

Position Description

Director of Juvenile Services

Dallas County Juvenile Department

The Dallas County Juvenile Department has emerged as one of the leading providers of juvenile justice services. With the support and partnership of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, the Department has halved the number of youth detained in its detention centers in the last four years while still maintaining the safety of the community it serves. However, this statistic is only just the beginning. By offering constructive alternatives and treatment options to youth offenders and their families, Dallas County offers troubled young people the chance to develop into healthy, productive adults, thus breaking the cycle of recidivism and allowing these youth to become positive contributors to society.

The Dallas County Juvenile Department seeks a new Director who will continue and enhance these initiatives so that the long-term potential of these reforms may be realized to their fullest extent for the greatest benefit of the youth it serves – and the uncompromised safety of the residents of Dallas County.

Background

The Dallas County Juvenile Department is entrusted with the rehabilitation of the county's youthful offenders. Its mission is to assist referred youth in becoming productive, law abiding citizens, while promoting public safety and victim restoration. The Department expresses this mission through its operation of six residential programs, nine satellite field probation offices, an open enrollment charter school, a juvenile justice alternative education program, and a comprehensive psychological and substance abuse program. Through these initiatives, the Dallas County Juvenile Department services an average total of 11,000 families annually.

Current Situation

The Dallas County Juvenile Department operates with a budget of \$50 million dollars and a staff of approximately 1,000 employees. The Juvenile Department is governed by the Dallas County Juvenile Board with support from the Dallas County Commissioners Court and the Youth Services Advisory Board.

The Dallas County Juvenile Department offers both residential and non-residential community-based programs for the youth it serves. The Department contracts with several residential treatment programs that offer a broad range of services, including Substance Abuse Intervention, Sex Offender specific treatment, and therapeutic intervention for youth with Severe Emotional and Behavioral Disturbances, as well as other specialized services. The Department also contracts with a network of providers offering community-based

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services throughout the County. These programs, which support youth who reside at home under probationary supervision, include In-home Family Preservation, Substance Abuse Treatment, After School Programs, Wrap-around Family Support, GED Preparation, Job Placement and Independent Living Programs.

The Dallas County Juvenile Department also proudly partners with Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) as well as the Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network coordinated by the National Center on Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, which is funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The Mental Health/ Juvenile Justice Action Network in particular works to improve the response to youth encountered in the justice system who are challenged by mental health issues.

As mentioned previously, the JDAI has had a dramatic effect on the juvenile justice system in Dallas County. With the guidance, support, and expertise provided by the Casey Foundation Initiative, Dallas County has adopted the JDAI 's basic philosophy of intervention with youth and their families and has used the JDAI philosophical outline to develop new programs and to adapt many of the Dallas County programs already in place. Recommendations and subsequent decisions which are made regarding the detention and the eventual disposition/supervision/intervention of youth are now being crafted to meet the needs of the youth, to ensure the safety public safety, and do so in the least restrictive way. Every effort is made for every youth to build a support plan to return the child to the community with appropriate supervision and intervention (with the exception of youth who are the highest risk to recidivate or abscond from court).

Some of the strategies which have been implemented, in keeping with the JDAI include:

- the creation of a Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) to objectively assess a referred youth's level of risk;
- the creation of a number of alternatives to detention (such as home detention and a day reporting center) to support release recommendations for moderate risk youth who did not require maximum security detention while pending court;
- a reduction in the length of time the system takes to process a case through the court system which subsequently reduces the length of stay in detention;
- the evaluation and creation of strategies for special groups of youth (i.e. youth with mental health issues, girls in detention, youth who have violated probation rules but have not committed a new offenses, youth who are perpetrators of family violence) to appropriately address their needs in order to support a recommendation release consisting of programming and treatment options so that a youth will spend less time in detention.

As a result of these strategies and others, the number of youth in detention has been reduced from a high of 435 youth in detention four years ago to an average daily population of about 200. The average length of stay in detention for youth has been reduced from 22 days to about 18.5. The number of cases diverted from court has been also been increased. The result has been a tremendous saving in detention costs and, subsequently, a better use of taxpayer dollars.

