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# JUVENILE CORRECTIONS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING: FORMATIVE EVALUATION AND EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

## Final Technical Report

Phase 1. Formative Evaluation Report  
Phase 2. Evaluability Assessment Report  
Phase 3. Evaluation Plan Report

December 2023

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# JUVENILE CORRECTIONS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING

## Phase 1: Formative Evaluation Report

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## Introduction

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The Juvenile Corrections Executive Leadership (JCEL) training course is designed for juvenile facility leadership and agency deputy directors overseeing facility operations, offering them a national training opportunity to enhance their skills in facility management—to ensure functionality, comfort, safety, and efficiency of the built environment by integrating people, place, process, and technology. The objectives of the course, as identified by the logic model developed from the process evaluation work led by the project team, are to provide multifaceted technical assistance (in-person training, webinars, coaching, and peer learning) to juvenile residential facility leaders to

- Increase understanding of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act requirements, as they relate to juvenile facilities.
- Implement evidence-based practices in areas of most need, such as gender-specific services, needs-based reentry services, and conditions of confinement.
- Identify, monitor, and reduce racial and ethnic disparities within facility decision-making.
- Improve facility management, especially in emergency planning, staff wellness, data-driven decision-making, and adherence to the Prison Rape Elimination Act and the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA).

The JCEL training course is composed of four core components: 1) instructor-led, in-person training<sup>1</sup>; 2) webinars; and 3) coaching.

To measure whether training courses like the JCEL result in the intended outcomes for facility leaders, staff, and the youth they serve, it is necessary to conduct an outcome evaluation. But before allocating scarce resources for an outcome evaluation, it is wise to make two critical assessments. First, it must be determined whether the processes for developing the JCEL training course and its implementation are built on sound logic and best practices; if not, they will need to be adjusted. Second, a preliminary determination must be made whether the JCEL training course can and should be evaluated.

As such, the goals of this project are to determine the extent to which the JCEL training course is logically sound, and whether it can be reliably and credibly evaluated. Specifically, the objectives of this project are to

- Conduct a formative evaluation to provide feedback to stakeholders from the National Institute of Justice and the Office of Justice Programs about program functioning.
- Conduct an evaluability assessment to determine whether an outcome evaluation of the program would be justified, feasible, and useful.
- Develop a rigorous outcome evaluation plan to assess the impact of the training on facility leaders, staff, and the youth in custody (if an outcome evaluation is deemed worthwhile).

The focus of this report is to address the first objective: to assess the competency (i.e., the ability to successfully achieve its goals) of the JCEL training course and recommend improvements that may help increase the value of the training course. It represents the culmination of various observations obtained from each of the data collection efforts during the course of the project.

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<sup>1</sup> This took the form of prerecorded asynchronous modules during the Covid-19 pandemic for Cohorts 3,4,5, and 6.

## Methodology

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The formative evaluation assesses the JCEL training course against best practices in instructional design. Specifically, we used the ADDIE model<sup>2</sup> as the framework for assessing the JCEL training course. ADDIE is the preeminent instructional design framework used by instructional designers and training developers to develop training courses. Its name is an acronym for the five dimensions of the framework: **A**nalysis, **D**esign, **D**evelopment, **I**mplementation, and **E**valuation. Each dimension of the ADDIE model is described below.

- **Analysis:** The analysis phase is the process of defining the purpose of the training. In this phase, the instructional problem is clarified, the instructional goals and objectives are set, and the intended participants are defined.
- **Design:** The design phase is the blueprint that will be used as a reference to develop the course (structure and content). The blueprint defines the modules, learning objectives, content, exercises, and assessments.
- **Development:** The development phase is where the developers assemble the content that was created in the design phase. Programmers work to develop and/or integrate appropriate delivery models (e.g., technologies, PowerPoints, embedding videos). Testers perform debugging procedures. After the pilot, the content is reviewed or reassessed and revised for future presentations as needed.
- **Implementation:** The implementation phase is the actual delivery of the training course. The training should cover the course curriculum, learning outcomes, method of delivery, and testing procedures so that the delivery of the content will be useful and relevant for the learners.
- **Evaluation:** The evaluation phase is where the assessment of the training course takes place. An evaluation of a training course is important because it will determine whether the goals of the training have been met. In general, a training can be evaluated on four levels: (1) initial reaction of the participants, (2) knowledge gained by the participants, (3) behavioral change of the participants, and (4) results (i.e., the impact of the training on the youth at the facility).

Specifically, the formative evaluation comprises 40 best-practice criteria dispersed across each ADDIE dimension (4 analysis criteria, 8 design criteria, 11 development criteria, 11 implementation criteria, and 6 evaluation criteria). DSG research staff utilized data collected during the course of the formative evaluation to assess each criterion. Each criterion was assessed via an ordinal response structure (0=Not Met; 1=Partially Met; and 2=Met) as to whether the training met the requirement. For example, item DN4 (i.e., Design Phase criteria #4) reads: “The training designers defined clear learning objectives for each module.” To assess if this criterion was met, the research team used a matrix analysis approach to triangulate the findings from the various sources. The benefit of this triangulation approach is that the findings can be corroborated, and any weaknesses in the data can be compensated for by the strengths of the other sources, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results. These data sources include the following:

- Action Plan Report
- Document Review Report
- Expert Observation Report

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<sup>2</sup> Branch, Robert Maribe. 2009. *Instructional Design: The ADDIE Approach*. New York, NY: Springer.

- Knowledge Test Report
- Participant Evaluation Report
- Participant Focus Groups Report
- Stakeholder Interview Report

An index of the reports used to assess each specific criterion can be found in Appendix 1.

Ultimately, we used this assessment to calculate an *Instructional Design Competency Score* (IDCS). The IDCS is calculated in the following manner: Each criterion that meets the objective is awarded 2 points. Each criterion that partially meets the objective is given 1 point. Each criterion that does not meet the objective is awarded 0 points. These points were summed and divided by the number of criteria<sup>3</sup> overall as well as for each best-practice dimension. In order for each best practice dimension—as well as the overall training—to be considered as meeting best practice, the IDCS must meet or exceed 1.5 points.

Finally, it should be noted that the COVID–19 pandemic caused numerous travel restrictions that dramatically affected both the JCEL training event itself for all cohorts as well as this assessment. The impact of these travel restrictions on the JCEL training event was that the instructor-led component for Cohorts 3 (August 2020), 4 (January 2021), 5 (August 2021), and 6 (January 2022) were all changed from live, in-person events to prerecorded, asynchronous events. While necessary (given the pandemic), the format change significantly hindered the ability of this project to observe and assess the JCEL training as it was intended in its expected format (i.e., as a live event). Further, the inability to meet in a live format also affected the peer-learning portion of the training, as participants had a very limited opportunity to make important peer connections in a virtual environment. The result of these events was that the formative evaluation was largely restricted to the observation of a video of the JCEL training that may or may not represent the best and most complete version of the training course and which, in turn, may have had an important effect on the intended outcomes.

Fortunately, the pandemic restrictions were lifted in the Fall of 2022, and Cohort 7 attended a live training event in Columbus, Ohio. This experience was significant as it provided the researchers with the first opportunity to observe the training in its naturally designed format. As such, when possible, the observations of the Cohort 7 were weighted more heavily in the assessment below than the other observed cohorts, given that the live event represents a more genuine depiction of the designed training event, compared with the asynchronous events.

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<sup>3</sup> If a criterion was deemed not applicable, it was removed from the calculation.

## Analysis

Analysis is the process of defining the purpose of the training. A needs analysis should be conducted at the start of any development effort, to determine whether training is required to fill a gap in the professional knowledge or skills of a target group. The design, development, and delivery of the training will be influenced by the key characteristics of the targeted group.

### Assessment (AN1)

**Item:** A needs assessment (i.e., for the field) was conducted to determine that the training was needed.

**Finding:** Not Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review found some vague references to training needs being determined via a top-down process in which field experts in various areas contribute to the development of an impactful training for facility directors. However, there was no supporting evidence that this process occurred. Further, there is no evidence that the facility directors or potential facility directors were solicited (needs assessment; bottom up) to determine what was needed.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** The stakeholder interviews indicated that there was no formal needs assessment conducted. However, the stakeholder interviews indicated that there were informal discussions involving CJJA, National Institute of Corrections (NIC), NIJ, and OJJDP about the need to address the gap in the availability of formal training opportunities for juvenile facility superintendents and operational managers.

### Training Needs (AN2)

**Item:** A [The] needs assessment identified specific gaps, or training needs, in the field.

**Finding:** Not Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review provided no evidence that the facility directors or potential facility directors were solicited (needs assessment; bottom up) to determine what was needed.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** The stakeholder interviews indicated that no formal needs assessment was conducted. However, there were informal discussions involving CJJA, National Institute of Corrections (NIC), NIJ, and OJJDP about the need to address the gap in the availability of formal training opportunities for juvenile facility superintendents and operational managers. These discussions identified training needs specifically for juvenile justice facility leaders or operational directors. In corroboration, all interview respondents (*advocates, trainers, and coaches*) noted that there was a need for juvenile justice staff training. Additionally, some *advocates* indicated that there was a tangential focus on the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA) of 2018 and the importance of compliance with the four Core Requirements. Once OJJDP Administrator Caren Harp was appointed in 2018, she took an interest in helping juvenile facilities better understand the Core Requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act. Administrator Harp’s interest in this area was the main driving factor leading to the funding and development of the training.



### Training Goals (AN3)

**Item:** The goals of the training course were identified/established (by CJA).

**Finding:** Partially Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** According to the welcome packet, the goals of the program are to provide participants with (1) knowledge about best practices, (2) a better understanding of the strategies that can be implemented at the facility level, and (3) a connection to resources and content experts to assist their efforts. However, there was no evidence as to how these goals were identified.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** The stakeholder report indicated that CJA was responsible for choosing the topics and the format, but also that many individuals contributed to the development of the training course, including individuals from OJJDP, associate CJA members, and some of the trainers. Further, there was no evidence that there was a single individual assigned to ensure that each course module was relevant to the overall training course goals; instead, this responsibility was shared among several individuals. One of the advocates said, “CJA [at the time, CJA] had a list of topics that [it was] comfortable with, and we helped formalize them in a document. We made sure each session had learning objectives tied to a session description.” However, given that the overall training goals were a bit unclear, ensuring course modules were relevant was somewhat challenging.

### Training Participants (AN4)

**Item:** The potential participants were specifically defined (by CJA/OJJDP).

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review found evidence to suggest that potential participants are specifically defined. The Request for Applicant document indicates that the training is intended for *facility leadership and deputy directors that operate juvenile correctional and detention facilities—whether at the county or state level, or within tribal communities.*

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** The stakeholder interviews indicated that the target audience was superintendents of juvenile residential facilities, although some exceptions were made (e.g., deputy superintendents were occasionally selected to attend). One *advocate* reported that the target audience for OJJDP included mid-level managers who were overseeing juvenile facilities and that facility directors from states that were out of compliance with the JJDPA were to be chosen for the first cohort. Further, there is also some evidence to suggest that superintendents were selected because the JJRA information was not reaching this group through other means. For subsequent cohorts, there was an effort to create a geographic mix of participants. Also, if there was more than one person from a facility, they were separated into different cohorts, and directors were prioritized over deputy directors. There did not appear to be any knowledge or skills prerequisites to participate.

## Design

The design stage is a blueprint that will be used as a reference to develop the course (structure and content). The blueprint defines and illustrates the modules, learning objectives, content, exercises, and assessments.

### Logic Model (DN1)

**Item:** A logic model was used for developing the content of the overall training.

**Finding:** Partially Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review found evidence that a logic model was developed by CJJA. However, as the document was not dated it cannot be stated with certainty at what point in the process the logic model was developed. Anecdotally, CJJA staff in interviews that it was submitted for the second round of funding. Finally, it should be noted that DSG reviewed and recommended a number of changes to the logic model.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** *Advocates* were asked, “Was a logic model used to develop the content of the overall training?” Most could not recall a logic model being used, though some thought they remembered that this may have happened.

### Blueprint (DN2)

**Item:** The blueprint for the overall training course aligns with the results of the needs assessment

**Finding:** Not Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review does not provide evidence in the files of a formal needs assessment being conducted. (See AN1). That being said, NIJ Grant Component #2 documents the steps, parties involved, and actions taken from idea development to updating the curricula after the first implementation. It is not detailed by specific goals or curricula, but general descriptions across them all.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** The stakeholder interviews indicate that the initial idea for the training resulted from two driving factors: 1) the gap in formal training opportunities for juvenile facility superintendents and operational managers, and 2) significant interest by former OJJDP Administrator Caren Harp, specifically, to help facilities better understand the Core Requirements of the JJDP Act. There was no formal needs assessment, but there were informal discussions among CJJA, NIC, NIJ, and OJJDP about the need to address the gap in the availability of formal training opportunities for juvenile facility superintendents and operational managers. It appears that many of these topics were incorporated into the training.

### Relevant Modules (DN3)

**Item:** A qualified person was responsible for ensuring each course module was relevant to the overall training course goals.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review revealed a lesson plan for a module from Cohort 1 that was submitted by Penny Sampson and approved by Wendi Faulkner (Davis). There are likely other plans that we did not receive. This provides evidence that Wendi was the person who oversaw this process, especially for Cohort 1. Later, Stephanie became involved in this process.

Further, all documents in the Learning Objectives folder were listed as “prepared by” and “reviewed by” CJCA. Assuming CJCA is represented by Wendi, this finding provides evidence that a single qualified person was responsible for ensuring each course module was relevant to the overall training course goals. That being said, there appears to be only one document in the Cohort 2 folder, similar to the Learning Objectives documents in Cohort 1, both displaying the text “prepared by” and “reviewed by” CJCA.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** In general, the interviews indicated that CJJA was responsible for choosing the topics and the format, but that many individuals had contributed, including individuals from OJJDP, associate CJJA members, and some of the *trainers*. It does not appear that only one individual was assigned to ensure that each course module was relevant to the overall training course goals; instead, this responsibility was shared among several individuals. One of the *advocates* said, “CJJA [at the time, CJCA] had a list of topics that [it was] comfortable with, and we helped formalize them in a document. We made sure each session had learning objectives tied to a session description.”

### Clear Objectives (DN4)

**Item:** A The training designers defined clear learning objectives for each module.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Expert Observation Reports, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review indicated that most learning objectives for most of the modules are found under Learning Objectives for Cohort 1.

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** Reviewers rated the extent to which the sessions provided clear learning objectives to the trainees. This item was rated as “Met” if the information was clearly presented on a slide and also presented verbally in the presentation; it was rated as “Partially Met” if only one of these ways was incorporated. Of the 31 prerecorded modules, live modules, and webinars observed for Cohorts 3 and 7, 21 fully met this objective, 8 partially met this objective, and 2 did not meet this objective. The two sessions that did not meet this criterion were both in Cohort 3; thus, this objective has improved as time has gone on.

**Expert Observation Report–Coaching Calls.** In 12 of the 13 observed coaching calls, the goals for the call were clearly presented. Generally, this was done at the beginning of the call, but sometimes the goals were also sent in the calendar invitation.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** *Trainers* and *coaches* were asked about the learning objectives for their modules and coaching groups. Specifically, *trainers* were asked, “At the outset, what guidance did you receive in designing and developing your module(s)?” In general, respondents indicated that they were given a topic, researched the topic, and chose the material. Further, respondents indicated that they were given the freedom to design the content, with some feedback from OJJDP and CJJA. Some trainers provided more detail on how they developed the learning objectives for their modules. For example, one trainer said, “I chose material that I thought would be most compelling to an audience of people who are running facilities . . . generally very concrete ideas and examples.” This same respondent explained that this meant presenting information in a way that is quite practical to the trainees’ everyday responsibilities.

*Coaches* were also asked about guidance in developing learning objectives for their coaching calls, but the responses were inconsistent. Some said they were given guidance on what to include in the coaching sessions (including topic areas and a list of what the calls should focus on), while others said they did not receive much guidance on content to be covered. Some coaches also mentioned that there was more structure with later cohorts than with earlier cohorts.

**Subject Matter Experts (DN5)**

**Item:** Subject-matter experts (SMEs) were used to help develop the content of each module.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review did not provide clear evidence as to how the process for module development occurred. Nevertheless, from the interviews, we know the trainers were each responsible for developing their own modules, with input from CJJA. As such, a review of the trainers’ qualifications (on paper) indicates that each trainer is an SME on the topic of their module.

