

WHAT EVERY SAG MEMBER SHOULD KNOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

SAG Training Grant Toolkit Series



State Advisory Groups (SAGs) are called on to serve as the voice of juvenile justice in their States and Territories. A strong and knowledgeable SAG can be a catalyst for change and a great benefit to a State's youth. But what can you do to be a successful SAG member?

Become Familiar With the JJDP Act

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act establishes SAGs in every State and Territory. The Act also lists the roles and responsibilities of SAG members, the Four Core Requirements, and other vital information (JJDP Act).

Know Your SAG's Roles and Responsibilities

Familiarize yourself with these specific SAG responsibilities, and see how you and your SAG can fulfill them. The first four responsibilities are listed in the JJDP Act; the others are inherent in your SAG membership.

Participate in the development of the 3-Year Plan.

- Develop or serve on a 3-Year Plan Committee.
- Analyze the juvenile crime data in your State to fill in funding gaps.
- Assist your Juvenile Justice Specialist in writing the Report or Update.
- Familiarize yourself with the current 3-Year Plan's data and goals.

Advise the Governor and Legislature on compliance with the JJDP Act.

- Include information on how your State is fulfilling or striving to fulfill the Four Core Requirements in your Annual Report to the Governor.
- Develop or serve on your Compliance Monitoring Committee.
- Meet with legislators in your community to educate them on how your State is doing with compliance monitoring and other juvenile justice issues.
- Advocate for the goals of the JJDP Act.

Obtain input from juveniles in the system.

- Hold focus groups with juveniles who are institutionalized or on probation, and with parents whose kids are in the system.
- Survey juveniles in the system.
- Tour the juvenile facilities in your State.
- Hold your SAG meetings in various juvenile facilities throughout your State or Territory.

Review and comment on grant proposals and monitor programs.

- Serve on a Proposal Evaluation Committee.
- Familiarize yourself with the grantees that your SAG funds.
- Have grantees present what they are accomplishing to your SAG.
- Ask your Juvenile Justice Specialist to give periodic updates on all grantees.
- Participate in site visits to grantees.

Know your State and Federal juvenile justice laws.

- Develop or serve on your SAG Legislative Committee.
- Have the Chair of the Committee and your State's juvenile legislation liaison update the SAG on proposed legislation at the State and Federal levels.
- Visit online resources for Federal legislation: www.govtrack.us/ and www.juvjustice.org/.

Understand the flow of the juvenile justice system in your State.

- Arrange an annual presentation on the workings of your State's or Territory's juvenile justice system for your SAG.
- Sign up to receive your juvenile justice department's electronic newsletter.
- Receive updates on projects from your juvenile justice department director.

Monitor Your SAG's Federal Money

Know how much money your State or Territory receives from the Federal Government for juvenile justice and what you do with it. There are several pots of funding received by the States; it is important to know the requirements that come with each one.

- Keep a list of the programs your SAG funds.
- Host presentations and discussions at your meetings regarding funding.
- Hold retreats and annual meetings to discuss specific funding allocations.

- Focus on tying the funding into your State's needs and the 3-Year Plan.

Assist in Complying With the Four Core Requirements

To receive Formula money, the biggest pot of money for most States and Territories, States and Territories must be in compliance with the Four Core Requirements (also referred to as the Four Core Mandates or Protections). You should know where your State stands regarding compliance with the Requirements.

- Familiarize yourself with the Four Core Requirements.
- Have your Compliance Monitor periodically present on what the State is doing to stay or get in compliance.
- Start or participate in a Compliance Monitoring Committee.
- Obtain free technical assistance if you have questions about compliance or are preparing for a Federal compliance audit.

Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders

- Find successful strategies at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/dso/.

Separation of Youth From Adults

- Work with your Compliance Monitor and visit facilities that have violations, if possible. Assist each facility in developing its own plan to address violations.

Jail Removal

- Work with your Compliance Monitor and each community to help identify alternative places to take youth who have been arrested.

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

- Gather data on DMC, as required by law.
- Evaluate whether your State's delinquency prevention efforts reduce DMC.
- Join/create a DMC Committee.
- Find successful strategies at <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/dmc/>.

Recruit and Retain Youth Members

Your SAG membership must consist 1/5 of members who were under the age of 24 when appointed. Youth Members are not only a huge asset to the SAG but also are required to be 1/5 of your total membership base, according to the JJDP Act. Many States and Territories struggle with recruiting and retaining Youth Members on their SAGs.

