

HISTORY OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION

In 1974 the U.S. Congress recognized the problem of children in adult jails by enacting the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (the Act). Emphasizing the widespread abuse of juveniles in adult jails, the Act aimed at eventual removal of all juveniles from adult jails, but mandated "sight and sound" separation of juvenile and adult offenders in states participating in the funding program of the legislation. The Act also required that status offenders (non-criminal youths) be removed from juvenile detention and correctional facilities.

Idaho has participated in the Act since inception. The Commission was first housed in the Department of Law Enforcement, under the Law Enforcement Planning Commission. In 1979, a group of concerned Idaho citizens and agency representatives met to begin planning for effective, efficient services for Idaho's children and youth. The Governor authorized the mission of the Idaho Planning Committee for Children and Youth Services, and the Committee adopted the following statement of purpose: "to examine how services are delivered in Idaho, and to develop a plan which establishes goals, objectives and priorities that will assure a more systematic delivery of these services." In 1981 the responsibility was transferred to the Governor's office. In 1995 the responsibility for the administration of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act funds was transferred to the new Department of Juvenile Corrections. This change provided the Juvenile Justice Commission the opportunity to become an integral part of Idaho's juvenile justice system. The Commission serves as the state advisory group responsible for performing the duties required by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. Members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor and are chosen from many fields, including local government, elected officials, juvenile justice professionals, judges, prosecutors, juveniles, business professionals, educators, youth and volunteers. The Commission, through its seven District Councils, works with communities to help them assess needs and resources and develops an Action Plan identifying their specific needs. These action plans become the basis for Idaho's Three Year Plan.

The Commission and the Department strive to make Idaho a place where all children can grow up in safe communities and have the opportunity to be productive, contributing citizens