**Best Practice (DN6)**

**Item:** The training reflects best practice concepts in juvenile justice.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Reports, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Expert Observation Report—Training Modules and Webinars.** In every in-person training module, prerecorded training module, and webinar, best-practice juvenile justice concepts were either fully or partially incorporated. In the 23 sessions that fully met this criterion, all successfully cited and explained best practices in juvenile justice, using updated research and examples of how it is incorporated into practice. The seven sessions that only partially met this criterion may have presented some out-of-date research or did not cite research at all.<sup>4</sup>

**Expert Observation Report—Coaching Calls.** Observers felt that most of the coaching calls reflected best-practice concepts in juvenile justice. During the calls, the coaches provided feedback, support, and advice based on their own experiences and as they related to evidence-based practices in

<sup>4</sup> One of the sessions was rated “not applicable” for this criterion.

juvenile justice and self-care. This criterion was fully met in 11 of the 13 calls, partially met in 1 call, and not met in 1 call.

**Stakeholder (OJJDP/CJJA) Interview Report.** In interviews, *advocates* discussed several ways that best-practice concepts were used in the overall training, related to both the information and strategies that were shared and the format for sharing it. Best practices in training topics included using Performance-based Standards, which are grounded in research, and several of the other topic areas. Respondents said they drew on the trainers’ and advocates’ experiences working with jurisdictions across the United States and that best practices were important throughout both topic selection and material presented within the sessions. They also mentioned “staying on top of the research.” Many of the interviewees mentioned other work they do related to juvenile justice and how they were able to draw on that experience to help the training participants. Answering the follow-up question, “How did you find the best-practice concepts to put the modules together?” one advocate responded: “We have supported many agencies and facilities to advance their work. And through that work, we’ve also been able to kind of accumulate a body of knowledge of concrete examples of the ways that agencies and facilities make improvements.”

DSG also asked *trainers* and *coaches*, “What best-practice concepts did you use in developing your module (or coaching sessions)?” Most felt that incorporating best practices into their individual modules was crucial. One of the trainers noted, “Many of the participants are not working with any best practices, so improvement in this area was a major focus in the module.” Trainers and coaches discussed the sources for their material (e.g., toolkits; guidebooks; white papers; juvenile justice networks; and resources from OJJDP, CCJA, and the Vera Institute) and the importance of collaborating with other experts in the field when developing the material.

Adult Learning (DN7)
<b>Item:</b> The training integrates an appropriate and reasonable number of best practices in adult-learning principles.
Application of knowledge or skills
Contextualized learning of knowledge or skills
Incorporation of prior knowledge or experiences
Feedback and opportunities to learn from mistakes
Repetition of knowledge
Self-directed learning opportunities
Goal-oriented learning opportunities
<b>Finding:</b> Met
<b>Source:</b> Stakeholder Interview Report

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** *Advocates, trainers, and coaches* were asked about how best practices in adult learning were incorporated into the training. One of the *advocates* mentioned offering tips to the trainers on how to be more engaging on camera and the differences between talking to a screen versus presenting in person.

*Trainers* were also asked whether they considered several types of adult-learning methods in their sessions. In response, a number of trainers noted the contextualization of information by drawing on experiences and examples that have a better chance of resonating with adults working in juvenile justice programs. Trainers also mentioned asking questions during the live sessions to consider how the information would relate to their own facilities, using legible fonts, not reading from the slides, and limiting the number of concepts on a slide so the audience would not be overwhelmed.

**Interactive Elements (DN8)**

**Item:** The training course included interactive elements.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Reports, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** Observers rated the extent to which interactive elements were included into the live training modules, the prerecorded training modules, and the webinars in slightly different ways. For the 17 in-person training modules, observers felt that 12 of them fully met this criterion, 4 partially met this criterion, and 1 did not meet this criterion. Many of the in-person modules included small group interactive activities, opportunities to ask and answer questions in small groups and in the large group, and time for reflecting on the things they are doing in their own facilities related to the training topics. Regarding the prerecorded modules, there are other methods for incorporating interactive elements, and some presenters from Cohort 3 were able to do this successfully. This included allowing for activity time, in which participants were encouraged to stop the video and think through a question, asking participants to stop the video at one point to write down certain information specific to them, or asking questions of the participants and then pausing to reflect on practices in their own facilities. Of the 9 prerecorded modules, 3 fully met the criterion for incorporating interactive elements, 4 partially met this criterion, and 2 did not meet this criterion. However, although the webinars for Cohort 3 were live, none of them fully met this criterion, 4 of the webinars partially met this criterion, and 1 webinar did not meet it.

**Expert Observation Report–Coaching Calls.** Each of the 13 coaching calls fully met the criterion to include interactive elements, using several different strategies. Coaches consistently asked follow-up questions of the participants, summarized what participants said to ensure that they understood what the participants were saying, and provided feedback. However, incorporating more interactive and engaging icebreakers in the first couple of meetings may improve these coaching calls.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** *Trainers* were asked whether they incorporated interactive elements into their sessions. While most felt it was impossible to include interactive elements for the asynchronous training events, others tried to do so creatively. *Coaches* also mentioned that they tried to integrate more interactive elements during the asynchronous training events, given that the calls were the main opportunity for participants to intermingle.

In contrast, most training provided interactive elements for the participants. For example, one trainer said, “At the in-person sessions, there was an interactive exercise in which the attendees were split into three groups to work through different scenarios.” Other stakeholders noted the use of breakout groups, question-and-answer sessions, activities, and “conducting the sessions as if they were facilitated conversations and allowing for dialogue” as examples of how they incorporated interactive elements in their in-person training modules.



## Development

The development phase is where the developers assemble the content that was created in the design phase. Programmers work to develop and/or integrate appropriate delivery models (e.g., technologies, PowerPoints, embedding videos). Testers perform debugging procedures. After the pilot, the content is reviewed or reassessed and revised for future presentations as needed.

### Training Sequence (DV1)

**Item:** The training course is logically sequenced.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Expert Observation Report

**Document Review Report.** A review of the agendas indicates that the training course appears to be logically sequenced. It should be noted that the modules from asynchronous training events could be viewed in any order, while the webinars were rolled out sequentially. Further, one reviewer felt that the Adolescent Brain Development/Trauma module may have been better presented first as a module and then as a webinar.

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** Expert reviewers observed the full, 4–day training in Columbus, Ohio, for Cohort 7. They felt that the training was logically sequenced.

### Module Sequence (DV2)

**Item:** Individual modules are logically sequenced.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Report

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** Expert reviewers felt that 8 of the 9 prerecorded modules were logically sequenced, and 1 was partially logically sequenced; 3 of the 5 webinars were logically sequenced, and 2 were partially logically sequenced; and 15 of the 17 in-person modules were logically sequenced, and 2 were partially logically sequenced. When this criterion was not fully met, it was generally due to order and organization issues, slide material not matching what the presenter was explaining, or a confusing flow of information.

### Content Organization (DV3)

**Item:** A qualified person was responsible for assembling the content for the training modules (preparing slides, ensuring flow, making copies, folders, etc.).

**Finding:** Not Met

**Source:** Stakeholder Interview Report

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** There is no evidence that a single person assembled or coordinated the content. Specifically, *advocates* reported that they were unsure whether there was one person responsible for the final assembling of the training content.

### Content Delivery (DV4)

**Item:** The training course included a variety of content delivery methods (e.g., varied\* visual/audio elements, group discussions, panels).

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Report, Participant Focus Groups Report

*Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.* Reviewers rated two items to assess this metric. First, they rated the extent to which the sessions included diverse content delivery methods. They found that all in-person training modules, prerecorded training modules, and webinars included a variety of content delivery methods, such as storytelling, graphs, tables, embedded audiovisual elements, and group discussions. Some were much better at doing this than others, and the 21 sessions that fully met this criterion successfully incorporated several of these strategies. Of the 10 sessions that only partially met this criterion, 8 were from Cohort 3, indicating an improvement in meeting this training best practice. Second, reviewers rated whether the presenter was “interesting,” which was defined with examples, such as: 1) did they use an attention getter, humor, storytelling? 2) were slides clear, not too wordy? or 3) was time used efficiently? Of the 31 total sessions, 27 fully met this criterion, and 4 partially met this criterion. Overall, trainers successfully met this item.

*Participant Focus Groups Report.* Participants from the live training events stated that coaching calls were all audio-only. They indicated that being solely on the phone made it difficult to connect with others on the call. Without the use of video during the call it was easy for participants to get distracted and spurred multitasking, making it difficult for participants to give their full attention to the training tasks. As a solution, at least some participants felt that requiring the use of video and audio during coaching calls would inhibit multitasking. Conversely, some participants from the asynchronous cohorts indicated that the coaching calls that were on video and audio were well received. However, no coaching calls were on video. As such, it is likely that the participants were confusing the calls with the webinars.

### Clear Instructions (DV5)

**Item:** Clear instructions were provided on how to navigate the learning platform (ONLINE ONLY).

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report

*Document Review Report.* The document review indicated that instructions and expectations were provided in the welcome packet documentation, and further explained in the expectations call.

### Learning Platform (DV6)

**Item:** The learning platform was easy to use (ONLINE ONLY).

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Reports, Participant Evaluation Report

*Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.* The learning platform was easy to use when the training was conducted virtually. In 13 of the 14 observed prerecorded modules and



webinars for Cohort 3, observers gave a rating of “Met” for this criterion. The prerecorded modules used YouTube as their platform. In one of the prerecorded modules there were missing links for some of the material, which resulted in a “Partially Met” rating.

**Expert Observation Report–Coaching Calls.** This criterion was met in 11 of the 13 coaching calls and partially met in 2 of the calls. Generally, the observed coaching calls used platforms such as Zoom or GoToMeeting. The minor issues that did occur were related to participants’ poorly functioning microphones or connectivity or bandwidth issues. The platforms were generally easy to use for all.

**Participant Evaluation Report.** The participants noted in the evaluation forms that the online platform was relatively easy to use.

### Pilot Test (DV7)

**Item:** The developers pilot-tested the training course.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report

**Document Review Report.** While no formal pilot test of the training course was conducted, a review of the agendas indicated that the course was adjusted over time to reflect things that worked and things that did not, as voiced by participants in the participant evaluation forms.

### Pilot Test Feedback (DV8)

**Item:** The developers used feedback from the pilot test and subsequent training to revise the course content.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** While no formal pilot test of the training course was conducted, a review of the agendas indicated that the course was adjusted over time to reflect things that worked and things that did not, as voiced by participants in the participant evaluation forms.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** DSG asked the *advocates* questions related to whether feedback from the first cohort was used to review the course with subsequent cohorts. Most respondents mentioned that there were several discussions among CJJA, OJJDP, and the *trainers* on changes to the training format and content. One advocate said, “Some of the content changed . . . based on what OJJDP wanted at the time.” Another said:

We don’t want any presenter to be more present than OJJDP. OJJDP needs to be ever-present in this relationship. People need to know OJJDP is ensuring that they're getting this training. So, you'll see a pivot. . . . Perhaps OJJDP thought things were slightly more focused on providers instead of what OJJDP wanted. We may have said, *Shorten this*, *Elongate this*, or that OJJDP needs to be more present.

The *coaches* appear to have had a more robust debrief on improvements to be made between the first and subsequent cohorts.<sup>5</sup> They mentioned meeting to discuss what worked and what could be improved on, and that this was helpful.

<sup>5</sup>For more information, see *Opportunities for Trainers and Coaches to Give Feedback, Debrief, and Suggest Potential Improvements to the Training* in the Evaluation phase section.

### Training Delivery System (DV9)

**Item:** The developers selected an efficient (maximum productivity with minimum wasted effort/expense) delivery system for each training cohort.

**Finding:** Partially Met

**Source:** Participant Focus Groups Report

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** The instructor-led portion component of the JCEL training was generally held during weeklong conferences in a host city. However, due to COVID, this component was transformed into an e-learning component, the sessions were prerecorded, and participants could watch the videos at their own pace. Participants in the virtual cohorts indicated that the least useful training modules were those that were not engaging and hard to watch when other facility priorities conflicted with remote learning. Participants stated that coaching calls were all audio-only. They indicated that being solely on the phone made it difficult to connect with others on the call. Without the use of video during the call it was easy for participants to get distracted and spurred multitasking, making it difficult for participants to give their full attention to the training tasks. As a solution, at least some participants felt that requiring the use of both video and audio during coaching calls would inhibit the sense of urgency to switch back and forth from one task to another.

### Quality Control (DV10)

**Item:** The developers implemented quality control procedures (including editing, clicking links, etc.) to minimize mistakes or errors in the training course.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** The document review indicates that the training materials were reviewed and approved by Wendi Faulkner (Davis).

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** *Advocates and advocate/trainers* indicated that individuals at CCJA managed the quality-control process for the most part, providing initial editorial reviews before submitting to OJJDP for substantive content review. After the reviews, feedback was provided to presenters, and adjustments (where necessary) were made.

### Training of Trainers (DV11)

**Item:** The course developers provided the trainers with a training of the trainer's course (TOT; i.e., guidance for the overall course curriculum, learning outcomes, method of delivery, and assessment procedures).

**Finding:** Not Met

**Source:** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Document Review Report.** A review of the documents did not indicate any evidence that the trainers received any training.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** Interviewees shared that there was no formal training of trainers conducted, which would have provided guidance for the overall course curriculum, learning outcomes, method of delivery, and assessment procedures. Many of the *advocates* and *trainers* shared that a training of trainers may have been helpful.

## Implementation

The implementation stage is the actual delivery of the training course. During the implementation phase, a procedure for training the module facilitators (i.e., *the trainers*) is developed. The training should cover the course curriculum, learning outcomes, method of delivery, and testing procedures so that the delivery of the content will be useful and relevant for the learners.

### Trainer Experience (IM1)

**Item:** The trainers had prior experience conducting training.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report

**Document Review Report.** A review of the trainers' résumés indicated that all trainers had at least some previous experience in being a trainer.

### Trainer Knowledge Possessed (IM2)

**Item:** The trainers possessed the requisite substantive knowledge to lead the module.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Document Review Report

**Document Review Report.** A review of the trainers' résumés indicated that all trainers possessed the prerequisite substantive knowledge on paper.

### Trainer Knowledge Demonstrated (IM3)

**Item:** The trainers demonstrated the requisite substantive knowledge to lead the module.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Reports, Participant Evaluation Report

**Expert Observation Report—Training Modules and Webinars.** To assess this item, reviewers were asked whether the trainer demonstrated adequate substantive knowledge of the module content. For each of the 31 sessions, trainers noted that this item was fully met. The trainers were experienced and knowledgeable; in the best sessions, the trainers were able to present current trends and evidence-based practices along with personal stories of challenges and how they made improvements in their own facilities or implemented evidence-based approaches. The substantive knowledge of the trainers is one of the strengths of the training course.

**Expert Observation Report—Coaching Calls.** In each of the 13 observed coaching calls, observers felt that the coaches demonstrated adequate substantive knowledge of the content. The coaches were highly experienced, credentialed, helpful, and kind.

**Participant Evaluation Report.** The participant evaluation report provided a summary of the participants' perceptions of the overall instructor-led component across several dimensions, including knowledge of the presenter. The data suggested that the participants' perceptions of each dimension were generally consistent across cohorts, and that in all cohorts, presenter knowledge was ranked as the highest dimension.

Trainer Delivery (IM4)
<b>Item:</b> The trainers delivered the content in ways such that the learners were supported in the content acquisition.
Apply the desired skill or behavior
Learn the desired skill or behavior within a relevant juvenile justice context.
Learn the desired skill or behavior in ways that incorporate previous juvenile justice knowledge or experiences
Receive feedback enabling them to learn from mistakes
Practice and/or repeat the desired skill or behavior
<b>Finding:</b> Partially Met
<b>Source:</b> Expert Observation Reports

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** To measure the level of integration of best practices in adult-learning principles, there were two primary questions on the observation form. First, there was an item that asked whether the trainer included opportunities during the training for participants to do the following: 1) apply the desired skill or behavior, 2) learn the desired skill or behavior within a relevant juvenile justice context, 3) learn the desired skill or behavior in ways that incorporate previous juvenile justice knowledge, 4) receive feedback from mistakes, or 5) practice and/or repeat the desired skill or behavior. Fully meeting just one of these 5 items meant the module fully met this metric. Eight of the 9 prerecorded modules, all 5 webinars, and 12 of the 17 in-person modules fully met this criterion. The sessions that failed to fully meet this criterion (including 3 that partially met and 3 that did not meet it), generally did not teach a skill or behavior, had a presentation style that was more like a lecture than a facilitated learning session, or did not relate the material to the role of a residential program superintendent.