- To learn more, see the Tool Kit titled "How to Recruit and Retain Youth SAG Members."

Request Free Training and Technical Assistance for Your SAG

Free technical assistance is a great resource for SAG members. It is available on almost every SAG-related topic and can be requested through your Juvenile Justice Specialist. The training can be structured to meet your SAG's specific needs and is for new and seasoned members alike. Learn how other States are accomplishing their roles and responsibilities, and work on ways to make your SAG more successful.



SAG Web Site:

<http://www.dsgonline.com/sag>



State Advisory Group Training Grant

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For more information, contact Joseph Fedeli, Project Director jfedeli@dsgonline.com

Development Services Group, Inc.
7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 800E
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.951.0056



WHAT YOUTH SAG MEMBERS SHOULD KNOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

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Welcome to your State Advisory Group (SAG)! According to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act, 1/5 of all SAG members must be youth. Congress established this requirement while recognizing the important role youth play in improving the juvenile justice system. As members appointed before their 24th birthday, youth provide a fresh and unique perspective to your SAG. It can be intimidating to join a group consisting mostly of juvenile justice professionals. This document was created to ease your stress and give you information about ways to become an involved and successful SAG member.

Know the Responsibilities of a SAG Member

All SAG members have numerous responsibilities associated with their membership. As a youth member, your contributions play an invaluable role in completing the important work of the group.

Understand the flow of the juvenile justice system in your State.

- Work with SAG members and staff to understand how youth become involved in the juvenile justice system and what the decision points are.

Become familiar with your State and Federal juvenile justice laws.

- Each State has different juvenile justice laws, but all States must comply with the four Core Requirements of the **JJDP Act**:
- Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (or DSO)
- Separation of Youth From Adults in Custody (Sight and Sound)
- Jail Removal
- Reduction of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

Participate in conversations with juveniles in the system to gain their input.

- A good way to understand the challenges faced by your

State's juvenile justice system is to meet with juveniles currently, or recently, involved with the system.

- With the help of your SAG staff, organize a trip to a juvenile justice facility or program to get input from youth and form a clearer perspective of the system.

Make recommendations to your Governor and Legislature to improve the juvenile justice system.

- SAGs are required to make recommendations to the State Government each year. The SAG should ask the Governor and the Legislature to make changes to State law and policies that improve the juvenile justice system.

Participate in developing the 3-Year Plan.

- All SAGs are required to produce a 3-Year Plan.
- This document describes where the State stands in terms of complying with the JJDP Act. It identifies the priorities of the SAG. And it outlines how the Federal money will be directed.

Review and comment on grant proposals and monitor programs.

- SAGs are given Federal funds to distribute to local organizations for juvenile justice programs or projects.
- Volunteer to read grants and monitor the follow-up to determine whether the programs are successful.

Educate people about the juvenile justice system.

- You will become an expert on the juvenile justice system. Use your knowledge and experience to help inform people in your State, including policymakers, about the juvenile justice system.

Be involved in recruiting other youth members.

- Use your knowledge and contacts to help the SAG recruit additional youth members.

Participate in trainings and conferences offered.

Training is a great way to become more educated about juvenile justice issues. Training opportunities, both locally

and nationally, are provided at no cost to you. Many conferences have a specific “youth track” or a group of sessions designed specifically for youth. Ask your SAG Chair about the process of registering.

Advice Specific to Youth Members

Below is some advice that will not only make you a better advocate for youth but also will make your time as a youth SAG member more rewarding.

Try to attend all SAG meetings.

- Carpool with other members.
- Request meeting times and locations that are convenient for you.
- If you are unable to attend meetings in person, ask if there is the opportunity to participate by teleconference.

Attend trainings and conferences.

- Volunteer to attend national or regional conferences. These are fun and educational and are usually provided to you at no cost.
- Find one that looks interesting here: <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/events/EventList.asp>.
- See if you are eligible for a scholarship to attend.
- Ask to have training sessions (known as technical assistance) brought to your SAG. You can even request a youth-specific training!

Take notes and ask questions.

- While the SAG staff will make written notes, it can be helpful to keep a more detailed record of a meeting.
- Ask questions. If you are shy, write down the question and ask it during a break.

Find a mentor.

- Ask an experienced SAG member or staff to be your mentor. Some SAGs have mentor programs established and will provide you with a mentor after you are appointed.
- In the future, offer to serve as a mentor to new youth members.

