

Executive Committee vision session findings

Session date: June 2, 2021

Overview

On June 2, 2021, young people from the [CT Justice Alliance](#) and [Center for Children's Advocacy](#) hosted a youth-led vision session with the JJPOC Executive Committee members. This session gave each member the opportunity to answer 3 questions:

1. **Authentic Engagement:** In what way do you think the JJPOC can do better at working with directly impacted youth, parents and community?
2. **Improving Process:** Workgroups work year round to create strong recommendations for the entire JJPOC. Editing or not approving the recommendation can easily be done in one executive committee meeting. How can this approach be more mindful of the work that the groups have done?
3. **Barriers to Beyond Punitive:** What do you think are some of the barriers to creating policies that are focused on addressing root issues and less punitive approaches?

After sorting through the notes, we've identified common themes and recommendations/solutions that came from this discussion and will help guide the work of the Community Expertise Workgroup -- their plan being to spend the rest of 2021 focusing on structure and engagement recommendations for the JJPOC. **These are not formal CEW recommendations**, yet **strictly a summary** of the common themes and recommendations that came from this discussion.

Throughout the document you will see the term 'directly impacted' used a lot. We define 'directly impacted' as *young people that are primarily from urban, low-income communities, with a heavy focus on youth of color that are most disproportionately impacted by the juvenile legal system; realistically, folks who can not easily remove themselves from the legal system.*

Next steps: The CEW will spend time sorting through this information and identifying potential recommendations or conversations to have with the JJPOC co-chairs and/or members. It is intended to host another vision session in the near future.

Common Themes

Authentic Engagement

Participants discussed the need to...

- Create and maintain a fair and equitable partnership and power dynamic between current JJPOC members and directly impacted families and youth
- Meet parents/families where they are at
 - Follow-up question: What does “where they are at” mean/look like?
- Intentionally and authentically engaging directly impacted families and youth in the work of the JJPOC
- Make meetings more accessible for families and youth
- Do an internal examination for flaws/bias within the current JJPOC

Improving Process

Participants discussed the need to...

- Increase the communication and information exchange between directly impacted members and additional current JJPOC members; This includes all workgroups improving the way they exchange information and maintain communication pipelines within one another
- Create a more strategic, thoughtful recommendation timeline to be intentional about knowing and reviewing information per workgroup in advance. This alleviates the feeling of members not having enough time or information to research or catch up on any behind the scenes work or discussions

Barriers to Beyond Punitive

Participants discussed the need to...

- Identify and address root/system issues that contribute to youth legal involvement in order to create successful long terms solutions
- Increase member willingness to expand new resources meaning funding new opportunities; Overall breaking the cycle and investing in community-based resources and services served by non-traditional organizations and service providers
- Decriminalize developmental behavior when discussing youth legal involvement and solutions

Identified Recommendations/Solutions

Authentic Engagement

Participants recommended...

- Administering surveys and have conversations with directly impacted groups for continuous feedback on their experience in the system to inform the work and priorities of the JJPOC and maintaining those relationships with ongoing feedback and engagement
 - Follow-up question: But how do we ensure implementation after engagement?
- The JJPOC creates clear goals and outlines for how and why it wants to engage with directly impacted communities, creating intentional purpose and vision.
- The JJPOC creates opportunities to engage with directly impacted families and youth outside of a formal meeting, overall achieving stronger and authentic relationships
- Working with directly impacted groups to identify gaps in services and solutions
- TYJI expand their outreach and diversity of organizations that work with directly impacted communities to achieve a larger network of impacted partners
 - Follow-up questions: What groups? How do we ensure implementation after engagement?
- The CEW reintroduce their 2021 recommendation because families and youth need voting seats at the JJPOC
 - Follow-up question: What was the reason for the recommendation being removed this year?
- The JJPOC check in with families and youth to coordinate a meeting time and day that accommodates everyone's time and capacity - Acknowledging that not everyone around the table is attending as a representative from their employment

Improving Process

Participants recommended...

- Moving the workgroup process timeline back allowing more time for members to edit and/or review materials. Implementing a midway or quarterly progress check is a potential solution. This would also ensure that executive committee members have enough information about each issue area prior to reviewing the recommendation for approvals
- Examining the current representation at the executive committee and existing workgroups to ensure diversity of perspective and power
- Expanding the time allocated throughout the year on the JJPOC agenda to allow continuous feedback on the progress of each workgroup. This allows the opportunity for workgroup members to gather a wide variety of perspectives during their recommendation creation process

Barriers to Beyond Punitive

Participants recommended...

- Members needing to be mindful of youth development when discussing ways to address youth behavior
- The JJPOC and workgroups strengthen their work to undo systemic and structural issues to achieve successful long term policies. This means focusing more heavily on root issues such as racism, bias, social/economic barriers, and other factors that have contributed to the criminalization of youth
- Members exploring and agreeing to recommend funding non-traditional community based programs that have been proven to address issues identified within the JJPOC
 - **What's preventing this?**
- Identifying a way to shift the narrative of categorizing youth behavior as criminal acts instead of recognizing it as a cry for help