TOW YOUTH JUSTICE INSTITUTE
University of New Haven

Achieving positive youth outcomes for safer and healthier communities:

A shared vision for Connecticut's juvenile justice system

Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Comm
3-Year Strategic
2019 -

Adopted by the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee on December 20, 2018
The Tow Youth Justice Institute

This report is produced by the Tow Youth Justice Institute in partnership with the State of Connecticut Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee. The Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) was created in 2014 by Public Act 14-217.

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I. Executive Summary

In 2014, the State of Connecticut established the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) through Public Act 14-217 to oversee the continued reform of the juvenile justice system. This Committee was tasked with the following:

- Recommending changes in state law regarding juvenile justice.
- Crafting a standard definition of recidivism.
- Setting goals for reform.
- Assessing the impact of the Raise the Age legislation.
- Assessing the quality of education within the juvenile justice system.
- Planning for implementation of Results-Based Accountability (RBA) by agencies and as a juvenile justice system.
- Analyzing the existence of disproportionate minority contact (DMC) across the juvenile justice system.
- Reporting to the state on the quality and effectiveness of a variety of programs in community supervision, congregate care, diversion, behavioral health, and other areas.

The University of New Haven's Tow Youth Justice Institute supports the JJPOC through staffing, research and coordination of efforts. The work of the JJPOC has been largely conducted through its four workgroups: Diversion, Incarceration, Recidivism, and Cross Agency Data Sharing. The workgroups are comprised of state, local, private, not-for-profit, and advocacy agencies and collaboratively develop system-wide and research driven strategies to improve youth justice in the state of Connecticut. Starting in 2015, the JJPOC established three strategic goals to guide juvenile justice reform efforts by mid-2018:

- Increase diversion of children and youth from juvenile court by 20%;
- Decrease the number of children and youth confined (incarcerated) in state-run facilities by 30%; and
- Decrease the rate of recidivism among juvenile offenders by 10%

Significant progress has been made towards each of these goals, making Connecticut a state to be watched for its successes. A detailed summary of the progress achieved is discussed in Section II and IV of this strategic plan.

JJPOC now presents a new strategic plan, to build on the earlier achievements and guide the important work for the next three years (2019 to 2021). This plan was developed over an eighteen-month period in partnership with the Tow Youth Justice Institute at the University of New Haven, and was facilitated by Lael Chester and Selen Siringil Perker of Columbia University.

The JJPOC presents a set of four goals for the next 3-year period:

- Goal 1: Limit youth entry into the justice system. (Reserving the formal justice system only for cases that cannot be diverted or otherwise appropriately served by alternative means or systems).
- Goal 2: Reduce incarceration.
- Goal 3: Reduce racial and ethnic disparities of youth in Connecticut's juvenile justice system.
- Goal 4: Right-size the juvenile justice system by setting appropriate lower and upper age limits.

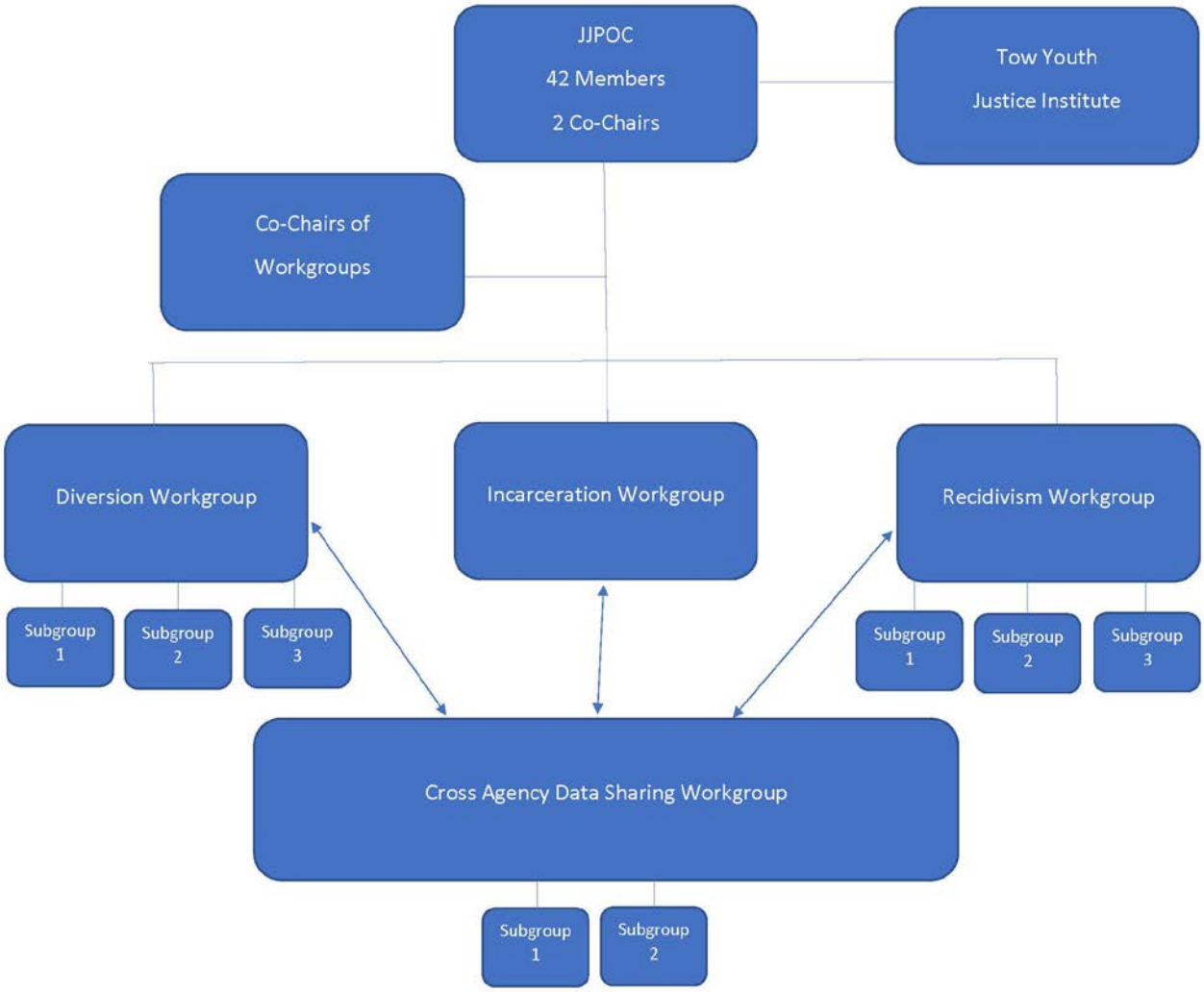
These goals, along with a set of corresponding objectives, are detailed in Section V, including recommendations on how best to organize the work of the JJPOC (structure and process). The JJPOC and workgroup members have developed strategies to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in this plan and identified indicators to assess the outcomes of these strategies, and achievement of the overarching goals and objectives.

The JJPOC presents this strategic plan as a roadmap, to guide the JJPOC's work going forward.

II. Progress Since 2015

In this progress section, results and measurements are a reflection of an annual report that JJPOC received in November 2018.

As the work was being defined and actions taken, the JJPOC quickly realized the need for sub-workgroups for Diversion, Recidivism and Incarceration to reflect the strategies being explored toward achieving their goals. The flowchart below reflects the structure of the JJPOC and workgroups in place until December 31, 2018. It should be noted that the chart does not reflect all active subgroups. The sub-workgroups were established based on an identified strategy or passed legislation

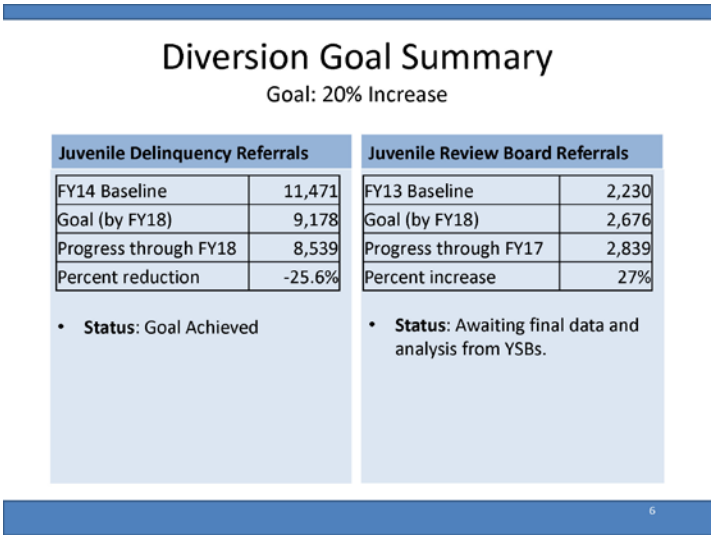


Examples of sub-workgroups include:

- Diversion subgroups:
  - Police training to address youth-police relations in the community and trauma informed practices and adolescent development.
  - Development of a Community-Based System that would respond to the Family with Service's Needs (FWSN) changes in the law effective August 2018 that removes all status offenses from the Juvenile Court process.
  - Development of a School-Based Diversion process.
- Incarceration subgroups:
  - Evaluating the impact of the new grounds of detention.
  - Collaboration with the Children's Behavioral Health Implementation Advisory Board.
- Recidivism subgroups:
  - Addressing the educational and vocational needs of children and youth in the juvenile justice system.
  - Prohibit out-of-school suspension in Congregate Care agencies.
  - De-escalation Techniques training in all congregate care facilities.
- Cross Agency Data Sharing subgroup:
  - Result Based Accountability (RBA) implementation to measure overall condition of youth and youth in the juvenile justice system.

Goal #1 – Increase diversion of children and youth from juvenile court by 20%

Toward the Diversion goal, two measures have been established: referrals of delinquents to Juvenile Court and referrals to Juvenile Review Boards. The number of delinquency referrals (referring youth to juvenile court) as reported on November 2018 has decreased by 25.6% effectively meeting the 20% diversion increase, and the increase of referrals to JRBs/YSBs as reported on October 2017 has been increased by 27%, also surpassing the diversion goal. JJPOC is awaiting updated JRB/YSB data for 2018.



Diversion Goal Summary

Goal: 20% Increase

Juvenile Delinquency Referrals	
FY14 Baseline	11,471
Goal (by FY18)	9,178
Progress through FY18	8,539
Percent reduction	-25.6%

- **Status**: Goal Achieved

Juvenile Review Board Referrals	
FY13 Baseline	2,230
Goal (by FY18)	2,676
Progress through FY17	2,839
Percent increase	27%

- **Status**: Awaiting final data and analysis from YSBs.

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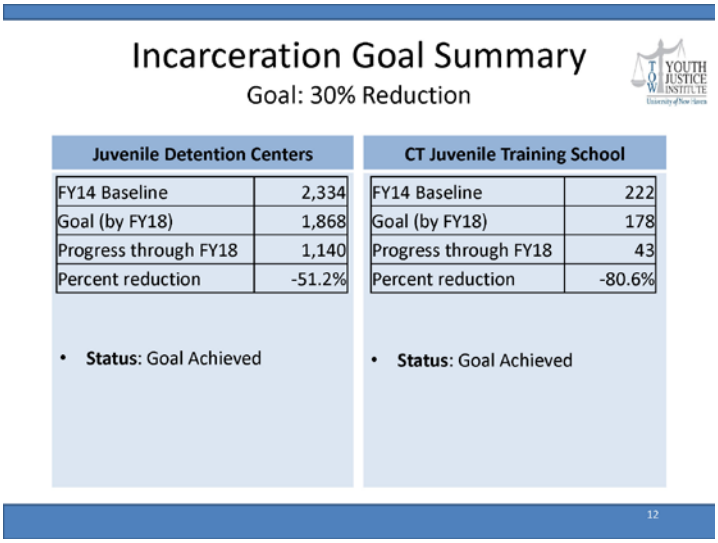
A number of programmatic initiatives has supported the accomplishment of this goal. A Community-Based Diversion System is being implemented throughout the state's YSB system. This is intended to divert status-offending youth from the juvenile justice system, as well as those who commit low-level offenses, to effective, developmentally appropriate, community-based responses. By creating a process for early identification, assessment and intervention, the individual social/emotional, behavioral, criminal, mental health and academic needs of at-risk youth can be addressed within the context of their family and community.

