and more.

RESOURCES:

- Learn about [OJJDP's priorities](#).
- Read a [blog](#) post from September 2023 by OJJDP Administrator Liz Ryan discussing the 49th anniversary of the JJDPA.
- Follow OJJDP on [X formerly known as Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



OJJDP NEWS @ A GLANCE TO BECOME MONTHLY

The award-winning *OJJDP News @ a Glance* online newsletter will be published monthly instead of bimonthly starting in January 2024. The newsletter is your top source for highlights of OJJDP's activities, publications, funding, news, and events.

The new monthly format will ensure readers receive timely and relevant news from OJJDP. A new section, "From the Administrator's Desk," will provide updates from OJJDP Administrator Liz Ryan and her work to promote juvenile justice reform.

RESOURCES:

- [Browse past issues](#) of OJJDP News @ a Glance.
- Follow OJJDP on [X formerly known as Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

OJJDP OBSERVES AMBER ALERT AWARENESS DAY

January 13 is National AMBER Alert Awareness Day. The AMBER Alert early warning system notifies the public when a child goes missing. It was named in remembrance of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman, who was abducted and murdered in Arlington, Texas, on January 13, 1996.



Join OJJDP and the Department of Justice as we honor Amber's memory and work to safely recover missing and abducted children. In fiscal year 2023, OJJDP awarded more than \$41 million to the [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#) and \$4.4 million to the [National AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program](#). OJJDP also supports the [AMBER Alert in Indian Country Initiative](#). The [AMBER Alert program](#) is responsible for the successful recovery of more than 1,160 children.

RESOURCES:

- [Watch](#) "Keeping Hope Alive: The AMBER Alert Program."
- Read the OJJDP-sponsored "[2022 Amber Alert Report](#)."
- Access OJJDP's Missing and Exploited Children [webpage](#).
- Follow OJJDP on [X formerly known as Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

SAMHSA LAUNCHES FENTANYL AWARENESS YOUTH CHALLENGE

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has issued the [FentAlert: Empowering Youth for Safer Choices—SAMHSA Fentanyl Awareness Youth Challenge](#).



This new initiative invites U.S. youth ages 14–18 to propose community strategies addressing fentanyl and fake pills to prevent youth drug overdose deaths. Ideas can include social media posts, vlogs, podcasts, and video journals.

The top six submissions will be awarded \$5,000, and up to 25 youth will receive a \$2,000 honorable mention. Winners will be announced in April 2024.

Submissions are due by **6 p.m. ET on February 26, 2024**.

RESOURCES:

- Learn more about OJJDP's [opioid-focused](#) prevention and intervention programs.
- Follow OJJDP on [X formerly known as Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

This publication is produced monthly by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. Guest articles are welcome; please submit by e-mail to ra-oajcnews@pa.gov.

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