Volunteer for a Subcommittee.

- This is a good way to get more involved and build relationships.
- Start a youth subcommittee if your State does not have one.
- Find your niche.
- Identify a particular area or issue within juvenile justice that you are passionate about. For Cailie, it’s working on membership recruitment and promoting youth development for system involved juveniles. For Sean, it’s reducing DMC and better serving youth in the child welfare system.
- Your niche might be related to a particular class of youth (e.g., female youth, crossover youth, or minority youth) or to processes of the SAG (e.g., grants, compliance monitoring, or the 3-Year Plan).

Additional Resources for Youth Members

- [Coalition for Juvenile Justice Youth Manual](#)
- [Power of an Untapped Resource](#)
- [Youth Today](#)

SAG Web Site:

<http://www.dsgonline.com/sag>



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For more information, contact

Joseph Fedeli, Project Director, jfedeli@dsgonline.com
Development Services Group, Inc.
7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 800E
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.951.5376

HOW TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN YOUTH SAG MEMBERS

SAG Training Grant Toolkit Series



According to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, every State Advisory Group's (SAG's) membership must be at least one fifth youth, and at least three members must have had contact with the juvenile justice system. Many SAGs struggle with filling or maintaining these requirements. What can you do to help your SAG meet these important requirements and obtain youth representation on your SAG?

What Does the Law Say?

At least one fifth of the members on every SAG must have been appointed before their 24th birthday. At least three members of the SAG must have been (or currently be) under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system. Although these are separate requirements, many SAGs will find that recruiting system-involved youth makes fulfilling both requirements easier.

Why Do We Have Youth Members?

The membership requirements are a mechanism for youth, especially youth who have been in the system, to be considered in the juvenile justice decision-making process. Youth offer a unique perspective on a system that affects them directly.

Seven Places to Recruit Youth:

- Your local high school. Call the high school's guidance counselor to ask for a recommendation. Talk with administrators about offering community service hours for youth who serve on SAGs.
- Your local college. Students majoring in political science, social work, or justice-related fields may be interested in serving on the SAG. Call the heads of those departments, and ask for a recommendation. A position on the SAG could fulfill community service hours or an internship component.
- Your community. Look for outstanding youth identified in the local media, especially if those youth are recognized for their public service accomplishments.

Talk with prevention organizations about nominating youth from their programs.

- SAG-funded programs. Would any youth working through the programs you fund be a good fit for your SAG? Ask the director of the program for a recommendation. Also, look for youth who help run the programs you fund.
- Current SAG youth. Empower current SAG youth members to lead the youth recruitment efforts and reach out to peers.
- Current SAG members. Many members on the SAG work directly with youth. Ask them to help identify potential new members.
- SAG-related events. Keep an eye out for interested youth wherever you present the SAG's work (e.g., rotations, school functions).

Why Is It So Hard to Retain Youth?

Youth often have less control over their own schedules and face unique barriers to participating at the same level as adult members. Once you have recruited youth to your SAG, take some extra time to make sure they stay involved and interested.

Ways to Keep Youth as Members:

- Provide youth with helpful materials. New members have a lot to learn about SAGs and the juvenile justice system in your State. Develop an orientation binder for youth that includes the youth toolkit and other important information (e.g., the Coalition for Juvenile Justice Youth Manual).
- Mentor youth members. Assign a mentor to youth members to teach them the ropes.
- Plan appropriate meeting times. At least some of your meetings should take place when youth don't have to miss school or work. Their schedules may not be as flexible as yours.
- Provide meaningful roles for youth. Create a youth committee, and involve it in all aspects of the SAG. Ask all members about their interests, and provide oppor-

tunities for each member to serve in a manner that appeals to his or her interest.

