

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

**Council for Equitable Youth Justice**  
**Annual Retreat Meeting Notes August 9, 2023, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.**  
In- Person at Allis State Park, Randolph

Members Present: Karen Vastine, Amy Davenport, Stu Berry, Mike Loner, Donn Hutchins, Kreig Pinkham, Laurey Burris, Kirsten Kersey, Sparks, Linda Johnson, Katherine O’Day

Members Missing: Mercedes Avila, Christopher Lukasik, Julia Brand, Matt Wolf

Partners Present: Elizabeth Morris, Alona Tate, Kara Doherty, Wendy Love

Icebreaker:

- Started with an Icebreaker facilitated by Kreig, where everyone sat in a circle and answered two questions “What has this challenging year taught you” and “What has this year transformed about you?”

Celebration of Accomplishments:

Karen gave her top:

- New name
- New statute
- Advocacy on S4
- Response to report on secure placement
- Potential new members: Wendy, Jessica, Addie, Sophie... and maybe more!
- Updated by-laws
- Inclusion in community violence prevention leadership
- We survived our first year without Kreig as chair
- We barely survived Elizabeth being on maternity leave but! WE DID IT!
- Our whole crew has shown incredible commitment to learning, participating in the work, bettering ourselves as a group, and bringing their authentic selves to our meetings.
- Hill Visits with Rep. Balint and Senator Welch’s team!

Amy, Sparks and Katherine gave their overview on behalf of each working committee: highlights include System Improvement’s legislative education, ERD’s racial equity consultant work, and Youth Service’s Youth Drop-in Center, Resource Map and School conference.

National News:

- Due to Naomi Evan’s cancelled flight, we skipped the national news update, with the hope that she might be able to virtually join our September meeting and provide an update there.

Mission Finalization:

- Lots of work went into taking the mission work from the July 20<sup>th</sup> Council meeting and crafting it into the proposed mission you see in your agenda.
- Please note that we also wanted the mission to mirror the legislative findings in the statute (see below).

Legislative Findings:

<sup>[1]</sup> 33 V.S.A. 5101a:

(a) The General Assembly finds and declares as public policy that an effective juvenile justice system protects public safety; connects youths and young adults to age-appropriate services that reduce the risk of reoffense; and, when appropriate, shields youths from the adverse impact of a criminal record.

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

(b) In order to accomplish these goals, the system should be based on the implementation of data-driven evidence-based practices that offer a broad range of alternatives, such that the degree of intervention is commensurate with the risk of reoffense.

(c) High-intensity interventions with low-risk offenders not only decrease program effectiveness, but are contrary to the goal of public safety in that they increase the risk of recidivism. An effective youth justice system includes pre-charge options that keep low-risk offenders out of the criminal justice system altogether. (Added 2017, No. 201 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

- The language regarding public safety was removed due to racial equity concerns, often this language ends up being code for racism.
- Amy drafted a mission *“The Council does its best work when, through advocacy and grants, it connects youth to age-appropriate services that reduce the risk of recidivism; reduce racial and ethnic disparities; and shield youth from the adverse impact of a criminal record.”* That was then reworked by the retreat planning team into *“Our mission is to ensure Vermont youth will be afforded developmentally appropriate services that prevent juvenile justice system involvement; reduce the risk of recidivism; eliminate racial and ethnic disparities; and shield youth from the adverse impact of a criminal record.”*
- Part of this work deliberately included the phrase “developmentally appropriate services” was crafted to be broad and encompassing of our values (family voice, brain development, trauma-informed, etc.).
- After that, there were a few edits from Naomi and Lindy. Naomi had pointed out the way recidivism is measured can perpetuate racial and ethnic biases of the system, and Lindy had pointed out issues with the word juvenile narrowing our work to only youth who touch the juvenile system, which ignores youthful offenders, etc. That, combined with the racial equity issues of the word “Justice” resulted in the final statement proposed in the retreat today.
- *Our mission is to ensure Vermont youth will be afforded developmentally appropriate services that prevent legal system involvement; reduce the risk of reentering the system; eliminate racial and ethnic disparities; and shield youth from the adverse impact of a criminal record.*
- There was lots of discussion afterwards, mostly circulating around two issues, trauma informed and family focus/voice.
- A few salient comments:
  - Stu: Would like to see rehabilitation language. Add in the word "habilitation services". In addition, preventing system penetration, which is different from re-entering the system. Family focus and positive youth development language should be added.
  - Wendy: trauma informed agree. Problem with the word "shield" youth from the criminal record impact, as juvenile records are not necessarily confidential.
  - Katherine: You don't put in language like trauma, family. However, concerns about removing public safety language, especially how that connects to victims.

