

## Juvenile Reentry Second Chance Project

I discussed in a previous post, [You Need to Know More Than Just the Law](#), that it has become increasingly important for attorneys to be knowledgeable about non-legal issues that affect the lives of their clients. I cited examples of law offices working in multidisciplinary teams to meet the legal, social, health and economic challenges faced by clients. This blog post will highlight a new project aimed at reducing recidivism and increasing positive outcomes for youth through a multidisciplinary approach. Jennifer Story, Supervising Attorney for Advocates for Children's Services, and Olivia McLaughlin, Juvenile Reentry Project Social Worker for the organization, presented the project to the juvenile defenders at the North Carolina Spring Public Defender and Investigator Conference in May 2018.

### Juvenile Reentry Second Chance Project

The Juvenile Reentry Second Chance Project is a project of Advocates for Children's Services (ACS). ACS is a statewide project of Legal Aid of North Carolina and focuses on helping youth in the public education system. The Juvenile Reentry Second Chance Project is supported by a grant from the Office of Justice Programs' Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), within the U.S. Department of Justice, and provides holistic legal and social work advocacy for youth who are returning from an out-of-home placement. The principal goal is to reduce recidivism by minimizing barriers to reentry into the community, stabilizing families, and improving outcomes for youth.

OJJDP awarded the project to ACS in October 2017. ACS began serving youth early in 2018 once the program was fully staffed. Several youth and their families have received holistic services to date. The project will continue under OJJDP funding until the end of September 2019.

The target areas for the project are Durham, Guilford and Wake counties. However, referrals from other counties may be accepted, depending on project capacity.

### Services

Many youth who come in contact with the juvenile justice system face challenges when they transition back into their communities from out-of-home placements. They deal with individual challenges as well as systemic barriers. For example, they may have difficulty with basic living needs, finding employment, school suspensions, accessing medical care or difficult familial relationships. They therefore need additional support and services.

The project serves justice-involved, low-income youth who (1) committed offenses when they were under the age of 18 and (2) are reentering their communities from out of home placements such as jails, Youth Development Center (YDCs), Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs),

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substance abuse treatment facilities, wilderness camps or group homes.

The project provides services through a multidisciplinary approach that includes legal and social work advocacy. Legal services include advocacy related to expungements, domestic violence, education, housing benefits and consumer issues. Legal representation is provided by an ACS staff attorney. Social work services include case management services that connect youth to resources related to mental health, housing, benefits and other community resources. A full-time ACS social worker provides case management services. The social worker and attorney collaborate closely to facilitate a smooth transition for youth reentering their communities.

### More Information

Youth can be referred to the Juvenile Reentry Second Chance Project by juvenile defenders, parents, court counselors, staff from the out-of-home placement, and other stakeholders.

For more information or to refer youth, contact Jasmina Nogo at 919-226-5925 or by email at [JasminaN@legalaidnc.org](mailto:JasminaN@legalaidnc.org). If you are interested in learning more about Advocates for Children's Services, visit [www.legalaidnc.org/acs](http://www.legalaidnc.org/acs).