

# Massachusetts Department of Youth Services

## Site Visit Report

### Description of Training Organization

#### *Mission Statement:*

The Department of Youth Services is the juvenile justice agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Our mission is to protect the public and prevent crime by promoting positive change in the lives of youth committed to our custody, and by partnering with communities, families, and government and provider agencies toward this end. We accomplish this mission through interventions that build knowledge, develop skills and change the behavior of the youth in our care.

#### *Total Programs:*

DYS operates 102 programs including:

- 64 facilities, ranging from staff secure group homes to highly secure locked units, and
- 38 programs to service youth who live in the community (residing with a parent, guardian, foster parent or residing in an independent living program).

#### *Total DYS Population:*

- As of January 1, 2005 there were 2,595 youth being served by DYS.
- 2,314 of these youth were adjudicated delinquent and were committed to DYS custody until age 18.
- 281 of these youth were adjudicated delinquent and had been committed as youthful offenders until their 21st birthday.
- At the request of the court, approximately 300 youth on any given day are being held at DYS facilities awaiting the outcome of their trial.

#### *Juvenile crime in Massachusetts:*

- Each year in Massachusetts there are approximately 18,000 to 20,000 juveniles arraigned in court on criminal charges.
- Of these youth, some 5,500 annually are held on bail at DYS facilities while they await the outcome of their trial.
- In the year 2004, 1,316 youths were committed to DYS (approximately eight percent of all juveniles arraigned).
- Between 1999 and 2004, juvenile convictions for property offenses decreased 33%.

#### *DYS Population Growth:*

- The population of juveniles committed to the Department of Youth Services has grown from 2,162 to 2,595 since 1995. (An increase of 20%)
- The overall population increase was fueled by A.) the rise in the number of juveniles newly committed to DYS by the courts of the Commonwealth, B.) an increase in the average length of commitment C.) an increase in the number of juveniles whose commitment was extended beyond 18 years of age due to dangerousness.

#### *Programs & Services:*

- All DYS programs address the educational, psychological and health needs of each client.
- The Department operates several small, locked, secure facilities. Following placement in facilities, offenders are placed in residential group homes, foster homes or at home with their families of origin with supportive services such as day reporting centers community supervision and outreach & tracking. Additionally, the Department operates "boot camps" and a Homeward Bound program. Placement of a youth depends on an assessed level of risk that enables the Department to match a juvenile with programs that best address the security needs of the public while meeting the service needs of an offender.
- For youths on detention awaiting trial, the Department operates several secure and staff-secure residential programs to provide care and custody while the youth is under the jurisdiction of the courts.

### Source of Official Student Records

In order to award credit, colleges and universities require proof of completion of coursework issued by the training organization. A student who has completed training provided by the Massachusetts Department of Youth Service may obtain such records of this training by contacting:

The Department of Youth Services  
Bureau of Training and Professional Development  
27 Wormwood St. Suite 400  
Boston, MA 02110

### Description of Training Programs

This 80 hour Basic Skills curriculum is intended to provide the necessary basic information every new employee needs to do their job effectively, as well as information about how DYS fulfills its mission, and what is expected of staff. As one moves through the curriculum the individual will discover that several basic, crucial ideas are being emphasized.

Massachusetts structures the Basic Training so that new employees attend one week of classroom training and then return to their work sites for one week. Upon completion of week one, participant's are given an On-The-Job Orientation form that must be completed and turned in when they return to the Academy. This addresses program specific issues, and insures that employees are briefed on these specific practices, that vary unit to unit. They then return for a second week of classroom training. Week one contains health and safety concerns or the topics employees must know before working the floor. Week two is on the job training at their respective units. Week three covers both State mandated and additional job skills training.

In Massachusetts the goal of DYS is to create an environment in which a now delinquent youth can choose to become non-delinquent. We are also charged with keeping youth safe, so safety is a major responsibility.

