

JJPOC Diversion Workgroup Meeting

February 17th , 2026, 2:00 – 3:30 PM

Zoom

1. Review Draft Diversion Workplan
2. Project Updates
 - a. Municipal Guidebook – Charter Oak
 - b. Diversion Supplement Reporting Metrics – DCF
 - c. Diversion First – Thea Montanez
 - d. Youth Police Training – Lisa Simone



Making connections. Informing solutions.

University of New Haven

JJPOC Diversion Workgroup Meeting

February 17th, 2026

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Agenda

Administrative Updates

TYJI

Diversion 2026 Workplan

TYJI & Chairs

Project Updates

Diversion Supplement Reporting Metrics
Municipal Guidebook
Diversion First Plan
Youth Police Training

DCF
Charter Oak
Thea Montanez
Lisa Simone

Administrative Updates

Workgroup/Subgroup Upcoming Meeting Dates

Workgroup/Subgroup:	Meeting Date:	Agenda Items:
Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee	March 19th, 2026, 2:00 – 4:00 PM (In-Person & Zoom)	• Youth Day
Education Workgroup	March 23rd, 2026, 2:00 – 3:30 PM (Zoom)	• Legislative Updates • 2026 Education Workplan
Community Expertise Workgroup	February 17th, 2026, 6:00 – 7:30 PM (Zoom)	• Legislative Updates • Youth Day Review
Cross Agency Data Sharing/RED Workgroup	April 20th, 2026, 11:00 – 12:30 PM (Zoom)	• Cross Over Youth Presentation TYJI TA • CCA RED Update

Workgroup/Subgroup Upcoming Meeting Dates

Workgroup/Subgroup:	Meeting Date:	Agenda Items:
Diversion Workgroup	May 12th, 2026, 2:00 – 3:30 PM (Zoom)	• TBD
Incarceration Workgroup	April 20th, 2026, 1:00 – 2:30 PM (Zoom)	• Reentry Success Plan Update
Direct any Questions to the following Tow Youth Justice Institute Staff: Erika Nowakowski: enowakowski@newhaven.edu Namandje Wali nwali@newhaven.edu Paul Klee: pklee@newhaven.edu Andrew Zhebrak: azhebrak@newhaven.edu		

2026 Diversion Workgroup Workplan

Project Updates

Diversion Supplement Reporting Metrics - DCF

Municipal Guidebook – Charter Oak

Diversion First Plan – Thea Montanez

Youth Police Training – Lisa Simone

THIS MEETING DID NOT CONTAIN A PRESENTATION

JJPOC Diversion Workgroup

February 2nd, 2026

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Web Based Meeting- Zoom

Attendance

Agata Raszczyk-Lawksa

Brian Wright

Erica Bromley

John Saccu

Nateisha-LaShay

Neika Thompson

Shirley Ellis-West

Tasha Hunt

Thea Montanez

Victor Jones

TYJI Staff

Andrew Zhebrak

Namandje Wali

Erika Nowakowski

Meeting Objectives:

The February 17, 2026 Diversion Work Group meeting consisted of reviewing the Draft Diversion Work Plan and receiving project updates on the Municipal Guidebook, Diversion Supplement Reporting Metrics, Diversion First Plan, and Youth Police Training.

I. Review of Draft Diversion Work Plan

- Namanji, the new Senior Project Manager presented the Draft Diversion Work Group Work Plan, emphasizing that it remains a living document subject to revision based on member feedback.
 - The plan is organized around three core initiatives:
 - (1) standardizing the diversion system so that youth in all communities have access to diversionary strategies, anchored by the Diversion First Plan;
 - (2) creating, implementing, and evaluating a diversion curriculum and training in partnership with law enforcement and the community;
 - (3) developing the Juvenile Justice Municipal Guidebook in partnership with Charter Oak.

- The work group will meet quarterly on the second Tuesday of designated months from 2:00–3:30 PM. The work plan and tentative agenda items will be shared with the group following the meeting.

