

DRAFT 2026 ANNUAL JJPOC & WORK GROUP WORKPLANS

DRAFT 2026 ANNUAL JJPOC WORKPLAN

Co-Chairs: Representative Toni Walker & Undersecretary Daniel Karpowitz

****Annual Workplans are developed from the 2025-2029 Strategic Plans. As other priority areas and strategies are identified they will be added to the workplan.***

Ongoing Projects:

1. Alternatives to Incarceration

- a. JJPOC's is committed to continuing efforts to reduce youth incarceration and create safe and least restrictive settings and facilities that have access to education, behavioral health services, and address the needs of young people that are developmentally responsive. Two areas of focus consist of oversight and monitoring of the
 - i. Settlement Agreement between the United States and the State of CT.
 - ii. Implementation of REGIONS programs

2. Educational Services for Youth in Justice Facilities

- a. The Education workgroup is monitoring the continued implementation of the DCF-JJEU by reviewing efforts, metrics, and success upon return to the community.

3. Re-entry Success Plan

- a. Driven by the need for a more robust and effective youth reentry system, the JJPOC's Reentry Subgroup has diligently developed a comprehensive Reentry Success Plan over the past two years. Mandated by Public Act 23-188, this plan is the culmination of extensive research, including the identification of gaps in existing services and the study of successful models from other states. The Reentry Success Plan aims to consider the unique needs of each youth reentering their community, emphasizing key areas for support such as education, employment, healthcare, behavioral health, restorative justice, credible messengers, and housing. This holistic approach to reentry reflects a multi-agency collaboration and the plan remains a high priority for the JJPOC. The incarceration workgroup will oversee the ongoing implementation efforts to improve the reentry process for young people involved in the justice system.

4. Gender Responsiveness

- a. In 2023, in response to the concerning experiences of young multi-system involved girls, the JJPOC created the Gender Responsiveness Workgroup and charged them with conducting a landscape analysis of Connecticut systems and

their provision of gender responsive programs and services. The group has released the 2025 Gender Responsive Landscape Analysis (phase 1) and will continue to work with both state and community partners collect input from system involved girls, parents, and community based organization to develop immediate and long-term intentional solutions to address gaps and barriers in our systemic response to vulnerable girls in crisis.

5. Diversion First and Pre-Arrest Diversion Plan

- a. Since its inception in 2016, the JJPOC has prioritized increasing the use of diversion, leading to significant progress in diverting youth from the formal juvenile justice system in Connecticut. Key initiatives like the Community-Based Diversion System and the School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) have resulted in a remarkable 31% decrease in delinquency referrals to juvenile court and a 3.5% increase in referrals to Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) and Juvenile Review Boards (JRBs) by 2019. Building on this success, Public Act 23-188 mandates further efforts to strengthen the state's diversion system by focusing on diverting low-level offenses from the formal juvenile justice system to a community-based diversion system. The Diversion First Plan and Pre-arrest diversion Policy both developed within the JJPOC Diversion Workgroup focuses on standardizing access to diversion, providing training, and considering crucial factors like service capacity and community-based accountability, and national best practices. At the Legislature's direction, the Diversion Workgroup has prioritized this initiative to re-envision the state's approach to Diversion. The Diversion Workgroup will continue to oversee the implement, its recommendations in partnership with community, youth, law enforcement, and youth serving partners.

To create space and opportunity for time needed to successfully deliver on the priorities of the JJPOC, the committee will transition from monthly to quarterly meetings. This adjustment will allow dedicated workgroups the time and space to meet between committee meetings, focus on the initiatives outlined in the workplans of the workgroups, and develop informed and data driven recommendations. All information produced at the workgroups will be delivered to JJPOC quarterly. The JJPOC meetings will remain on the third Thursday of the month and will be from 2:00-4:00pm. The new 2026 JJPOC meeting schedule will be the following:

Meeting Dates:

