

## **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) Background Information**

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act is the principal federal program through which the federal government sets standards for juvenile justice systems at the state and local levels, providing direct funding for states, research, training, and technical assistance, and evaluation.

The JJDP was originally enacted in 1974. Although the JJDP has been amended several times over the past 30 years, its basic composition has remained the same. As it was passed in 1974, the JJDP focused largely on preventing juvenile delinquency and on rehabilitating juvenile offenders.

The JJDP contains two main sections or "titles" through which the federal government provides funding to the States. Title II describes what information a State must submit to receive their portion of federal juvenile justice funding. The amount of funding a State receives under Title II is determined by a formula. Title V provides that States may also apply for competitive, discretionary grants focused on prevention efforts.

In order for a State to receive the full amount of federal money distributed under Title II, the State must comply with JJDP's four "core requirements." These four "core requirements" are:

**1. Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO).** This requirement specifies that juveniles who engage in status offenses, such as children who are truant, runaway or violate curfew, can not be held in secure facilities and must instead be placed in nonsecure alternatives. However, under current law, status offenders may be held in juvenile lock-ups under the Valid Court Order (VCO) exception, which allows judges to issue detention orders.

**2. Jail Removal.** This requirement stipulates that no youth under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall be detained or confined in any adult jail or lock-up except under very limited circumstances (i.e. a few hours right before or after a trial). This requirement does not apply to youth prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system.

**3. Sight and Sound Separation.** In the very limited circumstances that youth under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court can be placed in adult jails or lock-ups, this requirement states that juveniles being securely detained must be separated by "sight and sound" from adult detainees. This requirement also does not apply to youth prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system.

**4. Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC).** This requirement stipulates that States must "address" any disproportionate representation of youth of color in their juvenile justice system.