II. Diversion Supplement Reporting Metrics - DCF

- DCF was unable to attend due to a family bereavement, illness, and a legislative conflict affecting three staff members.
- There was a shared a brief written update on their behalf: contracts for three sites were executed in early January, and programs are actively recruiting staff and planning for implementation.
- DCF will return to present a full update at the next quarterly meeting in May.

III. Municipal Guidebook - Charter Oak

- Ron Schack and Anne McIntyre of the Charter Oak Group provided an overview of the Municipal Guidebook, a resource intended to give municipal-level agencies including police departments, school resource officers, and community organizations, a single accessible reference for diversion requirements, options, and recommended decision points.
 - The guidebook will cover applicable public acts (including PA 23-188), JJPOC recommendations, and lessons learned from municipalities that have implemented diversion practices.
- Thea noted that the guidebook originated from her experience in Hartford, where a lack of shared understanding across police, schools, youth providers, and families created significant gaps in navigating justice-involved youth cases. The intent is for the guidebook to be updated annually to reflect changes in law and practice.
- Members raised several considerations for the guidebook's development:
 - CYSI has developed a referring provider training and a procedural guide for YDTs and encouraged Charter Oak to incorporate that work and include CYSI in the development process.
 - A member concerns about chronically absent youth who intersect with the YDT system, emphasizing that school districts must be considered partners in any diversion framework, particularly for high-risk youth who are unattached to school.
 - Someone highlighted a growing trend of youth under 12 whose cases bypass traditional diversion pathways due to the severity of charges and urged the work group not to lose sight of this population in planning.
 - They also stressed the importance of incorporating Hartford's lessons learned, particularly the gap between statutory requirements and on-the-ground practice, into the guidebook.

- The group acknowledged the challenge of packaging the volume of information in a digestible format and noted that Charter Oak is exploring a modular structure that allows users to navigate to what is most relevant to them.
- Next steps: Charter Oak will draft an invitation letter for interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders. They will provide regular updates at future work group meetings as iterations of the guidebook are developed.

IV. Diversion First Plan

- In July, the JJPOC approved the diversion committee's recommendation for a statewide youth diversion policy for all local law enforcement and directed that it be submitted to the POST Council for review.
- POST Council Executive Director accepted the policy and formed a working group. The group includes law enforcement representatives from urban communities, a juvenile court member, and representatives from CCA
- After several weeks of review, the working group made only minor tweaks to the policy; the core intent remains unchanged, including its integration into the POST accreditation process. The revised policy will be shared with this work group and the full JJPOC and will next go to a POST Council subcommittee that reviews statewide law enforcement policies.
- A significant discussion arose around the operationalization of the policy, specifically the challenge of creating a cross-jurisdictional database allowing officers to confirm in real time whether a youth has been previously diverted. Key discussion points included:
 - No technology solution has been identified yet. Existing databases within local law enforcement have been explored but none has been selected.
 - Someone advocated for moving forward with a paper ticket book in triplicate in the interim so that the diversion process is not stalled while a digital solution is developed.
 - Members raised concerns about privacy and individual rights if a digital database is created, recommending future input from the public defender's office or parent-side counsel.
 - There was consensus that the policy should move forward, with the database challenge addressed in parallel. The concern is specifically around first and second offense diversion, where the officer has no current mechanism to verify prior diversion history.
 - POST Council is expected to form an operational working group to address these implementation elements.

V. Youth Police Training

- A member reported that she had arranged to observe in-person police recruit training in Waterbury to better understand how juvenile engagement is currently being taught to new officers.

- The youth-community-police engagement working group, which held its first meeting in November, was paused due to scheduling constraints and will be reactivated. Michelangelo Palmieri, Senior Project Manager for Training and Technical Assistance at TAO, will serve as Lisa's right-hand on this work going forward.
- The group's goal is to develop a voluntary community toolbox for youth engagement a resource for communities across Connecticut to use in building stronger relationships among youth, police, families, and educators.