Four elements are stressed throughout the DYS training modules:

1. Individual Youth – DYS youth in MA are cared for in small units. The major reason for this is so that staff can get to know youth as separate and distinct individuals. We work to build appropriate relationships with the youth in our care. This allows the youth to see they are recognized, that they count and that they have importance.
2. Professional Staff – We seek staff persons who have made a conscious decision to work with some very difficult youth, realizing most are victims as well as perpetrators. They believe that youth can choose to change and want to offer them additional tools to assist their successful integration within, or back into, the community. We believe that an important aspect of any staff's job is to be a positive role model.
3. Teamwork – The youth need to know that staff are working together and communicating with each other. This is not a solo business. As staff we need to support each other and offer the youth a consistent, team approach. Team work is not always easy but we stress the critical importance of it in all of our modules.

4. Effective Programming – We should be constantly questioning what we do as far as programming in our units and asking ourselves how this is helping the youth to integrate more successfully within the community. What we do should be directed at the needs of the youth in our care and not based upon convenience of staff.

Massachusetts believes that if you have these four key elements in place, you will not only have a safe environment but one that will offer youth the tools to choose to become non-delinquent. All of our training curriculum reflect these important themes and expand on them. Like building a good house, you need a good foundation with which to build upon. If your program’s foundation includes professional staff persons, working together as a team, getting to know each and every youth as an individual, and offering effective programming for the youth in our care, you will in turn provide the safe, secure and nurturing environment the youth we serve need to succeed.

**Location:** Massachusetts Department of Youth Services Training Academy – Boston, MA

**Length:** 2 weeks (80 hours) – Not including one 40hr week of On-the-Job-Training.

**Program Objective:** To provide participants with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to serve effectively at the entry level as a Youth Service Worker in the state of Massachusetts.

**Learning Objective:** Upon successful completion of this program, the graduate will be able to perform all routine duties of a Youth Services Worker in the State of Massachusetts.

**Instructional Methods:** A combination of lecture, discussion, practical exercise, and scenario.

**Learning Assessments:** Written and practical examinations are used.

**Description of Team**

Due to the size of the training being assessed, a three-member team was unnecessary to perform this assessment. However, it was imperative that the assessor(s) for this training have extensive background, knowledge, and experience in the fields of corrections, training and higher education. Below is a list of all participants; CJTA and Excelsior College have full curriculum vitae on file for each.

Bruce L. Bikle Ph.D.  
Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director  
Division of Criminal Justice  
California State University Sacramento  
Sacramento, California

Eric C. Schultz, MA  
Senior Assessment Coordinator  
Criminal Justice Training Assessment  
Albany, New York

**Description of Visit**

Due to the size of the training being assessed, and portability of the materials, an on-site visit was unnecessary to perform the assessment. All materials were given to the assessor(s) and the assessment of said materials occurred off-site in the assessor(s) home state(s).

Credit Recommendations

**Summary of Credit Recommendations**

**Program:** Basic Skills for Youth Service Workers

Introduction to Criminal Justice	3 credits
Juvenile Justice in Corrections	3 credits*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6 credits</b>

**Program:** Introduction to Management Certificate Program (MCP)

Introductory Management in Juvenile Justice	3 credits
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\*Denotes upper-level credit

Course Descriptions

**Introduction to Criminal Justice** (3 credits, lower division)

**Program:** Basic Skills for Youth Service Workers

**Location:** Massachusetts Department of Youth Services Training Academy – Shirley, MA

**Length:** 60 hours

**Dates:** July 2005 through June 2009

**Objectives:** At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to: Discuss the basics of adolescent development. Demonstrate an awareness of adolescent suicide assessment skills and prevention strategies. Demonstrate search techniques dealing with juveniles under supervision. Demonstrate appropriate physical restraint and defensive tactics to be used with juveniles. Demonstrate knowledge of and be able to discuss the issues of sexual harassment. Demonstrate knowledge of gang and other social issues that impact juveniles.