The second question asked whether the trainer provided actionable information or guidance (e.g., concrete things to do to address a challenge in a facility). For this criterion, 8 of the 9 prerecorded modules for Cohort 3, 1 of the 5 webinars for Cohort 3, and 10 of the 17 in-person modules for Cohort 7 fully met this criterion. The sessions that fully met this criterion were able to share specific tools or ideas that participants could use to improve their own residential programs. Presenters who did not fully meet this criterion often presented information that was too abstract, information that focused more on identifying a problem but not on solving it, or a session that was merely informational.

**Expert Observation Report–Coaching Calls.** Like the observation form for the modules and webinars, the observation form for the coaching calls also had two items related to this metric. First, reviewers felt that the coaches consistently delivered the content in ways such that the learners were supported in the content acquisition. This included using adult-learning methods, such as learning the desired skill or behavior within a relevant juvenile justice context and by incorporating previous juvenile justice knowledge or experiences. Second, reviewers felt that the coaches consistently provided actionable information to the participants, including guidance and feedback on the action plans. This kind of actionable feedback was shared from the first call through the last call. In only one case, a session was rated as only “Partially Met” because not much feedback was provided on the action plans. In all other observed calls, the observers felt this criterion was fully met.

### Trainer Engagement (IM5)

**Item:** There were opportunities for the participants to engage with the trainers.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Reviewer Reports, Participant Focus Groups Report

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** There were two questions on the observation form related to this item. First, observers rated how well opportunities to engage with the trainers were incorporated into the sessions broadly. This was rated differently depending on whether experts observed an onsite training module, a prerecorded training module, or a webinar. For the 17 in-person training modules, observers felt that 13 of them fully met this criterion, 1 partially met this criterion, and 3 did not meet this criterion. Many of the in-person modules included opportunities to ask the trainers questions and share experiences. Although three of the sessions were rated as “Not Met” for this item, many of the trainers were also available after the modules (during break times) to ask questions, thus providing opportunities for participants to engage with the trainers after the module was over. The prerecorded modules were rated slightly differently for this criterion: for a pre-recorded presentation, providing contact information at some point during the presentation was enough to be rated at least “Partially Met”; and if a presenter actively encouraged contact or support, this item was rated as “Met.” Among the 9 prerecorded modules, 5 fully met this criterion while 4 partially met this criterion, meaning that all presenters provided contact information to the participants, and about half also actively encouraged contacting them. The 5 webinars were rated in the same way as the in-person modules, and each of them were rated as “Partially Met.” This was unexpected. Since the webinars were live, reviewers were expecting more opportunities for participants to engage with the trainers.

The second question, which was only rated for Cohort 3, asked whether the trainer was visible on the screen. For this criterion, 1 of the 5 webinars fully met this criterion, 2 of the 9 modules partially met this criterion, and 11 sessions did not meet this criterion at all. Because the delivery of the training modules for Cohort 3 was changed abruptly from in-person to prerecorded, due to the Covid–19 pandemic, it is understandable why this may have been challenging to accomplish. However, 4 of the 5 webinars, which were always designed to be virtual, also did not have a trainer who was visible on the screen, which was surprising.

**Expert Observation Report–Coaching Calls.** Like the observation form for the modules and webinars, there were two items on the coaching call observation form related to this metric: 1) there were opportunities for participants to engage with the coach, and 2) the coach was visible on the screen. Observers had many positive comments related to engagement with coaches and felt that this item was fully met in all calls. Also, in each of the coaching calls, the coaches were visible on the screen.

### Participant Engagement (IM6)

**Item:** There were opportunities for the participants to engage with fellow learners.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Reports, Participant Focus Groups Report

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** This item was assessed for the in-person training modules. Being on site gave trainees the opportunity to get to know each other and

to start building relationships that have the potential to serve as sources of support after the return to their facilities. When examining each of the 17 in-person modules individually, 10 modules fully met the criteria to provide opportunities for trainees to engage with fellow learners, and 2 partially met this criterion. Most of this was done during small and large group activities and discussions. Also, although 5 of the sessions did not meet this criterion, participants had ample opportunity to engage with peers during breaks, meals, and meetings with coaches. Given that, it was not necessary to have opportunities to engage with peers in each of the sessions.

**Expert Observation Report–Coaching Calls.** There were three items on the coaching call observation form related to this metric: 1) the coach provided opportunities for participants to engage with their fellow learners; 2) at least most of the participants were visible on the screen; and 3) participants offered advice, feedback, and support to other participants. In 10 of the 12 observed calls with more than one participant<sup>6</sup>, reviewers felt that coaches successfully provided opportunities for participants to engage with their fellow learners. Often, participants shared feedback and advice on other participants’ action plans. This was actively encouraged by the coaches. The chat box was also used to do this. In 10 of the 12 calls, most of the participants were visible on the screen. In 9 of the 12 calls, participants offered advice, feedback, and support to other participants. Observers felt that this criterion was fully met in 5 of the calls and partially met in 4 of the calls. In the calls where this happened most frequently, participants gave each other detailed feedback on their presentations, provided advice based on their experiences at their own facilities, and asked follow-up questions.

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** Participants indicated several goals for participating in the training, one theme being the opportunity to network with peers (i.e., hear different perspectives on topics, exchange ideas on similar problems, and collaborate on effective practices or programming). Many of the participants who attended in-person groups felt that they did increase their peer network after attending the training. Conversely, participants who attended the virtual training indicated that they did not increase their peer network from the attending.

**Useful for Position (IM7)**

**Item:** The participants found the training useful for their position.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Participant Evaluation Reports, Participant Focus Groups Reports

**Participant Evaluation Report.** The participant evaluation report provides a summary of the participants’ perceptions of the overall instructor-led component across several dimensions, including usefulness. The data suggest that the perceptions among participants regarding the usefulness of the training was relatively high across all cohorts.

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** All participants felt the training was beneficial to their current jobs, as many participants were new to their positions, or they felt the training was good for personal growth in their careers. The training provided participants with useful resources and knowledge to apply to their facilities, a chance to network with others and share their experiences in a “safe” environment, a validation of the work they are doing, and encouragement from other staff at their facilities.

<sup>6</sup> We did not rate this item for the one call where only one trainee participated.



### Useful for Promotion (IM8)

**Item:** The participants found the training useful for promotion.

**Finding:** Partially Met

**Source:** Participant Focus Groups Report

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** Although participants felt the training was beneficial to their current jobs, a small number of participants felt the training was not particularly helpful in seeking advancement.

There are higher [positions], and definitely training always helps you prepare for the next level. And so, we don't get as many opportunities. I mean, I don't know, I can't speak for anyone else, but as a facility director, you don't have a lot more in the building that you can learn from, and so we need opportunities as facility directors, to train and look at what we're doing and talk to people who are safe.

### Participant Knowledge (IM9)

**Item:** The participants perceived that they gained knowledge of the topics presented.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Participant Evaluation Report, Participant Focus Groups Report

**Participant Evaluation Report.** The participant evaluation report provides a summary of the participants' perceptions of the overall instructor-led component across several dimensions, including a belief that they gained a deeper understanding of topics presented. The data suggest that the perceptions among participants regarding the knowledge gained during the training was average at best across all cohorts.

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** Participants indicated they gained knowledge on several topics presented in the training. For example, one participant explained they used information acquired from the training to de-emphasize the institutional character of the setting by creating a more home-like environment. Another example from a different participant was that they intended to utilize training services from one of the training module presenters to implement gender-specific programming training at their facility.

### Training Length (IM10)

**Item:** The length of the training was appropriate for the amount of content being covered.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Reports, Participant Evaluation Report, Participant Focus Groups Report

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** Experts reviewed whether the length of each individual training module and webinar was appropriate for the content being covered in that particular session. For this criterion, 14 of the 17 in-person modules fully met and 3 in-person modules partially met it. Of the 9 prerecorded modules, 6 fully met this criterion, while 4 partially met it. Two of the webinars fully met this criterion, while 3 partially met it. When modules and webinars did not fully meet this criterion, it was usually because the presenter ran out of time to complete the session, or the module was too long or too short (given the importance of the material).

**Expert Observation Report–Coaching Calls.** Observers also felt that in 11 of the 13 observed coaching calls, the length of the call was appropriate for the amount of content being covered. For the two sessions that only partially met this criterion, the reviewers felt that they were too short, did not allow sufficient time for discussion of the final presentations of the action plans and among participants, or felt rushed. However, most of the reviewer comments were positive.

**Participant Evaluation Report.** The participant evaluation report provides a summary of the participants’ perceptions of the overall instructor-led component across several dimensions, including the length of the training. The data suggest that the perceptions among participants regarding the length of the training were that it was average at best across most cohorts but fell to low for Cohort 7.

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** Participants who attended in-person groups indicated that the least useful aspects of the training were the content and length of some of the training modules. Participants stated some topics “felt off,” were too elementary, or were not applicable to their type of facility. Participants also felt that some modules delivered too much information in a brief period.

<b>Technical Issues (IM1 1)</b>
<b>Item:</b> The course was delivered free of any major technical issues.
<b>Finding:</b> Met
<b>Source:</b> Expert Observation Reports, Participant Focus Groups Report

**Expert Observation Report–Training Modules and Webinars.** Reviewers assessed this item for the 9 pre-recorded modules and the 5 webinars for the third cohort. Except for one webinar that was missing the linked videos in our version, there were no major technical issues.

**Expert Observation Report–Coaching Calls.** The coaching calls were almost always delivered free of major technical issues. Observers felt that this criterion was met in 12 of the 13 calls. The minor issues that did occur were related to participants’ poorly functioning microphones or connectivity or bandwidth issues.

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** No major technical issues were identified by participants. However, there were a few disruptions, due to COVID-19, which significantly affected the in-person sessions.



## Evaluation

The evaluation stage is where the assessment of the training course takes place. An evaluation of a training course is important because it will determine whether the goals of the training have been met. In general, a training can be evaluated on four levels: (1) initial reaction of the participants; (2) knowledge gained by the participants; (3) behavioral change of the participants; and (4) results (i.e., the impact of the training on the youth at the facility).

### Training Relevance (EV1)

**Item:** The degree to which participants find the training favorable and relevant to their jobs is assessed.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Participant Evaluation Report, Participant Focus Groups Report

**Participant Evaluation Report.** Overall, the attendees had a relatively favorable and stable impression (across cohorts) of the training, with an overall rating of 4.40 in Cohort 1, 4.33 in Cohort 2, 4.39 in Cohort 3, and 4.39 in Cohort 7. (Note: All criteria were assessed on a five-point scale with 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. See the *Participant Evaluation Report* for details on the ratings scale.) Further, no individual module fell below an average of 3.76. These overall findings suggest, among other things, that the trainees felt the training event offered useful strategies and skills, that the event provided them with a deeper understanding of the material, and that the presenters were knowledgeable about their subject areas. Moreover, there does not appear to be a significant overall difference between the live (Cohorts 1, 2, and 7) and the asynchronous events (Cohort 3).

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** While all participants indicated that the training met their expectations and provided a variety of topics, a few participants felt the information provided was elementary or that they would have preferred a separate track for participants with more experience running a facility.

### Participant Feedback (EV2)

**Item:** Learners are provided the opportunity to give feedback and suggest potential improvements to the training.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Participant Evaluation Report

**Participant Evaluation Report.** The participants were provided with the opportunity to complete an evaluation form (see the Participant Evaluation Report for a full assessment of the results). Specifically, the participants noted the *Ability to Ask Questions* as an important aspect of the training. Specifically, it was ranked relatively high in each of the cohorts included in the analysis first ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.64) in Cohort 1, third ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.46) in Cohort 2, fifth ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.31) in Cohort 3, and second ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.57) Cohort 7. (Note: All criteria were assessed on a five-point scale with 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. See the *Participant Evaluation Report* for details on the ratings scale.)

### Training Feedback (EV3)

**Item:** Trainers were provided the opportunity to give feedback and suggest potential improvements to the training.

**Finding:** Partially Met

**Source:** Stakeholder Interview Report

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** DSG asked *trainers* whether they were provided the opportunity to debrief, give feedback, or suggest potential improvements to CJJA or OJJDP about the training. Some trainers said they were able to do this, while others said they did not have this opportunity. However, many of the trainers who said they were not given the opportunity to provide feedback, said they would feel comfortable approaching CJJA or OJJDP with their suggestions, if they had any.

We also asked the *coaches* about opportunities to debrief among themselves and provide feedback to OJJDP and CJJA. Coaches who were involved since the first cohort recalled getting together to learn from their experiences. One coach reported:

After our first cohort, we did have a meeting with the coaches and kind of debrief the process. We did some of that [by] email, and we had some discussion before what we thought the coaching would look like. I mean, this was something new for all of us because the whole curricula—the training—was all brand new.

After the first cohort, the coaches got together. We debriefed. We discussed what worked, what didn't work, what we might want to do differently next time. And so, we made some adjustments in cohort number 2 to do this, and then even further with cohort number 3. We had more calls and discussions about our experience being coaches.

*Advocates* also mentioned that the coaches had regular meetings to strategize, talk about the process, and discuss their experiences with coaching calls.

### Knowledge Acquisition (EV4)

**Item:** The degree to which the participants acquired the intended knowledge and skills based on their participation in the training is assessed.

**Finding:** Met

**Source:** Expert Observation Reports, Knowledge Test Report, Participant Evaluation Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Expert Observation Report—Training Modules and Webinars.** Reviewers assessed this item during the in-person training. None of the 17 sessions fully met the criteria to assess the achievement of the learning objectives. One of the sessions partially met this criterion by including a summary slide at the end of the presentation to check for understanding of the material. One of the best ways to assess the knowledge gained by the participants regarding the learning objectives is via a knowledge test. This can be accomplished through a pretest–posttest survey where the survey is developed directly from the module objectives.

**Knowledge Test Report.** Knowledge acquisition is best tested via a pretest–posttest assessment. The participants were not originally assessed on the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, DSG, in cooperation with CJJA, developed and pilot-tested a knowledge test instrument. The results indicated a modest but not statistically significant gain in relevant knowledge. Specifically, for Cohort 7, 26 of the attendees completed the pretest survey while 23 attendees completed the posttest survey. An independent *t*-test indicated that there was an increase in knowledge regarding juvenile corrections practice from pretest ( $M = 4.73, SD = 2.92$ ) to posttest ( $M = 5.70, SD = 3.47$ ), but the difference was not significant  $t(47) = 1.06, p = 0.296$ .

**Participant Evaluation Report.** It should be noted that the participants in all cohorts<sup>7</sup> indicated that the training provided *useful strategies and skills* [ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> in Cohorts 1 ( $\bar{x}$ =4.33), 7<sup>th</sup> ( $\bar{x}$ =4.53) and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Cohort 2 ( $\bar{x}$ =4.54)], and that they *learned new concepts or gained a deeper understanding* of the topics presented. Further, the participants also noted that the presenters were *knowledgeable about their subject areas and provided relevant and valuable experience*. In fact, presenter knowledge was ranked as the highest dimension in all cohorts [Cohort 1 ( $\bar{x}$ =4.64), Cohort 2 ( $\bar{x}$ =4.65), Cohort 3 ( $\bar{x}$ =4.54), and Cohort 7 ( $\bar{x}$ =4.63)].

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** During the interviews, *trainers* were asked, “Had you planned, or did you intend to include assessments of whether participants achieved the learning objectives?” Most of the trainers were unaware of how learning objectives were formally assessed for each of the modules or the overall training. Some mentioned that they did this informally as part of a group discussion, by a) having participants reflect, b) by asking them questions, or c) by having them help one another. However, when asked about a more formal type of assessment of learning objectives, most interviewees did not have much to share. One interviewee responded: “I would have loved to have received the evaluation, so we know who to follow up with and all of that. And also, professionally, I always appreciate that because I can use it to do better in regard to presentations.” Another responded: “I remember thinking, I didn’t know if that was my job. Or, if that was something that, as part of the broader program, they were going to kind of ask the standard questions of participants. I think they did have evaluation forms, though.” Finally, some of the interview respondents mentioned difficulties in measuring the achievement of learning objectives when the modules were prerecorded but that they did try to incorporate some strategies. For example, one of the trainers said, “I gave everybody all three exercises and just said to pause and do whichever ones you want to do.”