- Provide opportunities for questions. Make sure each member knows he or she is able to ask clarifying questions as they arise. Use meeting breaks to ask shy youth members if they have any questions.
- Provide monetary resources. Offer to provide up front travel or event costs that may be prohibiting youth from participating. This could be done through a general youth reimbursement account or even through your personal credit card; you can file for a reimbursement yourself.
- Encourage youth members to attend conferences and take advantage of trainings. Each SAG has money available for useful training; encourage youth to attend trainings that will get them oriented. Make sure youth know there are opportunities to attend national conferences, and encourage them to go, learn from workshops, and network with other youth. Youth who attend conferences tend to be more engaged with SAGs.
- Acknowledge hard work. Provide letters of recommendation from the Governor and the SAG Chair. Youth can use these to apply for scholarships and jobs, and to excuse their SAG-related absences from work and school. Offer to serve as a reference on a youth's résumé; put youth into contact with people in the field who can help them find work. Some SAGs even provide small gift cards for work well done.
- Provide food and drinks at your meetings. Use general SAG funds or offer to chip in for some cheap snacks.
- Give respect. Speak to youth in the same respectful manner as other adults SAG members. Treat them as equals in the decision-making process.
- Clarify your speech. Explain common acronyms. Don't assume youth know the particulars of the juvenile justice field. Provide youth with orientation materials (e.g., a glossary, an organizational chart).
- Ensure adequate transportation. Suggest carpooling to all members, and check in with youth members about transportation. Offer to pick them up or arrange for someone who lives nearby to drive them to each meeting. Rotate meeting locations. Some SAGs meet

at juvenile justice detention/program facilities.

- Ask current youth members to lead by example. Encourage current youth members to reach out to new members, and offer to answer any questions they may have. Peers are the best way to make youth members feel comfortable.
- Encourage youth to speak. Develop opportunities that require everyone to speak, or ask youth specifically for their thoughts. Start each meeting with introductions or an icebreaker. Youth may be too intimidated to speak at first, so a little encouragement may be necessary.
- Be flexible. If youth seem to disappear after a few long business meetings, consider having youth serve through the subcommittee work alone.

Take It Further!

Don't stop recruiting youth members just because you've reached the one-fifth minimum. Youth are more transient than adults; they may move away to college or spend a year abroad. Make sure you have enough youth on your SAG to sustain your membership requirements through these fluctuations.

SAG Web Site:

<http://www.dsgonline.com/sag>



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For more information, contact Joseph Fedeli, Project Director, jfedeli@dsgonline.com Development Services Group, Inc. 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 800E Bethesda, MD 20814 301.951.5376

HOW TO IMPLEMENT A DMC-REDUCTION PLAN WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

SAG Training Grant Toolkit Series



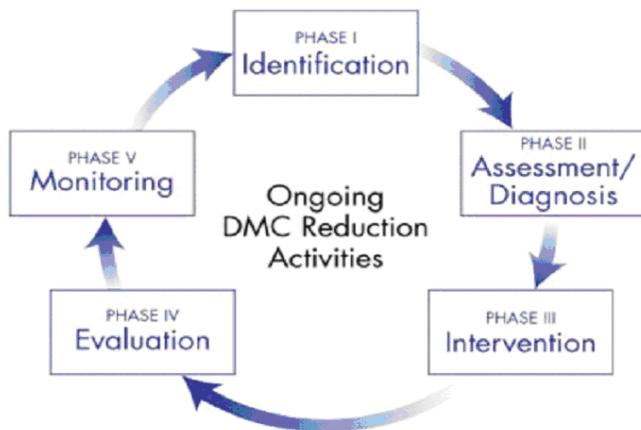
Each State Advisory Group (SAG) is tasked with mobilizing action to reduce disproportionate minority contact (DMC) within its State or Territory. Since DMC reduction was made a Core Requirement of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in 1988, many SAGs have struggled to fulfill this obligation. How can you help implement a successful DMC plan with your SAG?

Legal Basis

DMC is one of the four Core Requirements outlined in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. If a State fails to address the overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system, the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) may withhold 20 percent of the State's formula grant allocation for the subsequent year. States must address disproportionality at all nine key decision-making points in the system: arrest, referral, diversion, detention, petition, delinquency finding, probation, secure confinement in a correctional facility, and transfer to adult prison.

Develop a Strategic Approach

Identify the roles that your SAG and subgroups will play in the overall DMC approach for your State. Make sure that the SAG (or its DMC subcommittee) considers carefully what leadership position the group should adopt. Your SAG may become the advocacy leader on DMC issues, the



State's key source of DMC data and interpretation, a funding source, the key adviser on policy and legal issues, or a broker of partnership relationships. No group can do all those things, so choose which is most feasible and critical for your State.