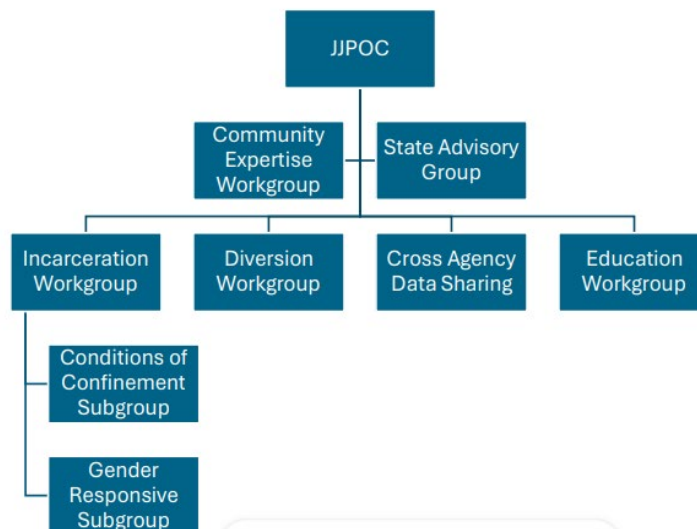
Effective May 2026 committee meetings will transition from monthly to quarterly. The remainder of the year the JJPOC will meet on the following days:

- May 21, 2026
- September 17, 2026
- November 19, 2026
- December 17, 2026
 - Special voting meeting to vote on recommendations

Quarterly	Theme/Topic:	Presenters:
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026 Legislative Recommendations (Voting mtg) 	
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No Meeting</i> 	
March 19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Employment / Career Pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JJPOC Community Expertise Workgroup members & youth • Panel of employers
April 10 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Responsive Report and panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JJPOC Incarceration workgroup Chairs • Panel
May 21 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Updates • Update on 2026 Session outcomes • SAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TYJI • OPM
September 17 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Responsiveness Landscape Analysis Phase Two • Cross over youth update • <i>2027 draft legislation recommendation concept language</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JJPOC Incarceration workgroup chairs • OPM • TYJI/JJPOC Co Chairs

November 19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual JJ state of the system Report (system focus) • Data spotlight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions of Confinement • Re-entry Success Plan • JJPOC 2027 draft legislation recommendation concept language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-Agency Data Sharing Workgroup chairs • DOC/JJEU • Brittany LaMarr, OPM • JJPOC Workgroups Chairs
December 17 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2027 Legislative Recommendations Voting meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JJPOC Workgroups Chairs

Structure of the JJPOC



The Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee, with administrative support from the TYJI, employs a multi-tiered structure to strategically address the key objectives outlined in this plan. Utilizing dedicated workgroups centered on the pivotal areas of diversion, incarceration, and education, along with further division into specialized subgroups, the JJPOC ensures a focused and efficient approach. The workgroups are comprised of state, local, private, not-for-profit, and advocacy agencies and groups who collaboratively develop system-wide and research-driven strategies to improve youth justice in the state of Connecticut.

The committee also champions data-driven decision-making through the crucial Cross Agency Data Sharing Workgroup, which supports the informational needs of all workgroups and generates insightful annual reports with the integration of members from the former Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup. In parallel, the Community Expertise Workgroup (CEW) diligently prioritizes youth and community voices in JJPOC initiatives and legislative recommendations, underscoring a firm commitment to equity and meaningful youth engagement.

These structural enhancements to the JJPOC's framework reflect a thoughtful and comprehensive strategy to tackle complex issues within the juvenile justice system. By capitalizing on the expertise of its diverse workgroup membership and prioritizing data analysis, community input, and the perspectives of young people, the JJPOC strives to strategically drive positive change and facilitate improved outcomes for youth navigating the complexities of the justice system.

DRAFT 2026 ANNUAL WORK GROUP WORKPLANS: DIVERSION

Co-Chairs: Dr. Lisa Simone & Thea Montanez
Supporting TYJI Team Members: Namandje Wali

Strategic goal: Enhance diversion and community-based accountability

Workgroup Purpose Statement: Enhance public safety by creating youth diversionary policies, practices, and trainings, and supporting positive youth development and community-based accountability.

Objectives: Standardize Diversion System: Ensure youth in all communities have access to diversion programs and that referrals follow developmentally appropriate best practices. Development Diversion Training: Create, implement, and evaluate a diversion curriculum and training in partnership with law enforcement and the community.