Dovetailing the Community-Based Diversion System is a School-Based Diversion Plan that was completed in early 2018. It included a focus on revision of current school discipline policies. One component of this work is the use of Restorative Justice practices. These practices are a set of relational, communication approaches used to facilitate meaningful conversations to prevent harm, as well as to restore relationships wherein harm has occurred and conflict exists between people. They have evolved as a tool to improve school climate and educational outcomes, and provide structure for organizing effective group communication, building relationships, sound decision-making and resolving conflicts.

Goal #2 – Decrease the number of children and youth confined (incarcerated) in state-run facilities by 30%

Toward the goal of a 30% reduction in incarceration, the progress in reducing the incarceration rate for juveniles has important implications nationally. As reported in November 2018, a cut of over 50% in the state's juvenile detention centers has already been achieved. The reduction in males admitted to the Manson Youth Institute has remained steady at 28% each year. Admissions to The York Correctional Institute have remained below 10% for the past four years. CJTS closed in May 2018, earlier than anticipated, as the last youth was placed in alternative confinement.

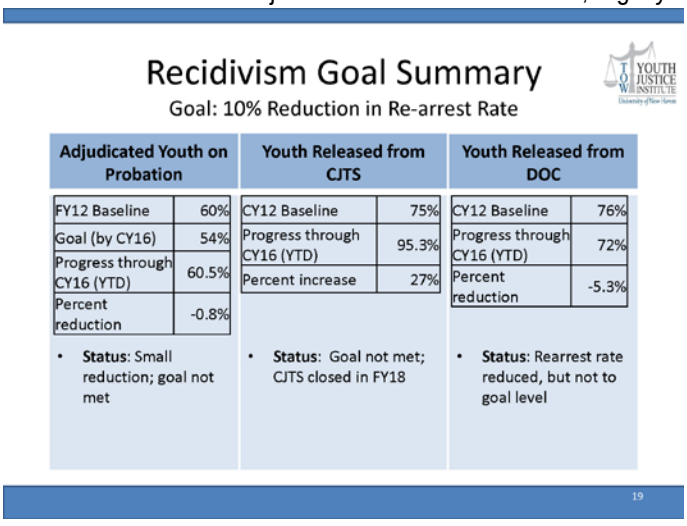


Through Raise the Age legislation and various diversionary strategies, the incarceration rate in Connecticut is among the lowest of any other state in the country.

This is the result of many committed and caring individuals, organizations and state agencies dedicated to improving the system and keeping as many youth as possible away from interaction with the system. Far surpassing the goal of a 30% reduction, an almost 50% reduction is unprecedented.

Goal #3 – Decrease the rate of recidivism among juvenile offenders by 10%

Toward the 10% decrease in Recidivism goal, the system had not seen strong results as of the November 2018 report. Recidivism increased for juveniles released from CJTS, slightly decreased when measured to 2014 for those on probation, and is approaching 10% for those transferred juveniles released from the Manson Youth Institution. However, when looking at results from 2007 when the Court Support Services Division began measuring recidivism, there has been an 8% reduction. The Recidivism Workgroup determined that Connecticut needs a meaningful, system-wide quality control mechanism to ensure that youth in the deep end of the justice system have access to educational and economic opportunity, and they are working to address issues that point to the need for a single, consolidated system to educate youth in custody. The Recidivism Workgroup has developed a plan to create multiple pathways to educational opportunity, cultivating and supporting expert teachers, developing specialized curricula, supporting reentry from detention and coming home to opportunity.



Additional details of this plan will be explained later in the report.

III. Research Supporting Reform

The University of New Haven's Tow Youth Justice Institute has a Research Team comprised of University faculty, students, and the TYJI Director of Research. Several research projects have been conducted or are in progress of being reported out to the JJPOC and its workgroups:

- CT Juvenile Correctional Facilities: A study of youth in confinement (Phase I) focuses on state run facilities, with the goal of investigating the relationship between conditions of confinement and various well-being. Data from 2005 to 2015 were analyzed to examine who the youth housed in Connecticut state run facilities are and what characteristics are most common.

- State-funded Privately Operated Congregate Care: A Study of the Network of Residential Programs for Juvenile Offenders (Phase II) identifies the scope and capacities of the existing state-funded network of privately operated residential programs for pre-trial and adjudicated juvenile offenders and to identify options for expansion. It also aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the network in meeting the needs of pre-trial and adjudicated/convicted juvenile offenders.

- The Pre- and Post-Assessment of Community-Based Programs and Recidivism Outcomes Study contrasts changes in community-based programs, the demographic characteristics of youths served, and recidivism outcomes leading up to and throughout the implementation of Connecticut's Raise the Age (RtA) legislation. This study also focuses on the different community-based programs used to address youth's needs through services.

- Video Review of Use of Restraint in State-run Facilities reviews incidents where seclusion or restraint was used with youth and the supplemental incident reports. Using videos and incident reports provided from state-run facilities, a content analysis was conducted to assess differences in practices and documentation throughout the state of Connecticut.

- Interviews with Youth Detained or Committed in State-run Facilities involves conducting interviews with youth who have been housed at a juvenile detention center or have been housed at an adult facility in Connecticut. These interviews focus on open-ended questions that highlight youths understanding of the rules, the supervision of the facility, the perception of social support (both in and outside of their facilities), and their perceptions of the use of punishment within facilities.

- National Survey of Truancy Intervention Models used an online self-report questionnaire that was used to get feedback from those involved in direct truancy intervention models throughout the United States, as well as to ask a wide range of questions about the youth served.

- Listening to Youths and Young Adults about Policies Affective Juveniles in CT is a collaboration with youth advocates and juvenile justice reformers from around the state of Connecticut with the goal of learning about youths understanding of JJPOC, as well as youth justice reform efforts in the state of Connecticut. These focus groups focus on youth voice for justice reform initiatives.

IV. Significant Changes in Juvenile Justice

Throughout this section of the report, some of the content has been taken directly from plans developed by workgroups over the past year. The significant changes outlined below are the result of efforts of the JJPOC and others through executive and legislative leadership.

Details of the legislation passed in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 can be found in Addendum A.

A. Closing Connecticut Juvenile Training School

Background

Nationally and globally, juvenile justice practitioners have come to a universal understanding: Prisons don't work well to change youth from law breaking to law abiding. No matter what they have been called--- training schools, reformatories, youth centers, the time for punitive congregate care facilities has passed. States are being challenged to redefine their response to juvenile crime and to create a future without juvenile prisons.

In December 2015, Governor Dannel Malloy announced his desire to close the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) by July 2018. The facility opened in 2001 with a maximum capacity of over 230 residents. In the spring and summer of 2016, due to a decreasing number of youth committed delinquent and to policy changes within the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the average daily population at CJTS was 45 youth. In June 2016, DCF presented an overview of their plan for closure of CJTS to the JJPOC. Legislation in 2016 mandated that CJTS close by July 1, 2018. Earlier than anticipated, CJTS closed in May 2018.

Legislation

As previously mentioned, in December 2015, Governor Dannel Malloy announced his desire to close CJTS by July 2018.

- P.A. 16-147 Legislation in 2016 mandated that CJTS would close July 1, 2018.

B. Consolidation of Juvenile Justice Functions in CSSD

Public Act 17-02, "An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium ending June 30th, 2019, Making Appropriations therefore, Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the State and Implementing Provision of the Budget" included three sections (e.g., Sec. 321, 322, and 323) that involve the transfer of juvenile justice functions from Department of Children and Families (DCF) to the Judicial Branch. The Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (CSSD) is currently working on implementing the new system and provides regular updates to the JJPOC.

The new system will provide for a more comprehensive and consistent approach to working with incarcerated youth, and those recently involved in the JJ system. This system will also utilize more community-based approaches for services and secure residential placements.

Research

A major source in developing the CJTS closure plan was the "No Place for Kids, The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration" report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in which they stated that the use of correctional training schools is "neatly summarized in six words: dangerous, ineffective, unnecessary, obsolete, wasteful and inadequate."

They cite what they call "overwhelming evidence showing that wholesale incarceration of juvenile offenders is a counterproductive public policy." Although there may be a small number of youthful offenders who pose a public safety concern, using incarceration in broad strokes provides no benefit, causes further decline in youthful behavior, eliminates a sense of hope about the future, and wastes taxpayer dollars that could be used more restoratively.

Legislation

- P.A. 17-2 section 321 states that effective 7/1/2018, the court is authorized to sentence children who have been convicted as delinquent to a period of probation that may include placement in a residential facility, in addition to the existing menu of orders and conditions available to the court.
- P.A. 17-2 section 322 requires the Judicial Branch to expand its contracted juvenile justice services to include a comprehensive system of graduated responses with an array of services, sanctions and secure placements.

C. Removal of Status Offenses for Youth

Background

In 1992, Connecticut referred 2,500 youth to court for status offenses, and by 2002, that number had grown to more than 4,000. There were no programs or services for youth charged with status offenses outside the delinquency system. State leaders recognized that a new approach was needed, and have made significant reform that appropriately respond to the needs of status offenders.

Key Considerations

Punishing and confining youth for nonviolent misbehaviors that pose little to no public safety risk does nothing to address the underlying personal and family needs but has potentially far-reaching, negative consequences. Status offenses are at the front end of the entire justice system—the earliest point of contact where youth misbehave. If this point of contact is overly punitive and youth enter the justice system, the chance for greater offenses is increased, recidivism rates are increased and this affects the entire justice system and community.

Now with more knowledge and research on brain development, it is clear that these behaviors are often a reaction to being exposed to traumatic events and activities. Until now, schools, police, communities, and families have been at a loss as to how to handle these cases without putting them in a confinement environment that leads to greater offenses and higher recidivism rates. Rather than punishment, youth need support services and opportunities to heal. In addition, adults have had varying levels of knowledge around youth development and particular ideas about what acceptable family and social norms look like. These preconceptions lead to personal biases (including racial, cultural, and gender biases) that shape how they interpret and respond to a youth's misbehavior. An understanding of the cause and effect and signs of mental health problems and trauma, of how culture, systemic bias, gender identities and race, and of their own personal biases are critical to the development of influence dynamics with youth.

Not all cases call for interventions, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Systems must be able to assess youth and family needs and have an array of service options that range from minimal to longer-term. It is also important that systems swiftly respond to the more serious and immediate needs of youth and families through readily available crisis intervention and mental health services.

Legislation required the development of a community-based diversion system and a plan for school-based diversion to appropriately respond to the needs of youth diverted from the juvenile justice system.

P.A. 16-147 called for the implementation of the Community-Based Diversion System Plan. The plan focuses on identifying and addressing the underlying needs/symptoms of the behavior and putting early intervention supports in place. Ensuring screening and service matching to the needs that led to the behaviors has been proven to ensure long-term behavior change versus just imposing sanctions. By identifying and addressing the root cause of the behaviors, continued involvement in the juvenile justice system is likely to decrease.

Consistent cross-agency collaboration is needed to serve individual youth and families such as:

- Approach all misbehaviors with an understanding of youth development and needs.
- Eliminate court as an option for status offense cases.
- Understand youth and families as central to the solution.
- Develop a robust continuum of services that can meet the needs of youth and families in their communities.
- Measure and publicly report on the efficacy and fairness of status offense systems.

The Community-Based Diversion System maximizes existing mechanisms to connect children and youth, families, and schools with resources in their community, and divert them from the care of state agencies (CSSD and/or DCF). It essentially weaves a system of supports from existing individually operated programs, leverages the Connecticut Children's Behavioral Health Plan (PA 13-178) and enhances an array of services that may currently be under-funded, structurally fragmented, and insufficiently distributed due to limited access created by agency contract restrictions.

The benefits of a fully implemented Community-Based Diversion System include:

- Decreased referrals to Juvenile Court
- Increased participation in appropriate services and programs
- Increased family engagement
- Decreased rates of recidivism
- Reduction in the stigma/labeling associated with formal juvenile justice system involvement
- Reduction in costs of associated with crime and incarceration. The reduction in costs include a repurposing of resources to the components of the Community-Based Diversion System Plan and the returning of cost savings to the agencies of cognizance to better respond to the needs of children, youth and families in all Connecticut communities

Legislation in 2016 also required the development of "a plan for school-based diversion initiatives to reduce juvenile justice involvement among children with mental health needs in schools with high rates of school-based arrests, disproportionate minority contact and a high number of juvenile justice referrals." To address these requirements, the Diversion workgroup completed a report titled, "Development of a School-Based Diversion System in Connecticut." The report outlines the need for a system of school-based diversion supports to prevent and reduce juvenile justice involvement, provides a model framework for addressing those needs statewide, and recommendations with cost options for implementing a statewide school-based diversion system.

The Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) is currently being implemented to address the issues articulated in Section 11 of P.A. 16-147. SBDI was developed in response to the high percentage of juvenile court referrals resulting from incidents that occur in school and the disproportionate prevalence of behavioral health conditions and disabilities among students referred by schools to the juvenile court. SBDI was initially developed in 2008 as a component of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network.

The Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) is the coordinating center for SBDI. To date, SBDI has been implemented in 37 schools that demonstrate the highest levels of need—typically high schools, technical high schools, alternative schools, and some middle schools. SBDI has three primary goals:

1) Reduce the frequency of discretionary in-school arrests, expulsions, and out-of-school suspensions
2) Link children who are at risk of arrest to appropriate school and community-based services and supports
3) Build knowledge and skills among school staff to recognize and manage behavioral health crises in school

The School-Based Diversion System is linked to the larger Community-Based Diversion System, which the JJPOC Diversion Workgroup submitted on January 10, 2017. The community-based system provides a roadmap for effective, developmentally appropriate, community-based responses to divert children from the juvenile justice system. Together, the School-Based Diversion System and the Community-Based Diversion System will create a seamless array of early identification, screening, and intervention practices. Those systems will help to address the individual criminogenic, social/emotional, behavioral, mental health and academic needs of at-risk pre-delinquent and delinquent children within the context of their family, school, and community so that no child is entered into the juvenile justice system without having exhausted appropriate school and community resources.

Implementation of both the School-Based and Community-Based Diversion System will have far-reaching benefits for the youth, their family and caregivers, schools and community. Ultimately, this will also lead to reduced costs for juvenile justice system.

Research

There is a significant amount of research and data about the negative implications of arresting youth for status offenses. Disproportionate responses and harsh school discipline policies to youth misbehavior contributed to the school-to-prison pipeline. Vera's Just Kids: When Misbehaving Is a Crime report calls for a national movement for systems to "reframe these cases to focus on diversion and prevention, rather than potential detention, incarceration, or other legal and life-long consequences." They ask systems to not only "close the courthouse door", but also to ensure that at every point in the system, an understanding of youth misbehaviors, development and needs is included in the assessment of a situation and that investing in community-based prevention and diversion programs cost less and better improve youth outcomes.

Many school referrals to the juvenile justice system are for relatively minor and non-violent offenses. According to State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2017 data from the Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD), the top five reasons for a school referral to the juvenile court are:

1. Breach of Peace-2nd degree (29.9%);
2. Assault-3rd degree (16.6%);
3. Threatening-2nd degree (6.6%);
4. Disorderly Conduct (6.1%); and
5. Possession of under ½ oz. Cannabis (6.0%).

Research indicates that 40% to 80% of youth involved with the juvenile justice system have mental health and/or substance use conditions, suggesting that many of these youth may be better served by the behavioral health, rather than the juvenile justice system. Arrested youth are significantly more likely than non-arrested peers to have poor mental health and educational outcomes, especially if they are placed in secure confinement settings. Please see Addendum B and C for the Community–based and School-based Diversion Plans.

Legislation

There have been significant changes to status offenses that are reflected in the following legislation:

- P.A. 05-250 ended the use of detention for any status offender who had violated court orders.
- P.A. 07-4 in 2007 created and funded a network of Family Support Centers throughout the state to quickly identify and address the needs of the youth and their families, and divert them away from the juvenile justice system allowing them to remain in their communities.
- P.A. 16-147, eliminating truancy and defiance of school rules as status offenses in order to divert youth from the juvenile justice system, effective August 2017.
- P.A. 16-147 called for implementation of the Community Based Diversion System Plan in which the Youth Services Bureaus are identified as the primary agent for diversion of children from the juvenile justice system.
- The legislation also called for the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) to create a guide of truancy intervention models by August 2017. Furthermore, effective August 15, 2018, schools determined by SDE as having a high rate of truancy will be required to implement a truancy intervention program. Other legislative and policy changes directly relate to the role of behavioral health services within schools.
- P.A. 17-2 in 2017, legislation mandated that effective July 1, 2019, children identified as Families with Service Needs (FWSN) will no longer be referred to the courts. This recommendation addresses the remaining categories (Beyond Control, and Runway) under the FWSN law.
- P.A. 18-31 codifies in legislation both the Community-based Diversion System Plan developed in January 2017 and the School-based Diversion Framework developed in January 2018, whereby 1)Youth Services Bureaus are identified as the primary agent for diversion of children from the juvenile justice system, 2)a newly developed process for making referrals of juvenile justice children from police, schools and other agents to the youth services bureau system is implemented, and 3)priority strategies for school-based diversion: disciplinary policy review, use of community resources such as the Emergency Mobile Crisis Teams, improved professional development for school staff are addressed.

Details on the legislation in P.A. 18-31 can be found in Addendum A.

D. Education Improvements for Juvenile Justice Youth

Background

Children are most likely to thrive when they are educated in their own communities, not in custody. Nevertheless, when children are removed from their homes, it is critically important to provide them with high-quality educational supports and services. Educational achievement is a key protection against recidivism, and strengthening education is one of the surest ways of increasing community safety and improving life outcomes for vulnerable youth.

Connecticut struggles to educate young people in state custody. In 2015, for instance, 91% of youth in DCF custody did not reach the state's math achievement benchmark, and 80% did not measure up in reading. Currently the system is fragmented and expensive; lacks quality standards, monitoring, and accountability; lacks specialization and expertise causing youth to slip during transitions. The Connecticut legislature in 2016 directed key state stakeholders to collaborate in developing a plan to meet the educational needs of justice-involved youth better.

The Recidivism Reduction Workgroup of the JJPOC was tasked with developing the plan envisioned by the legislature, and spent much of 2017 studying the problem in Connecticut and examining possible solutions. In January of 2018, those solutions were distilled into a set of recommendations for the JJPOC and details of the approved legislation is below.

Key Considerations

There are four key problems with the status quo for educating youth in the custody of our justice system:

- We are fragmented and expensive: Connecticut has a welter of uncoordinated state and local agencies and actors providing educational services for youth in justice system facilities. Fragmentation costs money by defeating economies of scale in an era of shrinking budgets and falling populations of youth in custody. For instance, in 2016, education at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School and in our detention centers cost more than $35,000 per seat in staffing alone. However, because we have no economies of scale, even that was not enough, as the detention center schools in Hartford and Bridgeport slashed expenses to the extent that teachers were not always available in every classroom.
- We lack quality standards, monitoring, and accountability: Connecticut has no quality standards for educating out-of-home youth in the justice system, very little data reporting and external monitoring for educational programs in justice system facilities, and few accountability mechanisms to fix failing programs.
- We lack specialization and expertise: Right now, educational services may be provided by programs that lack specialized expertise and which have not invested in teacher training, curriculum development, or the multiple pathways to success that are necessary for educating youth in justice system custody.
- We let youth slip during transitions. Fragmentation makes seamless transitions among facilities, and between facilities and the community, more difficult. Connecticut struggles with records collection and transfer; identifying youth with special needs; and reentry planning and support.

Educating youth in detention centers presents structural problems including short lengths of stay, the disruptions necessitated by court appearances, and the mobility of youth who enter and leave the school for reasons unrelated to their education.

Other challenges arise from the educational deficits and unmet needs that are already present in the lives of youth who enter justice system custody. Only half of the youth in Connecticut's detention centers in 2016 were previously enrolled in traditional high-school settings. The overwhelming majority are behind in school, usually by at least two or three grades. 57.5% of youth entering the school in Hartford's detention center had existing, diagnosed special education needs. In addition, if Connecticut youth entering detention are like their peers across the country, a majority have a history of suspensions and expulsions.

At the deeper end of the system, the data suggest even greater challenges. The Department of Children and Families, which operated the school in Connecticut's secure custody facility for boys, reported that 80% of youth have identified special education needs at intake, and the average youth entering secure custody reads and does math at a

combined 5th grade level. Like many states, Connecticut has little information on educational outcomes for youth in the deep end of the justice system. However, the data that exists mirrors negative national trends. In 2015, for instance, 91% of youth in the custody of DCF – which at that time, held both justice system involved youth and youth in the abuse and neglect system – did not reach the state's math achievement benchmark, and 80% did not measure up in reading.

Vocational education came into focus in 2018. Many other factors needed to be addressed before the juvenile justice system would be poised to make any offerings and changes. Among the many things that the Education Transition Plan must address are the range of services for the justice-involved youth must include, at a minimum, a traditional high-school diploma program, an accelerated credit recovery program, vocational training, and access to post-secondary options.

Research

The JJPOC Recidivism Workgroup made recommendations for building a coordinated system for justice system education, implementing common-sense quality control measures, and investing in supports that are proven to change lives and increase educational and economic opportunity for vulnerable youth, including:

- Coordination & Consolidation
  - Legislate a planning and implementation process leading to the creation of a single, consolidated system for educating youth in the deep end of the justice system.

- Quality Control & Accountability
  - Create a comprehensive quality control system for education in facilities and during transitions. That means setting clear standards for educational quality; developing benchmarks for achievement; establishing a data collection and reporting system, including school profiles with relevant, customized quality metrics; mandating external accreditation and evaluation; and developing a set of meaningful interventions, tailored for the custodial context, if education falls short of quality benchmarks.

- Expert Teachers & Specialized Curricula
  - Redeploy resources conserved through consolidation by investing in new supports, including a statewide professional development community for teachers who work with out-of-home youth and youth who are transitioning home from custody.
  - Follow nationally accepted best practices by developing and deploying a flexible, high-interest, modular curriculum that is aligned with state standards.
  - Offer youth in custody a robust set of vocational and post-secondary learning options and multiple pathways to graduation and careers.

- Community Transitions
  - Reinvest resources conserved through consolidation in reentry coordinators who can support youth returning to the community from both short-term detention and long-term custody.
  - Mandate prompt school reconnection for youth who are returning home from juvenile detention.
  - Define a clear protocol with timelines for transitional support, including records transfer at both intake and release from custody, team-based reentry planning, reenrollment, and credit transfer when youth return to community-based educational settings.
  - Support the development of an electronic database that allows real-time sharing of educational records among schools statewide to support seamless transitions.
  - Create pathways into the Technical High School system for youth who have fallen into the deep end of the justice system.

See Addendum for Transforming Education in Connecticut's Justice System Report.

Legislation

Legislation began in 2015 with prohibiting out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of children in pre-K through 2nd grade and including behavioral health and disciplinary issues in school health screenings. It also included extending restrictions

on use of restraint and seclusion in public schools to all students, not just those in special education programs, and requiring memorandum of understanding between school districts that employ school resource officers with local police departments specifying the role of officers in schools, clarifying the definition of school-based arrest, and requiring collection and disaggregation of data on suspensions, expulsions, and arrests.

In 2018, the primary focus of P.A. 18-31 is creating a new Education Committee on improving the educational services to youth in out of home placement.

- By 1/1/21, a single agency will be in charge of a statewide system of education transitional supports for children in custody.
- By 7/1/18, the JJPOC will convene a committee, the members of which are designated in the bill, to develop the plan mentioned above. The education committee has been formed and is chaired by State Rep. Robyn Porter, and Joshua Perry. The membership includes 11 key stakeholders and convened September 2018. It plans to meet monthly throughout 2019.
- By 1/1/19, the JJPOC will receive a report from such committee and propose legislation to vest responsibility for the education of children in custody in a single state agency that will provide all education and related transitional supports, effective July 1, 2020.
- Among the many things that the Plan must address are the following: the range of services for the justice-involved youth must include, at a minimum, a traditional high-school diploma program, an accelerated credit recovery program, vocational training, and access to post-secondary options. Additionally, a recommendation was made to submit a plan for a single agency to be in charge of a statewide system for education transitional supports for children in custody.
- P.A. 18-31 calls for the Board and the Superintendent of the Technical Schools to submit a plan to accomplish this by January 1, 2019, to both the JJPOC and the appropriate committees of the legislature. The collaboration is intended to create a pathway to enrollment and the technical schools are called upon to amend their admission criteria to enable this change.

E. Justice Reinvestment Planning to Begin

Background

It is long past time to choose a different path, one that aligns the moral, ethical, and human imperative with fiscal prudence, safer communities, and better youth outcomes. The call for the closure of youth prisons does not mean there are not some young people for whom secure confinement is the right and necessary solution. However, even for them, harsh, punitive, and developmentally inappropriate settings are not the right place, certainly not if the goal is — as it should be — positive youth development and rehabilitation.

