

## How Status Offenses Intersect with Other Civil and Criminal Proceedings

### **Choose the type of proceeding that best advances your client's interest.**

- Avoid proceedings that will result in your client receiving a criminal record or requiring him to register as a sex offender.
- Examine the causes of the youth's behavior.
- Look for signs of abuse or neglect or coordinate with a professional who can recognize those signs.
- Involve the youth in the decision-making process.
- Coordinate with the youth's counsel in other proceedings to address the consequences of each proceeding and avoid duplicating services.

### **If the youth has been abused or neglected, weigh the pros and cons of child welfare system involvement.**

- The youth may have access to more agency placements in the child welfare system.
- The youth may be able to access more informal placement arrangements through the status offense system.
- The youth may have access to greater public benefits through the child welfare system.
- The youth may have greater access to legal assistance in one system over another.

### **Avoid delinquency proceedings.**

- If the youth is already involved in the status offense system, urge the delinquency court to set aside proceedings in favor of treatment or services already being offered through the status offense (and/or child welfare) system.

### **Weigh the pros and cons of a family law proceeding versus a status offense case.**

- If the youth is subject to both status offense and custody proceedings, there may be an opportunity to dismiss one case over the other or obtain concurrent jurisdiction. Consider:
  - The family court may be better suited to respond to abuse or neglect issues.
  - The youth will be party to a status offense proceeding, but not likely to a custody case.
  - The different financial and educational benefits that each proceeding offers.
  - The youth's opinion.

