



University of New Haven

HENRY C. LEE COLLEGE OF
CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND FORENSIC
SCIENCES



JJPOC Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2024

2:00-3:30 PM

LOB – 300 Capitol Avenue Hartford, Room 1E

Virtual Option Available

Attendance

Amy Marracino	Martha Stone	Tais Ericson	TYJI Staff
Charles Hewes	Melanie Dykas	Tammy Nguyen-O’Dowd	Brittany LaMarr
Curtis Eller	Michael Pierce	Thea Montanez	Danielle Cooper
Daniel Karpowitz	Ray Dancy	Toni Walker	Donna Pfrommer
Erica Bromley	Renee Cimino	Vin Duva	Erika Nowakowski
Lisa Simone	Sharmese Walcott		Paul Klee

Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair, Representative Toni Walker and co-chair Daniel Karpowitz welcomed all in attendance to the meeting. Representative Toni Walker introduced the youth advocate partnered with her today, Nazir King. Nazir attends Connecticut River Academy in East Hartford. He enjoys math, chemistry, and english. He intends on pursuing social work in higher education due to his innate ability to help people with their struggles.

Acceptance of JJPOC Meeting Minutes

Representative Toni Walker sought a motion for the approval of the April 2024 meeting minutes. The motion was moved, seconded and approved.

Overview of Meeting and Announcements

Erika Nowakowski, the Executive Director of the Tow Youth Justice Institute, greeted everyone in attendance and acknowledged the youth advocates who were in attendance for the meeting. She expressed the significance of having the youth advocates in attendance and acknowledged the four organizations that help in allowing these youth to attend. These organizations were Center for Children’s Advocacy, Full Circle Youth Empowerment, Connecticut Justice Alliance, and AFCAMP.

Erika also thanked Stella Rose Dugue, the Speak Up Coordinator for the Center for Children’s Advocacy, for helping to prepare the youth advocates for the JJPOC meetings.

Erika announced that on Wednesday, May 22, 2024, from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, the Tow Youth Justice Institute will be holding their second annual Pathways to Success: Trailblazers and Innovators in Youth Justice Conference.



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Additionally, the date for the Strategic Planning Day, which is July 15, 2024, was announced. The meeting will take place at Middlesex Community College. Prior to this meeting, surveys will be sent to JJPOC members to gain insight into their thoughts on what the JJPOC should prioritize in the next iteration of the JJPOC Strategic Plan.

The agenda for today's meeting includes a presentation on homelessness, youth, and housing by various agencies including the Center for Children's Advocacy, the Department of Housing, the Connecticut Youth Services Association, and the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness.

Community Care Teams for Minors: A Collective Impact Approach to Addressing Minor Homelessness

The presentation was presented by Erica Bromley, the Youth Justice Consultant for the Connecticut Youth Services Association and the co-chair for the statewide Minor, Youth Homelessness Taskforce; and Stacey Violante Cote, the Deputy Director for the Center for Children's Advocacy, the co-chair for the statewide Minor, Youth Homelessness Taskforce, and the tri-chair for the Youth and Young Adult Homelessness work.

For the purposes of this presentation, the population being discussed are minors under the age of 18 who are unaccompanied (not with their family). Youth homelessness, within the context of this presentation, refers to individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes those who are doubled up, couch surfing, living in motels, living in cars, parks, and abandoned buildings, and those who are not in the physical custody of their parent or guardian.

National data from 2017 highlights the youth homelessness issue. 1 in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 and 1 in 30 adolescent minors ages 13 to 17 endures some form of homelessness in a year. Additional data highlights certain educational and racial disparities; youth who have less than a high school diploma or GED had a 346% higher risk of becoming homeless, Black or African American youth had an 83% higher risk, and Hispanic and non-White youth had a 33% higher risk. Further data showed the correlation between youth homelessness and juvenile justice involvement. 50-75% of youth experiencing homelessness had been arrested, while 50-60% had been incarcerated. Additionally, the duration of time a youth remains homeless or disconnected relates to a higher frequency and likelihood of being involved with the criminal justice system. Juvenile justice and homelessness intersect in other ways: (a) quality of life, (b) survival crimes, (c) family violence, (d) behavioral health, and (e) collateral consequences.

Data regarding homelessness in Connecticut are derived from multiple different sources (schools, court support services, runaway and homeless youth providers, Youth Service Bureaus, etc.). According to the 2020 Connecticut Youth Count, of youth aged 18-24 years 3,613 were considered unstably housed, while 1,766 are considered literally homeless. Of youth aged 13-17



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years of age, 1,748 were considered unstably housed, while 696 were considered literally homeless. These estimates are based on 2,573 surveys completed and combined with extrapolated data.

More recent data from 2023, based on the Runaway & Homeless Youth (RHY) Programs, indicates that 26 minors were served emergency shelter beds, 21 minors were serviced homeless prevention programs, and 26 minors were provided services through the community care team pilot sites. As of 2023, there were only two active providers of crisis beds in the state. The presenters made a point of emphasis that there is a large disparity between the number of youths being serviced and the estimates of minors experiencing homelessness as well as a large disparity between the number of providers to minors experiencing homelessness.

The final data point that was discussed was from the National Runaway Safeline in 2022, which received crisis calls from Connecticut youth. In total, 184 youth placed calls, 60% of which were minors. Of all the calls, 78% were regarding family dynamics, 32% were about emotional/verbal abuse, 32% were about mental health, 27% were about economics, and 17% were about peer/social issues.

