



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES

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# Tools for Planning and Improving Your Juvenile Drug Court's Referral and Acceptance Process

## Instructions

### Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to create a visual representation of the process, steps, decision points, professionals, and information involved in referring prospective youth to your JDC and determining which of those youth get accepted into the program. The activity is intended to inform and educate all who participate in the exercise about the process so that everyone has a shared view and understanding of the current process. The exercise should be used to identify gaps, confusions or problems in the current process and for brainstorming and planning solutions to address them. It is recommended that JDC teams revisit the mapping exercise at least annually for purposes of continuous quality improvement and for training new team members and referral sources who may have become involved with the program since the last time the exercise was done.

### Who to involve?

All current JDC team members and stakeholders who are referral sources for the JDC program (but may not be team members). The team may wish to obtain an external facilitator to lead the exercise and discussion.

### Activity set-up

Arrange to use a room with blank wall space sufficient to accommodate two sets of materials to be posted (taped) to the wall:

- A set of cards, arrows and worksheets that will depict the referral and acceptance process

- An Action Plan worksheet (the size of flip chart paper)

The room space should be flexible and large enough for team members to move around in. There should be space enough for those posting the materials on the wall to stand and for other team members who are waiting to post materials to sit and view the mapping process.

It is helpful to have available a large flat table surface on which to lay out kit materials (cards, arrows, worksheets). This will enable team members to first see all of the materials and what they will be working with before they begin arranging them on the wall. The goal is to create a visual depiction of the sequence of steps and decisions of how the referral and acceptance process for the JDC program currently works.

### Time needed to complete the Referral/Acceptance Process Mapping and Action Planning Exercise:

- 20-45 minutes for mapping (depending on the number of steps to the process and the familiarity of team members with the steps/process); plus
- 30 minutes for action planning

### Materials included in the Referral/Acceptance Process Kit:

- ✓ One set of cards
  - The set of cards includes cards with pre-printed steps/decisions on them that are common to the process many jurisdictions follow for referring and

accepting youth into the Juvenile Drug Court.

- There may be more cards/steps than are needed for the process used to refer and accept a youth into your JDC program. Discard the steps/cards not needed.
- There also may be additional steps in the process that your program follows for which cards are missing. Use the blank cards for missing steps and write on the blank cards the step(s) that need to be included.

- ✓ Arrows to use to connect the steps/index cards
- ✓ Eligibility Criteria Worksheet
- ✓ Screening and Assessment Worksheet
- ✓ Action Plan Template (poster sheet)
- ✓ Sample Decision Process Map

### **Additional materials needed (not provided in the kit):**

- ✓ Three 3” x 3” Post-It packs, each of a different color
- ✓ Tape to attach the cards and arrows to a wall surface (painter’s tape is recommended) and to attach the Action Plan template to a wall
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Pens (to write additional information on index cards and/or Post-Its)
- ✓ Markers (to use to complete Action Plan template)

### **Activity Instructions:**

#### **Process Mapping**

**Eligibility Criteria** - Have the team member(s) complete the Eligibility Criteria Worksheet. Tape the worksheet on the wall to use as a reference document for the Process Mapping activity and the Action Planning activity.

**Screening and Assessment** - Have the team member(s) complete the Screening and Assessment Instrument(s) Worksheet. Tape the worksheet on the wall to use as a reference document for the Process Mapping activity and the Action Planning activity.

**Mapping** – Before beginning the mapping, team members

may find viewing the Sample Referral and Acceptance Process Map included in the kit helpful to orienting them to the main goal of the Process Mapping activity, which is to create a visual depiction of the process for referring and accepting youths into the JDC program.

Have all team members assist in setting out the relevant cards on a large table top or the floor, and take the actions below.

- Review the labels/steps on the cards to see which ones apply to the program’s process and keep those cards.
- Discard the cards with labels/steps that don’t apply.
- If there are steps in the program’s process that don’t have a corresponding card, write on a blank index card the step(s) that needs to be included and add the card(s) to the cards to be used.
- Tape the cards (with information about steps/activities) to the wall and tape the arrows between cards to depict the order and relationship of the distinct steps/activities in the referral/acceptance process.

