



# Redefining Justice

*2017 Annual Report*

DELAWARE



**CENTER  
FOR  
JUSTICE**  
INCORPORATED

# Dear Friends,



At DCJ, we spend a lot of time thinking about how to make our justice system “better,” and what that means may mean different things to different people. When imagining a more just system, it is essential that the voices of those directly impacted by it be empowered in its reshaping. In reality, though, the communities the most impacted by crime are often left out of the discussion about what they need and what they want.

The definitions of “justice” that you will see throughout this report come from our staff and from our clients. To us, justice must not only incorporate the voice of the victim, but it must also promote healing within impacted communities. The root causes of crime are complex, yet we often fail to consider the nuances during sentencing and instead respond harshly and with finality. Without a deeper understanding, we cannot expect to meaningfully respond to what our communities most need.

Significantly reducing mass incarceration, reducing recidivism, and reducing victimization will require reflection, restoration, and recovery. We are hopeful for 2018, and we can’t do it without you.

In service,

Ashley Biden, M.S.W ~ *Executive Director*

# DCJ & Executive Staff

## Administrative

Ashley Biden, Executive Director  
Kirstin Cornell, Director Of Operations  
Kate Parker, Policy Director  
Kailyn Richards, Office Coordinator & Communications Assistant  
Laura Mood, Bookkeeper

## Adult Victim Services Program

Nikki Kress, Program Coordinator  
Gloria Smith, Case Manager  
Tracie Purnell, Mental Health Counselor  
Elise Schubert, Mental Health Counselor

## Community Reentry Services Program

Jessica Alicea, Program Coordinator  
Suzanne Kirk, Case Manager  
Osha Hudson, Case Manager

## Court Of Common Pleas Mediation Program

Karin McManus, Program Coordinator

## Healthy Thinking/Moving On

Judy Hutt, Program Coordinator

## Juvenile Restitution Program

Karin McManus, Program Coordinator

## Read In, Read Out

Kailyn Richards, Program Liaison

## School Offense Diversion Program

Cindy McDaniel, Program Coordinator

## Student Warriors Against Guns And Gangs

Corry Wright, Program Coordinator  
Gabriel Mensah, Intensive Case Manager  
Tanisha Brown, Intensive Case Manager

## Tuancy Reduction Program

Cassandra Freeman, Program Coordinator

## Victim Sensitivity Program

Erin Goldner, Program Coordinator



# youth Programming

DCJ supports policies and practices that are fair, equitable, and developmentally appropriate for youth involved in the justice system. In the event a youth makes a bad decision, it is important that age appropriate sentencing and services are provided. We know that the condition of childhood, the very structure of their brains, makes young people more susceptible to the pressure of others, less able to extricate themselves from environments that induce criminality, and less in control of their surroundings.

DCJ served more than **132** youth in 2017; **91%** of the population served were students of color. Nationally, black youth are 5 times more likely to be incarcerated than their white counterparts—and shamefully Delaware is **one of six** states where black youth are at least 10 times more likely to be held in placement as white youth. Rates of juvenile incarceration are decreasing as developmental science and diversionary programs expand, but we still have much to be do, especially when addressing racial disparity within the system.

**justice means**  
believing in the potential of ALL children.



## Read In, Read Out Program (RIRO)

The Read In, Read Out Program is a collaborative project of the Department of Correction, the Delaware Center for Justice, and Read Aloud Delaware. Selected incarcerated parents are able to record themselves reading age-appropriate books to their children. The program strengthens bonds among family members during periods of incarceration, which research suggests can reduce likelihood of recidivism. Additionally, the program promotes literacy skills for both child and adult participants.

184 incarcerated parents in two facilities participated in 2017, and **217** children received packages including the book and the recording. Additionally, RIRO hosted its first reading workshop day in partnership with the University of Delaware during the summer of 2017. Children of participating parents were invited to listen to a reading and then participate in a hands-on activity led by early-learning specialists. All attendees left with several new books to keep as their own.

**Client Spotlight:** *\*Robert expressed that he was nervous, and the other participants agreed. The group went around the room practicing reading in animated voices to loosen up. RIRO is a small community within HRYCI, and participants form a bond and sense of responsibility through the program. Robert expressed that he feels like it is his responsibility to be an active father because of RIRO.*

**justice means**  
not punishing children as a result of parental circumstances and supporting families.

## Juvenile Restitution Determination Program

Program staff assists victims of crimes committed by individuals under 18 by assessing and filing court orders of restitution on behalf of the victims. Court orders of restitution ensure that juvenile offenders are legally obligated to make amends and to compensate their victims for their financial losses.