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

- Linda: Would like to add the word prevention. Karen pointed out that “preventing” is in there, and Linda said she would like it up front. In addition, language regarding strengthening families – for example: Family focused services.
- Sparks: A mission should be short and concise.
- Laurey: family doesn't need to be in the mission, that’s not language that should be included in a mission.
- Kreig: Many of the aspects people have mentioned wanting to add are values - can we accept the mission statement as it is as long as there is a commitment to adding those elements to a separate values statement?
- Some potential values: victim, family, trauma informed, positive youth development. System penetration.
- The Governance Committee and the Executive Committee will work on developing how the September committee meeting can move forward with a vision and values statement.

#### Lunch and Celebration of Kreig’s last Council retreat!

#### Update regarding the Department of Health’s Community Violence Prevention Program:

- Elizabeth, Amy, and Karen all connected with Emily from VDH regarding the community violence prevention program. There was a lot of discussion in the first meeting, and it appears a RFP will be forthcoming. It appears some communities might be posed to respond to a RFP, but some at the meeting with VDH stated that they really wanted to see funds go to non-municipality related organizations, etc. More to come, there may be some opportunities to score as well.

#### World Café:

The group split into groups of three. Each group is charged with brainstorming ideas for one of the three topics for 20 minutes. After 20 min, the groups moves to the next topic for 15 minutes and add to the first group’s ideas. After 10 minutes the groups move to the next topic and begin to brainstorm next steps/action items.

#### Topics/Questions

1. Delinquency Prevention: Please see the JJRA definition on page 8.
  - How do you want the Council to be represented in the Community Violence Prevention project?
  - What are key focus areas within community violence that we want to advise Karen/Amy?
  - What outcome do we want from the VDH/Community Violence Prevention discussion?
  - (If time allows) Who else is having the delinquency prevention conversation? Where do we need to add our voice?

#### Notes from breakout groups:

- Reparations in restorative justice within the community (reparative boards role schools and communities)
- Making sure we have youth voice, meaning youth participation and involvement
- Parent/family education and support
- Council can serve as grant readers

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

- Council efforts in grant making are educational
  - Racism as a public health concern needs to be addressed
  - We bring in a trauma informed voice
  - Council speaks to the roll of this funding in law enforcement (there is a question mark hear from another group, some clarity is needed on this statement)
  - Educate distinction between parent violence and domestic partner violence
  - Include youth based voice/perspective in definition of grant based focus and rfp
  - Data: increase sources of data
  - Parent/family participation
  - Council should have a team of people who are representing CEYJ on the community violence prevention program
  - How can we counter the public stance of a punitive approach
  - Ensure youth are focused in the conversation
  - Ensure a diverse representation for scoring – CEYJ should advocate for scoring to include those with lived experience in the justice system. What would have prevented their involvement with violence?
2. Recruitment of members/leadership: Please see the membership needs overview on page 6.
- What are our goals?
  - What are our action steps?

Notes from breakout groups:

- At September Council meeting, brainstorm a list of potential members from law enforcement, public defenders, prosecutors.
- Set end of year as deadline for getting theses appointments on the Council
- Focus on youth recruitment and retention (per diem, systemic building of relationships between youth members and council members)
- Recruit from the defender general's office (carrie johnson?)
- Front porch forum for general members
- Council will support whoever is in a leadership position
- Provide more opportunities for other members to facilitate
- St. Albans public defender for youth Paul Groce
- A ) Vice Chair = incoming chair B) Current chair C) Exiting Chair
- Get clarity from Governor's office on what system involvement rejects a youth from the Council.

3. Youth Engagement on the council

- What is our goal?
- What would youth want?
- What are we going to do?
- How do we collaborate on this with other entities?
- What can we apply from national models?
- What is realistic for our group to address in the first year?

Notes from breakout:

- Goal is to increase youth membership on the Council
- Focus on youth with current lived experience
- Transportation for youth for in person meetings (retreat, etc.)
- What times work for youth? We need to be willing to accommodate those changes
- Youth who are currently under the legal system or recently out of the system

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

- How to handle meeting? (There was a question regarding if this was about in person meetings, this comment was surrounding how all of our meetings are run, facilitated, etc.
- Ensure that youth are not tokenized
- We should have a Youth Council for the CEYJ (there was a question about if this was it's own committee of sorts?)
- Looking for youth who have recently left supervision
- Role for Youth Coordinator (What do you mean by a youth coordinator? A position on the Executive Committee of sorts?)
- We need a better way to get a concentrated effort to get strong youth voice
- Go to youth rather than making them come to us
- Use social media
- Use AmeriCorps members who are involved
- Get ride of barrier to participation in meetings (accessibility, language)
- Find the places to find youth
- Place to submit token for youth (virtual bulletin board)
- Adequate per diem for youth is there some other way to compensate
- Adequate training and orientation for us + them
- Mentoring
- Accessibility – translate
- Recruit diverse youth

**Next Steps: Governance to address vision/values and membership. Youth services to review youth engagement. Systems Improvement to review community violence prevention program process.**

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

Membership Needs: The Council currently has 15 appointed members and 25 slots. There are four pending applications.