Workgroup Meeting Schedule:

The Diversion Workgroup will meet quarterly, on the second Tuesday of those months, from 2– 3:30 PM virtually. (Additional meetings may be called as requested by workgroup chairs)

- Feb. 17
- May 12
- Aug. 11
- Nov. 10
- Dec. TBD

2026 Strategies and Task:

- **Monitor the implementation progress of the Diversion First Plan** which ensures that youth in every community have access to diversionary programs
 - Task:
 - DCF to provide updates on the RFP to expand JRB in municipalities
 - DCF to provide update on the development, data collection, and analysis of data metrics it will collect for all diversion programs as outlined in PA 25-168
- **Monitor the continued development and implementation of the Pre-Arrest Diversion Policy.**
 - Task:
 - Update to be provided by Connecticut’s Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, the Community Expertise Workgroup, and the

Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council on the state-wide uniform youth diversion policy.

- Lose end – mechanism for local police to identify and confirm when a young person had been previously diverted anywhere in the state. Review what operational functions and technology is being used in other states that have implemented similar policies.
- Youth Diversion Training Curriculum that can be implemented by police departments across the state
- Task:
- The Diversion Workgroup will partner with DESPP, POST, and CEW to develop a Youth Diversion Training Curriculum that police departments across the state will be required to complete every three years as part of the law enforcement accreditation process
- The Diversion Workgroup will partner with members of the CEW to identify Youth and Police Engagement Training Programs that aim to educate youth on safe and effective interactions with law enforcement
- **Development of a municipal guidebook** focused on current policies and practices specific to justice involved youth, that will provide guidance related to pre-arrest diversion options for local juvenile justice teams (police, juvenile probation, juvenile review boards, youth service bureaus, schools, community providers and other community members). The guidebook will include best practices and in-depth review and cataloguing of juvenile justice statutes, and also existing juvenile justice policies across state departments.
 - Task:
 - Charter Oak, Inc. to lead the development of the guidebook and will consult with
 - Judicial Branch, SDE, DCF, DSS, Public Defender, State’s attorneys, local police departments, school districts, youth services bureaus, and other local organizations serving youth.
 - For the purpose of understanding the legal limits of data-sharing, along with the importance of privacy considerations, is a critical piece of the knowledge needed to guide local teams in planning for individual juveniles and also for systemwide approaches. Building on the relevant statutes and policies, and data-sharing and privacy considerations, identified above, we will develop a decision-flowchart to help individual police officers, as well as municipal police departments, understand and take actions based on available, legal options.

- Guidebook that synthesizes each section and can serve as a resource for local teams interested in improving their prevention and intervention work in juvenile justice in Connecticut.

** 2027 Recommendations: The development of 2027 recommendations is dependent on priorities, and progress within the group. If the group does come up with a set of recommendations, the decision to proceed with 2027 legislative recommendations package depends on committee and leadership feedback.*

Long-Term Workgroup Goals (2027-2029):

- Utilize information from the workgroup to plan for 2027, 2028, and 2029.
- Learning agenda questions:
 - What are the demographics of referred youth and prevalent disparities? How is diversion operationalized at the municipal level and do all youth have the opportunity to be diverted? Track progress and impact: How are youth who are offered diversion faring in the short term (entering diversion and being connected to resources, if warranted, to support their individualized needs) and long term (avoiding subsequent involvement in the justice system, improving their well-being, and achieving other important life goals)?
- Performance indicators:
 - 1) Reduction in youth arrests and referrals to court for minor offenses 2) Increased accessibility of diversion programs, measured by an increase in diversion referrals in all areas of the state, particularly municipalities that historically have not had access to the diversion system, and districts with high court referral rates for minor offenses 3) Improved racial and ethnic equity in diversion outcomes 4) Positive short-term and long-term outcomes for youth who participate in diversion programs, measured 13 through a harm reduction model and improved quality of life metrics. 5) Enhanced community safety 6) Availability of data on the effectiveness of diversion programs 7) Continuous quality improvement to inform resource allocation

DRAFT 2026 ANNUAL WORK GROUP WORKPLANS: EDUCATION

Co-Chairs: Representative Maryam Khan & Amy Vatner

Supporting TYJI Team Members: Namandje Wali & Andrew Zhebrak

Strategic goal: Improving engagement and success through education

Purpose Statement: We are dedicated to reducing the likelihood of future youth justice system involvement by ensuring equitable access to education for all young people, with a particular focus on those impacted by or at high risk of encountering the justice system. Through strategic engagement and comprehensive support, we aim to strengthen positive educational protective factors, enhance academic efficacy, and promote meaningful achievement.