**Knowledge Application (EV5)**

**Item:** The degree to which the participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job was assessed.

**Finding:** Partially Met

**Source:** Participant Focus Group Report, Stakeholder Interview Report

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** Some participants from the in-person cohorts indicated they shared knowledge acquired through the training modules with their staff at their facility. For example, one participant explained they used information acquired from the training to de-emphasize the institutional character of the setting by creating a more homelike environment. Another example from a different participant was that they intended to use training services from one of the training module presenters to implement gender-specific programming training at their facility. Another participant explained, through the following quote, how they planned to pass on the information they acquired at the training to their facility and staff:

One of the main things that I’m looking forward to doing is taking the information and filtering it through my admin team to get some ... positive changes. ... So, for instance, for family engagement we have a an ... administrator that’s responsible for family engagement. ... So even more ... can be added [on] some different ideas that have been given ... about what family engagement looks like and how we can really do that effectively. You know, so not just from our, our lens or our perspective, but really some ... best practices, but how we can really do it effectively with the challenges that we have.

<sup>7</sup>USEFULNESS, TIME PERMITTED TO NETWORK, and TIME ALLOWED FOR BREAKS were not included in the criterion for Cohort 3.

Alternatively, participants from the virtual cohorts indicated a poor understanding of what they could or should do with the training material. For example, some participants were not aware they could share the information with others at their facilities. However, in one instance, the participant delegated the viewing of the material to subordinates without becoming familiar with it.

**Stakeholder Interview Report.** A key feature of the intervention is that juvenile correctional facility leaders who attend the JCEL training course and are provided with state-of-the-art information regarding the care of juvenile offenders. In turn, these trained leaders return to their respective facilities to educate their staff on the skills and knowledge acquired during the training and integrate them into the daily practices of the facility. Unfortunately, while the development of the action plans was intended to encourage the application of the knowledge and skills learned during the training, there was no specific mechanism integrated into the training to require (and measure) the application of the acquired knowledge and skills.

**Targeted Outcomes (EV6)**

**Item:** The degree to which the targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training was assessed.

**Finding:** N/A

**Source:** N/A

*Note.* To measure whether training courses like the JCEL result in the intended outcomes for facility leaders, staff, and the youth they serve, it is necessary to conduct an outcome evaluation. As a result, this item was not assessed.

## Summary

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The purpose of the formative evaluation was to assess the JCEL training course against best practice in instructional design. The ADDIE model was used as the framework for assessing the JCEL training course using 40 best-practice criteria dispersed across each of 5 best-practice dimensions. These dimensions include:

- **Analysis:** The analysis phase is the process of defining the purpose of the training. In this phase, the instructional problem is clarified, the instructional goals and objectives are set, and the intended participants are defined.
- **Design:** The design phase is the blueprint that will be used as a reference to develop the course (structure and content). The blueprint defines the modules, learning objectives, content, exercises, and assessments.
- **Development:** The development phase is where the developers assemble the content that was created in the design phase. Programmers work to develop and/or integrate appropriate delivery models (e.g., technologies, PowerPoints, embedding videos). Testers perform debugging procedures. After the pilot, the content is reviewed or reassessed and revised for future presentations as needed.
- **Implementation:** The implementation phase is the actual delivery of the training course. The training should cover the course curriculum, learning outcomes, method of delivery, and testing procedures so that the delivery of the content will be useful and relevant for the learners.
- **Evaluation:** The evaluation phase is where the assessment of the training course takes place. An evaluation of a training course is important because it will determine whether the goals of the training have been met. In general, a training can be evaluated on four levels: (1) initial reaction of the participants, (2) knowledge gained by the participants, (3) behavioral change of the participants, and (4) results (i.e., the impact of the training on the youth at the facility).

Table 1 below summarizes the results of the assessment of the training overall and by dimension. Overall, the formative evaluation indicated that the development and implementation of the JCEL training event compares favorably when benchmarked against instructional design best practice. Specifically, an IDCS of 1.64 for the overall training course indicated that the JCEL was developed and implemented according to best practice in instructional design.

In terms of the individual dimensions, 4 of the 5 dimensions compared favorably when benchmarked against instructional design best practice (IDCS>1.50) indicating that the JCEL training event generally adhered to best practice in most phases of development and implementation. The single dimension that did not demonstrate adherence to best practice (IDCS=.75) was the analysis dimension. A review of the individual criterion reveals that the deficiency in the analysis dimension was caused by the lack of evidence indicating that a needs assessment of the field was conducted to determine whether the training was needed, and/or what gaps in skills or knowledge the training was attempting to fill. Thus, not surprisingly, there was ambiguity as to the purpose and goals of the training course, which was evidenced in the comments of stakeholders in the interviews.

**Table 1. Instructional Design Competency Score**

Item	Total	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Not Applicable	IDCS
Analysis	4	1	1	2	0	.75
Design	8	7	0	1	0	1.75
Development	11	9	1	1	0	1.73
Implementation	11	9	2	0	0	1.82
Evaluation	6	3	2	0	1	1.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.64</b>

Note: The Instructional Design Competency Score is calculated in the following manner: Each criterion that meets the objective is awarded 2 points. Each criterion that partially meets the objective is given 1 point. Each criterion that does not meet the objective is awarded 0 points. These points were summed and divided by the number of criteria overall as well as for each best-practice dimension. In order for each best practice dimension as well as the overall training to be considered as meeting best practice the IDCS must meet or exceed 1.5. If a criterion was deemed not applicable, it was removed from the calculation. For example, the evaluation numerator was 5 as 1 criterion was not applicable.

## Recommendations

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While the findings from the formative evaluation indicate that the JCEL training course overall was developed and implemented according to best practice in instructional design, the analysis did reveal some deficiencies. This final section of the report identifies these weaknesses in the training course and offers recommendations for improvement.

### 1. Clarify the purpose of the training

The formative evaluation revealed some uncertainty in the purpose of the training. For example, the objectives of the course, as identified by the logic model developed from the process evaluation work led by the project team, are to provide multifaceted technical assistance (in-person training, webinars, coaching, and peer learning) to juvenile residential facility leaders to 1) increase understanding of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA) requirements, as they relate to juvenile facilities; 2) implement evidence-based practices in areas of most need, such as gender-specific services, needs-based reentry services, and conditions of confinement; 3) identify, monitor, and reduce racial and ethnic disparities within facility decision-making; and 4) improve facility management, especially in emergency planning, staff wellness, data-driven decision-making, and adherence to the Prison Rape Elimination Act and the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA). However, documents provided to participants provide slightly different information, and almost no mention of the JJRA. The purpose of the Facility Superintendent/Director Training must be clarified and shared with all training designers, developers, implementers, and evaluators to ensure that training topics are well chosen and meaningful.

### 2. Conduct a formal needs assessment

The stakeholder interviews indicated that there was no formal needs assessment conducted. Instead, the feedback received from the interviews provides evidence that the JCEL training course was developed from informal assessments of the field that pointed to a gap in formal training opportunities for directors, superintendents, and operations managers of juvenile facilities, and from former OJJDP Administrator Caren Harp's interest in helping juvenile facilities better understand the Core Requirements of the JJDP Act. While this informal assessment may be on target, it is recommended that a formal needs assessment be conducted to tailor the training event to the needs of the attendees. A formal needs assessment provides those conducting the training with the current level of competency, skill, and knowledge of those attending the training and permits a comparison with the required competency standard established for their positions. The difference between the current and required competencies can help one make informed decisions about the best ways to address the competency gaps among those in attendance.

### 3. Reexamine the training topics

Another observation related to both the purpose of the training, and the completion of a formal needs assessment is that some of the training topics were a bit extraneous to some of the most important roles of a facility director. These roles include scheduling staff to ensure effective teamwork on units and time off that works best for the staff; classifying and assigning youths to units and services; hiring, onboarding, and retaining employees; and early identification, prevention, and debriefing of crisis situations. Thus, in conjunction with conducting a formal needs assessment to identify the most pressing issues faced by facility directors, it is recommended that the training topics be more focused on the pragmatic day-to-day issues faced by facility directors.



#### 4. Reduce the heterogeneity among training participants

While the training event was well received overall, the formative evaluation found variability in terms of the utility of both the individual modules and the overall training event by participant and/or by cohort. While there are likely a number of causes for this variability, including both the lack of clarity regarding the purpose of the training as well as the lack of formal needs assessment noted earlier, a related issue is the heterogeneity of the training participants, and the variability in the training needs caused by that heterogeneity. Specifically, the training eligibility criteria indicates that “to be considered, participants must serve in a facility director/superintendent (or deputy superintendent) role and be committed to the entire 6-month training and technical assistance (TTA) program including webinars and coaching calls”. Such a broad eligibility criterion permits the inclusion of both newly appointed superintendents as well as long-time veterans, and this was evident in a review of the background of participants. The problem with including these two distinct groups in the same training is that the training needs of each are wildly different due to their level of individual experience in the position. As a result, it is recommended that the training be either (1) restricted to newer superintendents, or (2) separated into two distinct tracks based on the level of experience, in order to tailor the training content to the specific needs of the attendees. Finally, it should be recognized that there is a substantial peer-to-peer learning opportunity to introduce novice superintendents to more veteran voices. However, it is recommended that this commingling process occur in a way other than as participants in the same training event. For example, one possible way would be to incorporate either a formal or informal mentoring component to the training where junior directors can learn from more experienced persons.

#### 5. Clearly present the learning objectives

Many of the presenters clearly communicated the learning objectives of their modules or webinars in the first few minutes. However, some did not. Following best practice in instructional design, it is recommended that each presenter give an overview of the learning objectives both orally and written on a slide at the start of each module. This small tweak would strengthen the overall training for all participants.

#### 6. Incorporate pre-training collaboration

The formative evaluation revealed that *trainers* and *coaches* both desired pretraining collaborative discussions or meetings among other trainers and coaches to coordinate a more cohesive message for the overall training during the sessions and webinars. Similarly, *coaches* indicated a need for cohort debriefs to support an evolutionary process to build on future cohort training.

#### 7. Update the research and other content presented in some of the modules and webinars

The feasibility evaluation revealed that in some of the instructor-led modules, the slides lacked references (or up-to-date references). It is recommended that these references be added (or updated). CJJA may want to review the slides before they are presented to check for up-to-date references and other content.

#### 8. Adjust certain module titles to best reflect the material being presented

The module titles and content sometimes were not aligned. For example, Making Facilities Safe: A Holistic Approach was, in fact, a presentation about PbS. To reflect the module content more accurately, the title could be changed to something like Using PbS to Track Facility Safety Outcomes. The module only provided information on PbS and data collection and tracking. It did not cover



actual strategies for making facilities safe (e.g., changing culture, new strategies, appropriate staff characteristics, de-escalation). It also included topics unrelated to safety. Similarly, the Multigenerational Workforce and the Impact on Facilities module focused primarily on the more general topics of recruitment, the status of the workforce, interviewing, creating a positive work environment, supervision, performance evaluation, leadership, and retention in general. These topic areas are important, but they do not align completely with the module title. The slides on multiple generations seemed to be the ones that were talked through the most quickly.

### **9. Offer guidance to presenters on providing information about their own organizations**

A few presenters spent a significant amount of time in the beginning of their presentations talking about their organizations. This information may be helpful for trainees to know, but at times it felt a bit like an advertisement for their organizations' services. It may be more appropriate to offer a separate handout with this information so presenters can just jump into the training in their topic areas.

### **10. Offer additional peer-to-peer learning opportunities**

A consistent critique across cohorts was a desire for additional ways to support peer-to-peer learning (see Participant Evaluation Reports and Participant Focus Group Reports). Though it was challenging to create an environment conducive to peer-to-peer learning within the training setting during COVID-19, it is recommended that the peer-to-peer learning opportunities are expanded not only during the training event but also after the completion of the training by building an infrastructure to encourage attendees to solve problems collaboratively post training. While remote workplace peer-to-peer learning must be carefully engineered to avoid the proliferation of erroneous information, it can be an effective way for institutions to grow stronger and produce more-effective outcomes. For example, it can 1) be more comfortable than a formal presentation, 2) strengthen skills among all participants through the experience of sharing with others, 3) strengthen institutional culture by creating stronger bonds among participants, 4) formalize collaboration among individuals and institutions, and 5) support individual development and career-path building. One way to create a collaborative learning environment between peers outside of a formal training environment that is consistently available is through the development of an asynchronous learning platform that emphasizes peer-to-peer interaction and growth (e.g., Peer Learning Slack Channels). This online platform encourages shared information across a network of people outside of the traditional constraints of communication. People can share and see ideas when they have the time by just logging on to the portal. They can go on, do their work, and take a break—before their peers examine that same work from across the globe hours later. Again, this recommendation supports another adult-learning principle of peer-to-peer learning: that it is not always instructor-led or guided. Adult learners are more resourceful in their learning styles.

### **11. Consider incorporating site visit opportunities**

Another way to increase peer-to-peer learning opportunities is to incorporate site visit opportunities into the training curriculum. All too often, many facilities operate in isolation without the opportunity to learn and share from others in the profession. As such, OJJDP would be well served to organize and fund to the extent possible a complementary program to follow up the training with a site visit to selected “best practice” facilities. Many people learn best via onsite observation and a correlated discussion of mutual policy, procedures, practices, and culture. Similarly, states should also be encouraged to promote regular in-state meetings and/or mentoring relationships among juvenile administrators to share ideas, receive common training, communicate with state-level authorities, and

generally exchange information related to best practice and facility administration.

## **12. Reimagine the webinar component**

Seven focus groups consisting of 30 JCEL training participants provided the research team with a valuable understanding of the training course from the attendee's perspective. Participants uniformly agreed that the most useful part of the training was the opportunity to network with peers from other states during the instructor-led components. Specifically, participants noted the ability to share problems and discuss solutions with others who may be experiencing similar issues in their facilities as one of the greatest benefits of the training event. In contrast, the webinar component provided less utility. Participants suggested several improvements to the webinars. For example, one suggestion was to offer a dynamic, rather than static, selection of webinar topics that could be specifically tailored to the interests of cohort members. Another suggestion was to offer an additional track for individuals who were more experienced in their positions. A final suggestion was to use the breakout rooms during webinars to facilitate small group work for more engagement. It is recommended that the webinars be reimaged to take these suggestions into consideration.

## **13. Restructure the coaching calls**

The formative evaluation found evidence that the coaching calls met participants' expectations overall and were helpful to those who used the feedback. Further, the implementation plans discussed on the calls were useful for planning actionable work for those who completed the plans (not all participants finalized or implemented the plans). Nevertheless, participants felt the coaching calls could be improved in several ways. First, the participants felt the calls would be improved by requiring attendees to use video and audio for better connections with others. Second, they felt it would be better to structure the calls to allow more time for dialogue rather than reporting out from the previous call. Third, several participants mentioned offering flexible coaching call times or options for alternative participation as some had a hard time attending the calls. Finally, several participants noted that one or two individual coaching sessions integrated into the training structure would have been preferable to holding them on an as-needed basis. It is recommended that the coaching calls be restructured in such a way as to make them more appealing and accessible to the training participants.

## **14. Assess knowledge acquisition**

The formative evaluation demonstrated that the collective knowledge of the attendees regarding juvenile corrections practice increased after the training (see Knowledge Test Report). However, a knowledge test should be integrated into both the individual training modules and the overall training model as a way to gauge the degree to which the participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills based on their participation in the training. As such, this is a best practice component for instructional design. The assessment of knowledge acquisition at the module level can be formal or informal. For example, each trainer may incorporate knowledge checks periodically during the module or ask the participants questions to assess their comprehension or use an activity to gauge how they apply what they are learning. This provides real-time information for the instructor to reinforce content or adapt as needed. The assessment of knowledge acquisition at the overall training level is best accomplished through a pretest–posttest design to measure the knowledge gained from participating in the training course.

## **15. Incorporate a diffusion of information mechanism**

The formative evaluation makes clear that the JCEL training course is composed of four core components: 1) instructor-led, in-person training; 2) webinars; 3) coaching; and 4) peer learning. The

instructor-led component was meant to provide trainers with a platform to deliver content on research and best practices in the juvenile justice field, while the webinars were meant to continue that education via a longer format. Further, the coaching call component was meant to both encourage small group discussion among peers in the field and assist the trainees with developing an action (or implementation) plan that tied in each of these four components. Finally, upon successful completion of each of these components as well as the action plan, attendees receive a certificate of completion for the training.

