

**Committee on County Criminal Justice System Best Practices for the 21st Century –
Annual Award Program 2018
Honoring Best Practices County Jail Programming**

BACKGROUND

The County Criminal Justice Systems for the 21st Century, a subcommittee of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) Courts and Corrections Committee has been charged by the CCAP Board with developing programs to promote best practices in criminal justice. First introduced as a means of promoting the 2003 CCAP Prison Overcrowding Task Force recommendations, the awards program has evolved over time to focus on best practices in general, rather than just programs that are designed to address overcrowding.

HISTORY

The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania undertook the Pennsylvania Prison Overcrowding project in 2001, in response to concerns raised by members about jail overcrowding and construction costs. The committee appointed a task force to conduct a study and report back its findings, assuming the board would take a policy position in support of finding funding for expansion and upgrades. A study was commissioned that examined the state of overcrowding, including the reasons behind those conditions, and the findings demonstrated a need to examine process before deciding on expansion of jail space.

In order to assure that counties would take advantage of the report findings to look for strategies that could be employed locally, the CCAP Board created the Committee on County Criminal Justice Systems for the 21st Century, and charged them with education for members and promotion of the report. The Committee designed the awards program as a way to highlight the work that counties are doing in this regard and to share that information for other counties to consider for their own plans.

The Awards program has evolved to include a component for juvenile detention and alternative programs, and an award honoring a county partner for their efforts in assisting counties with criminal justice goals. The awards program is in its eighth year.

AWARD PROGRAM GOAL

The focus of the award is to recognize county jails for implementation of best practices for jail operation. These may be consistent with the 2003 report recommendations or the recommendations of the recently released CCAP Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force Report. Best Practices may address conditions of confinement using successful re-entry initiatives, prevention or early intervention programs, development of effective linkages with community behavioral health services, family involvement, school communication and efforts to make communities safer. Efforts to introduce sharing or collaborations that result in improved outcomes for local justice systems are areas of interest, in that other counties may use the example of awardees in developing their own programs. Initiatives that may be considered include the following:

- Efforts to stabilize or reduce the jail population
- Adoption of assessment methodologies which identify areas for effective change
- Implementation of re-entry initiatives
- Establishment of community corrections programs
- Use of technology to enhance operations of the jail and outcomes for inmates
- Improving the quality of data
- Employment of innovations in housing and treatment of mentally ill inmates
- Development of community services efforts
- Implementation of diversion programs for specific populations
- Collaboration between county departments that are not traditionally involved with corrections
- Innovations through public/private partnerships

2018 Themes

While all projects and programs are of interest to the Committee and eligible to enter, the committee is encouraging the submission of projects that demonstrate the following:

- Addressing the Opioid Crisis
- Successful collaboration and partnerships at the local level
 - Court/judicial team impact on jail population, lives of inmates, successful community re-entry
- The use of evidence based correctional programming
 - Assessment of need/risk levels
 - Enhancement of offender motivation
 - Targeted interventions
 - Staff training consistent with delivery of programs, including positive reinforcement, environments conducive to success

NUMBER OF AWARDS

No more than one large county and one small county jail will receive an award. A large jail is one from a county of the first, second, second A or third class. A small county jail is one from a county of the fourth through eighth class.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Entries will be judged on the following categories:

Problem description (10 points)

Background (20 points)

Soundness of approach (20 points)

Description of specific program elements (20 points)

Expectations and measurable goals (20 points)

Evaluation, sustainability (10 points)

PREPARING AND SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY

Use the official award form in this brochure or available online at <http://www.pacounties.org/ProgramServices/Pages/Criminal-Justice.aspx> click on "Criminal Justice System Best Practices Awards"

ELIGIBILITY

A county jail is eligible to enter under the following conditions:

- The project took place in and was operating during calendar year 2017
- The county has applied for this award in the past, but can show an ongoing benefit to the project
- The county plays a significant leadership role in the development and implementation of activities
- The county commits to follow up evaluation by phone if requested by the committee
- The chair of the board of county commissioners must sign the form for non-home rule county submissions and the Chief Executive Officer must sign the form for home rule county submissions.

DEADLINE

Entries must be submitted via email using the electronic form no later than close of business February 10, 2018.