Objectives: Reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy rates statewide through early identification, targeted interventions, and improved data tracking. Reduce the Use of Discipline in Schools and support schools in implementing restorative practices and alternative appropriate responses. Ensure the provision of quality education to youth in justice facilities meets their educational needs and prepares them for educational success upon return. Review facility education provision in justice facilities through DCF-JJEU and review efforts, metrics, and success upon return to the community.

Workgroup Meeting Schedule:

- The Education Workgroup will meet virtually every other month, on the fourth Monday of those months, from 2– 3:30 PM virtually.
 - 2026 meeting schedule:
 - March 23rd
 - May 18th
 - July 27th
 - September 28th
 - November 23rd
 - December date TBD

2026 Strategies and Tasks:

- Review and evaluate the facility education provision in justice facilities through the DCF-JJEU.
 - Tasks:

- Monitor implementation of the JJEU compared to the legislative charge.
- Review any updated and or new policies introduced by the JJEU within facilities
- Review any data, metrics, and measures (credit gained, diploma rates, graduation rates, recidivism rates) for youth in facilities and exiting facilities.
- Overview of what educational services are being provided to youth in facilities.
- 2026 recommendations- Pilot of Free Public Transportation
- 2026 Truancy legislation clean up recommendations

The development of 2027 recommendations is dependent on priorities, and progress within the group. If the group does come up with a set of recommendations, the decision to proceed with 2027 legislative recommendations package depends on committee and leadership feedback.

Long-Term Workgroup Goals (2027-2029):

- Utilize information from the workgroup to plan for 2027, 2028, and 2029.
- Learning agenda questions:
 - What are the best practices to improve and expand effective interventions for chronic absenteeism? What trends in CSDE statewide and municipal data can inform strategies to increase attendance? How can we effectively collaborate with municipal or statewide initiatives, taskforces, and commissions to be most impactful? What is the accessibility of alternative education opportunities for students and their utilization and participation rates? Are the educational needs of youth in facilities being met? Monitor and oversee the provision of education services to youth in all juvenile justice facilities. Explore ways to enhance oversight and ensure quality education. Why are students being suspended and expelled in the community? Review these offenses. What is the rate of recidivism for students who have been in juvenile justice facilities, and what are their eventual graduation rates?
 - Performance indicators:
 - Increased school attendance and graduation rates for justice-involved youth. Increased school attendance rates for youth with a history of unexcused absences. Increased proactive responses from school districts for youth who are disengaged. Improved time for connection between

school and YSB to engage YSB student support. Positive trends in LEAP data related to attendance. Improved educational outcomes for youth in justice facilities, including increased attendance and participation, academic progress, successful transitions back to community schools and educational attainment. Decreased use of exclusionary discipline in schools statewide. Increased use of restorative practices by school districts

DRAFT 2026 ANNUAL WORK GROUP WORKPLANS: CADS

Co-Chairs: Dr. Derrick Gordon & Brian Hill

Supporting TYJI Team Members: Namandje Wali & Andrew

Strategic goal: Ensure that the work of the JJPOC is led by data and accuracy

Purpose Statement: To support comprehensive data requests from the JJPOC Workgroups and the JJPOC Committee, as well as to support annual state agency presentations and prepare the annual state of the system report. Analyze policies and practices for their equitable implementation and effectiveness for all youth in Connecticut.

Objectives: Provide quantitative metrics across agencies to support the understanding of system involved youth and proactively monitor implications of racial and ethnic disparities.

Workgroup Meeting Schedule:

- CADS Workgroup will meet virtually every other month, the third Monday of those months, 11:00-12:30 PM virtually.
 - 2026 meeting schedule:
 - February 9
 - April 20
 - June15
 - August 17
 - October19
 - December 21

2026 Strategies and Tasks:

- Equity Dashboard 2.0
- In partnership with the CADS, CSDE, and JBCSSD
 - Tasks:
 - “analysis of statewide expulsions including but not limited to, (1) the number of expulsions with the school year; (2) a breakdown of how many of those expulsions were as a result of a community-based arrest, school-based arrest or other; (3) the amount of time between the arrest and the issuance of expulsion; (4) duration of expulsion; (5) education

provided after expulsion; (6) the offense the student was expelled for and arrested for; and (7) ultimate adjudication of the case which the student was expelled for.”

