

DATE: October 18, 2021

TO: Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight

FROM: Executive Committee of the Kansas Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (KAG)

RE: Restoration of Evidence-Based Funds

The Executive Committee of the Kansas Advisory Group (KAG) on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention wishes to thank the Committee for your commitment in supporting the stated vision of Kansas's youth justice system which is, "To lead the nation in juvenile justice by strengthening families, empowering youth, and making communities safer." To this end, in addition to your leadership and support, Kansans need adequate resources to help local and state systems and the youth and families they serve. We believe it is critical that juvenile justice continue to be a dedicated focus within Kansas and seek your ongoing commitment on this issue.

A critical piece of juvenile justice reform in Kansas has been the reinvestment in evidence-based practices in the community. During the 2021 legislative session, \$21 million allocated for evidence-based services was moved from the Evidence-Based Funds (EBF) and allocated elsewhere across the state budget. This reduction in the EBF will significantly impact the sustainability of existing community-based programs and prevent future initiatives that seek to support Kansas's youth justice system vision. The damaging impact of this loss of funding for youth and families will not be fully observed for years to come.

The KAG, and other bodies working towards juvenile justice system delinquency and prevention efforts, recognize that community-based treatment for youth is far more effective and cost-efficient than incarceration. Kansas youth need programs supported by the EBF so they can remain safely within their homes and avoid the negative outcomes associated with detaining and incarcerating youth - outcomes which are rarely positive or in-line with best-practice standards. We know that for every \$1 invested in community-based youth development and prevention efforts, we dramatically reduce delinquency and save taxpayers between \$7 to \$10 in future costs.<sup>1</sup>

We all share the responsibility to create opportunity and services within communities for our youth—especially those at-risk for juvenile justice system involvement. *Therefore, in the collaborative spirit, the KAG urges this Committee to revisit the reallocation of the \$21 million saved for evidence-based practices to serve youth in Kansas in the upcoming budgetary sessions.* We ask that your Committee act to make juveniles a priority; to refocus on Kansas's youth justice system vision; and to financially support the safety and well-being of all Kansans. This means ensuring access to prevention and intervention services for youth, statewide, and in adherence for best-practices and intentional and ongoing movement that supports the 2016 juvenile justice reform bill, Senate Bill 367.

Kansas juvenile justice reform serves as a model for other states; however, the removal of funding to support reform efforts will significantly and negatively impact youth in Kansas, causing a regression in the state's reform efforts. The KAG asks your Committee to empower Kansas to work on delinquency prevention to the greatest possible extent. The KAG Executive Committee wishes to thank you for your consideration of our recommendation to revisit the allocation of the EBF in the upcoming budgetary conversations. Please feel free to contact the KAG's Chairperson, Terri Williams at [williams@csimail.org](mailto:williams@csimail.org) or at 785-249-6462.

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<sup>1</sup> Small, S. A., Reynolds, A. J., O'Connor, C., & Cooney, S. M. (2005). What works, Wisconsin: What science tells us about cost-effective programs for juvenile delinquency prevention. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison. Retrieved from [https://www.juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/resource\\_618.pdf](https://www.juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/resource_618.pdf)