



Learning from and partnering with communities that have been directly impacted by the juvenile justice system is a priority for the deep end work and an essential way to inform and enhance reform efforts. Community engagement is critical when embarking on a comprehensive reform agenda and thus, developing a mechanism to hear from impacted communities is key. Of course, seeking input from justice impacted communities should not be limited to the assessment process. By creating pathways for continued learning, child-serving agencies can increase their overall effectiveness and ensure the system is working with youth in the most meaningful, respectful, effective, and fair way. Below is a suggested framework that employs a multi-level approach to partnering with impacted communities. This includes understanding **who** we are talking about when we talk about impacted communities, **what** the benefits are, and recommendations on **how** to form these partnerships.

Who are impacted communities? Impacted communities include youth who have been in the juvenile justice system, families of loved ones who have been in the system, and individuals living in communities disproportionately impacted by the juvenile justice system. Opening the doors to learn from and partner with such individuals adds a level of insight and perspective that wouldn't otherwise be represented through data, interviews with staff, or years of employment with a juvenile justice agency or court. In order to achieve better outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system, eliminate racial disparities, and safely eliminate the unnecessary use of out-of-home placements, community engagement must be a priority.

Partnering with individuals and communities that have been impacted by the juvenile justice system leads to better outcomes for youth.