- Cross reference by municipal arrest of young people
 - Review expulsion school-based arrest vs non-school based arrest
 - List of offenses that students are being expelled for.
- IMRP Project
 - Proposes extending “The Connecticut Model” developed for identifying and addressing policing disparities in the area of juvenile justice through comprehensive data analysis as well as engaging system actors to diagnose and treat the root causes of local disparities, including both intentional practices and unintended consequences of justice procedures.
 - Cross over youth
 - JJPOC State of the System Annual Report

Long-Term Workgroup Goals (2027-2029):

- Utilize information from the workgroup to plan for 2027, 2028, and 2029.

DRAFT 2026 ANNUAL WORK GROUP WORKPLANS: INCARCERATION

Co-Chairs: Sharmese Walcott, Esq & Hon. Judge Tammy Nguyen-O’Dowd
Supporting TYJI Team Members: Namandje Wali & Prince

Strategic goal: Improve conditions of confinement and reentry

Purpose Statement: Ensure systems and facilities are responsive to the developmental needs of youth and provide programming for youth to thrive and be successful in life.

Objectives: Foster positive youth development through supportive environments, education, and rehabilitative opportunities. All youth-leaving facilities have the identified individual support desired and necessary for success. Programs, services, and system responses are gender responsive.

Workgroup Meeting Schedule:

- The Incarceration Workgroup will meet every other month on the third Monday of those months, 1– 2:30 PM virtually.
- 2026 meeting schedule:
 - February 9
 - April 20
 - June 15
 - August 17
 - October 19
 - December 21

2026 Strategies and Tasks:

- Foster positive youth development through supportive environments, education, and rehabilitative opportunities.
 - Increase reporting requirements to JJPOC from facilities that house youth.
 - Increase data reporting from DOC/JBCSSD.
 - JJPOC to receive conditions of confinement data in addition to OCA.
 - Receive available updates on DOC / DOJ settlement.
 - Increase JJPOC oversight and monitoring of facilities that serve youth, including REGIONS and MYI and YCI.

- Review facility conditions by visiting facilities and speaking with youth annually.
- Review the recreation space and its utilization at each facility
- Develop a chemical agent and restraint reporting form to be used by each facility. Review staff training curricula and ensure that it includes training in adolescent development, trauma-informed care, verbal de-escalation, and safe physical intervention techniques. In conjunction with the Education Workgroup, review the education services provided at each facility, including the delivery of special education services and career and technical education.
- Ensure all youth leaving facilities have the individual supports desired and necessary for success.
 - Oversee Implementation of Reentry Success Plan recommendations.
 - Recommended Strategy #1: Coordinate and Expand Reentry Supports for Connecticut's Youth
 - Recommended Strategy #2: Expand Access to Credible Messengers
 - Recommended Strategy #3: Improve Education Transition Planning and Monitoring
 - Recommended Strategy #4: Provide Access to Meaningful Vocational and Employment Opportunities
 - Recommended Strategy #5: Address Mental Health Service Gaps and Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Supports
 - Recommended Strategy #6: Increase and Expand Transition Supports
 - Recommended Strategy #7: Address Barriers to Transportation
 - Recommended Strategy #8: Expand Access to Housing Options
 - Recommended Strategy #9: Improve the Use of Restorative Justice Practices
 - Review routine progress monitoring and quality assurance reports
- Programs, services, and system responses are gender responsive. In 2023, in response to the concerning experiences of young multi-system involved girls, the

JJPOC created the Gender Responsiveness Workgroup and charged them with conducting a landscape analysis of Connecticut systems and their provision of gender responsive programs and services. The group has released the 2025 Gender Responsive Landscape Analysis (phase 1) and will continue to work with both state and community partners collect input from system involved girls, parents, and community-based organization to develop immediate and long-term intentional solutions to address gaps and barriers in our systemic response to vulnerable girls in crisis.

