

Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

2025 Recommendations



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**GENDER
RESPONSIVENESS
WORKGROUP**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1: DCF will report to JJPOC by July 1, 2025, on the new STTAR Plan released in March 2024.

Recommendation 2: Enhance and require training for congregate settings /out of home care providers. enhance programming standards. DCF, DOC, and JBCSSD collaborate to provide/facilitate/support regular uniform prevention training and ensure cyclical training in case of staff turnover. DCF to examine and strengthen (with youth and provider input) programming standards in out of home care settings, including clinical and non-clinical programming. Training shall be received pre-service or within 90 days, at any out of home/congregate care setting.

- a. The Gender Responsiveness Workgroup will review trainings provided by DCF and JBCSSD and establish guidelines for any additional appropriate trainings by October 1, 2025.
 - i. The group will consider:
 - 1. All DCF, JBCSSD, and YCI/MYI staff assigned to work with youth to receive required training on child sex trafficking upon hire and every three years.
 - 2. De-escalation and harm reduction trainings
 - 3. Minimal Facts Training (how to receive disclosures of trauma from youth)
 - 4. Training on racial and ethnic disparities as they intersect with gender and class
 - 5. Restorative justice practices to address incidents/conflicts
 - 6. Trainings on sexual and domestic violence
- b. DCF, DOC, and JBCSSD will track and monitor compliance with training at an individual level.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen safety of out-of-home care settings. Agencies that serve vulnerable children, including JBCSSD and DCF, should address security needs of out of home settings, e.g., lighting, security cameras, other.

- a. DCF, in conjunction with local police departments, shall assess

all out of home care settings for security needs, including lighting, security cameras, and others by July 1, 2025.

Recommendation 4: Consistent monitoring of specialized placements for overall accountability.

- a. DCF to develop a quality assurance framework and provide biannual updates to JJPOC
- b. DCF shall collect data on the treatment and stability of placement for children in STAR homes, group homes; and JBCSSD on treatment and stability of placement for children in secure residential facilities, and provide Bi-Annual updates to the JJPOC regarding:
 - i. Number of children placed in the quarter, include age/race/gender/number of admissions
 - ii. Average, range, and median length of stay and reasons for discharge delay/stay greater than 60 days
 - iii. Number of kids who cumulatively stay longer than 60 days in the last year
 - iv. Recommended and actual discharge settings for youth and reasons for deviation (e.g., residential, therapeutic foster home, kin home, bio home)
 - v. AWOLs by duration and number of incidences
 - vi. Critical incidents (136s, 737s, calls to EMS, police responses, hospitalizations/ED visits)
- c. OCA will annually examine the treatment needs and stability of placement for children in STAR homes, group homes, and/or residential facilities, by reviewing a small cohort of girls in such placements, and providing a report to the JJPOC that will include information on:
 1. Child welfare histories.
 2. Number of placements.
 3. Lengths of stay in placements.
 4. Identified Treatment needs, including mental health, behavioral health, and educational needs.
 5. Services provided to meet treatment needs.
 6. Unmet needs; and
 7. Involvement in critical incidents, including AWOL's.

	<p>Recommendation 5: Enhance capacity to provide individualized wrap services to children in star/other out of home settings. Ensure children in out of home settings are timely connected to services to meet their assessed needs, and that they have access to WRAP funding to ensure their needs are met, including receipt of services outside the scope of the out of home care or community-based provider contract.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DCF will submit an annual report out to the Gender Responsiveness Subgroup, no later than August 1, beginning August 1, 2025, of how much WRAP funds are allocated, what they are spending, what requests were approved including name of vendor paid, denied requests, and what services receive the percentage of funds. b. DCF and JBCSSD will submit to the Gender Responsiveness Workgroup information on how many youth Gender Response Providers/Programs they have for youth under the age of 18 and how much funding is going towards these programs, and their utilization rate or lack thereof, by July 1, 2025. <p>Recommendation 6: Referral to multidisciplinary teams. Ensure DCF and law enforcement refer within 24 hours, every case of possible (suspected) child sexual abuse, including reports of abuse and neglect in out of home care, to multidisciplinary teams.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. By April 2026, The Governor’s Taskforce on Justice for Abused Children shall develop a plan to further enhance the multidisciplinary response to human trafficking, including CSEC (commercial sexual exploitation of children).
<p>EDUCATION WORKGROUP</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>Recommendation 1: The Education Workgroup of the JJPOC is recommending an amendment to Section 10-198c of the general statutes. In Section 10-198c of the general statutes the Education Workgroup is recommending that attendance review teams report annually to the Connecticut State Department of Education on their approach and outcomes. Section 10-198(c)(b)(2) shall read:</p>

(2) Any attendance review team established under this subsection may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers and representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined in section 10-198a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly and shall report annually to the Department of Education on its specific efforts and outcomes.”

