Quality Improvement Standards for Transition Services

Office of Program Accountability

Promoting continuous improvement and accountability in juvenile justice programs and services
**Standard 1: Management Accountability**

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1.01 Initial Background Screening

Background screening is conducted for all Department employees, contracted provider and grant recipient employees, volunteers, mentors, and interns with access to youth. The background screening process is completed prior to hiring an employee or utilizing the services of a volunteer, mentor, or intern. An Annual Affidavit of Compliance with Level 2 Screening Standards is completed annually.

— CRITICAL —

Guidelines: Background screening is mandatory for employees, volunteers, mentors, and interns with access to youth to ensure they meet established statutory requirements of good moral character. The department is cognizant of its status as a criminal justice agency and its special responsibilities in dealing with the youth population, and has determined that it is appropriate to establish stringent screening requirements for all DJJ personnel. Therefore, the Department utilizes Level 2 Screening Standards as required in s.435.05, F.S.

Guest speakers, guest performers, ministers, or other visiting personnel who interact with youth on an occasional basis do not need to be background screened if they are under the constant and direct supervision of background screened staff.

Current employees of the Department or a provider are not required to submit a new background screening request when they are promoted, demoted, or transferred into another position within their organization, as long as there is no break in service.

A new background screening is required when a Department employee is hired by a provider or when a provider employee is hired by the Department or another contracted provider company.
Moving from DJJ or a contracted provider, from a contracted provider to DJJ, or from one contracted provider company to another is considered a new hire.

Neither the Department nor contracted providers shall hire any applicant until:

a. An eligible background screening rating has been received.
b. An application with ineligible rating has received an approved exemption from disqualification from the Department.

Teachers who are paid by the school board or who are paid through funding provided by the school board or Department of Education to provide instruction to youth in programs are not required to undergo background screening by the Department.

Review files of all staff hired since the last QI review to determine that a clearance was received prior to the employee being hired.

An exemption was granted by the DJJ Inspector General prior to hiring any staff currently working in the program who were rated ineligible for employment by DJJ Inspector General to continue employment.

Review documentation to determine whether the Affidavit of Compliance with Level 2 Screening Standards was submitted to the Background Screening Unit prior to January 31 of the current calendar year.

**References:**

- FDJJ-1800, Background Screening Policy and Procedures
1.02 Five-Year Rescreening

Background screening is conducted for all Department employees, contracted provider and grant recipient employees, volunteers, mentors, and interns with access to youth. Employees and volunteers are rescreened every five years from the initial date of employment.

Guidelines: A rescreening is completed every five years, calculated from the agency hire date. Five-year rescreens shall not be completed more than twelve months prior to the employee's five-year anniversary date.

When a rescreening is submitted to the BSU at least ten business days prior to the five-year anniversary date, but it is not completed by the BSU on or before the anniversary date, the screening shall meet QI standards of compliance.

When a rescreening is not submitted to the BSU at least ten business days prior to the five-year anniversary date and the BSU does not complete the rescreening prior to the anniversary date, the screening shall not meet QI standards of compliance.

Review the employee and volunteer roster to determine which staff and volunteers required a five-year rescreening since the last QI review. All eligible staff and volunteers should be reviewed.

References:

- FDJJ-1800, Background Screening Policy and Procedures
1.03 Pre-Service and/or In-Service Training

All Transition Services staff shall successfully complete training requirements as set forth below. The following training shall be completed prior to the delivery of direct services to Department youth and/or as in-service training to Transition Services staff:

- Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) – As Applicable
- Civil Rights Training – Pre and In-Service
- Motivational Interviewing (MI) - Pre-Service
- Staff Verification System – As Applicable
- Critical Incident Reporting Requirements - Pre and In-Service
- Trauma Informed Care - Pre and In-Service
- Adolescent Brain Development - Pre-Service
- Remaining staff training completed in accordance with the Staff Training Plan, in Exhibit 5 of Project Connect and Project Bridge Contract.