**\$321,813** in restitution was ordered in 2017.

## School Offense Diversion Program (SoDP)

DCJ's School Offense Diversion Program (SoDP) staff work with students referred by the Courts as a result of an arrest for an in-school incident. It is our goal to make each student's first encounter with the criminal justice system their last. By successfully completing SoDP, the student's charge is dismissed with the expectation that they stay out of trouble, stay in school, and graduate. By utilizing principles of restorative justice, youth work to understand the harm caused and in turn identify ways to provide healing for all of those involved. **83%** of students enrolled successfully completed the program in 2017.

### **justice means**

**not perpetuating the school to prison pipeline.**

## Student Warriors Against Guns and Gangs (SWAGG)

The Student Warriors Against Guns and Gangs (SWAGG) Program is an evidence-based gun violence intervention program and operates in partnership with the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services. SWAGG works to reverse the trend of increased gun and gang violence among youth by helping them to understand the impact of gun and gang violence on individuals and communities. The program follows a curriculum to help students develop strategies for avoiding negative behaviors and making positive choices. **62** student were enrolled in the program in 2017, and 91% demonstrated an improvement in attitudes toward gun and gang violence. DCJ launched an expansion to the program in early 2018 and now has two intensive case managers providing early intervention to identified youth in school and in their communities.

### **justice means**

**early intervention in order to achieve the best possible outcome for individuals and the community.**

## Truancy Reduction Project

The Truancy Reduction Program works with high-risk students whose school attendance has ceased or dropped dramatically. The program seeks to increase truant students' engagement in school to decrease dropout rates and to prevent future criminality. Through intensive case management, students and their families receive support in addressing the underlying causes of truancy, which may include factors such as bullying, lack of appropriate clothing or transportation, undiagnosed learning disabilities, precarious housing situations, and/or lack of academic support. **70%** of students enrolled showed marked improvement in attendance by the following quarter.

### **justice means**

**giving all Delaware children the experience of an engaged and appropriate education.**



# adult Programming

DCJ supports policies and programming that hold individuals accountable while also improving their capacity to achieve future success. Over 25,000 individuals are released from Delaware prison facilities annually, and unfortunately the state has a higher than average rate of recidivism. Nearly **76%** of those released are rearrested within three years. In order to combat recidivism and strengthen communities, DCJ works to empower individuals to address trauma, identify professional opportunities, access healthcare, and resolve conflict.

DCJ served **443** incarcerated or formerly incarcerated adults in 2017.



## Reentry Services

DCJ provides comprehensive and intensive case management services to previously incarcerated individuals through its Community Reintegration Services Program (CRSP). Participants are diverse in their ages, criminal charges, needs, challenges, and goals. The universal task is to assist participants with resolving challenges, building skills, and working towards a better life. **235** clients received case management services in 2017. 80 clients obtained employment directly through DCJ services, which includes an innovative partnership with 2Fish Home Renovations which provides apprenticeships to clients.

We know that our clients succeed at a higher rate when their basic needs are taken care of upon their release, allowing them to focus on longer term educational and career goals. 72% of clients report making less than the Federal Poverty Line (\$11,772 annually), with 99% reporting making less than \$29,430 annually. **75%** of clients self identify as an ethnic minority. Through support from the Delaware Criminal Justice Council, DCJ is able to provide financial assistance for the urgent needs of eligible clients. Through this financial assistance, 35 clients were able to gain or maintain stable housing, 11 client were able to avoid a shut off of their utilities, 26 clients were able to obtain their drivers' license and/or birth certificate, 9 clients were able to pay for job training programs, and 405 bus passes were distributed so that clients could attend interviews, work, job training, etc.

**justice means**  
**being prepared to move my life in a better direction.**

## Women in Transition

Women in Transition delivers educational instruction using the Moving On curriculum, designed specifically for women who are involved in the criminal justice system, at Hazel D. Plant Women's Treatment Facility. The overarching goal of the program is to assist women in mobilizing and developing personal and social resources that mediate the impact of risk for future criminal behavior. The program targets criminogenic factors in order to reduce recidivism and promote healthy living, thus improving one's capacity for life's various stressors. Women build human, social, and emotional capital necessary for successful reentry into the community and greater ecosystem.

Two cohorts of women participated in 2017, with **24** women successfully completing the program. **100%** of clients assessed indicated that the program had an impact on self-esteem and development of positive coping skills.