Additionally, the JDAI has helped reduce the detention population without compromising the safety of the community as there has not been an increase in the recidivism or crime rate since the implementation of the program. Consequently, the incorporation of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative into Dallas County has resulted in better individual intervention strategies for referred youth without sacrificing public safety.

Specific Role:

The new Director of Juvenile Services reports directly to the Dallas County Juvenile Board, which consists of nine members. The Director must embrace the Board's philosophy of juvenile justice that is focused on assisting youth to meet their individual potential through family-focused strength-based intervention, while always continuing to be mindful of community safety and victim restoration.

Leadership/Management

The Director directs the operation of all juvenile services, programs and facilities for Dallas County and implements the directives and policies of the Juvenile Board relating to the delivery of these services and programs. The Director is responsible for directing staff in accomplishing the mandates of Title III of the Texas Family Code involving services for delinquent and pre-delinquent youth, their families and victims of juvenile crime.

Fiscal Management

The new Director is responsible for the fiscal management of the Department's budget. The Director must have demonstrated experience in managing complex budgets in order to rigorously manage the Department's finances.

Programmatic Oversight

The new Director is responsible for all aspects of the Juvenile Department's programming as well as planning, research and facility development. The Director will be expected to respond to the changing needs of the community with the development of appropriate programming.

Communications/Public Relations

The success of the Juvenile Department is largely dependent upon its partnerships with juvenile justice stakeholders and the community at large. Therefore, it is imperative that new Director establish, maintain and enhance relationships with law enforcement agencies, school districts, faith-based organizations, community providers, and volunteers. The Director is also responsible for all communications and interactions with the Juvenile Board and the Commissioners Court.

Major Objectives

The Dallas County Juvenile Services expects the new Director to accomplish the following major objectives over the next 12-18 months:

- Establish best practices for the Department which allow for the best possible long-term outcomes for the youth and families served;
- Continue to implement the JDAI reforms in accordance to the values and practices reflected by the JDAI model sites;
- Maximize the overall efficiency of the Department while continuing to maintain a high quality of service.

Professional Characteristics:

The following qualifications are required in the new Director:

- A master's degree from an accredited university in Business, Public Administration, social or behavioral science or in a job-related field of study – or a bachelor's degree and equivalent experience;
- At least seven years of executive management experience in directing and managing programs and services related to juveniles and/or other offenders;
- Effective oral and written communication skills;
- An ability to maintain effective working relationships with employees, other departments, board members, and the general public;
- A demonstrated ability to develop and implement effective programs;
- Knowledge and a thorough understanding of laws, principles and program applications related to juvenile services.

Personal Characteristics

The following characteristics are preferred in the new Director:

- Passion and values that align with those of the Dallas County Juvenile Department and its mission;
- Strong interpersonal skills and a team-building, collegial approach to work;
- Drive, coupled with energetic, entrepreneurial leadership qualities;
- Ability to build, strengthen, and maintain both internal and external relationships;
- Healthy respect for colleagues, employees, and superiors;
- Goal-oriented, project-oriented, and achievement-oriented;
- Demonstrated excellence through achievement;
- Personal and professional integrity and honesty;
- Community-focused and the ability to network with partners to build strong critical relationships for the Dallas County Juvenile Department;
- A warm, personal style.

Additional Requirements

Per Dallas County law, the new Director must also:

- Pass an extensive background investigation prior to employment;

- Possess or attain certification by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission as a Probation Officer;
- Possess a valid Texas driver's license with a good driving record;
- Pass drug testing prior to employment and be subject to random, unannounced drug and alcohol tests during employment;
- Remain on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week;
- Reside in or be willing to relocate to Dallas County.

Compensation

Compensation will be commensurate with skill and market.

Application

Please forward cover letter, resume, and appropriate material immediately to:

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