The right solution is a comprehensive one, achieved through simultaneous and well-sequenced actions to reorient the system into one that is driven by the goal of helping youth get back on track, and prioritizing youth development and accountability over punishment. States are doing so by limiting commitment to youth prisons to only youth who have committed serious offenses and pose clear and demonstrable risks to public safety. Enacting statutes that limit the categories of youth who are eligible for correctional placement can help make this happen (Mendel, 2011). When Texas and California statutorily limited youth corrections to youth with more serious convictions and reallocated savings to counties to fund local solutions to youth offending, both states experienced marked declines in youth incarceration and offending. Indeed, from 2001 to 2013, there was a 53% decline in youth incarceration in the U.S., with youth incarceration declining by double digits in 48 states. During that time, each of the nation's five largest states experienced youth incarceration declines of nearly two-thirds.

As Connecticut has moved toward reducing juvenile incarceration rates, providing alternative approaches to confinement and other successful diversionary strategies, a 2016 Harvard report "The Future of Youth Justice: A Community-Based Alternative to the Youth Prison Model", offered sound principles they refer to as the 4 R's, Reduce, Reform, Replace, and Reinvest.

Key Considerations

A journey through Connecticut's juvenile justice system leads us to the conclusion that embracing the 4 R's will produce a positive result.

Reduce

In Connecticut, our juvenile justice reforms have contributed to significant reductions in incarceration without compromising public safety. For example, juvenile crime rates have been dropping since 2007 even with the inclusion of 16 and 17 year old youth; juvenile recidivism rates have been dropping—down 15% since 2007 in probation; juvenile detention populations have been reduced, to the point where our two remaining detention centers which have 176 beds now hold about 35 daily; and commitments to Department of Children and Families for out of home placements has been significantly reduced---an amazing 77% since 1999, with fewer than 200 commitments in all of 2016.

Reform

Given the successful reduction in the pipeline to youth prisons, the alternate and more successful approach is to move toward a continuum of services that address the underlying causes behind a youth's involvement with the juvenile justice system. Connecticut has taken a lead in juvenile justice reform in the country through several strategies and changes in law that have resulted in the reductions noted in the previous section.

Replace

Connecticut has already begun addressing the replacement of juvenile correctional facilities. The New Haven Detention Center was closed in 2012 thanks to improved court screening and increased use of community alternatives. Effective July 1, 2018, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School is now empty and closed.

Some of the major reforms to date include:

- Removing status offenders such as truancy and defiance of school rules from placement in detention, and largely from the courts through the creation of community based alternative programs.
- Making Diversion a priority through the establishment of the Juvenile Review Boards throughout the state including the three largest cities; also new strategies to reduce school arrests.
- Moving 16 and 17 year olds into the Juvenile Justice system and getting even better outcomes than with the under 16 juveniles.
- Reducing Incarceration through creation of community based evidence based programming and alternative residential options.
- Reducing recidivism through the adoption of validated assessment tools, strength based treatment approaches and cognitive behavioral therapies.
- Adopting Results Based Accountability (RBA) to maximize the opportunity for accomplishing intended outcomes.
- Establishing the JJPOC to provide overall leadership and direction and system wide goal setting.

Reinvest

The concept of reinvestment is rooted in the Justice Reinvestment strategy—by reducing incarceration, states not only achieve better outcomes for the juveniles and increased public safety, but they should also experience significant cost savings.

The creation of the Statewide Community Diversion System Plan by JJPOC has cost implications. The Plan for this new system outlines community capacity needs as alternatives to state agency involvement and intervention. The Plan demonstrates how youth justice can be addressed within the context of their family, school, and community such that no child or youth is entered into the juvenile justice system without having exhausted appropriate community resources. A coordinating hub that can weave together a system of supports and services including police, schools, families, court and child welfare systems, community organizations, faith based organizations, and neighborhood groups and the funding resources are critical factors in its implementation.

Legislation

P.A. 18-31 mandates that by January 1, 2020, the JJPOC shall report on a Justice Reinvestment Plan that will allow for the reinvestment of a portion of the savings from the decreased use of incarceration and congregate care programming to become strategic investments in home, school and community based behavioral health services for children diverted from the juvenile justice system. TYJI has commissioned Connecticut Voices for Children to conduct research on best practices for creating a justice reinvestment plan in Connecticut.

V. Going Forward: 2019-2021 Strategic Plan

A. Introduction

Connecticut adopted two previous strategic plans, in 2006 and 2016 respectively, to guide its reform efforts in juvenile justice. To build on the progress achieved so far, the JJPOC, in partnership with the Tow Youth Justice Institute at the University of New Haven, worked over the course of the last eighteen months on developing a new strategic plan for the next three years (2019 to 2021). Lael Chester and Selen Siringil Perker were invited to facilitate discussions with the JJPOC and workgroups, advise about ways to build and frame this strategic plan, and help translate the ideas generated to the written page. However, the plan itself is the work product of the JJPOC, and is a roadmap that the members created to guide the work going forward.

First and foremost, this strategic plan is a statement for a ***shared vision***: to achieve positive youth outcomes for safer and healthier communities. This requires a fair, effective and equitable youth justice system. In the process of developing this plan, the JJPOC members identified three activities to be infused in all aspects of this strategic plan and JJPOC's efforts to improve the juvenile justice system:

- *Integrating Community Expertise*: Those most impacted by the youth justice system – system-involved youth and their families – have experience and expertise that are essential in directing reform efforts. The JJPOC is committed to finding ways to welcome youth and families to participate in and inform JJPOC discussions and decisions, and partnering with them to identify ways to ensure their meaningful, sustainable involvement in the development of JJPOC priorities and recommendations. While hearing individuals' first hand experiences and stories is valuable and impactful, authentic partnership is critical to ensure those stories guide policy and practice decisions.[1]

- *Conducting Research*: The JJPOC is committed to using research to identify areas for reform, and to assessing whether JJPOC recommendations have been implemented and to making improvements in youth outcomes and public safety. The JJPOC values the role of research in all its work and is committed to investing in research going forward.

- *Enhancing workforce specialization in youth services:* Serving system-involved youth effectively requires special knowledge, skills, and a mindset different from those required for working with adults. JJPOC is committed to enhancing the capacity of service providers and correctional personnel serving youth in both the juvenile and adult justice systems by ensuring that they acquire foundational knowledge and training related to the principles and practices of positive youth development and rehabilitation.

This plan identifies four specific goals for the next 3-year period (2019-2021):

- Goal 1: *Limit youth entry into the justice system* (reserving the formal justice system only for cases that cannot be diverted or otherwise appropriately served by alternative means or systems).
- Goal 2: *Reduce incarceration.*
- Goal 3: *Reduce racial and ethnic disparities of youth in Connecticut's juvenile justice system.*
- Goal 4: *Right-size the juvenile justice system by setting appropriate lower and upper age limits.*

For each stated goal, the JJPOC and its workgroup members have described a set of concrete objectives, strategies and

[1] Tow Youth Justice Institute. (October, 2017). Issue Brief: Amplifying Youth Voice and Partnerships. http://www.newhaven.edu/_resources/documents/lee-college/institutes/tow-youth-justice-institute/our-partners/issue-brief-youth-voice-10-31-17.pdf

measures, which will be presented to the full JJPOC for approval. The JJPOC also identified a new structure for workgroups, which is described later in this report.

JJPOC wishes to acknowledge that members are still working to implement goals and carry out the strategies from the last strategic plan and the JJPOC will continue to oversee and assess the implementation of prior recommendations and reforms, e.g. removing status offenses from the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

A critical element of implementing the new strategic plan will be careful planning – sorting priorities and mapping out a timeline. For instance, the JJPOC will undoubtedly devote more time and attention to achieving one goal over another in the short-term. This does not mean that the other goals are less important or that thoughtful planning and progress cannot be made simultaneously for these other goals. However, making these choices, and carefully sequencing the strategies over a three-year period, is what will make this strategic plan both feasible and effective.

Finally, the JJPOC recognizes that this Strategic Plan should be considered a "living document" that can be developed further over the course of the three-years, and not a static mandate. Workgroups will develop, as they currently do, six-month project plans over the course of the three years. This proposed process and structure should be periodically reviewed and changed as needed. External changes will occur (e.g., elections of new state leadership, changes in funding and budgets) as well as internal ones (e.g., addition of new JJPOC members with specific expertise), and the JJPOC needs to have the flexibility to respond to both new challenges as well as positive opportunities that might arise within the overall framework of this plan.

B. Process Used to Develop This Strategic Plan

The Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee began the process of developing a new strategic plan in the summer of 2017. Steps taken over the course of a year have included:

- Lengthy discussions at JJPOC meetings facilitated with the assistance of a consultant;
- The development and distribution of a survey via Survey Monkey to gauge the topics that seem most urgent to the members.
- Multiple meetings with the co-chairs of the workgroups.
- Multiple meetings with workgroup members to obtain their feedback on strategies and measures.
- Specific feedback and edits provided by the co-chairs on working drafts.
- Ongoing discussions and coordination from the TYJI at the University of New Haven.
- Conversations with the JJPOC co-chairs, Representative Toni Walker and Office of Policy and Management Secretary Benjamin Barnes.
- Conversations and presentations from content experts, including Shay Bilchik, Founder and Director, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University.
- Input from statewide partners, including but not limited to CT Voices for Children, Partnership for Strong Communities, CT Juvenile Justice Alliance, The Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut, Center for Children's Advocacy and the CT Youth Services Association.

Throughout the process, the JJPOC members have worked on the following elements of this strategic plan:

1) Identifying goals and objectives: The JJPOC spent considerable time and effort identifying goals and priorities to focus on over the next 3 years. The members generated an abundance of wonderful and important ideas for reforms that encompassed almost every aspect of the juvenile justice system. The hardest part of the planning was to narrow a long list down to a more manageable number of items and then to build consensus on which ones deserved top priority at this time.

2) Organizing the structure of the JJPOC: In addition to thinking about what the JJPOC should work on for the next three years, JJPOC members also discussed how best to do this work. In the past, the JJPOC has created workgroups to tackle specific subjects and bring recommendations to the full JJPOC for consideration. Recognizing that this strategic plan is ambitious, the JJPOC took time to develop a structure and a process that ensures that the work of the JJPOC members can be as effective as possible to achieve these important goals.

3) Identifying strategies and indicators. The current workgroups of the JJPOC discussed the strategies and indicators to work toward over the course of the next three years. While these are detailed herein, as previously stated, this document is a living document, and as such, strategies and measures may change over time based on the changing environment. In addition, the JJPOC recognizes the significant learning from qualitative measures, and commits to incorporating insights gained from case studies of 3 – 4 populations across the system to understand what works well and to learn from negative outcomes.

4) JJPOC Legislative Recommendations: The Executive Committee will consider the schedule for filing legislation, the budgeting process and other relevant, non-JJPOC processes that can affect the feasibility of achieving the reforms proposed, when presenting recommendations to the JJPOC.

Alongside the establishment of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) by Public Act 14-217, the Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) at the University of New Haven was identified as the entity to staff the JJPOC. That structure remains in place and is pivotal in the workgroups achieving their goals. In addition to staffing, the TYJI through its University capacity provides research required to substantiate the strategies and measures needed to achieve those goals.

C. Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1

Limit youth entry into the justice system.

Connecticut is committed to preventing youth from entering the formal justice system by appropriately serving them by alternative means or systems (e.g., community-based diversion, restorative justice approaches, mental/behavioral health services, etc.) in order to achieve better outcomes for youth.

Research shows that using prevention and early intervention methods work better than formal system involvement regarding social, personal and financial outcomes.[2] Identifying children that are most at risk of being arrested and improving the protective factors that address those risks will lessen the likelihood of delinquency of at-risk youth in Connecticut. If and when delinquency occurs despite these preventive efforts, Connecticut will reserve the formal justice system only for cases that cannot be appropriately served by alternative ways, such as community-based diversion programs.

By ensuring that the "right" cases are processed in the juvenile justice system, Connecticut will prevent the trauma to youth and their families potentially caused by the experience of being involved in the justice system, and will connect youth and their families to alternative and effective services in their own communities that they can access now and in the future.[3] This will allow justice system officials to focus their efforts and limited resources to where they are needed most. Connecticut has already invested in innovative diversion procedures and programs at numerous stages of the system, such as the Juvenile Review Boards, schools, probation (even before arraignment), and the police, with successful outcomes. At least one-third of all juvenile cases in Connecticut are handled and successfully resolved in a non-judicial manner.[4] This highlights the importance of cross agency collaboration within and outside of the justice system to ensure youth are not inappropriately escalated into the justice system.