Recommendation 2:The Education Workgroup of the JJPOC is recommending an amendment to Section 10-198d of the general statutes. In Section 10-198d of the general statutes the Education Workgroup is recommending that the State Department of Education and the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap report on its use and efficacy (by school district) of chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plans. Section 10-198(d)(a) shall read:

(a) Not later than January 1, 2016, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap established pursuant to section 10-16nn of the general statutes, shall develop a chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan for use by local and regional boards of education to reduce chronic absenteeism in the school district, and shall report on its use and efficacy by school districts.”

Recommendation 3: The Education Workgroup will collaborate with CSDE to identify school district metrics that shall be reported to CSDE in 10-198c and 10-198d.

**INCARCERATION
WORKGROUP REENTRY
SUBGROUP**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Connecticut Reentry Success Plan Recommended Strategies

Recommendation 1: Coordinate and Expand Reentry Supports Connecticut’s Youth

1. A coordinating entity will convene multi-agency team meetings for each youth until the youth has successfully reintegrated and service coordination is no longer necessary. Agency staff and contracted community-based organizations and local service providers will participate and provide information and services as needed for each youth and their family. State agency representation may include but is not limited to JBCSSD, DOC, CSDE, DCF, DMHAS, DOL, DOH, DSS, and DCJ. Based on the needs of the individual youth and their family, agency staff, community-based organizations, and/or local providers will be added to the meetings based on what referrals the probation officer and the team deem appropriate. The entities which are appropriate to work directly with the youth and their family will be included in these care coordination meetings.

Recommendation 2: Expand Access to Credible Messengers

1. Credible messenger programs (including reintegration mentors, navigators, etc.) will be expanded, as funding allows, to serve youth reentering from DOC, JBCSSD, and contracted programs. This support will be available to youth for up to 24 months from the time of release.

Recommendation 3: Improve Education Transition Planning and Monitoring

1. The CSDE will partner and coordinate with the DCF JJEU to build relationships and improve communication between facility education providers, transition specialists, and school district reentry coordinators to support joint training, enhanced communication, and the timely transfer of records. (The focus will be on the reentry of students with known discharge dates at

residential treatment programs or at end of sentence. Students in pretrial detention or at DOC presentence will benefit from the development of these relationships and practices.

2. The DCF JJEU will convene a meeting with the facility education provider, the school district, and the JBCSSD, DOC, or contracted program as soon as possible within 30 days after admission to a program to review and develop the student's educational and reentry plan. (The focus will be on the reentry of students with known discharge dates at residential treatment programs or at end of sentence.)
 3. As soon as the student, legal guardian, and school district have agreed upon which school the student will return to, the DCF JJEU will provide updates on the student to the school district every other week.
 4. JBCSSD will provide students discharging from JBCSSD and DOC facilities and contracted programs with access to Educational Support Services (ESS) for legal representation and advocacy as needed.
 5. The DCF JJEU will facilitate a reentry circle(s) for a returning student prior to (and/or thereafter) their first day back at school to provide wrap around support and inclusion for the student. Reentry circles at schools may include the school counselor, principal, teacher, family, probation officer, mentor, and school resource officer.
 6. The DCF JJEU will provide ongoing reintegration support and check-ins for 90 days, or longer if needed and staff resources allow, once a student is placed back in the receiving school.
 7. The DCF JJEU will work with facility education providers and school districts to assure that education credit earned in the facility is applied to the student's transcript at the school district.
 8. The DCF JJEU will place greater attention on students released to alternative schools and large urban high schools. The DCF JJEU will provide weekly attention to absenteeism and any interventions put in place to eliminate barriers to attendance.
 9. The DCF JJEU will facilitate conversations with the school district regarding essential educational services for any student on house arrest following their stay in a facility, or who experiences environmental safety challenges that create barriers to them returning to school.
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10. The DCF JJEU will assist a student's parent or legal guardian with connections to continuing their own education if so desired.

Recommendation 4: Provide Access to Meaningful Vocational and Employment Opportunities

1. JBCSSD and DOC will ensure that each youth has access to their preferred immediate educational goal (high school diploma or GED), career exploration and development, and post-secondary education and occupational training during facility stays. Staff will assist youth as requested with access to testing, information, and funding resources for post-secondary education and/or vocational training, such as, SAT testing, college and technical school applications, and financial aid forms.
2. JBCSSD and DOC will ensure that youth reentering from juvenile facilities and contracted programs have started, and whenever possible completed, job readiness and/or career training programs with imbedded industry-recognized credentials (IRCs), certifications, or licenses.
3. JBCSSD and DOC will work with DOL to understand how best to support youth to benefit from CT Hires, CT Pathways, workforce development boards, and post-secondary technical schools.
4. The facility or contracted program will collaborate with the youth and coordinating entity to support the youth in finding and sustaining employment upon release. JBCSSD and DOL will collaborate to identify opportunities and access/pathways to year-round employment.
5. The coordinating entity will connect interested parents or guardians to employment and/or vocational opportunities and training.