JUDGING AND SELECTION

All entries will be scored by the Committee on County Criminal Justice System Best Practices. The winning entry in each category will be announced at the CCAP annual conference in March, and afterwards, contacts identified for each winning submission will be notified. Awards will be presented at a time and location chosen by the awardee.

NOTICE

By applying the applicant agrees that items submitted for the program narrative will be posted on the CCAP and JDCAP websites, and made available to counties who wish to establish similar best practices. The signatures on the submission indicate agreement with the public posting, and the award recipient may be asked to share additional information with other counties. The Committee on County Criminal Justice Systems Best Practices reserves the right to disqualify and entry if all of the required elements are not included. Further, entries not receiving a minimum score may be disqualified. Further, entries that fail to achieve a minimum score may be disqualified.

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered by the Committee. A copy of this official entry is available at www.pacounties.org

County	Butler
County Class	4
Address	202 S. Washington Street
City, State, Zip Code	Butler, Pa 16001
Primary Contact, Title	Jennifer Passarelli, Deputy Warden
Contact Phone	724-431-4708

PROJECT INFORMATION

Title [Click here to enter text.](#)

Project Start Date January 15, 2017

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Enter program narrative that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below. Entries must be submitting using this form. All sections must be complete. Entries submitted without the required information may be disqualified.

Problem Discussion - Enter comments on the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort. This section is worth 10 points.

Prior to this collaboration, there were no contact visits between inmates and their visitors at the Butler County Prison. All visits took place in areas that were fully partitioned by cinderblocks with a Plexiglas window. Communication took place through hand held phones. No physical contact was possible or permitted. This was the procedure for all visits, including those involving CYS and children. Visits took place in a partitioned area designed specifically for non-contact visitation on the mezzanine level for each individual unit and there was no general space available or dedicated to a different style of visitation, namely a contact visitation.

Background – Enter history of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to divert individuals from further penetration into the juvenile or adult justice system, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county- wide planning strategies, etc. This section is worth 20 points.

Charlie Johns, Director of Butler County Children and Youth Services (CYS) contacted Jennifer Passarelli, Deputy Warden to discuss using Federal grant money received to enhance visitation between parents and children to create a friendlier visitation process and space for the children

of incarcerated parents involved with CYS. This was partially a result of the findings of the 2016 Quality Services Review (QSR) which was conducted by the Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) on Butler County CYS. One of the findings of the QSR was that CYS needed to improve the engagement of incarcerated parents in dependent children's lives. Both Parties agreed that this would be an excellent project to achieve that goal. Considering the Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights developed by San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership in 2003 which states that children have the right to speak see and touch their incarcerated parent, we decided to meet and see if this could be something our two organizations could work together to put into practice. Studies have shown that there is a link between visitation and a reduction in recidivism. "Prison Visitation and Recidivism", a study by D. Mears, J. Cochran, S. Siennick and W. Bales suggests making visitation areas cleaner and more family friendly to have a greater impact on visitation frequency. All of these factors generated the need for planning and moving forward on the project.

Soundness of approach – Enter a description of the ways the project conforms to either program themes or goals as established in the criteria. This section is worth 20 points

Despite this being a collaboration of two separate and very distinct entities, CYS and the Prison remained united on the goal of assisting children of incarcerated parents. Protocol, policies and procedures were developed to ensure the individual concerns of CYS and the Prison would not be overlooked or dismissed while meeting the goal of the greater good. For CYS, this meant that the visits would be designed around what a typical supervised parent/child visit would be. This included supplying a therapist to supervise each visit to ensure they were therapeutic for both the incarcerated parent and the child. Utilizing this format would also make the visits familiar and functional from the view of Dependency Court. The visit could be communicated to the court and progress for both parent and child could be reported much like it is for all families with children who are placed outside of their home. For the Prison, this meant maintaining the security and safety of the Institution and the community while also assisting in addressing the needs of the incarcerated parent and their eventual transition back to society that includes their dependent children. CYS and the Prison both wanted to create an environment that would not cause further trauma to the children but also not irresponsible in the realm of security. We worked diligently to blend our individual mandates for a successful delivery of this service.

Program Elements – Enter a description of the elements of the project, utility, adaptability, strategies used, community and stakeholder involvement, evidence-based approached. This section is worth 20 points.