A key feature of this model is that juvenile correctional facility leaders who attend the JCEL training course and are provided with state-of-the-art information regarding the care of juvenile offenders. In turn, these trained leaders return to their respective facilities to educate their staff on the skills and knowledge acquired during the training and integrate them into the daily practices of the facility. This diffusion of innovation (DOI) is a key concept of the training that is not well articulated, but vital to its success. The theory of DOI, developed by E.M. Rogers in 1962, is one of the oldest social science theories. It originated to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system. The end result of this diffusion is that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behavior, or product. Adoption means that a person does something differently than what they had previously (i.e., acquire knowledge and change behavior). The key to adoption is that the person must perceive the idea as useful, which makes diffusion possible.

The issue with respect to the JCEL training course is that there are no criteria as to what satisfies as a “successful completion” and no diffusion requirement. Although the completion of the action plans is an attempt to encourage the diffusion of the acquired information, the evidence that this process actually occurs is minimal as many participants did not even complete the action plan. As such, there is little assurance that the trainees complete all the required tasks, acquire the desired skills and/or knowledge or disperse the skills and knowledge to the facility staff.

As a result, we recommend integrating a mechanism formalizing or standardizing the concept of diffusion as a key component to the JCEL training course model. For example, some ways to formalize the diffusion process may be to 1) incorporate a certification process in order to both hold the trainee accountable and provide the trainee with earned credentials that verify their legitimacy and competence as experts in the field; 2) require the JCEL-trained staff to hold a localized training event to educate facility staff on the relevant knowledge and skills obtained during the JCEL training course; 3) document an attempt to change the manner in which staff perform their duties; (4) other active (compared to passive) methods of diffusion. The effectiveness of these mechanisms could then be measured in each facility as part of adherence.

## Appendix 1: Report Index

Analysis							
Item	Action Plan	Document Review	Expert Observation	Knowledge Test	Participant Evaluation	Participant Focus Group	Stakeholder Interviews
Assessment (AN1)		X					X
Training Needs (AN2)		X					X
Training Goals (AN3)		X					X
Training Participants (AN4)		X					X

Design							
Item	Action Plan	Document Review	Expert Observation	Knowledge Test	Participant Evaluation	Participant Focus Group	Stakeholder Interviews
Logic Model (DN1)		X					X
Blueprint (DN2)		X					X
Relevant Modules (DN3)		X					X
Clear Objectives (DN4)		X	X				X
Subject-Matter Experts (DN5)		X	X				X
Best Practice (DN6)			X				X
Adult Learning (DN7)							X
Interactive Elements (DN8)			X				X

Development							
Item	Action Plan	Document Review	Expert Observation	Knowledge Test	Participant Evaluation	Participant Focus Group	Stakeholder Interviews
Training Sequence (DV1)		X	X				
Module Sequence (DV2)			X				
Content Organization (DV3)							X
Content Delivery (DV4)			X		X	X	
Clear Instructions (DV5)		X					
Learning Platform (DV6)			X		X		
Pilot Test (DV7)		X					
Pilot Test Feedback (DV8)		X					X
Training Delivery System (DV9)						X	
Quality Control (DV10)		X					X
Training of Trainers (DV11)		X					X

Formative Evaluation Report

Implementation							
Item	Action Plan	Document Review	Expert Observation	Knowledge Test	Participant Evaluation	Participant Focus Group	Stakeholder Interviews
Trainer Experience (IM1)		X					
Trainer Knowledge Pos. (IM2)		X					
Trainer Knowledge Dem. (IM3)			X		X		
Trainer Delivery (IM4)			X				
Trainer Engagement (IM5)			X			X	
Participant Engagement (IM6)			X			X	
Useful for Position (IM7)					X	X	
Useful for Promotion (IM8)						X	
Participant Knowledge (IM9)					X	X	
Training Length (IM10)			X		X	X	
Technical Issues (IM11)			X			X	

Evaluation							
Item	Action Plan	Document Review	Expert Observation	Knowledge Test	Participant Evaluation	Participant Focus Group	Stakeholder Interviews
Training Relevance (EV1)					X	X	
Participant Feedback (EV2)					X		
Training Feedback (EV3)							X
Knowledge Acquisition (EV4)			X	X	X		X
Knowledge Application (EV5)	X					X	
Targeted Outcomes (EV6)							

# JUVENILE CORRECTIONS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING

## Phase 2: Evaluability Assessment Report

December 2023

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## Introduction

The Juvenile Corrections Executive Leadership (JCEL) Training course offers juvenile facility leadership and agency deputy directors overseeing facility operations a national training opportunity to enhance their skills in facility management—to ensure functionality, comfort, safety, and efficiency of the built environment by integrating people, place, process, and technology. The objectives of the course, as identified by the logic model developed from the process evaluation work led by the project team, are to provide multifaceted technical assistance (instructor-led,<sup>1</sup> webinars, coaching, and peer learning) to juvenile residential facility leaders to

- Increase understanding of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act requirements, as they relate to juvenile facilities.
- Implement evidence-based practices in areas of greatest need, such as gender-specific services, needs-based reentry services, and conditions of confinement.
- Identify, monitor, and reduce racial and ethnic disparities within facility decisionmaking.
- Improve facility management, especially in emergency planning, staff wellness, data-driven decisionmaking, and adherence to the Prison Rape Elimination Act and the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (or CRIPA).

To measure whether training courses like JCEL result in the intended outcomes for facility leaders, staff, and the youths they serve, it is necessary to conduct an outcome evaluation. But before allocating scarce resources for an outcome evaluation, it is wise to make two critical assessments. First, it must be determined whether the processes for developing the JCEL Training course and its implementation are built on sound logic and best practices; if not, they will need to be adjusted. Second, a preliminary determination must be made regarding whether the JCEL Training course can and should be evaluated.

As such, the goals of this project are to determine 1) the extent to which the JCEL Training course is logically sound and 2) whether it can be reliably and credibly evaluated. Specifically, the objectives of this project are to

- Conduct a formative evaluation to provide feedback to stakeholders from the National Institute of Justice and the Office of Justice Programs about program functioning.
- Conduct an evaluability assessment to determine whether an outcome evaluation of the program would be justified, feasible, and useful.
- Develop a rigorous outcome evaluation plan to assess the impact of the training on facility leaders, staff, and the youth in custody (if an outcome evaluation is deemed worthwhile).

The focus of this report is to address the evaluability of the JCEL training course. The evaluability assessment is designed to encourage a comprehensive assessment of all components of an intervention and make objective recommendations about whether to proceed with an outcome evaluation. It consists of several criteria relevant to deciding on evaluation readiness spread across the following three broad dimensions (see also Methodology below).

1. Plausibility
2. Feasibility
3. Utility

<sup>1</sup>This took the form of pre-recorded asynchronous modules during the COVID-19 pandemic for cohorts 3,4,5, and 6.



## Methodology

The evaluability of the JCEL training course is guided by the Evaluation Decision Support Tool (EDST). Derived from the latest guidance on conducting evaluability assessments,<sup>2 3</sup> the EDST is designed to encourage a comprehensive assessment and make objective recommendations regarding the decision to evaluate a program (or in this case a training). The tool consists of several criteria relevant to deciding on evaluation readiness, spread across three broad dimensions of evaluability. The dimensions are 1) plausibility (Should the activities reasonably be expected to lead to the intended outcomes?), 2) feasibility (Is there sufficient capacity, resources, and time to collect quality data?), and 3) utility (Will the intended evaluation produce useful findings?).

Specifically, the assessment comprises 38 evaluability criteria dispersed across the three dimensions (9 plausibility criteria, 11 feasibility criteria, and 18 utility criteria). DSG research staff utilized data collected during the course of the formative evaluation to assess each criterion. Each criterion was assessed via a dichotomous response structure (0=No; 1=Yes) as to whether the training course met the criteria. For example, item OB1 reads: “The need for the training course is clearly identified.” To assess whether this criterion was met, the research team used a matrix analysis approach to triangulate the findings from the various sources. The benefit of this triangulation approach is that the findings can be corroborated and any weaknesses in the data can be compensated for by the strengths of the data other data sources, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results. These data sources include the following:

- Action Plan Report
- Document Review Report
- Expert Observation Report
- Knowledge Test Report
- Participant Evaluation Report
- Participant Focus Groups Report
- Stakeholder Interviews Report

Ultimately, we used this assessment to calculate an *Evaluability Decision Score* (EDS) for each dimension. The EDS is calculated by summing the number of criteria that meet each specific objective. A cut point analytical approach was used to determine whether there were any barriers to conducting an evaluation. A cut point is the threshold value of a continuous distribution which, using statistical criteria, best separates the distribution into smaller discrete groups. In this case, we separated the distribution for each dimension into tertiles in order to categorize the practical significance of the EDS. The scores in the top third of the distribution signaled that the assessment identified no major barriers to conducting an evaluation. The scores in the middle third of the distribution indicated that the assessment identified some minor barriers to conducting an evaluation, which should be addressed. The scores in the bottom third of the distribution revealed that the assessment identified some major barriers, which cannot be addressed easily or in a timely manner. If any dimension fell into the bottom third of the distribution, conducting an evaluation would not be recommended (at this time).

Finally, it should be noted that the COVID–19 pandemic caused numerous travel restrictions that dramatically affected both the JCEL training event itself for all cohorts as well as this assessment. The impact of these travel restrictions on the JCEL training event was that the instructor-led component for Cohorts 3 (August 2020), 4 (January

<sup>2</sup> Peersman, G.; I. Guijt; and T. Pasanen. 2015. *Evaluability Assessment for Impact Evaluation: Guidance, Checklists, and Decision Support*. A Methods Lab Publication. London, England: Overseas Development Institute.

<sup>3</sup> Davies, Rick. 2013. *Planning Evaluability Assessments A Synthesis of the Literature With Recommendations*. Working Paper 40. London, England: Department for International Development.



2021), 5 (August 2021), and 6 (January 2022) were all altered from a live, in-person event to a prerecorded, asynchronous event. While necessary (given the pandemic), the format change significantly hindered the ability of this project to observe and assess the JCEL training as it was intended in its expected format (i.e., as a live event). Further, the inability to meet in a live format also affected the peer-learning portion of the training, as participants had a limited opportunity to make important peer connections in a virtual environment. The result was that the formative evaluation was largely restricted to the observation of a video of the JCEL training that may or may not have represented the best and most complete version of the training course and which, in turn, may have had an important effect on the intended outcomes.

Fortunately, the pandemic restrictions were lifted in the Fall of 2022, and Cohort 7 attended a live training event in Columbus, Ohio. This experience was significant as it provided the researchers with the first opportunity to observe the training in its naturally designed format. As such, when possible, the observations of the Cohort 7 were weighted more heavily than the other observed cohorts as the live event represented a more genuine depiction of the designed training event, compared with the asynchronous events.

## Analysis

The evaluability assessment findings are offered below. The findings for each criterion include the response, the documented source for the response, and a summary explanation. Further, the findings for each dimension are summarized via the EDS in order to assist in making the determination as to whether an evaluation is justified, feasible, and likely to provide useful information.

### PLAUSIBILITY (IS IT PLAUSIBLE TO EXPECT CHANGE ?)

**Item 1. The need for the training course is clearly identified (OB1).** Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interviews Report

**Summary.** The formative evaluation found anecdotal evidence that there is a considerable need for the training as there are no national training standards for juvenile correctional staff, and the basic training varies widely from state to state. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following reports:

**Document Review Report.** The document review found some vague references to training needs being determined via a top-down process in which field experts in various areas contributed to the development of an impactful training for facility directors. However, there was no supporting evidence that this process occurred. Further, there was no evidence that the facility directors or potential facility directors were solicited (needs assessment; bottom up) to determine what was needed.

**Stakeholder Interviews Report.** The stakeholder interviews indicated that there was no formal needs assessment conducted. However, these stakeholder interviews did indicate that there were informal discussions involving CJJA, National Institute of Corrections (NIC), NIJ, and OJJDP about the need to address the gap in the availability of formal training opportunities for juvenile facility superintendents and operational managers. For example, the stakeholder interviews indicated that the initial idea for the training resulted from two driving factors: 1) the gap in formal training opportunities for juvenile facility superintendents and operational managers, and 2) significant interest by the former OJJDP Administrator Caren Harp, specifically to help facilities better understand the Core Requirements of the JJDP Act.

**Item 2. The objectives of the training course align with the identified needs (OB2).** Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Document Review Report, Logic Model. Stakeholder Interviews Report

**Summary.** While there is no evidence that a formal needs assessment was conducted to identify specific training needs, the training course objectives align with the needs identified via informal discussions among CJJA, National Institute of Corrections (NIC), NIJ, and OJJDP. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Document Review Report.** The document review provided no evidence that the facility directors or potential facility directors were solicited (needs assessment; bottom up) to determine what was needed.

**Logic Model.** The objectives of the course are to provide multifaceted technical assistance (in-person training, webinars, coaching, and peer learning) to juvenile residential facility leaders to

- Increase understanding of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act requirements, as they relate to juvenile facilities.
- Implement evidence-based practices in areas of most need, such as gender-specific services, needs-based reentry services, and conditions of confinement.
- Identify, monitor, and reduce racial and ethnic disparities within facility decision-making.

- Improve facility management, especially in emergency planning, staff wellness, data-driven decision-making, and adherence to the Prison Rape Elimination Act and the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA).

**Stakeholder Interviews Report.** The stakeholder interviews indicated that there was no formal needs assessment conducted. However, there were informal discussions involving CJA, National Institute of Corrections (NIC), NIJ, and OJJDP about the need to address the gap in the availability of formal training opportunities for juvenile facility superintendents and operational managers. These discussions identified training needs specifically for juvenile justice facility leaders or operational directors. In corroboration, all interview respondents (advocates, trainers, and coaches) noted that there was a need for juvenile justice staff training. Additionally, some advocates indicated that there was a tangential focus on the JJRA of 2018 and the importance of compliance with the four Core Requirements. Once OJJDP Administrator Harp was appointed, she took an interest in helping juvenile facilities better understand the Core Requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act. Administrator Harp’s interest in this area was the main driving factor leading to the funding and development of the training.

**Item 3. The course activities are likely to produce the expected impact. (OB3)** **Response:**  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** Direct custody work in a youth correctional confinement setting is an important task given the significant physical, emotional, social, and psychological development that occurs during childhood and adolescence. Working with youth in this setting, however, can be difficult and challenging. One of the best ways to manage this obstacle is via staff training. Research shows that the more education, training, and experience an individual who works in a juvenile confinement setting has, the more likely it is he or she will have good communication skills, be able to effectively implement behavior management programming, and encourage and reinforce positive program participation and behavioral outcomes of youth.<sup>4</sup> With that in mind, the JCEL training course attempts to address many of these topics. The training course topics include 1) Conditions of Confinement, 2) CRIPA and Other Consent Decrees, 3) Emergency Planning, 4) Ethics in Juvenile Justice, 5) Family Engagement, 6) Gender-Responsive Care, 7) Human Resource Strategies, 8) Leadership in Youth Facilities, 9) Making Facilities Safe, 10) PREA, 11) Promoting Youth Development, 12) Recruitment and Retention, 13) Reducing Racial Disparities, 14) Strategies to Maintain Staff Wellness, 15) Understanding and Responding to Trauma, and 16) Reentry. Thus, the topics addressed in the training course appear to address the needs of direct custody staff. However, an area of concern is the transfer of knowledge from the leadership personnel who attend the training to those staff in direct care of the youth. This transfer has not as yet been demonstrated.

<sup>4</sup> Roush, David W. 1996. *Juvenile Detention Training Needs Assessment: Research Report*, Washington, DC: OJJDP.

**Item 4. The target group of the training course is clearly identified (TG1).**

**Response:**  No  Yes

**Source Document(s):** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interviews Report

**Summary.** While a target group of the training course was identified, the formative evaluation found that the target group should be refined. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Document Review Report.** The document review found evidence to suggest that potential participants were specifically defined. The Request for Applicant document indicated that the training is intended for facility leadership and deputy directors that operate juvenile correctional and detention facilities—whether at the county or state level, or within Tribal communities.

