

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL

LIVE WEBINAR

## PROMISING PRACTICES IN DIVERSION AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council is hosting a webinar on promising practices in diversion and community supervision. Josh Weber will provide research related to promising practices in diversion, community supervision and connecting young people with the right services at the right time. He will highlight some recommendations and challenges in connecting youth to the right type, level and quality of services when young people come into contact with the criminal justice system.

**Wednesday,  
March 22, 2023**  
02:30 - 04:00pm

[Registration Link \(WebEx\)](#)



*Josh Weber, Council  
of State Governments  
Justice Center*

## Introduction

On March 22, 2023, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) hosted a juvenile justice webinar themed “Promising Practices in Diversion and Community Supervision.” The presentation was conducted by Josh Weber, Program Director of Juvenile Justice with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center.

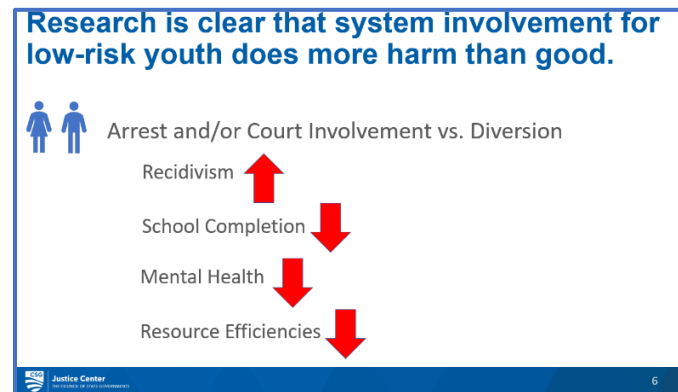
Kristy Love, CJCC Executive Director, welcomed attendees to the webinar. Ms. Love provided an overview of Josh Weber’s background working with various government agencies to make improvements throughout the justice system nationally.

Mr. Weber further explained his role and the work of CSG as a nonpartisan membership association. The CSG has used research-driven strategies to improve communities and public safety through work with the courts, law enforcement, mental health agencies, youth and families, corrections agencies, and justice reinvestment initiatives.

## Diversion Is An Important Tool to Prevent Harm

Mr. Weber began the session presenting the idea that system involvement is harmful to youth, specifically if the individual is at low risk of reoffending. Bringing young people into the system could have a negative effect and increase disparities for Black and Hispanic youth. Mr. Weber provided national arrest data that overwhelmingly shows youth being arrested for non-violent offenses and youth of color being arrested at higher rates than their White peers.

- 92-94% of arrests are for non-violent offenses.
- Black & Hispanic youth are 5x more likely to be arrested for a violent crime compared to White youth.
- Black & Hispanic youth are 3.5x more likely to be arrested for a property crime compared to White youth.
- Black and Hispanic youth are 3.5x more likely to be arrested for discretionary offenses like disorderly conduct/breach of peace.



## Community Supervision as a Tool for Public Safety

Mr. Weber used a case study from Texas to review community supervision as a method for addressing public safety. He pointed out the cost savings gained investing in the community and decreasing the use of incarceration. The study concluded that rearrest rates for secure and



non-secure detention were similar. Further, youth on community supervision were three times less likely to commit a felony when they recidivated. Mr. Weber expressed the importance of keeping youth closer to their home and within their community as a reason for using community supervision. Serving youth and families within their community

setting can help support important transitions. Mr. Weber also indicated that youth released from secure settings were 21% more likely to be rearrested than youth supervised in the community.

## Risk and Needs Are Important Factors in Determining Supervision and Services

Mr. Weber expressed that the use of risk and needs assessments should drive decisions at all points of the juvenile justice system including diversion, prosecution, detention, and community supervision. He went on to confirm that the decision to detain a youth and place them under community supervision should be based on the level of the individual's risk and needs, otherwise youth consistently face higher levels of detainment and supervision than warranted. Mr. Weber cited a study of seven counties that brought to light concerning findings. It revealed that low-risk youth tended to receive more programming and services than youth who exhibited a high need for supervision and programming. Further, low-risk individuals stayed on supervision longer than youth with high risk, and often were not matched to services that met their needs. For example, youth identified as having substance abuse needs were rarely referred to substance abuse programming.

## Conclusion

Mr. Weber encouraged the District to review the current risk and needs assessment tools to determine whether the tools are nationally or locally validated to address the District's youth needs and services. In addition, it is important to implement a comprehensive evaluation of current programs and their associated outcomes and establish clear standards for the programs that serve as referral sources for justice system-involved youth within the District. If providers are not providing the fidelity and outcomes desired, these organizations must be held accountable.

## Key Takeaways

- Youth who do not pose a risk to public safety must be diverted, as system involvement for low-risk youth can have a harmful effect on school completion and mental health;
- Risk and needs assessments should be conducted at all points of the juvenile justice system, from initial entry point through detainment and confinement;
- Assessment screening can help identify the appropriate tools to address youth needs;
- Youth and family partnerships can help address behavioral needs;
- Restorative justice can be used to help repair the harm to the community and victims; and
- Reviewing data regularly can help determine proactive measures and determine overall outcomes.