A place for contact visitation was identified at the prison. An area that was formerly a housing pod had been converted into a classroom center where a myriad of psychoeducation classes for inmates are held in addition to GED classes. That also area contains a gym/recreation area and a small sally port that leads into the gym. This area was chosen to be the contact visitation area. The gym was identified to be used for older children and the sally port was more suitable for younger children. Rubber puzzle piece rainbow flooring was purchased for the sally port. Beanbag style chairs, and various toys including a coloring table, a doll house and a train with wooden train tracks. The area was designed to be a soft play area for younger the children. Director Johns and Deputy Warden Passarelli spent time ensuring the toys were developmentally appropriate for a range of ages as well as items that would not compromise

the security of the Prison. The gym was painted a light beige color to brighten up the space and a large grass green kickball diamond was painted onto the floor. A kickball and bases were purchased. The gym was already equipped with a basketball hoop. New basketballs were purchased. A heater was purchased and installed, mounted on the wall to heat up the gym area because it is not insulated. This would help make the climate more comfortable and enhance the visit experience for the children.

While the physical elements of the room were being completed, group work was also being done on completing the policies and procedures for the use of the room. This group consisted of multiple stakeholders including representatives of the Prison, CYS, Visitation Provider Agencies, Parents Attorneys, and Guardian Ad Litem (attorneys for the best interests of children.) This group of stakeholders was essential to create an understanding of the utilization and benefits of having this visitation environment. One of the leading drivers of this program was that multiple best practice studies have indicated that parents who receive visitation and have an opportunity to bond with their child are more likely reunified. Projects such as this are also highly recommended by the OCYF and the Office of Children and Families in the courts to ensure the engagement and involvement of incarcerated parents.

Expectations and Measurable Goals – Enter a description of the costs of the project, how it was funded, projected impact, number of inmates diverted or assisted, utilization of risk assessment, impact on recidivism. This section is worth 20 points.

The grant that was utilized for this project was a total of \$5,000 which went toward the renovation and design of the physical space. There were 48 contact visits between incarcerated parents and their child(ren) in 2017 under this initiative. The range of ages for the children visiting was from infancy to late adolescence. The cost of the money was contained to the grant amount. The grant money was used to purchase toys, paint the area, purchase rubber flooring and a heater to make the gym climate more comfortable to the visiting children. The impact on recidivism cannot be measured, as it is too soon to draw correlation or influence of this effort. Although not measurable the anecdotal stories of impact in the first year of this project were overwhelming. All of the visits held were positive, and there were no negative incidents whatsoever reported by any party. Additionally this project was unmeasurably beneficial for an incarcerated father who was able to hold and bond with his infant daughter for the first time as he was in prison for her birth. This father continued to look forward to these visits when they were provided. He reported that this event made him “feel like a young child on Christmas morning waiting for Santa to arrive.” This project’s measurable goal for this family would be for him to maintain a role in his daughter’s life.

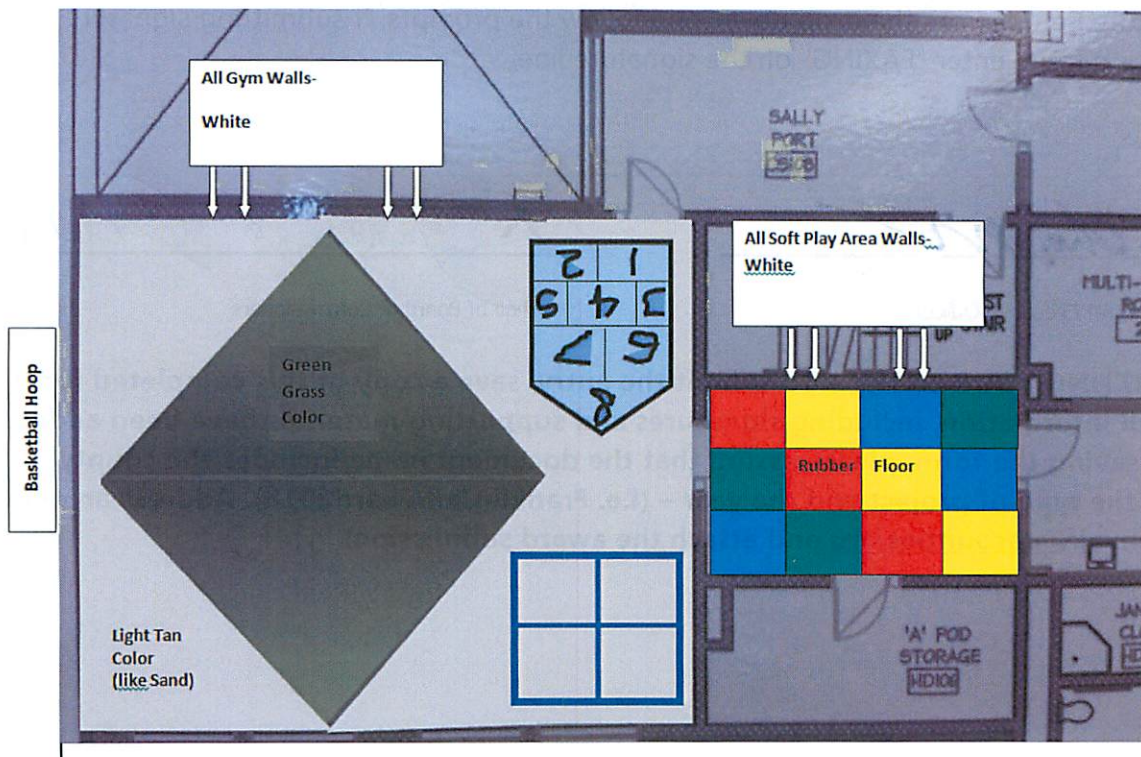
Evaluation/Sustainability – Enter details describing the process for evaluating success including assessment methodologies, data reports, continuation, and determination of success. This section is worth 10 points.