Use Data

Statistical reports validate the extent of the DMC problem. Start by gathering State- and community-level data on disproportionately. To obtain current information for the identification stage, every SAG should have consistent contact with the providers of the identification data. Also, a carefully scripted set of explanations and interpretations should be available for every SAG member's use. Using data does not require that all members become statistical analysts. But it is likely to require that the group develop an ongoing relationship with a qualified statistical analyst who can work with the group and become part of the DMC team. SAGs may find that resource in a State agency. Or they can subcontract with a researcher or solicit one for volunteer service from a local college or university. Requesting DMC technical assistance through OJJDP will also put you in contact with an experienced researcher.

Understand and Support the Role of Your DMC Coordinator

SAG members need to learn to rely on the operational skills of the DMC Coordinator. The DMC Coordinator's roles are outlined in chapter 8 of the DMC Technical Assistance Manual. The DMC Coordinator will provide staff support, provide budget and grant compliance information, and serve as a liaison to OJJDP. He or she also can provide a sense of operational continuity for the DMC efforts and be a link to multiple interested parties.

Establish a DMC Working Group

The Chair: Ideally, the Chair of a SAG DMC workgroup should have power, influence, and respect in the community. This could be a judge, an elected official, or a senior law enforcement officer. A community activist or volunteer may also successfully fill this role. The Chair must be effective in building collaborative and cooperative relationships within the community.

DMC Subcommittee Tasks: Do not request another DMC study and then simply sit back. Members may lose interest while the study is pending. Identify a modest project specific to your community. If school expulsion commonly leads to delinquency for minority youth, you might choose a "stay in school" type of program. If large numbers of minority youth are being arrested, an initiative that provides nonarrest referrals for law enforcement may be an option. If minority youth receive more out-of-home placements and longer sentences at disposition, meetings with judges should explore what the judges will require before they

change their disposition orders. Such alternatives will require competent, evidence-based community programs in which police, district attorneys, judges, and school administrators have confidence.

Use the DMC-Reduction Best Practices Database

The DMC Best Practices Database is designed to help communities identify DMC–reduction strategies. After gathering data, SAGs can search the database for successful strategies by using different contact points, strategy types, and specific populations targeted at <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/dmc/>.

Obtain Funding

SAGs may consider developing a pilot program to address one or two DMC contact points in the juvenile justice system. Starting a pilot program to address DMC may be much easier than effecting systemwide reform. Pilot programs are cheaper, and they are easier to obtain funding for if they have been proven to work elsewhere. Many SAGs have found success in reducing DMC by funding fewer programs that have traditionally received small grant awards and concentrating on one or two contact points at a specific time. Funding for a DMC–reduction pilot program should be made available over a period of several years to adequately assess impact.

Analyze Policy Implications

Examine whether a policy or practice within your legal system needs to be changed. Many practices are based on historical precedent and are no longer aligned with the goals of the community. To make substantial impact on DMC, some of these practices may need only slight modifications. Testing these changes with a pilot program (e.g., for a specific practice, within a limited geographic zone, or with one judge) is a smart way to gain trust and gather outcome data.

Track the Impact

Have a data-based plan in place before beginning your pilot program. This will allow you to monitor whether the program is achieving the desired positive outcomes. Regularly assess the data of your pilot program to see whether changes to strategies are necessary. Concentrating on data-driven information will mitigate emotional decisions that often accompany DMC–related discussions.

Master Public Relations

Media reports contribute to many communities' fears of today's youth, especially of minority youth. Gain support for working with this population by stressing the benefits of such programs to law enforcement. Present a cost–benefit

analysis: explain how much the community pays to work positively with youth in justice systems versus the monetary and societal cost of locking these youth up. Build positive relationships with all news media, and regularly update them on your progress. Publicize success stories of local youth.

Actively Seek and Develop Partnership Relationships

Many groups are concerned about racial and ethnic disparities, especially for youth. Find these partners. Initiatives to identify and address such disparities are increasingly common in public health, child welfare, education, mental health, and similar fields. Potential partners include the agencies and policy groups involved with each of these fields as well as myriad nongovernmental organizations. Your SAG or its DMC subcommittee should periodically assess which of these represent promising partnership opportunities.

Request Training and Technical Assistance for Your SAG

Free Technical Assistance (TA) is a great resource for SAGs and DMC subcommittees. A trainer who specializes in DMC can hold a strategic planning workshop with your SAG or facilitate a general “DMC 101” course. You may also request help with obtaining and analyzing various kinds of data. Your Juvenile Justice Specialist can request training and TA through your OJJDP State Representative.

SAG Web Site:

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