Guidelines: Review training files and/or the Department’s Learning Management System (SkillPro) for Program/Provider staff completion of the following required trainings:

Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS): This one day training in JJIS to ensure the Program/Provider staff possess the necessary training and permissions to access and use JJIS.

Information Safety Awareness: Program/Provider staff that have access to JJIS must complete this on-line course prior to accessing confidential information and are required to repeat the course annually.

A Provider may provide their own MI training, as long as they have a Department approved Qualified Trainer who follows the training protocol/trainer agreement issued by the Department and the trainer meets Qualified Trainer (QT) qualifications. Documentation of MI Training shall be maintained for each employee.
Critical Incident Reporting Requirements: The two hour training will be provided by the Department Contract Managers and is provided to ensure Provider and all staff providing direct services to youth fully understands the Central Communications Center reporting requirements in Rule 63F.11.001-11.006, Florida Administrative Code.

Trauma Informed Care: All staff who work with youth in DJJ care are required to take this course. The course will assist staff in recognizing trauma and trauma triggers in youth, identifying physical warning signs that indicate that a youth may lose control and identify behaviors for staff that demonstrate trauma informed practices.

Adolescent Brain Development: This course is essential in understanding the brain development and its influences on adolescent behavior—traits of cognitive, social, and emotional development, and the behavior commonly exhibited by delinquent youth.

References:

- DJJ Transition Services Contract, and Exhibit 5
1.04 Incident Reporting (CCC)

Whenever a reportable incident occurs, the program notifies the Department’s Central Communications Center (CCC) within two hours of the incident, or within two hours of becoming aware of the incident.

— CRITICAL —

Guidelines: This indicator shall be rated “non-applicable,” if the program has not had any reportable incidents during the scope of the review. If there are no CCC reports for the past six months, the reviewer may sample reports since the date of the last QI review, but no more than twelve months.

Incidents discovered and reported by the review team during the review shall be considered “non-applicable,” unless documentation exists that the program was aware of the incident, but failed to report it.

The purpose of the Central Communications Center is to provide a service to DJJ, the providers, and programs in maintaining a safe environment for the treatment, care, and provision of services to youth. The CCC activities are conducted twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The telephone number for the CCC is 1-800-355-2280.

The reporting of incidents shall be consistent with the Department’s requirements. The reviewer shall be familiar with the Department’s incident reporting requirements and list of reportable incidents.

Review CCC reports for the past six months to determine compliance with CCC reporting procedures.

Review internal incidents and grievances to determine if additional incidents should have been reported to CCC.

References:

- F.A.C. 63F-11, Central Communications Center
1.05 **Administration**

The Program/Provider shall provide a safe and appropriate treatment environment that includes administrative and operational oversight.

**Guidelines:** The program director is responsible for maintaining information on the facility and reporting to the Department.

Program/Provider may utilize subcontractors for elements of service delivery; however, if subcontractors are used to deliver a core transition service (vocational services, education, mentoring or transportation), Program/Provider shall provide appropriate administrative and programmatic oversight to ensure that the subcontractors deliver services in accordance with the resultant contract.

Monthly reports shall be submitted to the department detailing incidents and population data.

Youth listed on the program roster shall match the census report in the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS).

Statistical information shall be maintained, including monthly data on admissions, releases, transfers, absconds, abuse reports, medical and mental health emergencies, incidents, personnel actions, volunteer hours, and average length of stay.

Monthly reports include:

- Youth Monthly Progress Report
- Monthly Service Summary Report
- Discharge Summary Report
- Fidelity Monitoring Report
- Compliance Monitoring Report
• Ad Hoc Reports
• Staff Vacancy Reports to include Sub-Contractor staff Vacancies
• CMBE Utilization Report
• Youth Census Report
• Invoice
• Youth Services Report

Transition Services providers shall not employ subcontractors to provide direct services to youth, but shall employ volunteers throughout the community and utilize their Community Action Team (CAT).