One team member may be selected to assist with the taping of all of the cards on the wall, or each team member may tape the cards on the wall for those steps/activities for which he or she is responsible (or whose agency or office is responsible).

To start the process with the first card, the law enforcement and prosecutor team members may tape the card “petition filed” or “new offense.”

OR

If a program only accepts youths who are already on probation, the probation officer team member may get the process map started by taping the card “probation violation” on the wall as the first card.

The team member responsible for the next step in the process would tape on the wall the card that corresponds to that next step or activity, and so on.

The basic referral/acceptance mapping process is completed when all of the relevant cards/steps and arrows are taped on the wall in the appropriate order.

Once the basic referral/acceptance process is mapped, team members may wish to use Post-Its (one color for each category of information) to indicate additional information about the process including:

***who is responsible (if not otherwise indicated on a card)***

***what documentation is used/needed (if not otherwise indicated on the cards)***

***time requirements (for decisions or activities, etc., or in between decisions and activities)***

## Oral Description of the Process

Once all steps, activities, individuals, documentation, decisions, and time frames have been placed on the wall (with cards and Post-Its) to show what is involved in the acceptance/referral process, team members should orally describe what is represented.

The team member(s) (or agency the team member represents) responsible for the first step/action that happens in the process starts the oral description. Other team members add to the oral description of the process when a step or activity occurs for which they (or the agency they represent) are responsible.

Team members should use the exercise, and especially the oral description of the process portion of the exercise, as an opportunity for peer teaching and learning. During the oral description/review of the process, team members should ask questions and ask for clarification from one another.

By the end of the oral description of the process, all team members should have a shared understanding of the current referral and acceptance process.

The coordinator may wish to take photographs of the wall with the process mapped to create a visual record of the process for the program files.

## Action Planning

During the oral description of the process, team members may generate ideas or realizations about aspects of the process that they would like to change. These ideas or realizations may concern eligibility criteria (e.g., based on offense, risk and substance abuse screening assessments), information shared (or information needed/gaps or redundancies, MOUs), time frames, family involvement, treatment provider involvement, training (e.g., of law enforcement or community partners about the eligibility criteria and referral processes), and/or data/process monitoring that need to be changed to help make the referral and acceptance process more effective and efficient.

Team members are encouraged to engage in Action Planning to

- a) identify the specific tasks or steps needed to make changes or improvements in the referral and acceptance process;
- b) select an individual who will be the lead on the respective tasks or steps; and
- c) set a definite time frame when the change/improvement (tasks/steps) will be initiated or completed.

The team may use the enclosed Action Plan Template on poster paper (included in the Kit) to assist with Action Planning.

## Action Planning with the Action Plan Template

- Tape the Action Plan template to the wall
- Have one team member (perhaps the coordinator) serve as the facilitator to assist the team's discussion and resolution of what actions are to be taken, who to involve, and within what time frame.

OR

- Ask an outside party to assist with action planning facilitation so that all team members can be actively involved in action planning brainstorming and decision-making.
- Have one team member serve as the scribe to write out the steps, individuals, and time frames on the plan in the respective columns and rows.
- The JDC coordinator is encouraged to create a word document of the Action Plan chart notes to keep as a program document and to use for action plan management and follow-up. An electronic version (8 1/2" by 11" paper size) of the Action Plan Template may be obtained from Dr. Martha-Elin Blomquist, Site Manager, NCJFCJ, via telephone at 775-507-4804 or email at [mblomquist@ncjfcj.org](mailto:mblomquist@ncjfcj.org).

**The NCJFCJ welcomes feedback  
from JDC teams using this toolkit.  
Please email us at [jtdc@ncjfcj.org](mailto:jtdc@ncjfcj.org).  
Thank you!**