

# **THE BLUE RIDGE DETENTION CENTER REPORT**

**A Response to the Blue Ridge Detention Center Commission  
Regarding Assessment Center Programming and the Superintendent Hiring Process**

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Of the  
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## **Introduction**

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee of the Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families views the development of the Blue Ridge Detention Center as an exciting and needed addition to our juvenile justice services continuum. The lack of an accessible and secure residential option has been a missing link in our system for some time and we look forward to working with the Commission.

This report contains preliminary programming design ideas that were discussed in the earlier planning stages for the Detention and Assessment Centers. These ideas will be presented to the Commission on Children and Families, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee and our local governments prior to any final design or implementation recommendations to the Blue Ridge Detention Center Commission. These meetings will be held in September 2000, at which point we can provide follow up information.

## **Background**

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee was established by the Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families in September 1998 to develop a comprehensive juvenile justice plan and to provide oversight and coordination for local juvenile justice services. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee meets monthly and is representative of the juvenile justice service community. The Detention Subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee was formed to assist the Blue Ridge Detention Center Commission in developing programming ideas for the Detention Center and the adjacent Assessment Center space. The subcommittee includes agency representatives that were involved in the original detention center needs assessment, the Department of Juvenile Justice application, and the project design work. The subcommittee will work with the Detention Center Commission to develop programming for the detention and assessment centers and will assist the Commission to effectively integrate the new services into the interagency service system.

## **Request from the Blue Ridge Detention Center Commission**

In its May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Blue Ridge Detention Center Commission requested that the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee develop a report for the Detention Center Commission that would assist with long term planning. The Detention center Subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee identified the following objectives:

- Identify alternative philosophies for the operation of the Blue Ridge Detention Center and the Assessment Center that will be collocated at the same site.
- Define the relationship and the parameters of how the Detention Center and the Assessment Center will interact.
- Achieve community consensus on the philosophy for the operation of the Blue Ridge Detention Center and the Assessment Center.
- Compile a list of desired qualifications and characteristics for the Blue Ridge Detention Center Superintendent.

- Define the process for hiring the Blue Ridge Detention Center Superintendent

## **Philosophy**

The philosophy for the Juvenile Assessment Center that will be collocated at the Blue Ridge Detention Center will be similar to the Community Assessment Center concept model developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This concept is based on the fact that most of the youth in the juvenile justice system are also involved with other community agencies (police, social services, mental health, schools, health, etc.). They often have multiple workers, experience duplicative interviews and assessments, have separate agency based service plans, and often move from one system to the next with minimal information sharing and coordination, especially in the beginning stages of their involvement with public agencies. Not only is this a cumbersome process for them to go through, it is also expensive and not always successful. Alternately, many youth having contact with the juvenile justice system have not received services and are in need of assessment and referral.

Our Community Assessment Center concept will attempt to address these problems by bringing together our interagency partners in a collaborative and “multi –use” approach to assessment and crisis intervention. This concept provides a unique opportunity to address the 24 hour needs of at-risk youth in an interagency framework that could further minimize duplication, simplify access and coordination, reduce costs, and improve services. The presence of this facility and an interagency approach will encourage the development of a more comprehensive strategy to provide earlier assessments of youth.

## **Possible Juvenile Assessment Center Programming:**

- The Juvenile Assessment Center could provide a central, safe place for agencies responding to crises and providing assessment and intake of youth and families after normal business hours.
- The annex facility could house JCAC staff six evenings per week from 5:00 – Midnight. JCAC and CSU staff might also use this space as needed each night between Midnight and 8:00 A.M. and on weekend days as necessary for crises and intake.
- Region Ten CSB might be able to use this facility for after-hours and weekend TDO evaluation of juveniles.
- Local Departments of Social Services might have access to this facility for child protective services calls or foster care crisis calls.
- JCAC will probably occupy one office permanently. Agencies may be able to use one of the two interview rooms as available.
- All programs could have their own file cabinets for forms, brochures, etc.
- Agencies could be provided with a key to be used by their on-call personnel.
- Overnight community “on calls” may be able to be consolidated at the assessment site.

## **Interaction between the Assessment Center and the Detention Center**

The Juvenile Assessment Center, although collocated with the Blue Ridge Detention Center, at this point, is seen as a separate facility operated under the City/County umbrella of juvenile justice services. Interaction between the two facilities could be based on contractual agreements that benefit both facilities, including physical maintenance and security. Programming coordination between the facilities could be handled through advisory committee representation. If a youth being seen by Assessment Center staff needs to be detained, the proximity of location will assist this process.

## **Qualifications and Characteristics of the Blue Ridge Detention Center Superintendent**

The Blue Ridge Detention Center Superintendent should reflect the service orientation of the Charlottesville/Albemarle community. He, or she, should be capable of developing and providing innovative programming designed to rehabilitate and reconnect the offender with the community. The Blue Ridge Detention Center Superintendent should view interagency collaboration and coordination as the best way to address the short and long-term needs of detained children. The subcommittee has obtained job descriptions, knowledge, skills, abilities and other pertinent information from the Department of Juvenile Justice and other detention centers. We also are seeking input from several detention center superintendents and the Deputy Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice, a former detention center superintendent. We will send a more specific description of the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities and a recruitment schedule to the Commission in the near future.

## **Summary**

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the Blue Ridge Detention Center Commission in developing programming for the Detention and Assessment Centers and will develop an action plan to insure a timely completion of the requested tasks.