The JJPOC has identified the following objectives as priority areas of Goal 1 to build on the progress so far achieved with the Community-Based Diversion Plan currently in place. Workgroups met numerous times to develop overall measures for the goal and corresponding strategies and measures for each objective.

Primary measures

- # of youth entering Juvenile Justice system.
- # of youth participating in diversion programs
- # of youth successfully completing diversion programs.
- # and % of youth participating in diversion programs that have justice involvement 12 months later (data development agenda).

Objectives:

A. Assess and increase both the quality and availability of diversion programming

[2] Loeber, Rolf, and Farrington, D., and Petechuk, D. (March 2003). "Child Delinquency: Early Intervention and Prevention." Available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/186162.pdf. This bulletin summarizes the final report of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Study Group on Very Young Offenders, published by Sage Publications as *Child Delinquents: Development, Intervention, and Service Needs* (edited by Rolf Loeber and David Farrington).

[3] Weber, J., Umpierre, M., and Bilchik, S. (May 2018). "Transforming Juvenile Justice Systems to Improve Public Safety and Youth Outcomes."(Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform).

[4] Lael Chester and Vincent Schiraldi. Public Safety and Emerging Adults in Connecticut: Providing Effective and Developmentally Appropriate Responses for Youth Under Age 21. Boston, MA: Harvard Kennedy School Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, 2016. (Submitted to the Tow Youth Justice Institute, University of New Haven.)

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Create a standard definition for "Diversion". • Map and identify what diversion programs, strategies, and interventions exist within communities. • Conduct a gap and needs analysis to identify missing resources, services, and interventions needed within the community system, including data collection and data availability. • Define "effectiveness" of diversion programming both short term and long term. • Obtain qualitative data from youth and families about the quality of diversion services received. • Use gap analysis to increase services and interventions within areas of need. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of report that maps and identifies diversion programs, strategies and interventions within communities. • Issuance of gap and needs analysis identifying missing resources, services, and interventions needed within the community including gaps in the data collection and data availability. • Collection and analysis of qualitative data from youth and families about the quality of diversion services received.	• # of instances of new services and interventions within areas of need. • % increase in the number of individuals served and types of services provided within areas of need. • % of YSBs collecting qualitative data. • % of respondents rating YSB services as "good" or "very good".

B. Ensure that youth have supports from youth-serving agencies (schools, Department of Children and Families, community providers, etc.) as viable alternatives to the formal juvenile justice system, including but limited to:
    a. Substance use services
    b. Mental and behavioral health services
    c. Child protection and welfare services
    d. Educational services, including special education
    e. Housing services for youth and their families
    f. Other services for youth with disabilities

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Review data from systems (as noted above a-f) to identify viable alternatives to the formal juvenile justice system. • Improve collaboration with Children's Behavioral Health Advisory Board. • Utilize LIST infrastructure to enhance partnerships between youth serving agencies by creating LIST Network Agreements to ensure partnerships between LIST participants.	• Issuance of a report on youth homelessness, health and juvenile justice disparities. • Issuance of a joint report from DCF and Judicial outlining how they will collaborate on behavioral health diversionary services for children involved in the juvenile justice system.	• # of JJPOC members involved with Children's Behavioral Health Advisory Board and/or its workgroups. • # of LIST Network agreements created. • % of LIST Network partners signing the agreements • # of families involved in the process of identifying viable alternatives, establishing resources.

• Engage families in understanding available resources in their community. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.		• # of families who participate in creation of LIST infrastructure agreements. • # of family members who participate in creation of LIST Network agreements. • # of juvenile justice children being served through CBHAB. • # of juvenile justice children with child protection status.

C. Identify sustainable funding for the Community-Based Diversion Plan and School-Based Diversion System through a variety of resources.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Investigate possible sources of new funding including – foundation, federal grants, other state funding models. • Identify existing funding opportunities to blend or leverage dollars across agencies. • Investigate barriers to funding structure. • Create subgroup of executive team to maximize financial opportunities and efficiencies targeting and prioritizing funds based on need and risk. • Conduct an analysis of justice fund allocation and create a plan for justice reinvestment. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of a report per PA 18-31 that mandates that by January 1, 2020, the JJPOC shall report on a Justice Reinvestment Plan.	• # of potential new funding sources identified. • # of potential new dollars identified. • # of applications for new funding, completed and submitted. • # of new dollars acquired. • % of total community-based diversion system dollars that are from non-state governmental sources. • % of total community-based diversion system dollars that are newly leveraged. • % of existing funding that is flexible across programs and agencies.

D. Reduce inappropriate referrals to the juvenile justice system.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Define criteria for appropriate referrals to Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare systems using a racial justice lens. • Reduce exclusionary school discipline.	• Identify appropriate. referrals to Juvenile Court • Creation of learning objectives for police training on appropriate referrals, including to the child welfare system.	• % of students suspended and expelled by race/ethnicity/gender/district. • % of school based arrests by race/ethnicity/gender/district. • # of police trainings conducted that include alternatives to arrest.

• Conduct on-going police training and awareness regarding appropriate utilization of alternatives to arrest; including FWSN petitions, court referrals and referrals to DCF. • Review and enhance current CSSD policy regarding diversion from juvenile court including status offenses. • Support and Educate families regarding utilization of community resources prior to filing FWSN petition. • Conduct on-going training for youth-serving agencies and schools for appropriate referrals to the child welfare system. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.		• % of police who were trained reporting a better understanding of alternatives to arrest. • % of first-time non-felony cases referred back to the community by juvenile court. • # of youth serving agencies, schools, and police departments trained in DCF referral guidelines. • # and % of unsubstantiated DCF Educational Neglect cases by age.

E. Apply restorative practices and principles in diversion programing.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Conduct Train-the-Trainer on restorative practices for school and youth servicing agency staff. • Use newly trained staff to bring training to the field Identify opportunities & resources for training on restorative practices with member associations, state and local agencies, non-profits, etc. • Support implementation of restorative practices across diversion programming. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Creation of standard learning objectives for restorative justice training content. • Train the trainer on restorative practices conducted.	• # of Train-the-Trainer trainings held. • # of trainings completed by those trained through "Train-the-Trainer". • % and # of school districts across state receiving restorative justice trainings. • # of instances of newly trained staff bring training to the field. • # and % of staff trained by agency type.

GOAL 2
Reduce incarceration.

Connecticut is committed to ensuring that youth who are committed to confinement are held accountable through individualized rehabilitative services, treated with fairness and dignity, and offered the support needed to mature into healthy and productive members of our communities.

Connecticut has implemented several strategies to reduce the incarceration of youth, and the state has experienced a 54% decline in the number of youth sentenced to the Department of Children and Families from 2005 to 2015.[5] In January 2018, the state's large, high-security juvenile prison, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School, ceased new admissions and the facility was effectively closed in May 2018. Connecticut acknowledges that holding youth accountable involves both responsibility and repair; pure punishment is an ineffective way to change behavior and improve public safety.[6] In 2016, Connecticut replaced the wording "punish the child" in the juvenile statute;[7] to focus instead on responses that research shows to be more effective in increasing public safety -- individualized supervision, care, and treatment.

It is imperative that closure of outdated and ineffective programs (especially the large, adult-like prisons)[8] is accompanied by the opening of more evidence-based community programs. While reducing reliance on formal correctional settings, Connecticut continues to shift towards a more developmentally appropriate juvenile justice approach that keeps more youth at home, in their communities or small, residential settings. This approach and these settings must address the array of youth needs, including behavioral health care services, education, and vocational training programs that provide pathways to healthy and independent lifestyles for system-involved youth.[9] These services must also be designed to respond to the unique needs of special populations, specifically taking into consideration gender and sexual orientation, and to ensure that all youth are safe, and fairly and equitably treated. Finally, to reduce further harm to the youth involved in the deepest end of the juvenile justice system, it is crucial that no youth be confined in an adult facility.

JJPOC identified the following overall primary measure for Goal 2, objectives, strategies and indicators:

Primary Measure
and % of justice-involved youth that are incarcerated (pre- and post-adjudicated).

Objectives:

A. Support efforts to create and operate developmentally appropriate, small, secure/staff secure residential settings (in lieu of formal, adult-like correctional settings) that can provide therapeutic care for Connecticut's youth who cannot succeed in less restrictive environments (regardless of whether the youth was prosecuted in the juvenile or adult systems).

[5] *Ibid.* The decrease in the committed caseload is particularly noteworthy considering that 16- and 17-year-olds were added to the juvenile justice system during this time period.
[6] Coalition for Juvenile Justice. 1998. "A Celebration or a Wake? The Juvenile Court After 100 Years." Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice, pp. 43–44; Danielle Sered. 2017. "Accounting for Violence: How to Increase Safety and Break Our Failed Reliance on Mass Incarceration." New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2017.
[7] Public Act No. 16-147, §6.
[8] The Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2011. "No Place for Kids. The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration." Baltimore, MD: Richard E. Mendel. Retrieved from www.aecf.org. Also see, The Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2015. "Maltreatment of Youth in U.S. Juvenile Corrections Facilities. An Update." Baltimore, MD: Richard E. Mendel. Retrieved from www.aecf.org.
[9] Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (December 2014). "Meeting the Educational Needs of System-Involved Youth." https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/commitment120814.pdf.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Conduct an exploratory review of best-practices for detained youth under 18 in all types of facilities. • Collaborate with community leaders, including parents and youth to gather feedback and input about what is needed Use the data collected to identify and secure the appropriate level funding for needed services. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of exploratory review of best practices for detained youth under 18 in all facilities. • Issuance of compilation of feedback and input about what is needed Identification of needed resources for needed services.	• % of needed resources secured. • # of youth identified for out of home placements. • # of youth in large institutional settings.

B. Improve the quality and availability of behavioral health care services and education and vocational training provided to justice system-involved youth placed out of home.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Ensure appropriate level funding for array of contracted services. • Conduct an exploratory review of current quality and availability of behavioral health care services. • Create educational, vocational and technical training programs for all out of home placements and ensure discharge planning process provides programs for continuity of vocational training. • Improve collaboration between DCF, SDE, VoTech and Children's Behavioral Health Advisory Board around the needs of juvenile justice youth placed out of home. • Gather information on dual status youth, behavioral health, and education, and determine opportunities for improvement. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of exploratory review of current quality and availability of behavioral health care services. • Creation of vocational and technical training programs for all out of home placements. • Issuance of Education subgroup report.	• # and % of participants in out of home placements who need behavioral health services/interventions. • # and % of these participants that received the full "dosage" of those identified services/interventions. • # and % of participants in out of home placements that participate in vocational and technical training programs. • # and % of participants in out of home placements that receive discharge planning that provides for continuity of vocational training.

C. Remove youth from adult prisons pre- and post-adjudication.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Explore juvenile transfer laws in Connecticut and other states. • Propose legislation to remove juveniles from being housed in adult correctional systems. • Conduct an exploratory study to determine how other states detain transferred youth under 18 pre- and post- trial. • Use all data collected, including cost data, to create a plan for housing of MYI/YCI youth. • Review the housing of 16 and 17 year olds incarcerated on motor vehicle charges. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of a plan for housing of MYI/YCI youth. • Issuance of a report to JJPOC on location of 16 and 17 year olds incarcerated on motor vehicle charges. • Issuance of a report on transfer laws across the United States and how they work with youth.	• # of youth in adult prison pre and post-trial.

D. Achieve safe and humane conditions of confinement that are culturally responsive, conducive to healthy development and responsive to special populations (e.g., gender/sexual orientation).

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Create youth councils with a diverse representation of youth who are incarcerated and gather input and feedback from these councils. • Increase family knowledge of and access to Ombudsman. • Establish and distribute Youth in Custody Bill of Rights. • Create access to services for families and youth with limited English proficiency. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Creation of youth councils with a diverse representation of youth who are incarcerated. • Issuance of report containing feedback from youth councils. • Issuance of Youth in Custody Bill of Rights.	• # of recommendations that come out of youth councils that are accepted/implemented by agencies. • # and % of families of incarcerated youth accessing ombudsman. • # and % of youth with limited English proficiency with access to information regarding services in native language. • # and % of families with limited English proficiency with access to information regarding services in native language. • # of youth who have received the Youth in Custody Bill of Rights. • # and % of youth with limited English proficiency receiving services in native language.

		• # and % of families with limited English proficiency receiving services in native language.