A large emphasis was placed upon the Community Care Team Pilot Process. The goal of the pilot program was to prevent homelessness and housing instability among unaccompanied minors, decrease the likelihood that minors experiencing homelessness/housing instability become involved with the youth justice system, inform policy and practice recommendations, amplify the voices of youth with lived experience of homelessness, and increase collaboration with community providers.

The four site locations for the Pilot Process include Stamford/Bridgeport Family and Children's Agency, the Manchester Youth Service Bureau, the New London/Norwich Thames River Community Services, and the City of Hartford Youth Service Bureau. Planning partners include municipalities, homeless service providers, the Center for Children's Advocacy, youth with lived expertise, the CT Youth Services Association & Youth Service Bureaus, state agencies including CT Departments of Housing, Education, Children & Families, and Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division, National organizations including the Coalition for Juvenile Justice and National League of Cities.

Youth are able to be serviced without the consent of adults due to laws that create affirmative obligation on the part of the provider to make reasonable efforts to contact a parent or guardian for consent. At the same time, the law allows providers to continue with services after reasonable efforts to reach the parent have been made.

The basic overview of this pilot is a case conferencing model without the inclusion of housing. The aim of the model was to bring the community together to understand who has the resources. A group of planning partners was brought together for each community, as decided by each community, who refer to a central point of contact. The central point of contact conducts an



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intake with the young person and then brings the de-identified information to a community care team meeting to share the stated needs. One of the stated needs from the youth was a comprehensive list of resources that could be offered. The youth expressed that some of their needs were personally understood, but other needs were unknown. The comprehensive list would shed light on the unknowns for the youth. Following the community care team meeting, the point of contact would then go back to the youth and provide a list of available resources within their community.

Further stated needs were improved data, collaboration with Community Care Teams for Minors, system improvement, housing, and re-entry supports. Data improvement is needed to better understand the experiences of homelessness among minors, including those involved with the juvenile and criminal justice system. Increased collaboration with Community Care Teams for minors is necessary to enhance outreach and engagement with minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Additionally, statewide partnerships with Youth Service Bureaus (YSB), and increased funding to stabilize housing for minors is needed. System improvement such as training for staff at all levels of school districts, re-entry providers, probation and parole officers, and YSB's are needed. Training for youths experiencing homelessness on their educational rights, and training for staff to better recognize the signs and symptoms of homelessness and housing instability, as well as crisis intervention and de-escalation is needed. An increased number of crisis beds for minors in all regions is essential to improve housing needs. To improve re-entry supports needs, continued work to connect youth exiting facilities to education, mental health, and family mediation supports as a preventative measure is needed. Additional support for the Connecticut Re-entry Success Plan, as it relates to housing (recommendation #6: utilize flex funds for housing assistance, and recommendation #8: expand access to housing options) is also needed.

Navigating the Coordinated Access Network

The Connecticut Homelessness Response System is built on principles and practices that enable effective strategies to address homelessness. The "Housing First Approach" is utilized which removes barriers to help homeless individuals obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible, without unnecessary prerequisites. Collaboration and cooperation with state agencies, 200+ programs, and other stakeholders aid in the success of the program. Data is utilized to track progress, improve practices, and maximize efficiencies.

Connecticut's Coordinated Access Network (CAN) is divided into multiple regions that work together to identify and serve households within their region. The regions are (a) Waterbury/Litchfield, (b) Greater Hartford, (c) Northeast, (d) Central, (e) Fairfield County, (f) Greater New Haven, (g) Middlesex Meriden Wallingford, and (h) Southeast. A high-level overview of the CAN system is as follows; households who are at imminent risk of homelessness or those who are living outdoors call 2-1-1 to speak to a CAN hub. From there, they are either placed on a shelter priority list, provided housing at an emergency shelter, or obtain outreach services where they are currently located. The needs of the households are obtained and brought



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to a Housing Solutions Meeting where the issue is either self-resolved, rapid rehousing is performed, permanent supportive housing is provided, or they obtain a shared housing accommodation.

Discussion was held regarding what youth who are under the age of 18 are to do in order to obtain the services provided by CAN. the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) is a national initiative designed to reduce the number of youths experiencing homelessness. The goal of the YHDP is to support selected rural, suburban, and urban areas, in the development and implementation of a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending homelessness. Services provided include crisis intervention, a Home Free program which provides free bussing, and screening services to ensure all contacts are referred to DCF if deemed necessary. During cases where calls are transferred from YHDP to any other agency, “warm hand-offs” occur where the call agent remains on the line until the youth is speaking to a representative from another agency. At that point, the YHDP representative would hang up. This tactic is utilized to ensure the youth can obtain necessary services.

A question was raised as to how youth will be made aware of these services. For youth to be made aware of these programs that are aimed to provide them services, youth ambassadors need to be hired to help spread the word. McKinney Vento liaisons should be utilized as well to both spread awareness of the programs within school districts but also to identify youth who are deemed at-risk of homelessness or who are homeless.

A question regarding the steps of diversion for youth was raised, which was followed by some discussion. Diversion is a complex, multi-agency involved process. At its core, diversion is a process that determines the barriers youths have to obtaining services necessary to aid in achieving adequate growth and success. Diversion is a person-centered process that is unique to each youth who is contacted. Currently, the systems in place that provide diversionary services for 18–24-year-olds operate at a one-to-two-day turnaround on services.

Data reports from 2021 were discussed to speak to the systems overall racial equity results. Disparities among races who seek out and receive services have been identified, primarily in the Greater Hartford area. Specific data was not provided at the time of the presentation. Additionally, data regarding other regions such as New Haven, New London, Waterbury, and more, is needed to conceptualize the racial equity progress statewide.

Next Meeting

Hybrid Model Option (In-person and available over Zoom)

June 20, 2024

2:00-3:30PM