1. Analysis of the survey of girls in the system by JBCSSD and DCF
2. Focus group and survey of parents and community organization
3. Drafting of recommendations and delivery of final report

** The development of 2027 recommendations is dependent on priorities, and progress within the group. If the group does come up with a set of recommendations, the decision to proceed with 2027 legislative recommendations package depends on committee and leadership feedback.*

Long-Term Workgroup Goals (2027-2029):

- Utilize information from the workgroup to plan for 2027, 2028, and 2029.
- Continuous Improvement: Encouraging Collaboration for Positive Outcomes

DRAFT 2026 ANNUAL WORK GROUP WORKPLAN: COMMUNITY EXPERTISE

Co-Chairs: Stella Rose Dugue and Deivonne Tanksley
Supporting TYJI Team Members: Namandje Wali and Andrew Zhebrak

Strategic goal: To develop, train, and inform formerly incarcerated individuals and young people to be the next generation of leaders in driving public policy changes within juvenile justice reform, and assist them in bringing their lived experience in shaping decisions of the JJPOC to promote Youth voice and empowerment.

Workgroup Purpose Statement: To empower youth, families, and communities to shape JJPOC decision-making, ensuring the voices and perspectives of those most impacted are valued and at the forefront of policy change.

Objectives: Youth Report : Create an annual Youth Report to highlight the voices of formerly justice involved individuals regarding their perspectives and experiences on an issue of importance to JJPOC. Education and Advocacy: Run a series of workshops to assist formerly incarcerated individuals in better engaging with the legislative/policymaking process. Such trainings will include (but not limited to) data interpretation, advocacy, written communication, and public speaking.

Workgroup Meeting Schedule:

- The CEW Workgroup will meet monthly, from 6-7:30 PM on the second Tuesday
 - 2026 meeting schedule (additional meetings may be called as requested by workgroup chairs):
 - May 12
 - June 9
 - July 14
 - August 11
 - September 8
 - October 13
 - November 10
 - December 8

2026 Strategies and Tasks:

- TYJI/CEW Member Conversation

Task:

- To build alignment within the workgroup, TYJI will hold one-on-one conversations with each CEW member to understand their priorities and individual goals that could be addressed through legislative initiatives and policy changes
 - From this conversation – TYJI will incorporate their feedback into the creation of a training curriculum to support the CEW’s ability to either independently or within the committee to advocate for changes in their communities.

- Coordinate the Research, Writing, and Release of the 2026 Youth Report for the JJPOC

Task:

- Project Management
 - (May-June) Conduct an exploratory inquiry with the members of the CEW for the topics they are interested in highlighting the JJPOC regarding employment concerns for formerly incarcerated and currently incarcerated young people.
 - (June-August) Identify relevant vested stakeholders and develop collaborative relationships and communication channels between those stakeholders and the committee.
 - (May- June) Identify the scope of what we will be creating and delineate roles/responsibilities within the workgroup through a released workplan specifically for this report. Within it – there should be due dates, timelines, and benchmarks for different sections of the work.
 - Introduction/Problem Statement (June)
 - Literature Review/Existing Methods (June-July)
 - Gaps and Analysis (June-July)
 - Proposed Recommendation Draft (August-September)
- Report Content
 - Draft a detailed problem statement that articulates the issue the CEW Workgroup aims to bring attention to in 2026, and how it impacts marginalized communities.

- Perform a landscape analysis of the identified issue using presently available data to assess current conditions and areas requiring further attention.
- Examine current academic research and best practices to support the development of a more effective and equitable alternative to our current methods
- Develop a recommendation to ensure that the report concludes with actionable insights and guidance for future recommendations
- Identify and bring forth a legislative/policy recommendation from the report's findings.

Task:

- Following the completion of the Youth Report – the Community Expertise Workgroup shall identify what they are interested in reporting onto the broader JJPOC in the form of legislative recommendation or policy alteration for the 2027 session
- CEW Workgroup Members will learn how to communicate this recommendation to members of their community, legislators, and policymakers
- The CEW will draft statutory and policy language related to the recommendation, along with a legislative report outlining its importance and impact.
- CEW members will independently develop testimony and accompanying speeches in support of the recommendation.

** 2027 Recommendations: The development of 2027 recommendations is dependent on priorities, and progress within the group. If the group does come up with a set of recommendations, the decision to proceed with 2027 legislative recommendations package depends on committee and leadership feedback.*