At National Crittenton we envision a world in which all girls and gender-expansive young people can achieve their potential and live unapologetic, liberated lives without fear of violence or injustice. This compels us to center their inherent wisdom as powerful survivors of generational chronic adversity, violence, and oppression. Our project work is dedicated to ensuring that girls and gender-expansive young people have the information, support, and opportunities they need to heal, be safe, be free, and experience joy. This means advancing collective power through a strong movement led by young folx and supporting decision-makers, jurisdictions, and advocates in turning the desire for change into concrete action. The summaries included below are a sample of recent and continuing National Crittenton projects.

**ACCESS (2018 - CURRENT)**

The Advancing a Continuum of Care – Engagement, Supports, and Services (ACCESS) project recognizes the ineffective and traumatizing impacts of the confinement and incarceration of girls and gender-expansive young people. ACCESS supports and assists jurisdictions demonstrating a commitment to reducing reliance on incarceration and to building a continuum of community-based supports and services to address the specific needs of this population. The project provides technical assistance and peer learning opportunities to support decision-makers in better understanding what drives girls and gender-expansive young people into the system. Additionally, the project focuses on identifying and creating the continuum of services and supports needed in the community to effectively address the needs of young people and their families. A final toolkit/report will describe the necessary elements of an effective and responsive continuum of community-based care and lessons learned from states and jurisdictions participating in the ACCESS project. The project is supported by the Public Welfare Foundation and currently includes work with Minnesota Ramsey County Social Services; the Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Youth and Family Services in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin; and the Kansas Department of Corrections.

**“YOU DON’T KNOW ME” - ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE) GRAPHIC NOVEL (2018-CURRENT)**

The high rate of adversity, including sexual violence, experienced by girls and gender-expansive young people by the time they are high school age should be declared a public health emergency or an epidemic – but it remains in the shadows, and each year new generations get caught in this vicious cycle. The goal of this project is to provide data and information to girls and young folx that will support them in making informed choices, understanding their family dynamics (across generations), and getting assistance for themselves and others as needed. Knowledge is power and power is what they need to break generational cycles of adversity, abuse, and trauma. The ACE graphic novel makes information about ACEs accessible to high school age girls and gender-expansive young people using an approachable, engaging, gender- and culturally-responsive, trauma-informed, and healing-centered format and style. This work was informed by a 2018 convening hosted by National Crittenton for 15 high-school-aged girls from Mississippi, Colorado, Oregon, New York, Kansas, West Virginia and Florida. Participants attended the two-day convening, including brainstorming and workshopping sessions, where they learned about the ACE study and actively contributed to the creation of the ACE graphic novel concept, approach, and storyline. Ebony Morris, who in 2018 was 16 years old, created the artwork for the novel. “You Don’t Know Me” will be released in 2020.

**IN SOLIDARITY WE RISE: HEALING, OPPORTUNITY, AND JUSTICE FOR GIRLS (2017 + 2019)**

In Solidarity is a national gathering of young leaders, advocates, community-based organizations, and policymakers, hosted by National Crittenton in 2017 and 2019. Both events focused on centering the leadership of girls, young women, and gender-expansive young people, and included over 1,000 people from all 50 states and 14 federally recognized Tribal Nations. In 2019, 40% of attendees and presenters were under the age of 25. Together, this intergenerational and multisector/multiethnic group strategized, shared solutions, imagined new futures, and made connections between our fields, issues, and approaches to advance healing, opportunity, and justice for all girls and gender-expansive young people.
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis, as well as the protests and uprisings ignited by ongoing police brutality and systemic racism in the United States, National Crittenton (Crittenton) and the National Collaborative of Young Women’s Initiatives (National YWI) organized 16 virtual, regional and Tribal In Solidarity Conversations led by young women and gender-expansive young people of color. From July to October 2020, over 400 girls, young women, and gender-expansive young people of color from 39 states participated in the In Solidarity Conversations. These conversations provided a safe space that centered the leadership and advocacy of cis and trans girls, young women, and gender-expansive young people of color. Findings from the conversations will be translated into a list of critical needs, policy, and/or practice responses.

**IMPACT (2018-CURRENT)**

Invincible Mamas Pushing for Action and Change Together (IMPACT) is a national advocacy network being formed and led by young mamas from across the country. It is the result of research conducted by young parents across the country focusing on the challenges they face as young parents and their ideas for change. Led by a group of young mothers, the network is committed to identifying and eradicating the biased policies and broken systems that hinder their ability to support their children and to achieve economic security. IMPACT is made up of young mothers who share lived experiences of oppression, discrimination, and exclusion simply because of their age. IMPACT will bring young parents, service providers, and policy experts together to advance justice at the local, state, and national level. Initial funding for IMPACT was made possible by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

**THE LOVE PROJECT (2018-CURRENT)**

The Leadership of Voices of Experience (LOVE) Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Violence Against Women, is co-constructing an advocacy training curriculum with currently and formerly incarcerated young women, women, and gender-expansive young people who are also survivors of violence. The goal is to build victims’ services providers’ capacity to support currently and formerly incarcerated people in enhancing and formalizing their advocacy skills as leaders for social and economic justice. The project will also provide training and technical assistance to the domestic violence field based on the final curriculum. LOVE is a collaborative effort between National Crittenton, the National Black Women’s Justice Institute, and the Young Women’s Freedom Center. Most importantly, however, this project is led and driven by currently and formerly incarcerated women themselves.


The National Girls Initiative (NGI), with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), focused on catalyzing change for girls in and at-risk of entering the juvenile justice system from 2013 to 2019. Through use of a diverse array of training and technical assistance (TTA) methods – including direct assistance, convening roundtables, hosting webinars, conducting research, releasing briefs and reports, giving Innovation Awards through a public/private partnership, and creating peer-to-peer learning opportunities – NGI and its many partners were able to increase awareness, support jurisdictions, and build momentum for change across the country. In total, NGI provided TTA to jurisdictions and advocates in over 24 states. Additionally, NGI provided resources and tools on the needs of girls, shared information on evidence-informed, evidence-based, and promising practices that are gender- and culturally-responsive, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate; and created opportunities for girls and their families to engage as active partners for change. In 2015, OJJDP released its policy guidance on “Girls In the Juvenile Justice System” which continues to provide direction on justice reform for girls and gender-expansive young people impacted by the juvenile justice system.