**Stakeholder Interviews Report.** The stakeholder interviews indicated the target audience comprised superintendents of juvenile residential facilities; however, some exceptions were made (e.g., deputy superintendents were occasionally selected to attend). One advocate reported that the target audience for OJJDP was mid-level managers who were overseeing juvenile facilities and that facility directors from states that were out of compliance with the JJPA were to be chosen for the first cohort. Further, there is also some evidence to suggest that superintendents were selected because the JJRA information was not reaching this group through other means. For subsequent cohorts, there was an effort to create a geographic mix of participants. Also, if there was more than one person from a facility, they were separated into different cohorts, and directors were prioritized over deputy directors. There did not appear to be any knowledge or skills prerequisites to participate.

**Item 5. The needs of the target group were assessed (TG2).**

**Response:**  No  Yes

**Source Document(s):** Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interviews Report

**Summary.** The formative evaluation found no evidence that the facility directors or potential facility directors were solicited (needs assessment; bottom up) to determine the training needs of the target population. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Document Review Report.** The document review provided no evidence that the facility directors or potential facility directors were solicited (needs assessment; bottom up) to determine what was needed.

**Stakeholder Interviews Report.** The stakeholder interviews indicated that there was no formal needs assessment conducted. However, there were informal discussions involving CJA, National Institute of Corrections (NIC), NIJ, and OJJDP about the need to address the gap in the availability of formal training opportunities for juvenile facility superintendents and operational managers. These discussions identified training needs specifically for juvenile justice facility leaders or operational directors. In corroboration, all interview respondents (advocates, trainers, and coaches) noted that there was a need for juvenile justice staff training. Additionally, some advocates indicated that there was a tangential focus on the JJRA of 2018 and the importance of compliance with the four Core Requirements. Once OJJDP Administrator Harp was appointed, she took an interest in helping juvenile facilities better understand the Core Requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act. Administrator Harp’s interest in this area was the main driving factor leading to the funding and development of the training.

**Item 6. The course material is relevant to the target group (TG3).**Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Participant Evaluation Report, Participant Focus Groups Report

**Summary.** The formative evaluation indicated that course material was relevant. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Participant Evaluation Report.** The participant evaluation report provided a summary of the participants' perceptions of the overall instructor-led component across several dimensions, including usefulness. The data suggest that the perceptions among participants regarding the usefulness of the training was relatively high across all cohorts.

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** All participants felt the training was beneficial to their current jobs, as many participants were new to their positions, or they felt the training was good for personal growth in their careers. The training provided participants with useful resources and knowledge to apply to their facilities, a chance to network with others and share their experiences in a "safe" environment, a validation of the work they are doing, and encouragement to other staff at their facilities.

**Item 7. The training course is based on an appropriate theory of change (TC1).**Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

The training course is based on an appropriate theory of change. While not specifically stated in any documentation or interview, the training event is based on the theory of change management originally developed by Kurt Lewin. Change management is focused on the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal consumers, which makes an organization as successful as possible.<sup>5</sup> Two important components of change management are leadership and knowledge management. Leaders have important roles to fill, such as influencing, encouraging, and educating employees, to achieve the organization's vision. Knowledge management, on the other hand, is a collection of methods relating to creating, sharing, using, and managing the knowledge and information of an organization, but also serves an important role in achieving organizational objectives by making the best use of explicit and tacit knowledge. Overall, the training course is centered on the idea that training correctional leadership in best practices will create better leaders, and in turn these leaders will share their skills, information, experience, and lessons learned during the training with their employees, ultimately leading to institutional change.

**Item 8. The key stakeholders agree on the theory of change (TC2).**Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Document Review Report, Stakeholder Interviews Report

The formative evaluation found no evidence that the key stakeholders agreed on a specific theory of change. Nevertheless, given the structure of the training, we hypothesize that the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory developed by EM Rodgers is the primary theory driving institutional and behavioral change (see Item 9 for more information on DOI).

<sup>5</sup> Moran, John W, and Baird K. Brightman. 2001. Leading organizational change. *Career Development International* 6(2), 111-119.

Item 9. The theory of change is supported in the literature (TC3).

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

A key feature of the intervention is that juvenile correctional facility leaders who attend the JCEL training course and are provided with state-of-the-art information regarding the care of juvenile offenders. In turn, these trained leaders can return to their respective facilities to educate their staff on the skills and knowledge acquired during the training and integrate them into the daily practices of the facility. This diffusion of innovation (DOI) is a key concept of the training that is not well articulated, but vital to its success. The theory of DOI, developed by E.M. Rogers in 1962, is one of the oldest social science theories. It originated to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system. The end result of this diffusion is that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behavior, or product. Adoption means that a person does something differently than what they had previously (i.e., acquire knowledge and change behavior). The key to adoption is that the person must perceive the idea as useful, which makes diffusion possible. Although the action plans are an attempt to diffuse at least some of the information, the evidence that this diffusion actually occurs is minimal: many participants did not even complete the action plan.

OB=Objectives; TG=Target Group; TC=Theory of Change

**DECISION SUPPORT**

Decision	Range	Reason	Score
Proceed	7-9	The training course can reasonably be expected to lead to the intended outcomes. There are no major barriers to the plausibility of the training course.	
Address Deficiencies	4-6	The training course may lead to the intended outcomes provided that some gaps or inconsistencies in the objectives of the course can be addressed.	6
Do Not Proceed	0-3	The training course cannot reasonably be expected to lead to the intended outcomes. The training course has significant deficiencies that cannot be addressed easily or in a timely manner.	

**UTILITY (IS IT USEFUL?)**

**Item 1. The training course addresses funder expectations (FD1).**

**Response:**  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Stakeholder Interviews Report

**Summary.** The formative evaluation found evidence that the training course was developed by CJA in conjunction with OJJDP, inferring that it should have addressed the expectations of OJJDP. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Stakeholder Interviews Report.** DSG asked advocates, trainers, and coaches about their role (or roles) in the training. Advocates (OJJDP staff) indicated multiple yet overlapping roles in the JCEL training course. First, they indicated their role was to provide agency representation, consistent messaging from the OJJDP administration, and manage the cooperative agreements involving OJJDP, NIJ, and CJA. Advocates also indicated that they provided instruction on sessions, reviewed speakers and presenters, made sure the training learning objectives were in line with the OJJDP mission, and supplied organization and onsite logistics during the in-person sessions.

Further, DSG asked advocates, “Who was in charge of producing the overall design or framework for the training course?” Most indicated that CJA was responsible for choosing the topics and the format but that many individuals had contributed, including individuals from OJJDP, associate CJA members, and some of the trainers. It does not appear there was only one individual assigned to ensure that each course module was relevant to the overall training course goals; instead, this responsibility was shared among several individuals. One of the advocates said, “CJA [at the time, CJA] had a list of topics that [it was] comfortable with, and we helped formalize them in a document. We made sure each session had learning objectives tied to a session description.” However, given that the overall training goals were a bit unclear, ensuring course modules were relevant was somewhat challenging.

Finally, DSG asked advocates a few questions related to whether feedback from the first cohort was used to review the course with subsequent cohorts. Most mentioned that between the first and the second cohorts there were several discussions among CJA, OJJDP, and the trainers on a proposed training format and content changes. They mentioned that it was a collaborative process and also that OJJDP was “very involved” in these decisions. Some mentioned that OJJDP was concerned with ensuring that training “messaging was on par” with OJJDP leadership. One advocate said, “Some of the content changed . . . based on what OJJDP wanted at the time.” Another said:

*We don't want any presenter to be more present than OJJDP. OJJDP needs to be ever-present in this relationship. People need to know OJJDP is ensuring that they're getting this training. So, you'll see a pivot. . . . Perhaps OJJDP thought things were slightly more focused on providers instead of what OJJDP wanted.*

**Item 2. The funder intends to continue offering the training course (FD2).**

**Response:**  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Document Review Report

**Summary.** The grant to CJA to provide the training ends September 30, 2023. Informal communications indicate that CJA and OJJDP have had some discussions regarding a continuance of the training course suggesting that there is at least some interest by both parties to continue offering the training beyond September 2023. No agreement, however, has been finalized as of July 2023 (Note: This statement should be confirmed by OJJDP.)



**Item 3. Resources are available from the funder to continue offering the training course**

Source Document(s): Document Review Report

**Summary.** As noted above, the grant to CJA to provide the training ends September 30, 2023. At this juncture, it is unclear whether the resources are available from OJJDP to continue offering the training course beyond September 2023. (Note: This statement should be confirmed by OJJDP.)

**Item 4. There is a demand for an evaluation course from the funder (FD4).**

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** The issuance of the formative evaluation and the evaluability assessment provides evidence that there is at least some demand for the training course to undergo a rigorous outcome evaluation.

**Item 5. The training course addresses participant expectations (PP1).**

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Participant Evaluation Report, Participant Focus Groups Report

**Summary.** The formative evaluation found evidence that the training event met the expectations of the participants. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Participant Evaluation Report.** Overall, the attendees had a relatively favorable and stable impression (across cohorts) of the training, with an overall rating of 4.40 in Cohort 1, 4.33 in Cohort 2, 4.39 in Cohort 3, and 4.39 in Cohort 7. (Note: All criteria were assessed on a five-point scale with 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. See the Participant Evaluation Report for details on the ratings scale.) Further, no individual module fell below an average of 3.76. These overall findings suggest among other things that the trainees felt the training event offered useful strategies and skills, that the event provided them with a deeper understanding of the material, and that the presenters were knowledgeable about their subject areas. Moreover, there does not appear to be a significant overall difference between the live (Cohorts 1, 2, and 7) and the asynchronous events (Cohort 3).

**Participant Focus Groups Report.** While all participants indicated that the training met their expectations and provided a variety of topics, a few participants felt the information provided was elementary or that they would have preferred a separate track for participants with more experience running a facility.

**Item 6. The training course provides participants with appropriate knowledge/skills (PP2).**

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Knowledge Test Report, Participant Evaluation Report, Stakeholder Interviews Report

**Summary.** The formative evaluation indicates that the training course provides participants with the appropriate knowledge/skills. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Knowledge Test Report.** Knowledge acquisition is best tested via a pretest–posttest assessment. The participants were not originally assessed on the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, in cooperation with CJA, DSG developed and pilot-tested a knowledge test instrument. The results indicated a modest but not statistically significant gain in relevant knowledge. Specifically, 26 of the Cohort 7 attendees completed the pretest survey while 23 attendees completed the posttest survey. An independent *t* test indicated that there was an increase in knowledge regarding juvenile corrections

practice from pretest ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SD = 2.92$ ) to posttest ( $M = 5.70$ ,  $SD = 3.47$ ), but the difference was not significant:  $t(47) = 1.06$ ,  $p = 0.296$ .

**Participant Evaluation Report.** It should also be noted that the participants in all cohorts indicated that the training provided useful strategies and skills [3rd in Cohorts 1 ( $\bar{x} = 4.33$ ) and 7 ( $\bar{x} = 4.53$ ) and 2nd in Cohort 2 ( $\bar{x} = 4.54$ )], and that they learned new concepts or gained a deeper understanding of the topics presented. Further, the participants noted that the presenters were knowledgeable about their subject areas and provided relevant and valuable experience. In fact, presenter knowledge was ranked as the highest dimension in all cohorts [Cohort 1 ( $\bar{x} = 4.64$ ), Cohort 2 ( $\bar{x} = 4.65$ ), Cohort 3 ( $\bar{x} = 4.54$ ), and Cohort 7 ( $\bar{x} = 4.63$ )].

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** CJJA has been collegial and cooperative during the course of the formative evaluation. In fact, based on the relationship built through this study, CJJA and DSG have agreed to collaborate on other endeavors. There is no reason to expect anything different during an outcome evaluation.

**Item 8. The developers (CJJA) are likely to use the evaluation results constructively (DV2).** Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** While CJJA has not adopted all of the recommendations during the course of the formative evaluation, it has demonstrated a willingness to make modifications based on feedback in order to improve the training course. For example, the instructor-led component of the training event has not remained constant throughout each cohort as CJJA willingly replaced or restructured low-performing modules, as demonstrated in the participant evaluation report, with topics that were thought to be more relevant to the target population.

**Item 9. The training course reflects best practice (subject matter) (DV3).** Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Expert Observation Reports, Stakeholder Interviews Report

**Summary.** The formative evaluation found evidence that the course content reflects best practice. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Expert Observation Report – Training Modules and Webinars.** In every in-person training module, prerecorded training module, and webinar, best-practice juvenile justice concepts were either fully or partially incorporated. In the 23 sessions that fully met this criterion, all successfully cited and explained best practices in juvenile justice, using updated research and examples of how it is incorporated into practice. The seven sessions that only partially met this criterion may have presented some out-of-date research or did not cite research at all.

**Expert Observation Report – Coaching Calls.** Observers felt that most of the coaching calls reflected best-practice concepts in juvenile justice. During the calls, the coaches provided feedback, support, and advice based on their own experiences and as they related to evidence-based practices in juvenile justice and self-care. This criterion was fully met in 11 of the 13 calls, partially met in 1 call, and not met in 1 call.

**Stakeholder (OJJDP/CJJA) Interviews Report.** In interviews, advocates discussed several ways that best-practice concepts were used in the overall training, related to both the information and strategies that were shared and the format for

sharing them. Best practices in training topics included using Performance-based Standards, which are grounded in research, and several of the other topic areas. Respondents said they drew on the trainers' and advocates' experiences working with jurisdictions across the United States and that best practices were important throughout both topic selection and material presented within the sessions. They also mentioned "staying on top of the research." Many of the interviewees mentioned other work they do related to juvenile justice and how they were able to draw on that experience to help the training participants. Answering the follow-up question, "How did you find the best-practice concepts to put the modules together?" one advocate responded: "We have supported many agencies and facilities to advance their work. And through that work, we've also been able to kind of accumulate a body of knowledge of concrete examples of the ways that agencies and facilities make improvements."

DSG also asked trainers and coaches, "What best-practice concepts did you use in developing your module (or coaching sessions)?" Most felt that incorporating best practices into their individual modules was crucial. One of the trainers noted, "Many of the participants are not working with any best practices, so improvement in this area was a major focus in the module." Trainers and coaches discussed the sources for their material (e.g., toolkits, guidebooks, white papers, juvenile justice networks, and resources from OJJDP, CCJA, and the Vera Institute) and the importance of collaborating with other experts in the field when developing the material. Given the sustained role that the coaches play, some of them mentioned sending them information over time, with one commenting that she sends them "as much information on best practices within their goals and objectives."

**Item 10. The training course reflects best practice (delivery format) (DV4). Response:  No  Yes**

Source Document(s): Expert Observation Reports, Stakeholder Interviews Report

**Summary.** The formative evaluation found evidence that the delivery of the course content followed best practice in adult learning. The evidence to support this response was derived from the following:

**Expert Observation Report – Training Modules and Webinars.** Observers rated the extent to which interactive elements were included into the live training modules, the prerecorded training modules, and the webinars in slightly different ways. For the 17 in-person training modules, observers felt that 12 of them fully met this criterion, 4 partially met this criterion, and 1 did not meet this criterion. Many of the in-person modules included small group interactive activities, opportunities to ask and answer questions in small groups and in the large group, and time for reflecting on the things they are doing in their own facilities related to the training topics. Regarding the prerecorded modules, there are other methods for incorporating interactive elements, and some presenters from Cohort 3 were able to do this successfully. This included allowing for activity time, in which participants were encouraged to stop the video and think through a question, asking participants to stop the video at one point to write down certain information specific to them, or asking questions of the participants and then pausing to reflect on practices in their own facilities. Of the 9 prerecorded modules, 3 fully met the criterion for incorporating interactive elements, 4 partially met this criterion, and 2 did not meet this criterion. However, although the webinars for Cohort 3 were live, none of them fully met this criterion: 4 of the webinars partially met this criterion while one webinar did not meet it.

**Expert Observation Report – Coaching Calls.** Each of the 13 coaching calls fully met the criterion to include interactive elements, using several different strategies. Coaches consistently asked follow-up questions of the participants, summarized what participants said to ensure that they understood what the participant was saying, and provided feedback. However, incorporating more interactive and engaging icebreakers in the first couple of meetings may improve these coaching calls.

**Stakeholder Interviews Report.** Trainers were asked whether they incorporated interactive elements into their sessions. While most felt it was impossible to include interactive elements for the asynchronous training events, others tried to do so creatively. Coaches also mentioned that they tried to integrate more interactive elements during the asynchronous training events, given that the calls were the main opportunity for participants to intermingle. In contrast, most training provided

interactive elements for the participants. For example, one trainer said, “At the in-person sessions, there was an interactive exercise in which the attendees were split into three groups to work through different scenarios.” Other stakeholders noted the use of breakout groups, question-and-answer sessions, activities, and “conducting the sessions as if they were facilitated conversations and allowing for dialogue” as examples of how they incorporated interactive elements into their in-person training modules.