E. Increase and improve re-entry support and services for youth.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Conduct review of re-entry services and what is effective. • Ensure appropriate level funding for needed reentry services. • Explore reentry services funding structures and identify barriers that agencies face. • Collaborate with community leaders, including parents and youth, to gather feedback and input about what is needed to reduce youth incarceration and improve re-entry services when youth do leave the community. • Establish community based involvement to support youth returning to the community. • Implement community involved restorative justice practices within detention and in community placements. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of review of re-entry services and what is effective. • Issuance of report of appropriate funding level for re-entry services, including re-entry service funding structures, barriers to fully resources those services, and procurement codes. • Issuance of report compiling feedback and input about what is needed to reduce incarceration and improve re-entry services.	• # and % of returning youth that receive re-entry services. • # and % of returning youth that get re-arrested within 12 months following re-entry. • # and % of returning youth that receive re-entry services that get re-arrested within 12 months following re-adjudication/reconviction. • # of youth receiving services that are restorative. • # of youth and family members engaged in providing feedback and input. • # of community involved restorative justice practices that are integrated into detention (and other out of home placements) and the community. • # of JJ involved youth completing high school. • # of youth reporting that restorative practices in detention/community placements was helpful.

F. Ensure that probation violations are handled in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Ensure ongoing education, including implicit bias, of probation officers, judges, attorneys, prosecutors and contract providers. • Ensure each agency (, Judicial/CSSD, Public Defenders, Prosecutors, Police and Contracted Providers) conducts and compiles their own data tracking of decision-making	• Issuance of a decision-making point map of Juvenile Justice System.	• % reduction of incarceration for probation violation. • % of successful completion of probation. • # of trainings conducted by agency type. • # of agencies tracking decision making data that reflects RED.

processes that reflect racial and ethnic disparities. • Review all decision-making areas within the juvenile justice system to identify areas with disparities. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.		

G. Provide evidence-based, developmentally appropriate responses as well as positive incentives to youth in the justice system.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Develop an age appropriate inventory of positive incentives. • Address gaps in transportation. • Review and enhance delivery of developmentally appropriate services by contract providers. • Include non-contract providers (educational, faith-based, etc.), families and the voice of the youth in all strategies. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of report on gaps in transportation including utilization and need. • Inventory of appropriate incentives and consequences for youth.	• % of youth that receive positive incentive. • # of families utilizing transportation offered by programming. • # or % of youth, families, non-contract providers engaged in creating report and developing inventory of incentives and consequences.

GOAL 3

Reduce racial and ethnic disparities of youth in Connecticut's juvenile justice system.

Connecticut is committed to eliminating racial and ethnic disparities of justice-involved youth to ensure fairness and equity for all youth.

Racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system pose serious civil rights issues. Research also shows that racial and ethnic disparities can cause a "crisis of legitimacy;"[10] undermining effective operation of the justice system, as law enforcement and other justice officials need cooperation and support of communities to operate successfully.[11] In addition, racial and ethnic disparities exacerbate the significant post-system-involvement inequalities in a variety of important areas of life, including jobs, housing, education and civic engagement, among vulnerable and minority communities. When the juvenile justice system impacts minority communities at higher rates, the decrease in opportunity for socio-economic development hits these communities hardest. All these negative effects of racial and ethnic disparities are amplified in the case of youth.

Interviews of youth in the recent Connecticut Public Television documentary "The Color of Justice Revisited," provide valuable insight into the impact that racial and ethnic disparities can have on a youth's experiences within the juvenile justice system:

"Everybody that was in the courthouse was white except my Mom."

"Being in the courtroom, and hearing the last remarks from the lawyers and just the way that they painted the picture and painted the scene for the judge to hear them talk about black and brown lives was denigrating and condescending."

"As far as black and brown youth trusting police, there is none."

"When I was in Juvie, I only see blacks and Puerto Ricans and it was mostly people with my skin color."[12]

While much progress has been achieved in both the front end and deep end of Connecticut's juvenile justice system by increasing alternatives such as diversion programs for justice-involved youth and reducing confinement, this progress has had a greater benefit for certain segments of the communities than others. Not only has racial and ethnic disparities persisted during these reform efforts, but the disparities appear to have increased in some of the key stages of its juvenile justice system.[13] Although Connecticut announced its withdrawal from the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Act JDPA in April 2018, a federal law that requires states to collect race and ethnicity data and address any disparities, Connecticut remains committed to continuing this important work on an even deeper level to address these inequities. Primary measures, objectives, strategies and indicators are detailed below.

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[10] Bobo, L. D., & Thompson, V. (2006). "Unfair by design: The war on drugs, race, and the legitimacy of the criminal justice system." *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, *73*, 445-471.

[11] Rocque, M. (2011). "Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System and Perceptions of Legitimacy: A Theoretical Linkage." Race and Justice, Volume 1, Issue 3, 292-315.

[12] The Color of Justice Revisited, https://cptv.org/colorofjustice/.

[13] Ricketelli, D.M., Hartstone, E.C., and Murphy, K.L. (May 15, 2009). "A Second Reassessment of Disproportionate Minority Contact." Also *see*, "An Assessment of Disproportionate Minority Contact in Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System (4th Study)". November 2017, http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/cjppd/cjjjyd/jjydpublications/ct_2017_dmc_assessment_study_final_report.pdf (found disparities in 11 key decision points of the juvenile justice system in Connecticut. Final recommendations of Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee were still under discussion at the time this strategic plan was drafted.)

Primary Measures

- Relative % rate index of justice involvement
- Relative % rate index of disposition
- Relative % rate index of service provision by type of service
- Relative % rate index of incarceration
- Relative % rate index of police arrests

The priority area objectives for Goal 3 are as follows.

Objectives:

A. Ensure the collection, review, and public reporting of race and ethnicity data at each important point of contact in the juvenile justice system.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Implement the recommendations of the State of Connecticut OPM JJAC most recent report "An Assessment of Disproportionate Minority Contact in Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System". • Survey and review of existing data sources (JBCSSD, DOC, DCF, Department of Emergency and Public Protection) to assess ability to provide data at key decision points disaggregated by race and ethnicity. • Identify gaps in data systems. • Develop a common data dictionary. • Identify challenges related to collecting and sharing of these data. • Ensure that agencies collecting race and ethnicity data are collecting data according to best practices (e.g., disaggregating race from ethnicity; allowing youth to self-identify race and ethnicity). • Apply best practices to the analysis and reporting of RED data, including the development and public posting of standardized and regular data reports that analyze racial and	• Issuance of report on data gaps. • Issuance of data dictionary. • Creation of system map of disparities by decision points.	• # of data sources identified and reviewed. • # of data sources/organizations included in development of common data dictionary. • Application of %, rates, and relative rate index (RRI) when appropriate. • # and % of system/state agencies and programs with current RED measurements. • # and % of system/state agencies and programs using best practices in analyzing and reporting RED. • Specifically, # and % of police departments with current RED measurements. • # of standardized reports created to report racial and ethnic disparity data.

ethnic disparities at key decision points. • Develop a system map of key decision points in the system and protocols for data collection at each point. • Determine how to accomplish analysis of RED data regularly in the absences of JJAC. • Determine how recommendations for reduction of racial and ethnic disparities developed at the local level can be shared statewide and in other localities. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.		

B. Ensure that race and ethnicity data and the strategies to address disparities are interpreted and developed in true partnership with communities of color.

Strategies	Indicators
• Conduct outreach and community listening sessions of leaders in communities most impacted by justice system inequities (Commission on Equal Rights and Opportunities, Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, NAACP, faith leaders from the Black and Latino/Hispanic communities, etc.). • Ensure that the LIST structure includes a partnership with RED committees including possible expansion of RED Subcommittee model currently used in some cities. • Establish RED committees in each juvenile court jurisdiction in partnership with the LIST. • Ensure RED sustainability by identifying a RED project coordinator within each juvenile court jurisdiction in partnership with the LIST. • Identify natural leaders, including youth, in communities who are diverse in thought on the root causes and have lived experiences. • Define collaboration with community partners. • Examine existing practices and develop an action plan to eliminate barriers to partnership with community experts (time/place of meetings, culture within meetings, etc.).	• # of communities of color involved in the interpretation and development of strategies to address disparities. • # of listening sessions conducted. • % of court districts with RED committees. • % of RED committee members that are of color. • % of committee members that are "non-traditional" system stakeholders representative of impacted communities. • % of committee members with lived experience with the justice system. • % of juvenile court jurisdictions with an active RED committee. • % of juvenile court jurisdictions with an RED project coordinator. • % of RED committee members who are youth. • # of opportunities/events where there is specific involvement of communities of color.

• Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	

C. Enhance and support opportunities for localized review (community oversight) of school and police practices.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Ensure that the LIST structure includes a partnership with RED committees, including possible expansion of RED Subcommittee model currently used in some cities. • Establish a RED committee in each juvenile court jurisdiction including identification of an RED project coordinator. • Research best practices for local oversight of police and school policy and practice around racial equity issues. Identify what Connecticut is doing on community oversight of police and schools and how partnerships can be established. • Connect with local and national juvenile justice and education policy organizations who can be a source of potential policy solutions. • Outreach to conduct presentation of data and facilitate community listening sessions of leaders in communities most impacted by justice system inequities (Commission on Equal Rights and Opportunities, Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, NAACP, faith leaders from the Black and Latino/Hispanic communities, etc.).	• Issuance of report on best practices for local oversight of police and school policy around racial equity. • Issuance of report on any oversight happening in CT and recommendations for partnerships.	• # and % of communities that have some form of oversight of police and school police and practice. • # of LISTs that have RED subcommittees or other structured partnership with RED tables. • % of citizens surveyed that report they feel they have the opportunity to review and affect school and police practice. • # of best practices implemented through system/state agencies. • # of coalitions and organizations where partnerships have been established. • # and % of minority youth involved annually in arrests, school suspensions and expulsions.

D. Promote the use of racial justice assessments of policy proposals that impact school discipline and juvenile justice.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Develop guidelines for the development of Racial Impact Statements. • Mandate that any workgroup/legislative/proposed bill should include racial justice impact statements. • Connect with local and national juvenile justice and education policy organizations who can be a source of models. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of guidelines for Racial Impact Statements.	• # of instances of use of racial justice assessments, by policy area. • # of racial impact statements used in public hearings regarding juvenile justice.

E. Identify opportunities where inequities within the juvenile justice system can be effectively addressed.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Conduct training for law enforcement, school, and juvenile justice staff on implicit bias in decision-making and effective strategies to counter the impact of implicit bias at the individual and systems level and ensure it is mandatory for all new staff members. • Implement the recommendations of the State of Connecticut OPM JJAC most recent report "An Assessment of Disproportionate Minority Contact in Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System". • Examine best practices from CT or other jurisdictions that have dealt successfully with inequities in the identified areas of the system and try to replicate appropriate interventions. • Review recommendations from local RED committees on addressing inequities in the juvenile justice system.	• Issuance of best practices report on how other jurisdictions are dealing with inequities in the system. • Create training objectives for implicit bias training by job type.	• # of trained staff in implicit bias in decision-making by job type and job status (new or existing staff) and effective strategies to counter its impact. • # of potential solutions developed and recommended out of the JJPOC committees regarding inequities. • # of proposed interventions or policy changes regarding inequities that are implemented. • # of strategies identified and implemented to increase diversity of workforces among agencies and service providers. • # of law enforcement department trained in implicit bias in decision making.

• Review links to mental health and behavioral health services (as outlined under Goal #1, B. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.		

GOAL 4

"Right-size" the juvenile justice system by setting appropriate lower and upper age limits.

Connecticut is committed to focusing its juvenile justice system to the appropriate age range of youth to provide developmentally appropriate and effective services for both the youngest youth (lower age of jurisdiction) and the older youth (including emerging adults) in order to improve individual outcomes and increase public safety.

Determining the appropriate age range for a juvenile justice system has enormous ramifications for the outcomes of the youth served and for public safety. This includes both the lower age and upper age of juvenile justice.

Children that come in contact with the juvenile justice system are already a very vulnerable group. On the lower end, social scientists and legal experts have questioned the capacity of young children to stand trial. Furthermore, research shows that subjecting very young children to court proceedings and/or confinement - even in a rehabilitation-focused juvenile system - deepens victimization, increases the likelihood of future criminal behavior, and is detrimental to a child's long-term mental and physical health.[14] Hence, rather than supervising, prosecuting, or detaining young people under a given age threshold, many places across the world have implemented alternative procedures for educational, child protection, social services, or family support interventions. The international norms have firmly established a lower age threshold (age of criminal responsibility) at age 12 while many jurisdictions have chosen to set the age of criminal responsibility at age 14 or even higher.[15] Connecticut sets the age of criminal responsibility at age 7. While there is no clear norm in the United States regarding the age of the lower-end of juvenile jurisdiction, there is increased support to raise the lower age to meet international standards. For example, Massachusetts raised the lower age of juvenile jurisdiction to age 12 in April 2018. By raising the lower age of juvenile jurisdiction, Connecticut could potentially serve the very young children more appropriately and enable the juvenile justice system to more effectively focus on adolescents and emerging adults.