<b>Federal Membership Requirements</b>	<b>Appointed</b>	<b>Application Pending with Governor</b>
Locally elected official	Mike Loner	
Representatives of law enforcement and juvenile justice agencies, including juvenile and family court judges, prosecutors, counsel for children and youth, and probation workers	Amy Davenport, Stuart Berry	
Representatives of public agencies concerned with delinquency prevention or treatment	Sparks, Stuart Berry	
Representatives of private nonprofit organizations, including persons with a special focus on preserving and strengthening families, parent groups and parent self-help groups, youth development, delinquency prevention and treatment, neglected or dependent children, quality of juvenile justice, education, and social services for children	Karen Vastine, Laurey Burris, Katherine O'Day, Matt Wolf, Mercedes Avila, Stuart Berry, Kreig Pinkham	Sophie Kaye
Representatives of programs that are alternatives to incarceration, including organized recreation activities	Kreig Pinkham, Stuart Berry	
Volunteers who work with delinquent youth or youth at risk of delinquency	Stuart Berry	Wendy Love
Persons with special experience and competence in addressing problems related to school violence and vandalism and alternatives to suspension and expulsion	Sparks, Stuart Berry	
Persons, licensed or certified by the applicable state, with expertise and competence in preventing and addressing mental health and substance abuse needs in delinquent youth and youth at risk of delinquency	Laurey Burris, Stuart Berry	
Representatives of victim or witness advocacy groups	Linda Johnson, Christopher Lukasik	Jessica Barquist
Youth (<28 when <b>first</b> appointed to the Council)  At least 20% of membership	Julia Brand, Christopher Lukasik, Kirsten Kersey	Addie Lentzner
Lived Juvenile Justice System Experience  Three members, regardless of size of Council	Names not listed for confidentiality	

<b>Council desired viewpoints not currently filled</b>	Notes (potential members to recruit, etc.)	Notes
Public Defender		
Law Enforcement Officer		
Prosecutor		

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

Youth with lived Juvenile Justice system experience		
Member with lived Juvenile Justice system experience		
?		

If Wendy, Jessica, Sophie and Addie are appointed, the Council will have 6 remaining slots open.

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

### **Delinquency Prevention Definition**

**Per SEC. 502. 34 U.S.C. 11311 DEFINITIONS. The Juvenile Justice Reform Act state that**

the term “delinquency prevention program” means a delinquency prevention program that is evidence-based or promising and that may include—

- (A) alcohol and substance abuse prevention or treatment services;
- (B) tutoring and remedial education, especially in reading and mathematics;
- (C) child and adolescent health and mental health services;
- (D) recreation services;
- (E) leadership and youth development activities;
- (F) the teaching that individuals are and should be held accountable for their actions;
- (G) assistance in the development of job training skills;
- (H) youth mentoring programs;
- (I) after-school programs;
- (J) coordination of a continuum of services that may include—
  - (i) early childhood development services;
  - (ii) voluntary home visiting programs;
  - (iii) nurse-family partnership programs;
  - (iv) parenting skills training;
  - (v) child abuse prevention programs;
  - (vi) family stabilization programs;
  - (vii) child welfare services;
  - (viii) family violence intervention programs;
  - (ix) adoption assistance programs;
  - (x) emergency, transitional and permanent housing assistance;
  - (xi) job placement and retention training;
  - (xii) summer jobs programs;
  - (xiii) alternative school resources for youth who have dropped out of school or demonstrate chronic truancy;
  - (xiv) conflict resolution skill training;
  - (xv) restorative justice programs;
  - (xvi) mentoring programs;
  - (xvii) targeted gang prevention, intervention and exit services;
  - (xviii) training and education programs for pregnant teens and teen parents; and
  - (xix) pre-release, post-release, and reentry services to assist detained and incarcerated youth with transitioning back into and reentering the community; and
- (K) other data-driven evidence-based or promising prevention programs;