Further, advocates, trainers, and coaches were asked about how best practices in adult learning were incorporated into the training. One of the advocates mentioned offering tips to the trainers on how to be more engaging on camera and the differences between talking to a screen versus presenting in person. Trainers were also asked whether they considered several types of adult learning methods in their sessions. In response, a number of trainers noted the contextualization of information by drawing on experiences and examples that have a better chance of resonating with adults working in juvenile justice programs. Trainers also mentioned asking questions during the live sessions to consider how the information would relate to their own facilities, using legible fonts, not reading from the slides, and limiting the number of concepts on a slide so the audience would not be overwhelmed. Specifically, one of the trainer/coaches said, “Adult learners should have examples they can visualize and relate to.”

**Item 11. There has been consideration as to how manage negative evaluation findings (DS1).** Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** The formative evaluation found no evidence that the management of negative findings was considered.

FD=Funder; PP=Participant; DV=Developer; DS=Dissemination

DECISION SUPPORT			
Decision	Range	Reason	Score
Proceed	9-11	An evaluation of the training course can reasonably be expected to be useful. There are no major barriers to utility of an evaluation.	9
Address Deficiencies	5-8	An evaluation of the training course may be useful provided that the noted deficiencies (continued funding of the training, the usefulness of the training to the participants, the dissemination of the findings) can be addressed.	
Do Not Proceed	0-4	An evaluation of the training course is not expected to be useful due to significant deficiencies that cannot be addressed easily or in a timely manner.	

**FEASIBILITY (IS IT REASONABLE TO ASSESS CHANGE?)**

**Item 1. At least one previous evaluation of the training course has been carried out (PE1). Response:**  No  Yes

Source Document(s): Document Review

**Summary.** The formative evaluation found no evidence that the training had previously been evaluated. Further, the training course is relatively new, having originated in 2020.

The data for the following measures is available (or the capacity exists to collect it).

Data	Item	Source	Response:	
Item 2. Participant reaction measures (satisfaction)	DA1	Participant Evaluation Report	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Item 3. Participant knowledge measures (learning)	DA2	JCELT Knowledge Test Report	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Item 4. Participant skill measures (learning)	DA3	JCELT Knowledge Test Report	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Item 5. Health domain (outcome)	DA4	Data Capacity Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Item 6. Order domain measures (outcome)	DA5	Data Capacity Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Item 7. Programming domain measures (outcome)	DA6	Data Capacity Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Item 8. Reentry domain measures (outcome)	DA7	Data Capacity Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Item 9. Safety domain measures (outcome)	DA8	Data Capacity Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Item 10. Security domain measures (outcome)	DA9	Data Capacity Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes

**Summary.** Overall, there is sufficient evidence (in some cases limited) that the various data domains are available for a comprehensive outcome evaluation.

**Participant Evaluation Report.** CJA has conducted a participant reaction survey with every training cohort. Overall, the training was well received by the participants. The training scored an overall rating of 4.40 in Cohort 1, 4.33 in Cohort 2, 4.39 in Cohort 3, and 4.44 in Cohort 4. (Note: All criteria were assessed on a five-point scale with 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. See the Participant Evaluation Report for details on the ratings scale.)

**JCELT Knowledge Test Report.** DSG developed and CJA operationalized a participant knowledge and skills test for Cohort 7. An analysis of the data provided some evidence that the participants gained knowledge, but the finding was not statistically significant. Specifically, 26 of the Cohort 7 attendees completed the pretest survey, **while** 23 attendees completed the posttest survey. An independent *t* test indicated that there was an increase in knowledge regarding juvenile corrections practice from pretest (*M* = 4.73, *SD* = 2.92) to posttest (*M* = 5.70, *SD* = 3.47), but the difference was not significant *t*(47) = 1.06, *p* = 0.296. (See JCELT Knowledge Test Report for more information).

**Data Capacity Survey.** DSG surveyed the CJA membership regarding the capacity of juvenile facilities (regardless of their training status) to take part in a multisite evaluation of the training program. The survey asked each participant whether they could provide 3 years (2020, 2021, and 2022) of monthly facility-level data that can be used to measure outcomes across several domains (health, order, programming, reentry, safety, and security). Unfortunately, the response to the survey was limited, and thus the results should be viewed with caution. Specifically, DSG received only 8 valid responses to the survey from an estimated membership of 60 (the 50 states plus larger metro/county members). Nevertheless, an analysis of

the survey results indicated that 75 percent of the respondents participated in the Performance-based Standards data collection system. (The PbS program is the preeminent data collection system for correction facilities and provides more than 100 outcome measures distributed across several domains.) Further, 88 percent of the respondents indicated that they could provide monthly data in at least 1 domain, and 63 percent of the respondents indicated that they could provide monthly data in most domains (the lone exception was the reentry domain).

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): JCELT Comparison Site Report

**Summary.** The JCELT Comparison Site Report found evidence that there are a sufficient number of facilities to identify a comparison group for an evaluation. Specifically, the report indicated that there are 1,510 juvenile correctional facilities located within the United States. Of those, only 186 facilities have received any part of the JCEL training course, leaving more than 1,000 facilities available to serve as comparison sites. Further, the findings indicate that in most states there are a sufficient number of facilities to identify a comparison group for an evaluation. For example, in Pennsylvania, 3 facilities have received the JCEL training course, compared with 91 facilities that have not received the training. The same pattern is observed in most states (See the JCELT Comparison Site Report for more details).

Item 12. An experimental design is feasible (DN2).

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** While it is possible to conduct an experimental design study, it is not feasible given the current construction of the treatment group, who essentially self-select into the training.

Item 13. A quasi-experimental design is feasible (DN3).

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** While an experimental design is unlikely (see Item 13), a quasi-experimental design is feasible given the availability of comparison facilities. Further, it is recommended that a panel dataset be constructed to assess the impact of the training to increase power. A panel data (or time-series cross section) means that there are data from many units (juvenile correctional facilities) over many points in time (36 months). (See the JCELT Comparison Site Report for more details).

Item 14. It is reasonable to expect an internally valid study (i.e., alternative explanations for the observed outcomes can be ruled out) (DN4).

Response:  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** Panel data (also known as longitudinal or cross-sectional time-series) are datasets in which the behaviors of entities like states, juvenile correctional facilities, or individuals are observed across time. Panel data are extremely useful in that they allow for the control of variables that cannot be observed or measured (i.e., differences in correctional facility practices across states) or variables that change over time but not across entities (i.e., national policies) so they control for individual heterogeneity.

**Item 15. The challenges of evaluating the training course are manageable (OT1).**

**Response:**  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** An evaluation of the training course is challenging, but manageable.

The ultimate goal of the training is to enhance the facility management skills of the learners to increase the functionality, comfort, safety, and efficiency of the built environment. The biggest challenge in conducting an evaluation of the training course is to measure the degree of transferability of the training material into everyday practice within the institution. Training transfer means that learners are able to take the knowledge and skills learned in training back to their facilities and implement these in their jobs. Unfortunately, there are many factors that can inhibit the transfer of the training information and thus impact the intended outcomes of the training. These obstacles include a lack of accountability, inadequate resources, a lack of institutional support, and few opportunities to use training knowledge. A thorough evaluation must recognize and assess the degree to which these obstacles are relevant.

Another important challenge very common to multisite evaluations is data quality. Data quality assessment is particularly important in multisite evaluations, to distinguish true variations in outcomes from data quality variation problems. One way to overcome this challenge is to focus on measures that are common across providers and settings in order to form a core set of outcomes. As such, it is recommended that data collection activities focus on the PbS system measures. As noted earlier, the PbS program is the preeminent data collection system for correction facilities and provides more than 100 outcome measures distributed across several domains.

**Item 16. The training course evaluation is likely to be free of ethical issues (OT2).**

**Response:**  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** An evaluation of the training course is likely to be free of any ethical issues. While individuals “involuntarily confined or detained in a penal institution” are considered a special population and require special human subject protections in evaluation research, the unit of analysis in this evaluation is the institution. Thus, no personally identifiable information (PII) will be collected. PII is any data that could potentially identify a specific individual. Further, the evaluation involves the secondary analysis of existing data. For the purposes of an Institutional Review Board review, existing data are data not generated by the researcher. It may include individual records (e.g., academic, medical, financial), datasets, interview notes, biospecimens, online profiles and posts (e.g., social media), and audio or video recordings. These data are available for purposes other than research, and are sometimes, but not always, identifiable.

**Item 17. The cost of the training course evaluation is reasonable (OT3).**

**Response:**  No  Yes

Source Document(s): N/A

**Summary.** The cost of the evaluation is not likely to be prohibitive. An evaluation of the training course requires a multisite evaluation approach. A multisite evaluation approach involves data collection processes and analyses at multiple sites. As such, the complex and uneven processes across the sites can have a multiplicative effect on the cost of the evaluation. That being said, such complexity is not prohibitive. Further, an evaluation can build some cost-saving processes into the project. For example, a uniform data collection procedure would reduce costs, as would not requiring a site visit to each participating site.

PE=Previous Evaluation; DA=Study Data; DN=Study Design; OT=Other Concerns



**DECISION SUPPORT**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Proceed</b>	13-17	A rigorous evaluation of the training course to assess change is possible. There are no major barriers to the feasibility of an evaluation.	<b>16</b>
<b>Address Deficiencies</b>	7-12	A rigorous evaluation of the training course to assess change may be possible provided the noted deficiencies (availability of data, the ability to create a comparison group, the estimated cost of the evaluation) can be addressed.	
<b>Do Not Proceed</b>	0-6	A rigorous evaluation of the training course to assess change is challenging due to significant deficiencies that cannot be addressed easily or in a timely manner.	

## Summary

The evaluability of the JCEL training course was assessed across three broad dimensions: 1) plausibility (Should the activities reasonably be expected to lead to the intended outcomes?), 2) feasibility (Is there sufficient capacity, resources, and time to collect quality data?), and 3) utility (Will the intended evaluation produce useful findings?). Overall, the findings from the evaluability assessment indicate that the JCEL training course is evaluable with some minor modifications. Specifically, the assessment found that that an evaluation of the JCEL training course is feasible and that there is utility in conducting an evaluation. However, the EDST also noted some deficiencies in the plausibility that the training course will result in the intended outcomes. The deficiencies in the plausibility are the result of two factors: 1) a lack of a formal bottom-up needs assessment being conducted prior to the design and implementation of the training course, and 2) the efficiency of the training model in integrating the information, obtained by those trained, into the daily operations of their respective facilities.

**A Formal Needs Assessment.** The purpose of a training needs assessment is to identify the performance requirements of the staff and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by an agency’s workforce to meet those requirements. An effective training needs assessment will help direct limited training resources to areas of greatest demand.<sup>6</sup>

The formative evaluation found anecdotal evidence that there is a considerable need for a JCEL-type training as there are no national training standards for juvenile correctional staff, and the basic training for juvenile corrections staff varies widely from state to state. However, designers of the JCEL training course relied solely on a top-down approach where OJJDP staff were the driving force behind the topics and materials of the training course. In a traditional top-down training needs analysis, management (or in this case federal staff) are the sole decision-makers on what employees (or state and local staff) need to learn. The problem with this approach is that it is overly centralized and potentially creates an inconsistency between those designing the training and those intended to apply what is taught. In contrast, a bottom-up approach democratizes the needs assessment process by giving local staff the platform to tell management what they want or need to learn to do their jobs better.

**Diffusion of Training Skills and Knowledge.** A key feature of the intervention is that juvenile correctional facility leaders who attend the JCEL training course and are provided with state-of-the-art information regarding the care of juvenile offenders. In turn, these trained leaders can return to their respective facilities to educate their staff on the skills and knowledge acquired during the training and integrate them into the daily practices of the facility. This diffusion of innovation (DOI) is a key concept of the training that is not well articulated, but vital to its success. The theory of DOI, developed by E.M. Rogers in 1962, is one of the oldest social science theories. It originated to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system. The end result of this diffusion is that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behavior, or product. Adoption means that a person does something differently than what they had previously (i.e., acquire knowledge and change behavior). The key to adoption is that the person must perceive the idea as useful, which makes diffusion possible. Although the action plans are an attempt to diffuse at least some of the information, the evidence that this diffusion actually occurs is minimal: many participants did not even complete the action plan.

Given these identified deficiencies, we make the following recommendations to improve the plausibility that the JCEL training course will lead to the intended outcomes:

1. Conduct a formal needs assessment to assess whether the training addresses the needs of state and local agency staff (See recommendation #2 of the *Formative Evaluation Report* for more information).

<sup>6</sup> OPM. 2018. “Planning & Evaluating.” U.S. Office of Personnel Management, [www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/planning-evaluating/](http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/planning-evaluating/).

2. Modify the JCEL training course according to the results of the formal needs assessment.
3. Integrate a mechanism designed to promote the diffusion of the concepts and skills learned during the training course in order for these practices to be adopted as part of the facility culture. (See recommendations #14 and #15 of the *Formative Evaluation Report* for more information).
4. Evaluate the JCEL training course to assess its impact in the field (See the *Evaluation Plan Report* regarding the details of the proposed design).

# JUVENILE CORRECTIONS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING

## Phase 3: Evaluation Plan Report

December 2023

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## Introduction

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The Juvenile Corrections Executive Leadership (JCEL) Training course offers juvenile facility leadership and agency deputy directors overseeing facility operations a national training opportunity to enhance their skills in facility management—to ensure functionality, comfort, safety, and efficiency of the built environment by integrating people, place, process, and technology. The objectives of the course, as identified by the logic model developed from the process evaluation work led by the project team, are to provide multifaceted technical assistance (instructor-led,<sup>1</sup> webinars, coaching, and peer learning) to juvenile residential facility leaders to

- Increase understanding of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act requirements, as they relate to juvenile facilities.
- Implement evidence-based practices in areas of greatest need, such as gender-specific services, needs-based reentry services, and conditions of confinement.
- Identify, monitor, and reduce racial and ethnic disparities within facility decisionmaking.
- Improve facility management, especially in emergency planning, staff wellness, data-driven decisionmaking, and adherence to the Prison Rape Elimination Act and the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (or CRIPA).

To measure whether training courses like JCEL result in the intended outcomes for facility leaders, staff, and the youths they serve, it is necessary to conduct an outcome evaluation. But before allocating scarce resources for an outcome evaluation, it is wise to make two critical assessments. First, it must be determined whether the processes for developing the JCEL Training course and its implementation are built on sound logic and best practices; if not, they will need to be adjusted. Second, a preliminary determination must be made regarding whether the JCEL Training course can and should be evaluated.

As such, the goals of this project are to determine 1) the extent to which the JCEL Training course is logically sound and 2) whether it can be reliably and credibly evaluated. Specifically, the objectives of this project are to

- Conduct a formative evaluation to provide feedback to stakeholders from the National Institute of Justice and the Office of Justice Programs about program functioning.
- Conduct an evaluability assessment to determine whether an outcome evaluation of the program would be justified, feasible, and useful.
- Develop a rigorous outcome evaluation plan to assess the impact of the training on facility leaders, staff, and the youth in custody (if an outcome evaluation is deemed worthwhile).

The formative evaluation found that despite some ambiguity as to the purpose and goals of the training course, which was evidenced in the comments of stakeholders in the interviews, the JCEL training course overall was developed and implemented according to best practice in instructional design (see the *Formative Evaluation Report* for more information). Further, the evaluability assessment found that the JCEL training course is evaluable with some minor modifications (see the *Evaluability Assessment Report* for more information). The purpose of this document is to present a preliminary evaluation plan for the JCEL training course. Specifically, the DSG research team provides a preliminary plan to conduct both an outcome and a process evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup>This took the form of pre-recorded asynchronous modules during the COVID-19 pandemic for cohorts 3,4,5, and 6.

## Preliminary Evaluation Plan

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Prior to proceeding with an evaluation of the JCEL training course, we first recommend remedying the deficiencies identified through the formative evaluation and evaluability assessment. Specifically, these recommendations include: 1) Conducting a formal needs assessment to assess whether the training addresses the needs of state and local agency staff; 2) Modifying the JCEL training course according to the results of the formal needs assessment; 3) Integrating a mechanism designed to promote the diffusion of the knowledge and skills learned during the training course in order for these practices to be adopted as part of the facility culture.

