

**CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES
CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS**

RESOLUTION 6

Commending the *Models for Change* Initiative

WHEREAS, because children lack the developmental or legal capacity of adults, the juvenile justice system was created; and

WHEREAS, over the last three decades, a shift in public policy to a “get tough on crime” approach led to policy and practice changes that eroded previously-held distinctions in the treatment of juvenile offenders; and

WHEREAS, recent advances in medical technology and the social sciences have provided a better understanding of adolescent development, and research has shown that the areas of the brain associated with decision-making develop at different rates, that adolescents are more susceptible to environmental influences, and that these aspects of evolving maturity highlight the need to carefully consider the impact of juvenile justice interventions and programs¹; and

WHEREAS, in response to these policy and practice changes and the better understanding of adolescent development, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation invested in an ambitious *Models for Change* initiative to identify and develop juvenile justice reform efforts for a “more fair, rational, effective and developmentally sound system of justice for youth”; and

WHEREAS, over the last decade the *Models for Change* initiative has supported a broad array of goals, including:

- expanding alternatives for youth charged with status offenses;
- improving access to counsel and the quality of representation in delinquency proceedings;
- reducing racial and ethnic disparities;
- improving the response to dual status youth;
- identifying and addressing the mental health treatment needs of youth that come in contact with the juvenile justice system;
- increasing the use of evidence-based assessments and treatment programs; and
- improving probation services; and

¹ National Research Council. *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2013.

WHEREAS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has been a major sponsor of the efforts by the four *Models for Change* core states and action network states to develop and implement juvenile justice reforms based on the needs within their states; and

WHEREAS, the *Models for Change* initiative has supported states by communicating information on effective practices through the development and publication of brochures, reports, and toolkits; conducting media outreach; providing technical assistance, training and consultation to practitioners and policy-makers; and collecting and analyzing data to inform system improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators recognize the important role of judicial leaders in encouraging and implementing system reforms;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators commend the *Models for Change* initiative and urge their members to review and consider the goals, strategies, and resources developed under the initiative as they undertake juvenile justice system reforms.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Courts, Children and Families Committee at the 2015 Annual Meeting.