There were 48 individual inmate/child(ren) contact visits through CYS at the Butler County Prison for 2017. There were no security issues or CYS concerns for any visit. There is no revolving cost to continue this service. It is sustainable and the success of the 2017 project will be the foundation for this project to continue.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

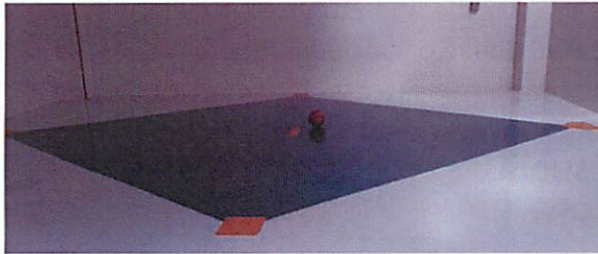
Please include any supporting documentation to demonstrate the impact of the project in cost or population outcomes, or other data to demonstrate the considerations utilized in determining the scope or design of the project. Scoring will be based on factors including the entrant's description of the problem, the soundness of the approach, and success in meeting goals and objectives. Award submissions will receive consideration for outcomes or best practices supported by data. **SUPPORTING INFORMATION SHOULD BE COPIED AND PASTED DIRECTLY INTO THE FORM USING THE BOX BELOW.**

Butler County Prison Parent Child Visitation Area

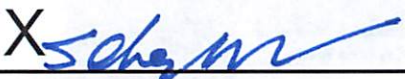


The floor in the gym will be painted a light tan. We would like a grass green diamond like the one depicted. This can be a kickball diamond or just an area that resembles grass. The diamond should extend to the area of the basketball lines, but should *not* be the size of the entire room. We plan on painting a hopscotch board and Four Square board in those corner areas. The Soft Play Area will only need the walls painted. The flooring will be rubber puzzle piece type removable squares. We are looking into extending the rubber flooring or some type of rubber padding approximately two feet up the walls in the Soft Play Area.

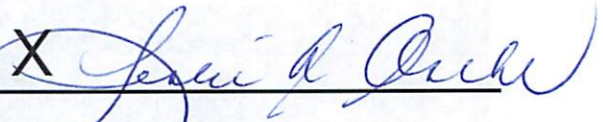




All forms must contain at least one signature. Signatures can be entered electronically, or submitted via fax using a separate form. To sign, right-click on the signature line, select "Signature Setup" from the drop down, and follow the prompts. If submitting signatures on a separate form, enter "FAXING" on the signature line.

X 

County Chief Executive Officer

X 

Chair of Board of Commissioners

SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY – To submit the entry, save a copy of this completed form after all information, including signatures and supporting materials have been added. When saving the form, please assure that the document name includes the county name, the type of project and the year – (i.e. FranklinJailAward2018). Address an email to bpenyak@pacounties.org and attach the award submission.