Recommendation 5: Address Mental Health Service Gaps and Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Supports

1. The facility or contracted program will connect the youth to mental health and behavioral health community service providers as needed prior to the youth's release to begin the engagement process and ensure a warm hand-off. When

deemed acceptable by the facility or contracted program, a young person may have the opportunity to see their provider in the community.

2. DOC, JBCSSD, and DSS will work together to expand transition and reentry care coordination services and supports through the 1115 Medicaid Waiver for justice-involved populations application and implementation process.
3. Through the 1115 Medicaid Waiver for justice-involved populations implementation process, JBCSSD, DOC, and DSS will explore the possibility of developing a rate for treatment providers to meet current clients in pretrial detention or incarceration so that treatment may continue while the youth is awaiting trial or serving their sentence.
4. DCF will work with the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Committee (TCB) to ensure there are no gaps in service delivery from facility to community for the juvenile population, including but not limited to psychiatric medication management services.
5. JBCSSD and DOC will work with DCF and DMHAS to identify and provide access to youth substance use treatment and recovery supports.

Recommendation 6: Increase and Expand Transition Supports

1. Every youth will reenter with a Reentry Wallet and Portfolio provided by the facility or contracted program. Documents to include are birth certificate (with seal), social security card, driver's license or state identification (ID), driver's permit if applicable, school transcript, immunization records, program certificates, vocational achievements, resume, cover letter, letters of recommendation, job references with contact information, job application template, W9 template, email account and password, and resourceful phone numbers youth should maintain.
 2. When a youth is admitted to a facility or contracted program, the provider will connect with the youth's identified family and provide, within available funding, up to two (2) people with access to bus passes or other transportation assistance to visit the young person at the facility or contracted program at least
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twice a month.

3. JBCSSD and DOC will utilize flex funds, as available, to provide support for families in need for up to 6 months following a youth's return home. Support may include but is not limited to housing assistance, basic needs, transportation, and vocational training.
4. JBCSSD and DOC will work together to develop community support for reentering youth like the adult reentry welcome centers and reentry round tables, which may include peer support groups.

Recommendation 7: Support Safe Driving and Address Barriers to transportation

1. The coordinating entity will provide released youth with assistance getting to school, interviews, work, and other appointments for up to a year.
2. The coordinating entity may utilize flex funds to cover Uber/Lyft costs; mileage reimbursement, if possible, for anyone providing transportation to the young person; bus passes; and any other approved method of transportation to support the youth.
3. JBCSSD and DOC will partner with the DMV to provide youth with the opportunity to take driving courses and obtain their permit and driver's license prior to reentry.
4. The coordinating entity will provide the youth and their family with information about how to obtain car insurance.

Recommendation 8: Expand Access to Housing Options

1. JBCSSD and DOC will screen youth for housing needs upon admission to the facility and work with the family to determine their housing needs upon release of the youth.
2. DOH will continue to educate JBCSSD and DOC staff about DOH funded housing options and how to access them so that identified youth and/or their family may benefit.
3. JBCSSD and DOC will use flex funds, as funding allows, to provide youth and their family the ability to relocate if needed for safety reasons. Funds may cover moving, basic needs, and initial housing payments.
4. JBCSSD and DOC will educate staff about the existing triage

	<p>systems with DCF, DMHAS, and DDS to determine eligibility and develop service plans to support youth who cannot return home because of abuse/neglect, significant behavioral health, or developmental needs. Services based on eligibility and appropriateness may include but are not limited to DMHAS behavioral health supports; DCF educational and vocational supports (e.g., CHAP/CHEER); START program case management and housing assistance for non-DCF involved youth; and CSSD transitional housing and rapid rehousing opportunities.</p> <p>Recommendation 9: Improve the Use of Restorative Justice Practices</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. JBCSSD and DOC will continue to implement restorative justice practices in their juvenile facilities and contracted programs. 2. JBCSSD, DCF, and OVA will collaborate to improve the use of restorative justice principles and practices by community-based providers. <p>Recommendation 10: Implement a Quality Assurance System and Identify Key Funding Sources for the Reentry Success Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a quality assurance system using the Reentry Success Plan Logic Model and the Accountability and Progress Monitoring Framework. 2. Pursue state funding, applicable federal and private grant opportunities, and other funding sources as available.
<p>COMMUNITY EXPERTISE WORKGROUP</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Recommendation 1: Appoint Youth to Vacant JJPOC Membership Seats.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Section 46b-121(n)(b)(23) of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage): Two children, youths or young adults under twenty-six years of age with lived experience in the juvenile justice system, one of whom shall be appointed by the Community Expertise Workgroup of the Juvenile

	Justice Policy and Oversight Committee
DIVERSION WORKGROUP	To be presented in December