References:

- DJJ Transition Services Contract
1.06 JJIS and Data Requirements

The Program/Provider and subcontracted service providers shall utilize the Department's Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) for data entry and shall monitor accuracy at all times.

Guidelines: The Youth Placement-Facility module shall be utilized to handle all referral acceptance, rejection, and placement. Referrals made by the Department must be reviewed and either accepted or rejected (Provider shall determine they will or will not work with the referred youth) within 72 hours of referral.

The Youth Release module shall be used to complete all releases and is an up to date census for all youth currently being served. All youth receiving services from a subcontractor (program) must appear on the youth release module listing.

Youth must be entered as “released” from the services in JJIS within twenty-four hours of release. The Provider shall keep their own reports on all referrals (both accepted and rejected), placements (admissions), and releases with dates and reasons notated for each youth.

Within the JJIS System, staff verification data shall be maintained by the Provider utilizing the Staff Verification System (SVS) module.

At a minimum, the date of youth admission for service, date of discharge/release, and release reason for each youth admitted must be collected and reported in JJIS.

References:

- DJJ Transition Services Contract
Standard 2: Assessment Services

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2.01 **Referral Process**

Program/Provider shall review each referred youth’s referral via email and JJIS to assess the youth’s service needs and shall accept or reject all DJJ youth referred for transition services within seventy-two (72) hours of referral from the Department (excluding weekend and holiday hours).

**Guidelines:** If the provider determines a referred youth is not appropriate for services, the provider shall decline the referral in JJIS and shall immediately contact (e-mail acceptable) the youth’s Juvenile Probation Officer (JPO) and the JPO Supervisor to review the referral.

The Department’s Chief Probation Officer or designee will review all declined referrals and handle any disputes on the appropriateness of the referral. The Department has the final decision regarding disputed referrals.

The Provider will admit the youth in JJIS upon placement. Placement does not begin until a youth physically returns back to the community.

Review a sample of case files of youth accepted for service and a sample of documentation on referrals rejected (if any) to determine if the contract was followed.

Interview Provider staff responsible for processing referrals to determine their knowledge of the process.

**References:**

- DJJ Transition Services Contract
2.02 **Admission and Services Provision Processes**

A referral and/or pre-service activities shall begin while the youth is in a residential commitment, however, placement does not begin until a youth physically returns back to the community.

**Guidelines:** For youth referred and accepted at least 60 days prior to release, the Provider shall assign a Transition Specialist/Coordinator to conduct any pre-service tasks, which should be completed during the youth residential placement to initiate the youth’s transition/reentry plan:

- Participate in Community Reentry Team meetings, and any additional meetings scheduled by the commitment programs or JPO related to the youth transition plan.
- Face to Face visit with the youth’s family prior to the release to initiate the assessment process.
- Engage the JPO to discuss the transitional planning for the youth.

Each referred youth shall be admitted/orientated to services within four (4) days of release from the facility if the youth was referred while in the commitment facility and within seven (7) days if the youth was referred after the youth was release from the commitment facility.

During the intake process and/or prior to any services being rendered, the Provider shall ensure that each youth receiving services has a youth case file developed and shall ensure documentation of services rendered, community referrals as well as the following:

- Services, Expectations and Consequences
- Consent and Authorization for Use and Disclosure, Inspection and Release of Information
- Consent for Service Planning/Follow-Up
Review a sample of case files to determine compliance with this indicator.

**References:**

- DJJ Transition Services Contract
2.03 **Assessments for Services**

Transition Services providers shall conduct a Service Needs Assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to further define each youth’s specific service needs as related to the core services.

**Guidelines:** Completion of the Service Needs Assessment shall be conducted within 48 hours of the initiation of services and initial contact with the youth.