**Instruction:** Students must complete no fewer than four hours of “Basic Legal Concepts,” one hour of “Evaluation,” one hour of “Introduction & Administrative Tasks,” three hours of “Introduction to the MA Department of Youth Services and the Youth We Serve,” seven hours of “Last Day Wrap up and scenarios,” forty hours of “On-the-Job-Training,” and four hours of “Writing Skills for Juvenile Justice Workers.” Instructional methods for this course include lecture, PowerPoint presentations, practical exercises, and scenarios. Evaluation methods include written examinations and practical examinations.

**Credit Recommendation:** In the lower division associate/baccalaureate degree category, three semester credits.

**Introductory Management in Juvenile Justice** (3 credits, lower division)

**Program:** Introduction to Management Certificate Program (MCP)

**Location:** Massachusetts Department of Youth Services – physical location varies

**Length:** 48 hours (8 sessions over a 10-month period)

**Dates:** January 2007 through June 2009

**Objectives:** Understand the importance of vision in your job & passion for your agency’s mission and goals. Learn the strategies for building Team Synergy and developing high performance teams. Understand the balance between content knowledge and managerial skills. Define managerial & employee responsibilities. Develop a working understanding of the constitutional framework that the manager works within. Learn the skills to “map” the landscape of decision-making, identifying key factors and influences to public policy issues. Develop an ability to formulate strategies to respond to public management dilemmas. Increase understanding of the new roles of leaders in a learning organization. Obtain a broader knowledge and understanding of adult learning styles. Demonstrate an understanding of leader/worker relationships. Increase knowledge of the functional areas of staff learning process. Obtain a broader knowledge of strategies for continuous learning and professional development. Understand that Human Resources Management is not simply a necessary evil of your management role. Learn to

push back on existing HR rules and procedures that hinder the efficiency and effectiveness of your organization. Learn how to embrace change and techniques for change management. Review communication skills that will help ensure success. Consider methods of quality improvement that helps us to learn from history/Let the data tell the story. Learn strategies for planned management vs. crisis management. Learn how to formulate meaningful and concise analysis questions. Understand how to access data sources and data sharing rules.

**Instruction:** Students must complete no fewer than: six hours of “Charismatic/Socially Skilled Manager,” twelve hours of “High Performing Manager,” six hours of “Learning Oriented Manager,” six hours of “Problem Solving Manager,” six hours of “Role Expert,” and twelve hours of “Success-Focused Manager.” Instructional methods for this course include lecture, group discussions, pre- and post-class readings, homework and research. Evaluation methods include final project.

**Credit Recommendation:** In the lower division associate/baccalaureate degree category, three semester credits.

**Juvenile Justice in Corrections** (3 credits, upper division)

**Program:** Basic Skills for Youth Service Workers

**Location:** Massachusetts Department of Youth Services Training Academy – Shirley, MA

**Length:** 44 hours

**Dates:** July 2005 through June 2009

**Objectives:** At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to: Relate the stages of adolescent development as they relate to criminal activity and supervision issues. Demonstrate an understanding of special issues of female offenders. Demonstrate and document in writing the importance of departmental rules, policies and procedures in areas including suicide prevention, gang awareness, and medical issues. Control of disturbances, and ward legal rights. Demonstrate and document in writing the importance of departmental policies, rules procedures and state law in the areas of sexual harassment and diversity. Demonstrate an understanding of the history of juvenile supervision in the community and in institutions, with special emphasis on the situation in the student’s home state.

**Instruction:** Students must complete no fewer than four hours of “Adolescent Development,” three hours of “Basic Health and Communicable Diseases,” three hours of “Diversity of Thought – Inclusion – Making Needed Connections,” six hours of “Gangs 101,” fourteen hours of “Safety and Security Issues/Crisis Prevention and Intervention,” four hours of “Understanding and Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace,” one hour of “Victim Awareness,” three hours of “Working With the Juvenile Female Population,” and six hours of “Youth Suicide: Epidemiology, Risk Factors and Intervention Methods.” Instructional methods for this course include lecture, PowerPoint presentations, practical exercises, and scenarios. Evaluation methods include written examinations and practical examinations.

**Credit Recommendation:** In the upper division baccalaureate degree category, three semester credits.