On the higher end of the jurisdictional age range, research shows that 18, 19 and 20-year olds, commonly referred to as emerging adults, have distinct developmental needs that are not adequately met by the adult criminal justice system.[16] The term emerging adults invokes the critical developmental period in which a child who is dependent on parents or guardians for supervision and guidance (as well as emotional and financial support) transitions into a fully mature, independent adult who engages as a productive and healthy member of society.[17] Innovative approaches are being implemented across the nation and the world to better address these distinct developmental needs of older youth. Raising the upper age of juvenile justice is one such measure, as has been proposed by bills introduced to the Connecticut legislature twice in the last couple of years. Connecticut is not alone in its efforts to seek new and more effective approaches to justice-involved emerging adults by expanding the juvenile jurisdiction. On May 30, 2018, Vermont enacted a new bill that gradually raises the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction to the 20th birthday by 2022, while the legislatures in Illinois and Massachusetts have also been considering similar reform efforts.

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[14] See e.g., Dierkhising C.B., Ko S.J., Woods-Jaeger B., Briggs E.C., Lee R., Pynoos R.S. (July 2013). "Trauma histories among justice-involved youth: findings from the national child traumatic stress network." European Journal of Psychotraumatology. 2013 Jul.4:1–12; Petrosino, A., Turpin-Petrosino, C., Guckenburg, S. Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency. Campbell Systematic Reviews, The Campbell Corporation; Woburn, MA: 2010.

[15] United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, Article 40 (3) (a) requires that all State parties set a minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR). United Nations Human Rights Council's Resolution 18/12 on Human Rights in the Administration of Justice, in particular Juvenile Justice (2011, Article 12) recommended that this MACR should not be lower than 12, and encouraged states not to lower their MACR to 12 if they were set higher. Among others, Germany, Croatia, Japan and Korea, for example, set the MACR (or lower age of juvenile justice) to age 14, whereas Sweden and Norway set it at age 15.

[16] For a detailed discussion of such developmental needs of emerging adults and opportunities for better addressing these needs in Connecticut, *see* Chester L. and Schiraldi, V. (2016). "Public Safety and Emerging Adults in Connecticut: Providing Effective and Developmentally Appropriate Responses for Youth Under Age 21." Boston, MA: Harvard Kennedy School Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, 2016. (Submitted to the Tow Youth Justice Institute, University of New Haven.)

[17] This population is also often described as "young adults" or "transition-age youth".

The JJPOC identified the following objectives as priority areas of Goal 4.

Primary Measure

- # and % of justice-involved youth, by age categories.

Objectives:

A. Eliminate or reduce the barriers in the justice system that prevent or hinder youth in their ability to mature and "age out of crime" and lead productive, healthy, law-abiding lives.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
• Identify and address barriers/obstacles that are created by confinement and a criminal record limit the opportunity for further education and career opportunities. • Identify and address barriers/obstacles that limit the opportunity for successful re-entry back into the community, prevent lifelong family connections, and prevent youth from becoming successful productive citizens due to having court involvement-criminal record. • Review recommendations from JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.	• Issuance of report on barriers preventing youth from maturing or aging out of crime that includes recommendations about how to address/ameliorate those barriers.	▪ # of initiatives implemented specific to addressing barriers in the areas of education and career for justice-involved youth. • # of initiatives implemented specific to addressing successful re-entry and family connections.

B. Review research and develop recommendations on developmentally appropriate lower and upper age limits of juvenile justice jurisdiction.

Strategies	Milestones	Indicators
"Right size" the JJ system, by setting appropriate lower age limits: • Review descriptive Data including Court/JRB/CPS Involvement. • Review non-juvenile justice interventions and community alternatives to juvenile justice involvement. • Identify strategies for diverted children from the JJ system. • Ensure that cases involving youth with specialized behavioral health	*"Right size" the JJ system, by setting appropriate lower age limits*: • Report on national/international standards and research for lower age limits. • Official communication from DCF regarding	*"Right size" the JJ system, by setting appropriate lower age limits*: • # of 7-11 year olds in juvenile justice system. • # of focus groups held regarding lower age limit by participant type. • # of surveys completed regarding lower age limit by respondent category.

needs are referred to and served by the appropriate agency. • Review and update literature and research nationally and internationally regarding juvenile justice system age limits. • Conduct community and stakeholder focus groups and surveys including families affected by the juvenile justice system to compile feedback and input on the age limits of the juvenile justice system. • Establish a plan for addressing greater awareness. *"Right size" the JJ system, by setting appropriate upper age limits:* • Review descriptive Data including - Court/JRB/CPS Involvement. • Examine the effectiveness of the previous Raise the Age legislation that included 16 and 17 year olds in the juvenile justice system. • Ensure that cases involving youth with specialized behavioral health needs are referred to and served by DCF as part of their behavioral health/child welfare mandate rather than through the juvenile justice system. • Refresh strategies and implementation plan for 18-20-year-olds. • Explore the expansion of youthful offender status-alternative to Raise the Age. • Review and update literature and research nationally and internationally regarding juvenile justice system age limits. • Conduct community and stakeholder focus groups and surveys including families affected.	service of youth with specialized needs in lieu of juvenile justice system involvement. • Report on results from focus groups and surveys. • Report on national/international standards and research for upper age limits. • Report on results from focus groups and surveys.	*"Right size" the JJ system, by setting appropriate upper age limits:* • # of 18-20 year olds in the CJ system. • # of OTC from the bench by type of placement. • # of focus groups held regarding upper age limit by participant type. • # of surveys completed regarding upper age limit by respondent category.

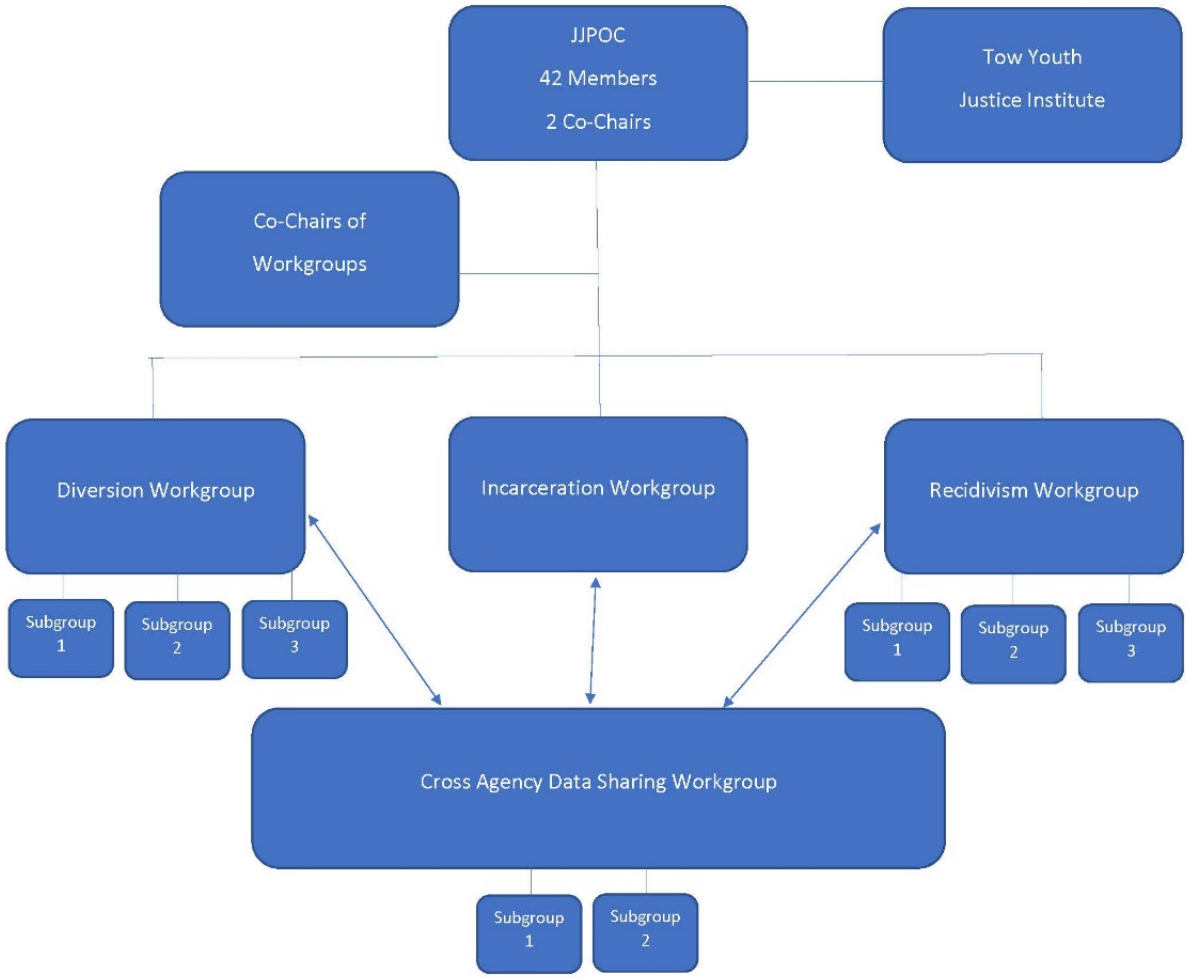
by the juvenile justice system, to compile feedback and input on the age limits of the juvenile justice system. • Establish a plan for addressing greater awareness. • Review TYJI Research JJPOC studies and implement where appropriate.		

D. Structure of the JJPOC

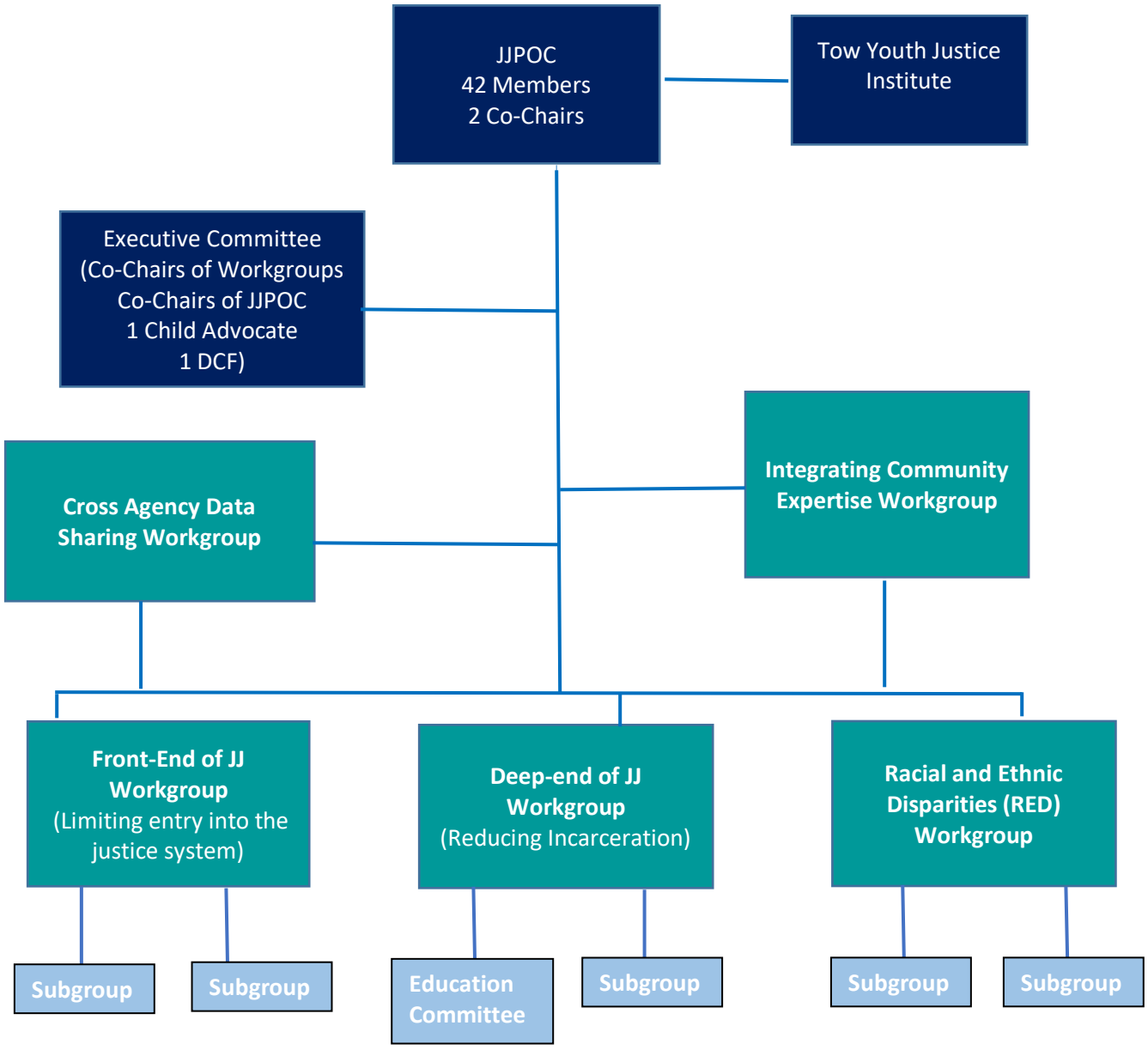
In addition to identifying and prioritizing goals and objectives, the JJPOC has also spent time and effort considering how best to organize its work, both in terms of structure and process. The members acknowledged that the workload has been increasing rapidly and that this trend will continue, especially with the continuation of the projects already under way and the adoption of this new, ambitious strategic plan. Consequently, the JJPOC has decided to make specific changes in its organizational structure going forward (as described below). Once implemented, the new structure should be assessed by the JJPOC members on a regular basis to determine if it is working as efficiently as possible and whether further changes are needed.