After remedying these deficiencies, we recommend proceeding with an evaluation of the JCEL training course to assess its impact in the field. The preliminary evaluation plan (including an outcome and process component) for the JCEL training course is presented below:

### Outcome Component

The basic purpose of the outcome component is to formalize a research design that matches the program context identified through the formative evaluation and is also powerful enough to yield answers regarding program effectiveness. In doing so, we consider numerous important questions, including 1) What is the most appropriate design? 2) Can subjects be randomly assigned? 3) What is an appropriate sample size? 4) Is informed consent required? 5) What should be the length of the data-collection period and (if applicable) the follow-up period? 6) What data are required to address the questions? and 7) How will the data be collected? For an evaluation of the JCEL training course, we review and summarize the following elements: 1) research design; 2) control/comparison group; 3) power; 4) attrition; 5) outcomes; 6) a data collection plan (what, how, and when the data will be collected as well as who will collect it); 7) a data management strategy; and 8) a data analysis plan.

**Research Design.** A randomized controlled trial (RCT) design (e.g., a design where units are randomly assigned to an experimental group) is considered the gold standard in evaluation research as it generally produces comparable groups and eliminates the source of bias in treatment assignments. Although conducting an RCT with the JCEL training course is feasible, it would require some modifications to the JCEL training course site selection process. For example, facilities currently self-select into the training course based on an invitation to the training event by the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA). Self-selection is, by definition, non-random. However, CJJA and OJJDP could modify the recruitment process to invite facilities to participate in a study without telling them whether they would participate as a treatment or control group site. Then, those that agreed to participate could be randomly assigned to either an experimental group that receives the JCEL training course or the waitlist control group. The waitlist control group serves two purposes. First, it provides an untreated comparison for those receiving the training course to determine whether the treatment had an effect. By looking at the control group, researchers can isolate the independent variable and look at the impact it had. Second, it allows the waitlist participants an opportunity to obtain the training course at a later date.

Alternatively, a quasi-experimental design (QED) is feasible, and perhaps more reasonable given the constraints noted above. Similar to an RCT, a QED is an empirical interventional study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on a target population. A QED shares similarities with the traditional RCT, but it specifically lacks the element of random assignment to treatment or control.

Instead, a QED typically allows the researcher to control the assignment to the treatment condition but uses some criterion other than random assignment. However, the lack of random assignment is the major weakness of the QED.

**Control/Comparison Group.** The unit of analysis is likely to be the facility level. To assess the potential for identifying a viable comparison group for an evaluation of the JCEL training course, we obtained from CJJA a list of all JCEL-trained facilities to date. Next, using data collected by the Juvenile Residential Facility Census (JRFC), we identified the universe of juvenile corrections facilities in the United States. An analysis of the data found that, overall, there are 1,510 juvenile correctional facilities located within the United States. Of those, only 186 facilities have received any part of the JCEL training course—leaving more than 1,000 facilities available to serve as a comparison site. The findings indicate that in most states there are a sufficient number of facilities to identify a comparison group for an evaluation. For example, in Pennsylvania, 3 facilities have received the JCEL training course, compared with 91 facilities that have not received the training. The same pattern is observed in most states where there are many facilities available to serve as comparison groups (See the Site Comparison report for more details).

**Power.** Given that the level of analysis is at the facility level (e.g., incidents of youth misconduct that result in injury, confinement, and/or restraint per 100 person-days of youth confinement), constructing a sample of facilities that is large enough to provide meaningful findings is a prohibitive challenge. An alternative to a traditional quasi-experimental design that circumvents this issue is an interrupted time-series (ITS) design. In this design, the outcome measure is repeatedly collected for several time periods (i.e., weekly, monthly, quarterly) *before* the training course, to signify the counterfactual pretreatment status quo. The data for the same measure are again repeatedly collected for several time periods *after* the implementation of the training course, which thus reveals the impact of the training. An ITS design may or may not include the same units at each time of measurement. In this case, we propose using not only the same units (i.e., correctional institutions) but multiple pre- and posttest observations from a treatment group that experiences the training and a comparison group that does not. Such a design is typically referred to as an interrupted time-series comparison group (ITSCG). In this case, there is an expectation of a severance in the time series data once the training is in operation in the treatment group. In contrast, there should be no such severance of the data in the comparison group. A minimum of 50 observations is typically necessary to discern a trend, but not necessarily equally balanced between before and after the intervention. Nevertheless, at least one third should be post-intervention observations.

**Attrition.** Attrition is not typically a significant problem in an ITSCG design as the data used is often drawn from existing databases such as internal institutional data systems.

**Outcomes.** To assess the capacity of juvenile facilities for cooperating in a multisite evaluation of the JCEL training course, we conducted a survey of the CJJA membership. Specifically, we asked each CJJA member facility to take a short survey (about 5 minutes) and (if eligible) regarding their ability to provide 3 years (2020, 2021, and 2022) of monthly facility-level data that can be used to measure outcomes across several domains. The requested data elements were derived from the Performance-based Standards (PbS) for Youth Correction and Detention Facilities to enhance the familiarity with and availability of the requested data elements. PbS is a program for agencies and facilities that uses national standards and outcome measures to identify, monitor, and improve conditions and treatment services provided to incarcerated youths. We specifically requested only data that are presently being



collected so as to 1) minimize the data collection burden, and 2) get an accurate representation of the type of data that is collected by facilities across the nation.

The PbS domains included items in the following domains:

- Health (e.g., percent of youths confined for more than 60 days whose records indicated that they received the health treatment prescribed by their individual treatment plans).
- Order domain (e.g., incidents of youth misconduct that resulted in injury, confinement, and/or restraint per 100 person-days of youth confinement).
- Programming domain (e.g., percent of youths confined for more than 6 months whose math scores increased between admission and discharge).
- Reentry domain (e.g., percent of youths confined for more than 60 days, who have signed aftercare treatment plans).
- Safety domain (e.g., injuries to youths per 100 person-days of youth confinement).
- Security domain (e.g., completed escapes, walkaways, and AWOLs per 100 person-days of youth confinement).

**Data Collection Plan.** We recommend the creation of a panel data set (i.e., a collection of quantities obtained across multiple units that are assembled over even intervals in time and ordered chronologically) where each facility provides 5 years (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023) of monthly facility-level data (60 observations) that can be used to measure outcomes across several domains. As noted above, we would request data elements derived from the Performance-based Standards (PbS) for Youth Correction and Detention Facilities to enhance the familiarity with and availability of the requested data elements. The data would be transferred via a cloud-based secure file-sharing platform.

**Data Management.** All data would be downloaded and stored in a password-protected, restricted-access drive. Only project research staff would have access to the data. Data would be secured on DSG premises. The suite entry doors are locked at all times and monitored by a receptionist during working hours. Visitors must sign in with the receptionist. The premises are secured 24 hours per day through the use of a motion-sensor security system. In addition, after hours, the building requires the use of a proximity key card to enter the building and use the elevators. Proximity key cards are programmed to allow tenants to access the appropriate floors only. Finally, all servers use 128-bit encryption for user authentication.

It is expected that multiple datasets would be integrated into the panel to create an institutional-level dataset suitable for executing a longitudinal analysis. For example, there may be a different dataset for each PbS domain, as well as a different dataset regarding facility-level characteristics. As such, for each dataset, the data would be cleaned and appropriately linked.

**Data Cleaning.** Data cleaning occurs after collection and involves detecting and correcting corrupt or inaccurate records. For this project, we recommend the following steps to clean the data:

- Conduct an analysis to detect errors and inconsistencies.
- Conduct a manual inspection of the data to assess the properties and detect data-quality problems.
- Develop transformation codes to enable automatic generation of the transformations.
- Test and evaluate the correctness and effectiveness of the transformation codes.

- Backflow the cleaned data by replacing the dirty data in the original sources to provide future applications of the improved data.

Another important data management task is to connect relevant datasets across disparate data sources. For instance, in this case, it will be important to link facilities across all datasets. However, this is sometimes more difficult than it seems owing to typographical and data entry errors, such as transposed digits or misspellings. With this in mind, we recommend using a data-linking algorithm to minimize false matches.

**Data Analysis.** While there are numerous analytic strategies to assess panel data, we propose the use of multilevel longitudinal regression modeling. Multilevel models are a class of regression models for data that have a hierarchical or nested structure. Many kinds of social science data have a hierarchical or nested structure (i.e., data collected from multiple units within a group) For example, siblings are nested within a family, and may further be clustered within geographical areas or institutions such as neighborhoods or schools. Multilevel data structures also arise in longitudinal studies such as the one presented here where measures are repeatedly assessed in incremental units over a period of time. The presence of nested data is an important consideration when analyzing the data because units within a group or setting tend to be more similar to each other than those chosen at random from all groups. This correlation (dependency) of observations violates the assumption of independence for regression analysis leading to biased standard errors of parameter estimates. Multilevel regression modeling accounts for statistical dependency by assigning each level in the data hierarchy its own statistical model that includes an intercept, regression coefficients, and error term.

### Process Component

The process component offers a plan for assessing the implementation fidelity of the JCEL training course. Fidelity refers to the degree to which the intervention is delivered as intended and acts as a moderator of the relationship between the intervention and its intended outcomes. Assessing fidelity during an evaluation is an important task because, despite good intentions, real world conditions often prevent the intervention from being implemented exactly as designed. Trainers may stray from the intended curriculum, a module may run long or be cut short, the participants may not be engaged with the trainer or the material, or even if the participants are engaged during the training course, they may fail to use the information learned during the training in the facility upon their return.

Importantly, the degree to which the intervention is delivered as intended has crucial implications for how the results of an evaluation can be interpreted, and subsequently our knowledge of the intervention. For example, if the evaluation results are positive, it is generally concluded that the intervention is effective. Conversely, if results are negative, the intervention is generally considered ineffective. However, both of these conclusions are based on the assumption that the intervention was implemented with high fidelity. If this assumption is erroneous, then the interpretation of the evaluation results are invalid as the assessed intervention is only a deficient facsimile of the intervention intended to be evaluated. In other words, the intervention intended to be evaluated was not really evaluated. By gathering fidelity data, a process evaluation can eliminate this ambiguity.

While the general concept of implementation fidelity is fairly well understood across disciplines, the specific dimensions of fidelity are not. For example, adherence, content, process, dose, quality of delivery, competence, participant responsiveness, and program differentiation are all dimensions of fidelity referenced in the literature (Barber, Sharpless, Klostermann, & McCarthy, 2007; Martino, Ball,

Nich, Frankforter, & Carroll, 2008; Stein, et al., 2007). However, there is considerable overlap in the definition of these terms, and no consensus as to how to measure each concept. Even more, rarely if ever, do researchers assess all these dimensions in a single study. Nor is it always applicable or practical. Thus, it falls to the researcher to develop unique fidelity measures that are relevant to the specific intervention under investigation.

For an evaluation of the JCEL training course, we propose focusing on adherence, dosage, quality of delivery, and participant responsiveness. These dimensions of fidelity together measure both the structure (e.g., adherence and dosage) and the processes (e.g., quality of delivery and participant responsiveness) of the intervention. In this sense, fidelity to structure measures both the content and the amount of the intervention. Fidelity to process, on the other hand, assesses the way in which the intervention is delivered and involves interactions between trainers and participants.

**Adherence.** Adherence measures the degree to which an intervention implements its key components. It is important to assess adherence as a concept as these are the key factors designed to induce change. Generally speaking, measures of adherence are typically reported as the proportion of intervention components that were delivered, compared with the number prescribed. In this case, the JCEL training course prescribes four components: 1) in-person training, 2) webinars, 3) coaching, and 4) peer learning. Thus, if the JCEL training course covered all four components during the course of the evaluation period, the adherence score would be 100%. With that being said, we recommend adding the concept of diffusion (i.e., the implementation of the action plan) as a key component to the training course as it is crucial to the success of the training (see above for more details).

**Dosage.** Dosage (or exposure) refers to the amount of an intervention received by participants. Specifically, it measures the degree to which the intervention is implemented as prescribed by the designers. It is important to measure the degree to which participants are exposed to a particular intervention because it is possible that in practice the received amount was insufficient to produce the desired effect. In this case, dosage can be calculated by summing the number of training hours completed and dividing it by the number total number of training hours offered. The resulting figure shows the percentage of training completed. Note: the number of training hours should include all four core components: 1) instructor-led, in-person training; 2) webinars; 3) coaching; and 4) peer learning.

**Quality of Delivery.** Quality of delivery measures the degree to which an intervention is delivered in a way appropriate to achieving the intended goals. It is important to assess the quality of delivery because if the training is poorly delivered, it is unlikely to produce the desired change. For example, even if the training course is composed of critically relevant knowledge, the participants may have a difficult time absorbing the material if the trainers cannot effectively communicate the information. Further, it is meaningful to note that an assessment of delivery quality may require the use of a benchmark. For example, during the formative evaluation, we assessed the quality of delivery by benchmarking it against the best-practice elements in instructional design drawn directly from ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation), the preeminent instructional design framework that is used to organize and develop training courses. Specifically, we asked subject matter experts to assess each module against best practice by completing an observation checklist for each module (see Expert Reviewer Report for more details). Each best-practice criteria maintained an ordinal response structure (1=Not Met; 2=Partially Met; and 3=Met) as to whether the module met the requirement. Significantly, guidance was provided on how each of the criteria should be rated. Overall, the expert reviewers found that when combining ratings of Met and Partially Met, the training

course was delivered with high quality by successfully incorporating many important best-practice elements. We recommend that a process evaluation of the JCEL training course incorporate a similar construct to assess the quality of delivery.

**Participant Responsiveness.** Participant responsiveness measures the degree to which participants respond to, or are engaged by, an intervention. It is important to assess responsiveness because if the participants feel the intervention is irrelevant, then the intervention is unlikely to produce the desired outcomes. Participant responsiveness is currently assessed via the participant evaluation survey conducted at the end of each training cohort. A review of the *Participant Evaluation Report* indicates that the attendees had a relatively favorable and stable impression (across cohorts) of the training, with an overall rating of 4.40 (out of 5) in Cohort 1, 4.33 in Cohort 2, 4.39 in Cohort 3, and 4.39 in Cohort 7. These overall findings suggest among other things that the trainees felt the training event offered useful strategies and skills, that the event provided them with a deeper understanding of the material, and that the presenters were knowledgeable about their subject areas. We recommend that this assessment continue in a process evaluation of the JCEL training course.

## Summary

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The formative evaluation indicated that the development and implementation of the JCEL training course compares favorably when benchmarked against instructional design best practice. Further, the evaluability assessment found that the JCEL training course is evaluable with some minor modifications. Specifically, the assessment found that that an evaluation of the JCEL training course is feasible and that there is utility in conducting an evaluation. However, the assessment noted some deficiencies in the plausibility of the training course resulting from 1) a lack of a formal bottom-up needs assessment being conducted prior to the design and implementation of the training course, and 2) the efficiency of the training model in integrating the information, obtained by those trained, into the daily operations of their respective facilities. Armed with the findings from the formative evaluation and evaluability assessment, the objective of this report was to present a preliminary research plan to assess the JCEL training course.

First, we recommended remedying the deficiencies identified through the formative evaluation (See *Formative Evaluation Report*) and evaluability assessment (See *Evaluability Assessment Report*). Next, we provided a preliminary plan to conduct an outcome evaluation of the JCEL training course. Specifically, we offered specific recommendations on the following outcome evaluation elements: 1) research design; 2) control/comparison group; 3) power; 4) attrition; 5) outcomes; 6) a data collection plan (what, how, and when the data will be collected as well as who will collect it); 7) a data management strategy; and 8) a data analysis plan.

We also provided a plan to conduct a process evaluation in conjunction with the outcome evaluation, to assess the degree to which the intervention was delivered as intended. Specifically, we proposed focusing on the following dimensions of fidelity: adherence, dosage, quality of delivery, and participant responsiveness. These dimensions together measure both the fidelity to the intervention structure (e.g., adherence and dosage) and the fidelity to the intervention processes (e.g., quality of delivery and participant responsiveness).

Lastly, while we did not specifically collect cost information as part of the formative evaluation or evaluability assessment, we recommend it be included in the evaluation of the training event. In particular, we recommend including a cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) as part of the evaluation. CEA is a way to examine both the costs and outcomes of one or more interventions. Specifically, it compares an intervention to another intervention (or the status quo) by estimating how much it costs to gain a unit of an outcome such as a reduction in violent incidents or improved mental wellness.