(Project Connect) The Project Connect Transition Workbook is a centralized data collection instrument used to assess the transitional needs of the youth and family. Transition Specialist shall also complete a triangulation of transitional needs assessment by:

- Reviewing collateral information (Electronic Commitment Packet, Exit RPACT, Facility Transition Plan)
- Conducting interviews with the youth, family, JPO, and residential facility staff
- Facilitating formal assessments such as the Juvenile Interview for Function (JIFF) and the Florida Ready to Work (FRW)

(Project Bridge) The Provider shall ensure each youth referred for services shall complete the comprehensive service needs assessment to verify service needs. RPACT and CPACT assessments results, in addition to Performance and YES Plans, shall be reviewed for risk and protective factors and for other needs that shall be addressed in the program.

Review a sample of case files to determine compliance with this indicator.

**References:**

- DJJ Transition Services Contract
2.04 **Abuse Reporting (DCF)**

Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, as defined by Florida Statute, or that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care, reports such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Abuse Hotline.

--- CRITICAL ---

**Guidelines:** The Program/Provider shall provide an environment in which youth, staff, and others feel safe, secure, and not threatened by any form of abuse or harassment. To promote an abuse free environment the program will:

1. Adhere to a code of conduct that forbids staff from using physical abuse, profanity, threats, or intimidation.
2. Ensure all allegations of child abuse or suspected child abuse are immediately reported to the Florida Abuse Registry Hotline or their FSFN system.
3. Ensure that youth have unimpeded access to self-report alleged abuse and the abuse hotline number is posted. During the wilderness expedition, students may be in areas that have no cell phone service and cannot self-report immediately. The student should be allowed to self-report at the earliest possible time.

Review CCC reports and program incident reports to determine if there have been any abuse allegations substantiated against staff or if staff have reported abuse on behalf of a youth.

If any allegations have been made against staff, review any documentation of management interventions and disciplinary actions in response to the incident.
Review youth records to ensure there were not any indication of abuse not being reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline.

Review the program's code of conduct to ensure compliance with statute.

References:

- Section 39.201, Florida Statutes, “Mandatory reports of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect; mandatory reports of death; central abuse hotline.”
- DJJ Transition Services Contract
**Standard 3: Intervention Services**

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3.01 **Individualized Plan of Care**

Program/Provider shall provide service planning for each youth with a youth-centered approach that takes into consideration all the youth’s service needs. The Individualized Service Plan (ISP) shall indicate goals to facilitate successful reentry to the community.

**Guidelines:** The plan shall identify individualized service needs, including but not limited to the following as appropriate: transportation, vocational job placement and future employment, educational goals and improvement of life skills that will assist the youth to avoid crime, engage in pro-social community activities.

Transition Specialist/Coordinator shall ensure follow-up is provided, every fifteen (15) days at a minimum, to ensure that youth receive the services outlined in the ISP and contact documented in case notes.

Upon completion of the youth’s ISP, the Transition Specialist shall assess each youth’s satisfaction with his/her vocational/educational services, support services, and outcome. A copy of the survey/report shall be included with the youth’s monthly progress report for the month of completion.

*(Project Connect)* Transition Specialist shall conduct a face to face contact with the youth every two weeks to address the status of the ISP. The ISP shall be reviewed and assessed monthly with the Community Action Team until completion.

*(Project Bridge)* No later than 7 days of completion of the admission/orientation, the Transition Coordinator shall schedule an ISP Conference to include the following Transition Team Members:

- Youth
- Parent (s)
- Juvenile Probation Officer
- Eckerd Transition Coordinator
- Paxen GED Instructor
Review a sample of files to determine if staff documented the development of the Individual Service Plan with youth and family.

Reference:

- DJJ Transition Services Contract
3.02 Community Referrals

The Provider shall have established links with other local community organizations to ensure that the supportive service needs of the youth can be met in accordance with their individualized service plan.