# victims Programming

DCJ supports policies and practices that strengthen victims and rebuild communities. DCJ believes in the power of restorative justice and that the victims' voices must be a key part of the criminal justice process. While victimization affects every demographic group, research has shown that violence is concentrated and its impact unequal. The communities most harmed by crime are often the least supported by the criminal justice system.

Programs that incorporate restorative justice listen to what the victim needs to heal and provide support to all parties to address feelings of anger and fear, in addition to any other harms caused. **70%** of victims think rehabilitation, drug treatment, and mental health treatment are better ways to prevent future crimes than punishment through incarceration.

## Adult Victim Services Program (AVS)

AVS provides intensive case management and counseling services to support, heal and empower victims of crime who are over the age of 50. Clients learn about healthy boundaries, cycles of abuse and power, behaviors of an abuser, and self-care strategies. Clients demonstrate improved attitude, knowledge, and skills needed to manage a health condition and are able to gain access to community based support services such as legal services, counseling, health clinics, and doctors' appointments. Clients access intensive case management through a master's level social worker and counseling through a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

51 victims of crime were served in 2017. **80%** of clients served were female, 82% identified as an ethnic minority, 96% reported income levels below 150% of the Federal Poverty Line (\$17,820 for 1 individual), and 57% possessed a disability.

## justice means

**receiving support after my victimization so that I can heal from the trauma.**

## Court of Common Pleas Mediation Program

Mediation services at DCJ provide a voluntary, safe, and confidential alternative to adjudication in court for victims and defendants. Participants are able to work out their conflicts without having to go to trial, and both parties have an opportunity to share the impact of the incident, to create an agreement for how the situation can be resolved and for how amends can be made. Mediation programs provide both victims and perpetrators with more satisfaction that justice had been served than traditional criminal justice pathways.

To date, over 4,000 cases have been successfully resolved through DCJ's mediation program. In 2017, 376 individuals received mediation services, and over \$10,000 in restitution was collected on behalf of the Court of Common Pleas

## justice means

**embracing and practicing empathy.**

## Victim Sensitivity Program

The Victim Sensitivity Program provides opportunities for adjudicated youth at juvenile detention facilities to learn about the impact of their behavior. The program develops empathy among its participants as they are confronted by the realities of the impact of their crimes on the victims, as well as the families of those victims, the community, and themselves. With the overall high rate of violence in the City of Wilmington, this program hits home for many youth because it allows them to hear real life stories from individuals that have lived through violent acts or committed violent acts themselves.



# public Education & Advocacy

DCJ's public education, research, and advocacy initiatives involve engaging the public and policymakers in reasoned discussions of criminal justice issues to improve the quality of justice in Delaware. Our main areas of concentration include Juvenile Justice, Pretrial Reform, Sentencing Reform, Victims' Rights and Restorative Justice, and Collateral Consequences. Over 500 Delawareans attended DCJ events and trainings throughout 2017, with over **5,000** visiting our website and Facebook pages to receive the most up to date information about criminal justice reform efforts both locally and nationwide.

**justice means**  
that the outcome of my case isn't determined by the color of my skin or amount of money in my wallet



Key legislative advances for 2017 include:

**House Bills 6, 8, and 9:** This package of bills made it harder for children to waive counsel, expanded the civil citation program, and allowed judges more discretion when deciding if a child should be in the custody of Family or Superior Court.

**Senate Bill 54:** This bill expanded discretionary expungement eligibility of for youth.

**House Bill 11:** This bill removed the prohibition against receipt of TANF funds by a person convicted of a drug felony, joining Delaware with the majority of states to abandon this failed initiative stemming from the War on Drugs.

**House Bill 204:** Though formally passed in January 2018, the first leg of this landmark piece of legislation was passed in 2017. This bill was an important step in modernizing Delaware's pretrial system; it protects both public safety and defendant's rights by seeking to improve pretrial outcomes while avoiding the unnecessary detention of people who do not pose a risk to public safety. DCJ coordinated the collaborative drafting of this bill, which gained unanimous support from a wide range of partners with often opposing ideologies. A second bill is expected to be introduced during the second quarter of 2018.

**justice means**  
supporting policies that take into consideration individual circumstances



# contributions

## Donations Received During Calendar Year 2017

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# Financial Statement

## Revenue

Program Grants	\$914,179
Fundraiser, Contribution & Investment Income	\$269,222
United Way of Delaware	\$64,732
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,248,133</b>

## Expenses

Employee Salaries, Benefits & Payroll taxes	\$911,355
Insurance - Business	\$15,605
Occupancy	\$48,458
Program Expenses	\$57,323
Outside Contractors	\$49,131
Other Expenses	\$99,883
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,181,755</b>



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