

OJJDP National Training and Technical Assistance Center

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR NEEDS SENSING (WEBINAR OR IN-PERSON)

Purpose

The purpose of this focus group is to learn more about the needs of juvenile justice professionals so that the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC) can improve its services to better meet those needs, and ultimately, improve services and outcomes for youth. This focus group can be done online or in person. It can also be tailored to specific topics, products, tools, resources, processes or information needs.

How the information will be used

- To inform training and technical assistance (TA) services, including how to make the process smoother, more efficient, and effective
- To inform marketing about how to make target audiences aware of relevant OJJDP NTTAC services.
- To inform conference services, including how to make the process smoother, more efficient, more effective, and helpful to those planning the conference as well as conference attendees.
- To inform website services about the content, organization, and presentation of website information.

Introduction (10 minutes)

Facilitator: Introduce leaders of the focus group and roles of each in supporting the meeting.

We are conducting focus groups to better understand the needs of juvenile justice professionals and how we can provide services in an effective and helpful way to meet those needs. Your participation is voluntary. Your input will not be associated with you personally, but will be combined with information from others for a broader perspective of the issues. The session will be recorded for the accuracy of our notes, but your identity will remain anonymous. Please let me know if you have any concerns.

Remember that there are no wrong answers or bad questions. We want honesty and we expect differences of opinion. Please be respectful of the opinions of others and try to stay on time so we can cover all our questions.

Let's do brief introductions. Please give us your name and tell us what you do.

Have any of you heard of OJJDP NTTAC?

Facilitator: Briefly introduce OJJDP NTTAC to provide a foundation and parameters for what OJJDP NTTAC can do to help them improve their services and improve outcomes for youth.

We will use your input, along with input from other groups like this around the country, to make decisions about new services and improve current services including training, technical assistance, and conference organization.

Any questions before we begin?

Facilitator: Explain the concept of writing down their answers using the 'notes' or equivalent feature of the webinar software and that they will be e-mailing them to the coordinator (if possible). Also explain that we are using the notes so they won't be influenced by colleagues in the focus group. Explain that we will be discussing their responses for about 15 minutes and then asking them additional questions.

1. *Think about previous training and technical assistance that you've received that had a significant impact on your work. Please write your answers to the following questions, and then we'll discuss them and write some notes on the screen. (5 minutes writing; 15 minutes discussing)*

Question screen says:

Think about previous training and technical assistance that you've received that had a significant impact on your work. It could be something you attended in person or online.

- What was the training/TA about?
- What was the format (e.g., length, teaching modality, activities, level)?
- What was the most helpful aspect? What was the least helpful aspect?
- How did you use the information? How did you apply it to your work?

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Ask participants to share what they've written and write it on the screen or on a flipchart. Probe for details:

- *What were the specific topics?*
- *What were the target audiences?*
- *How was it helpful?*
- *What was the length? What were the activities and practical exercises?*
- *How and why was it useful? What prepared you for applying it in your work?*

Mention that we would also like to discuss future training and TA needs and how OJJDP NTTAC can be helpful to them in providing better services.

2. *Think about a specific challenge you face in your work.* Ask them to share some of the challenges that they face. (Be sure to probe for specifics and get beyond the general challenge of limited resources.)
3. *Now think about the assistance that would be helpful to you as a juvenile justice professional.* (15 minutes) Throughout this discussion, use the show of hands and other features to get agreement from the group in light of the online format and inability to read body language.
 - *What topics would interest you?* Probe for specific topics, including specific populations, dealing with policy regulations, infrastructure, sustainability, information technology, and program operations.)
 - *What level of information would be useful (e.g., beginner)?*
 - *What are your preferences for length, level of detail, format (e.g., conference style, train the trainer)?*
 - *What would help you in applying the information/assistance received to your work?*
 - *Do you generally look for this kind of information, do you just receive it, or do you not get this kind of information?* Probe about where they look for assistance and information and/or where they get it from.
4. *If OJJDP NTTAC has assistance that could be helpful to you with your work, what would be the best way to let you and your colleagues know it's available?* (5 minutes)

Closing (2 minutes)

We're done! Thank you so much for your ideas and your time. Do you have any questions for us?