Guidelines: The Provider shall have a list of community organizations to which youths can be referred including the services they provide, referral information, and eligibility criteria as well as a procedure for identifying additional service providers to meet identified youth needs.

The Provider shall maintain in the individual youth file clear documentation of all referrals made for the youth that reflects the referral type(s), community organization(s) referred to, referral open date, referral outcome(s), and referral acquisition date, referral follow-up date(s), actual outcome(s), and referral end date.

Upon identification of a youth’s need for community service referrals, the Provider must notify the JPO of services and needed referrals, ensure referrals are appropriately documented and communicated to youth.

The Provider shall ensure that the youth receive any necessary referrals within fourteen (14) calendar days of the need for this service being identified. The Provider shall follow-up with the youth to ensure that services were accessed.

Review a sample of files to determine if staff documented all referrals and follow-ups based on guidelines.

Reference:
- DJJ Transition Services Contract
3.03 Transition Services Case Management

Program/Provider shall provide one or more core transition services, specifically Vocational Services and/or Education Services, including mentoring and transportation with related support services.

Guidelines: The Transition Specialist/Coordinator shall ensure each youth receive any necessary referrals for service within fourteen (14) calendar days of the need being identified. When a youth is referred to a community organization, the Transition Specialist/Coordinator shall follow-up with the youth to ensure that the services were accessed. (Review case notes for documentation)

Transition Specialist/Coordinator shall ensure follow-up is provided, every fifteen (15) days at a minimum, to ensure that youth receive the services outlined in the ISP and services are received within the time frames identified in each youth’s plan.

The Provider shall document all follow-up in case notes and reported in the youth’s monthly progress report.

(Project Connect)
Community Action Team (CAT) shall be developed to serve the youth and parent as a support system in the community. The Transition Specialist (TS) shall establish a team of community member from various disciplines to create the CAT.

The Transition Specialist shall obtain input from the youth and parent. The Transition Specialist shall meet face to face with the youth and Community Action Team within 10 days of the initial contact with the youth.

The Community Action Team shall meet monthly to assess the youth’s progress toward completion of the individual service plan and provide assistance in overcoming any barriers the youth and family may face.

Transition Specialist shall make face to face contact with the youth every two (2) weeks. The purpose of the meeting is to monitor the youth’s individual service plan and troubleshooting any problems which may arise.
The Provider shall assign the youth a Life Coach during pre-service. The Life Coach shall make informal mentoring contacts on the opposite weeks of the Transition Specialist. These informal mentoring contact shall be face to face or telephonic.

**Project Bridge**
Each youth receiving career/vocational services shall receive mentoring services utilizing HBI’s mentoring program model curriculum.

Each mentor/coach, shall average four hours per month of face-to-face, phone contact, and electronic communication with each Project Bridge youth.

Mentoring for younger youth that need supportive adults would be through Eckerd staff.

**Reference:**
DJJ Transition Services Contract
3.04 Release/Discharge

Prior to release or discharge of a youth from services (prior to completion of the intervention) the Program/Provider must coordinate discharge planning with the youth’s JPO.

Guidelines: (Project Connect) has Thirty (30) days prior to the anticipated release from program services, the Transition Specialist shall begin coordinating the discharge of the youth with the JPO. (Project Bridge has to begin the discharge prior to the completion of the ISP no set time frame)

(Project Connect) Transition Specialist shall conduct an exit meeting with the youth and family and complete a Discharge Summary.

The Transition Specialist shall submit the Discharge Summary to the Program Administrator who shall review, approve, and submit the Discharge Summary to the Area Director. The Area Director shall load the Discharge Summary into JJIS, and enter the discharge into JJIS. (Project Bridge upon release/discharge a copy of the discharge summary must be uploaded into JJIS and the JPO notified via email or phone contact)

Administrative discharges are youth releases that are considered neither successful nor unsuccessful, and may be documented in cases where youth move from the service area or fail to report for services.

Reference:

- DJJ Transition Services Contract