



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

Ted Strickland, Governor • Thomas J. Stickrath, Director

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Department of Youth Services Enters Into Historic Partnership with the Ohio Conference of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Columbus, Ohio — The Department of Youth Services (DYS) has joined with the nation's oldest, largest and strongest civil rights organization to form a unique partnership geared to providing culturally relevant programming to youth committed to the Department.

Although African Americans comprise 12% of the state's population, they are 65% of the DYS youth population. "It is critical for our youth to have strong and successful African American men and women as their role models," said Tom Stickrath, DYS Director. "While we have seen the African American community volunteer with DYS youth before, this is the first time a statewide, coordinated effort has ever formed for the purpose of preparing these youth with leadership and life skills necessary for success when released."

The Ohio Conference of the NAACP has already begun to volunteer at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility and plans to have a presence in four additional facilities by summer. Examples of the group's interaction with youth include an eight-month program called the NAACP Phoenix Leadership Program, ACT study workshops for youth wanting to attend college, and general instruction on building pro-social skills. As the partnership evolves, different types of programming will be developed based on surveys from youth and specific requests from facility staff.

"We believe this is the first partnership like this in the nation and hope that it will soon become a national best practice," said Sybil Edwards McNabb, Ohio Conference NAACP President. "The criminal justice system is one of the major concerns of the National Association. We know that our partnership is a step in the right direction early on to reduce, if not stop, the "Revolving Door" syndrome. We are committed to our youth and excited about another opportunity to make a positive impact, producing productive citizens."

The number of volunteers per facility will vary based on the number of community NAACP volunteers in that area. NAACP programming is open to all DYS youth, regardless of race. For more information about volunteering at DYS, please call the volunteer hotline at (614) 466-8561.

DYS is the juvenile corrections system for the state of Ohio and is statutorily mandated to confine felony offenders, ages 10 to 21, who have been adjudicated and committed by one of Ohio's 88 county juvenile courts. DYS operates six correctional and rehabilitation facilities and provides parole services from five regional sites.

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