Currently, the JJPOC, with the support of TYJI, uses workgroups to focus on the specific topics identified in its last strategic plan (i.e., diversion, incarceration and recidivism) along with some subgroups to allow for even greater focus within these topics. In addition, the JJPOC has used two other workgroups: (1) a "Cross Agency Data Sharing Workgroup" to assist the other workgroups in developing measurements to assess whether progress has been made and (2) a workgroup of all the co-chairs of the other workgroups to help coordinate the overall work plan of the JJPOC. It should be noted that these co-chairs played a vital role, driving the planning process to develop this strategic plan.

The flowchart below reflects the *current structure through December 31st 2018* of the JJPOC:



New Structure of JJPOC and Workgroups (2019 – 2021)



Front-end/Limiting entry into the juvenile justice system

This group will be tasked to identify ways to increase and assess both the quality and availability of diversion programming. In order to do that, the group will ensure that youth have supports from youth-serving agencies (schools, Department of Children and Families, etc.) as viable alternatives to the formal juvenile justice system thereby reducing inappropriate referrals to the juvenile justice system. The group will identify sustainable funding for the Community-Based Diversion Plan and School-Based Diversion Framework through a variety of resources while reviewing research and developing recommendations on a developmentally appropriate lower age limit of juvenile justice jurisdiction.

Goal #1 - Limit youth entry into the justice system. This workgroup will focus largely on all objectives of this goal, however, several other goals and objectives will also be addressed including:

Goal #3 - Reduce racial and ethnic disparities of youth in Connecticut's juvenile justice system.

- Objective A - Ensure that race and ethnicity data and the strategies to address disparities are interpreted and developed in true partnership with communities of color.
- Objective B – Ensure the collection, review, and public reporting of race and ethnicity data at each important point of contact in the juvenile justice system.
- Objective C - Enhance and support opportunities for localized review (community oversight) of school and police practices.

Goal #4 - "Right-size" the juvenile justice system by setting appropriate lower and upper age limits.

- The achievement of objectives of Goal #4 will also be evident through this workgroup.

This workgroup will also be informed by the work of the Education Committee (see pages 13 – 15 for details).

Deep-end/reducing incarceration

This group will be tasked with supporting efforts to create and operate developmentally appropriate, small, residential settings that can provide therapeutic care for Connecticut's youth who cannot succeed in less restrictive environments. Work will focus on achieving safe and humane conditions of confinement that are culturally responsive, conducive to healthy development and responsive to special populations (e.g., gender/sexual orientation) while continuing to work towards eliminating youth being held in adult systems pre- or post-trial. Increasing and improving re-entry support and services for youth will be targeted while improving the quality and availability of behavioral health care services and education and vocational training provided to juvenile justice system-involved youth placed out of home. The overall work of the group will be providing evidence-based, developmentally appropriate responses as well as positive incentives to youth in the justice system.

Goal #2 – Reduce Incarceration. This workgroup will focus solely on this goal however, the achievement of the objectives of all other workgroups will be evident in the achievement of this goal including:

Goal #1 - Limit youth entry into the justice system.

- Objective A - Increase and assess both the quality and availability of diversion programming.
- Objective B - Ensure that youth have appropriate supports from youth-serving agencies (schools, Department of Children and Families, etc.) as viable alternatives to the formal juvenile justice system.
- Objective D - Reduce inappropriate referrals to the juvenile justice system.

Goal #3 - Reduce racial and ethnic disparities of youth in Connecticut's juvenile justice system.

- Objective C - Enhance and support opportunities for localized review (community oversight) of school and police practices.

Goal #4 – "Right-size" the juvenile justice system by setting appropriate lower and upper age limits.

- Objective B - Review research and develop recommendations on developmentally appropriate lower and upper age limits of juvenile justice jurisdiction.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED)

The purpose of this group is to ensure that race and ethnicity data and the strategies to address disparities are interpreted and developed in true partnership with communities of color as well as ensuring the collection, review, and public reporting of race and ethnicity data at each important point of contact in the juvenile justice system.

The group will be tasked with enhancing and supporting opportunities for localized review (community oversight) of school and police practices, promoting the use of racial justice assessments of policy proposals that impact justice and identifying opportunities where inequities within the juvenile justice system can be effectively addressed. The group will also be tasked with reviewing and eliminating or reducing the barriers in the justice system that prevent or hinder youth in their ability to mature and "age out of crime" and lead productive, healthy, law-abiding lives. They will also review research and develop recommendations on developmentally appropriate upper age limits of juvenile justice jurisdiction.

Goal #3 - Reduce racial and ethnic disparities of youth in Connecticut's juvenile justice system. This workgroup is solely focused on the objectives of Goal #3, however will affect measures in the following:

Goal #1 - Limit youth entry into the justice system.

- Objective D - Reduce inappropriate referrals to the juvenile justice system.

Goal #2 - Reduce Incarceration.

- Objective F - Ensure that probation violations are handled in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Integrating Community Expertise Workgroup

The role of this group is to identify and suggest ways to overcome the barriers to equal, sustainable participation with JJPOC work by those who have first-hand experience with the juvenile justice system. This group will use their first-hand knowledge to educate JJPOC members and provide input and feedback on policy and legislation. This workgroup includes:

- young people with current or prior juvenile justice system involvement,
- parents, guardians, and family of those with current or prior juvenile justice system involvement,
- victims of offenses committed by juveniles,
- those who live in communities with a high rate of juvenile arrests[18]

The purpose of this group is not solely to identify individuals who may be appropriate for official appointment to the JJPOC, but to examine the operations of the JJPOC to encourage and support meaningful participation of community experts in meetings and eliminate barriers to their participation. For example, timing of meetings (during the work/school day), lack of transportation, stipends, childcare, feeling intimidated by the jargon used and titles held by people on the JJPOC need to be considered. Through their active participation in the JJPOC monthly meetings and workgroups and through focus group participation, they will directly educate and expand the

[18] JJPOC understands that many individuals will fit into several of these categories simultaneously as many youth and families experience both victimization and their own justice system involvement.

knowledge of decision makers. The workgroup will also recommend ways the JJPOC can create a welcoming environment and process that value the input of community experts as equal partners with existing stakeholders.

This workgroup should include community experts as members. At the very least, community experts must review and comment on any recommendations before they are finalized and presented to the executive committee. This group will be a critical component in the Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) workgroup achieving Goal #3 and its objectives.

Cross Agency Data Sharing Workgroup

This group will be a resource and support for all JJPOC workgroups. With their expertise, they have been and will continue to be an advisory group to all of the workgroups and committees. Through their access to data, they will secure and provide appropriate interagency data for use by the workgroups. They assist in the development of measures, but more importantly, provide insight into their efficacy and feasibility. In addition, through their understanding of the implications of implementing these measures, they will identify any barriers in funding needs.

Executive Committee

Membership will consist of the co-chairs of all of the named workgroups. In addition, membership will also include one representative from the following entities: Legislature, Child Advocacy and Department of Children and Families. There will be 13 members of the Executive Committee.

The tasks assigned to the Executive Committee will include:

- Coordinating with the Data Sharing Workgroup to ensure that the workgroups have the data needed to assess the progress made to achieve the goals and/or that appropriate steps are being taken to develop appropriate measurements and evaluate progress.
- Reviewing and coordinating all recommendations being made by the workgroups that require JJPOC approval, developing timelines for the JJPOC's work, and providing guidance on how best to present these group recommendations, especially those that will require legislative and/or budgetary changes (including the timing of these requests so that they correspond with both the budgetary process and legislative schedule).
- Troubleshoot any areas of need that arise regarding the new strategic plan and its implementation.

VI. Conclusion

It has been an arduous, but productive process to complete the 2019 – 2021 Strategic Plan for the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee. Co-Chairs of each workgroup devoted hundreds of hours to develop a plan that honors the great successes of the JJPOC for the legislation passed since 2015 and of Connecticut as a leader among the nation on many juvenile justice reforms.

The 2019 – 2021 Strategic Plan is comprehensive in addressing issues along all points in the juvenile justice system. Its four goals are ambitious, a reflection of the drive and commitment of the JJPOC and its workgroups. As stated earlier in the introduction of the process to develop these goals, all members have expressed their desire to state clearly that this is a "living document". As such, updates will be made over the course of the three years to reflect changing environments in national and local government, availability of data and other factors that may arise.

The objectives, strategies, milestones and indicators for each goal are very specific and based on the expertise of the workgroups and their experience as a JJPOC member. They feel comfortable with providing detail on what they are looking to achieve. However, after reading this document, please keep the following in mind:

- Some indicators reflected in the goals are aspirational and require multiple inputs to achieve
- The indicators in all of the goals are based on what data is currently available and what can reasonably be determined to become available
- Program measures and system measures will be developed by the workgroups based on the feasibility of the data to be developed.

Moving forward, each of the workgroups will begin meeting in January 2019 to develop priorities and measures for the coming three years. Each workgroup will continue to utilize six- month project planning to prioritize their work and understand what is being planned by the other workgroups so that recommendations for each year can smoothly be deduced. It is important to reiterate that the JJPOC recognizes the significant learning from qualitative measures, and commits to incorporating insights gained from case studies of 3 – 4 populations across the system to understand what works well and to learn from negative outcomes.

In addition, as noted earlier in this report, the Tow Youth Justice Institute not only staffs the JJPOC, but also fulfills ongoing research needs to support the needs of the workgroups. The following are new scopes of work for research to be undertaken during 2019 – 2021. Many of these reports will be utilized by more than one workgroup:

- Achieving Positive Youth Outcomes Creating Safer Healthy Communities
  This research will assess the current state of diversion and early intervention in the state of Connecticut, with emphasis of racial and ethnic diversity. This project will help inform policies and practices being implemented through the Community-Based Diversion Systems Plan, as well as other initiatives of the Juvenile Justice and Policy Oversight Committee (JJPOC).

- A Mixed-Methods Examination of Health, Housing, and Education Indicators for DCF/Justice-Involved Youths and Young Adults
  This project will assess health, housing, and education indicators that inform system contact for DCF/justice-involved youth and young adults. This project will involve coordination and collaboration among multiple system stakeholders to identify points to leverage to maximum effect prevention and intervention efforts in the state.

- Assessment of Mental Health and Trauma among Juveniles on Probation Residing in the Community

This research will assess the mental health and trauma by engaging with Connecticut's youth who are residing in the community under the supervision of Court Support Services Division (CSSD). This project will incorporate measures of trauma, moral disengagement, and experience with diversion while longitudinally following up with data on justice-involvement and incarceration among the youth.

As the author of this report, the Tow Youth Justice Institute would like to thank and commend all participants in producing this strategic direction for our juvenile justice system for 2019 – 2021.