

Juvenile Detention and Shelter Best Practices Award Official Entry Form

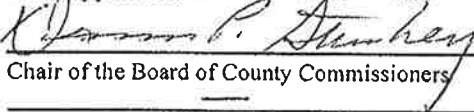
Attach the form to all entries. Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered complete. A copy of this official entry is available electronically at www.pacounties.org.

County Name Lancaster County Class Class 3
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 Contact Name Drew Fredericks Title Director
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PROJECT INFORMATION

Title Operation Deterrence / Youth Aid Panels Start Date mid 1990s

Each application must be submitted with two signatures. Place appropriate signatures on two of the lines below:


 Chair of the Board of County Commissioners

Facility Chief Executive Officer 

Oversight Board (where applicable)

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Attach a separate program narrative document to the form that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below. *Entries must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type.*

A separate program narrative document must be attached to this form that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below.

- A description of 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.
- A description 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.
- A description of expectations and measurable goals, including supporting data.
- A brief description of how the project was evaluated and any lessons learned.
- A brief description of the community, including a description of key stakeholders, organizations, and county departments that were involved in the project.
- A description of how the activities described in a project started in the past were altered or will be continued based on experience, including plans for leveraging additional resources.
- A description of any costs associated with the project and how it was funded; cost savings, if any, and any change in community acceptance, reductions in insurance costs, or inspection improvements that resulted from the program.

DATA ELEMENTS

Award submissions will receive consideration for outcomes or best practices supported by data. Please attach any supporting data 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 applicants description of the problem, the soundness of the approach, and success in meeting goals and objectives.

Please attach supporting documents, forms or other information that support the award entry. Entries must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type. Entries must be received by close of business on February 14, 2014. Winners will be announced during the CCAP Spring Conference, March 24 - 25, 2014.

More information: Brinda Carroll Penyak, bpenyak@pacounties.org

Operation Deterrence and Youth Aid Panels

With the change in direction and philosophy of the juvenile justice system over the last several years, stakeholders have found a need to become more creative and progressive with how they handle their community's first-time summary and misdemeanor offenders, with the goal of diverting them from progressing further into the system. These stakeholders/collaborators include Lancaster County Youth Aid Panels, District Magistrates, local police departments, the Juvenile Probation Department, and the Youth Intervention Center.

History of Youth Aid Panels in Lancaster County

Back in the 1990s, Manheim Township, in Lancaster County, created a Youth Aid Panel through its police department as a way to divert first-time summary and misdemeanor offenders from having to enter the juvenile justice system. The Township saw a missing component in the juvenile justice system; there should be a way to help young kids from having a criminal record. Without any program like this within the County, the Township created a Youth Aid Panel and educated their police officers to use their discretion and begin referring kids to the program. A Youth Aid Panel is made up of caring, non-judgmental community members who meet with juvenile offenders and their families in order to resolve juvenile criminal matters. The program became so popular that the County's Juvenile Probation Department began establishing other panels throughout the County. When funds dried up for this initiative, the Office of the District Attorney assumed the management of the Youth Aid Panels and has been overseeing them ever since.

Purpose and Goal of Youth Aid Panels

Youth Aid Panels fill a void that no other program in the County can fill. They are the only method by which non-violent, youthful offenders can receive a second chance without having to have a criminal record by diverting them away from the traditional juvenile justice system, thus lowering their chances of recidivism and lessening the strain on the already overburdened court system. The panels provides a means for trained, caring community citizens to be directly involved in the process of holding youth accountable for their improper delinquent acts and also empowers the community to participate in the problem solving process. A portion of this training is provided by Operation Deterrence program staff in order to educate panel members about the program and set referral recommendations, since one option for members of a panel is an Operation Deterrence referral. Panel involvement also helps the community better understand general areas or types of problems within their boundaries.

Victims of offenses usually receive restitution and are provided with a means to express the harm that was caused to them by the juvenile's inappropriate actions. It is the aim of a Youth Aid Panel to arrive at a satisfactory resolution.

During the development towards adulthood, many youth make poor life choices and some of those poor choices may result in police intervention. The Youth Aid Panels afford the citizens of our communities a setting to speak with the youth and to convey their understanding, expectations, and caring. By this process, the youth realizes that concern for their behavior is shared by those beyond the juvenile court authority. Youth who complete the Youth Aid Panel program become more closely connected to their community and are less likely to re-offend in the future.

Local Youth Aid Panels received a total of 233 referrals between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013.

