

# Sedgwick County Task Force Final Recommendations – Kansas Department of Corrections

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## Task Force Recommendation

**Youth Corrections # 4: Establishing a long-term goal for the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) to develop and implement a strategy that moves juvenile justice systems to a restorative justice system.**

Restorative Justice is a theory of justice that focuses on repairing harm caused by criminal behavior (Bazemore, 1998). Generally, these types of programs are geared toward lower level or nonviolent offenses but given the right support and intensity, those youth that have a repeatedly committed crimes may receive benefit from these programs as well. The most notable models are (1) Family Group Conferences, (2) Victim-Offender Mediation, (3) Victim Impact Panels, Victim Awareness Classes, and Community Reparative Boards (4) Circle Sentencing and (5) School-Based Restorative Justice. Because KDOC sees the importance of understanding this approach, informational sessions on Restorative Justice Practices will be planned.

KDOC does support the concepts of restorative justice and recognizes the evidence-based approaches that are employed in the most notable models. Juvenile Intake and Assessment Services (JIAS), Immediate Intervention Program (IIP), and Juvenile Intensive Probation and Case Management Services are funded by, and standards of operations are developed by, KDOC. While each community can prioritize programming and need for their respective communities, KDOC does encourage and follow the guiding principles of restorative justice as appropriate. KDOC currently funds programs such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) that very much support the concepts of repairing harm done in the family through similar concepts as Family Group Conferences. Training for Community Corrections includes challenging thoughts that lead to maladaptive behaviors and replacing those thoughts with more pro-social thoughts/skills paired with skills practice of those positive skills. These skills can lead to making amends with those the youth harmed.

An additional support that has been established in Kansas is the development of the Crossover Youth State Policy Team and the local Crossover Youth Pilot Sites. These local multi-disciplinary teams are designed to evaluate and establish approaches that best fit that community. KDOC will leverage the Crossover Youth State Policy team and local pilot site to evaluate local needs. In addition, KDOC will partner with national experts on restorative justice and evaluate the need for assessment of current practice and/or policy/standards.