The Youth Intervention Center's Operation Deterrence program received a total of 205 referrals between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013.

29 referrals from 10 different Youth Aid Panels
13 referrals from 7 different local police departments
16 referrals from 4 different District Magistrates
147 referrals from other agencies and concerned families

Operation Deterrence Program

The Youth Intervention Center's detention program provides temporary safe and secure care for alleged and adjudicated delinquent juveniles waiting for adjudication or disposition by the Courts. The center ensures community protection from the alleged or adjudicated offender. The program serves male and female juveniles between the ages of ten and eighteen. The facility has seventy-two secure detention beds, and works to stabilize the residents by structuring their stay with educational and psycho-educational programs, while instilling self-discipline and structure into their lives. Residents are referred to our facility through Lancaster County's Office of Juvenile Probation.

One of the community intervention services the Youth Intervention Center offers is called Operation Deterrence. This program was created in the mid-1990s to assist concerned parents whose child has been displaying inappropriate behavior, but has not yet entered into the juvenile justice system. This experience shows the juvenile where the results of their poor decision-making could lead. Loss of freedom is the key message that is delivered to the juvenile through an on-site presentation which occurs in our lobby area and

hearing room. A review of what a day in the life of a detention resident is reviewed as well as the negative impact that their behaviors have on their families and communities.

This free program has since grown and morphed over the years and is heavily used by Youth Aid Panels, District Magistrates, local police departments, and concerned parents. Through further collaboration with Compass Mark, a community service provider, we were able to include a parental component to the program which offered our parents guidance and other accessible resources to assist their families. In the future, we plan on expanding and enhancing the family component of our program by including other community service providers to offer family-based counseling services.

This unfunded community intervention program is facilitated by facility staff every Tuesday evening as a result of the ongoing interest and Youth Aid Panel referrals.

Testimonials

I am just writing to tell you that I think your program is wonderful!!! I didn't know what to expect, I actually thought it would be some lame speech and a movie, boy was I surprised! I have seen a remarkable improvement in my daughter's behavior! YOU GUYS ROCK!!! Thank you sooooo much!

- Concerned Parent

Thank you for having us to your detention center and also telling and explaining how horrible it can be to spend unwelcome time there. No offense, but I hope to never see you again as you probably wish the same. Once again, thank you for having us at your facility.

- Program Participant

This program is outstanding...this program needs to be pushed out into the public because it can make a difference now. I would highly recommend this to any parent as a tool to help them steer their kids in the right direction. I know that the experience will forever remain in his memory. Please let the staff that was on duty last night know that they did an outstanding job. Again thank you for this opportunity. I hope that the program continues to grow and word gets out that this is available. Lancaster needs this ...bad.

- Concerned Parent

I believe 11 and 12 year olds are very impressionable and many spoke of never going back there. As always we work together to improve the quality of life of these students.

- Early Childhood and Special Education Services Department, School District of Lancaster

Thanks for having us over. I can't really say I enjoyed it, but I learned from it. I learned to make better decisions in my life, so that I don't end up there.

- Program Participant

Please thank your staff again for doing such a wonderful job. Together we can have a great effect on these kids' lives. I also want to thank everyone else there who are allowing me to keep our relationship strong to reach these kids. I couldn't do this without your help.

- Program Mentor, School District of Lancaster

Wanted to let you know the experience was powerful and effective for my son. The male and female staff running the program were passionate, professional and prepared. It should be noted that even when their "required" presentation was complete, they both took time to follow up and speak individually to each participant. This was clear evidence they care about their work and the message they were delivering. Thank you for this opportunity for my son and for running such a good program.

- Concerned Parent

THANK YOU for the time you take out of your days to try and help kids like my son before they end up in the system. To parents like myself, it really does mean a lot even if it's not immediately evident.....

- Concerned Parent

Conclusion

Lancaster County has experienced positive outcomes as a result of the collaboration of all of these entities. Generally, the recidivism rate amongst the Lancaster County Youth Aid Panels is approximately 12%, which is well below the recidivism rate for juvenile offenders who enter the judicial process. This collaboration not only deters juveniles from progressing further into the juvenile justice system, but saves tax dollars by avoiding the use of high cost congregate care facilities, reduces the strain on the court system, lowers juvenile probation officer caseloads, and keeps our County's juveniles within their own communities. It is a true measure of successful collaboration between law enforcement, the courts, and caring, concerned citizens.