



Our mission is to: prevent youth legal system involvement, shield youth from the adverse impact of a criminal record, eliminate racial and ethnic disparities, and reduce the risk of reentering the system.

Council for Equitable Youth Justice

Approved Meeting Minutes

Jan 15, 2026, 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Public Location: Waterbury State Office Building, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT

Attendance: Jessica Barquist, Donn Hutchins, Kate Hayes, Mercedes King, Sparks, Zoe, Katherine O'Day, Stu Berry, Linda Johnson, J Brand, Laurey Burris, Peter Brown, Amy Davenport, Matt Wolf and Karen Vastine

Absent: Paul Groce, Hudson Ranney, and Mike Loner

Partners: Sheri Lynn and Lindy Boudreau (Dept for Children and Families), Hunter Hurst (NCJFCJ-NCJJ), and Nate Hines (Public)

Welcome and Introductions

Jessica called the meeting to order with a quorum at 10:36.

There were no public comments.

**Restorative Practices (Lindy, Boudreau, Adolescent Unit Director, Family Services Division)
see PowerPoint handout**

1. **Review:** elements of the project, history and support from the consultants Jennifer Llewellyn Professor Dalhousie University Nova Scotia and Paul Nixon Independent Social Worker Edinburgh, Scotland
2. **Focus:** relational, system transformation leadership, and policy outcomes.
3. **Framework:** perspective on involvement, focusing on restorative and relational aspects.
4. **District and State plans:** a report will be shared with CEYJ. Noted examples include the Abenaki relationship and statewide CHINS C youth initiatives.
5. **Casey Foundation Application:** Encouraged DCF to apply for the 3rd cohort, due in March or April. Currently FSD is using the Casey model for CHINS C.
6. **Family Work Impact:** Emphasized the positive impact on family work and improved outcomes, particularly in CHINS C
7. **Measuring Success:** Phase 3 implementation will evaluate 15-16 different plans.
8. **Restorative Opportunities:** Separate restorative work is ongoing internally and externally at Woodside. NCJJ will be informed by consulting restorative work. Tyler is managing HESOC work at GM Campus, with listening sessions planned.
9. **Staff and Family Restorative Process:** Restorative processes for families and youth are still being determined, with future recommendations expected. Community concerns about youth are noted.



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High End System of Care (Hunter Hurst, National Center for Juvenile Justice -NCJJ): Project to gather feedback from stakeholders and youth to build recommendations to ensure Vermont's high-needs youth detention center provides safe, effective care.

1. Meetings and Interviews:

- Initial meeting with Lindy and will meet with other leadership, and Family Services Division staff.
- In-person interviews to be scheduled for February or March, focusing on meeting with FSD leadership, and directors/staff of facilities like Red Cover, Depot, and Bennington. Other meetings have to be scheduled with prosecutors, and law enforcement.

2. Youth and Family Engagement:

- Consideration of focus groups with kids and families.
- Current plan involves working with the Elevate Youth- Youth Advisory Board virtually, approved by IRB.
 - 1. **Next Step:** Sheri will coordinate a meeting with Hunter, Zoe, J, and Karen to discuss incentives and logistics for the virtual Youth Advisory Board sessions.
- Exploring possibilities for in-person engagement.

3. Interview Protocols:

- Protocols for youth, caretakers, parents, and agency partners are ready and approved.
- Stu will review and provide feedback.

4. Judges and Defender Generals:

- Meeting with the defender general in Montpelier for in person.
- Judges may be engaged best virtually on Friday afternoons.
- Kate and Amy will assist in connecting with Judge Zonay and Hunter.

5. Agency Partner Interviews:

- Virtual interviews with agency partners and council have been successful.

Council Business

1. Don asked that the Dec 18 Minutes include absent council members. He motioned to approve the minutes as modified and Kate seconded. Motion passes.
2. Stu motioned and Linda seconded to approve the distribution of FFY 24 program funds as outlined. Motion passes
 - a. Vote FFY 24 Budget: Approval of the distribution of FFY 24 program area funds totaling \$430,017 distributed evenly among the SI, YS, and ERD committees
 - i. Proposed Allocation:
 1. SI Committee: \$143,339
 2. YS Committee: \$143,339



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3. ERD Committee: \$143,339

3. Dollars to Impact One Pager – suggested “To be spend in 4 years”. Number 8 add plural best proposal(s).

Federal, State, and Local Updates

1. Federal Grants- FFY 25 notice of funding expected in 2026 - late due to the delay from the shutdown.
2. Legislative session kicked off last week. Jessica is watching for the Council and will inform SI/council.
3. Reschedule Feb 19 meeting: No clear winner. Sheri will send out a poll
4. Mathematica will have the final draft of report (roadmap) on Jan 21, for review. The presentation on the final recommendations will be in Feb.
5. Annual Report- Sheri is working on the draft for review by volunteers from the executive committee.

Committee Report Out

1. ERD no update.
2. Governance:
 - a. **Recruitment Matrix and Flow Chart Process:** Finalize and implement the recruitment process. Recommend replacing names with titles on the flow chart.
 - b. **Onboarding:** Develop a checklist for onboarding. Consult with recent council members to gather feedback on what they would have liked to have in an onboarding process.
3. Youth Services:
 - a. **Orientation:** Gathering bios from council members.
 - b. **Funding:** Discuss potential funds for crisis planning and funding basic needs for youth. Consider setting aside emergency funds for youth transitioning out of care or in care who need housing, food, etc., to prevent youth from entering the justice system and support their transition out of care.
4. System Improvement:
 - a. **RFP for DOC Training:** Initially no proposals and will be reviewing one from bidder.
 - b. **Data Strategy:** Develop a strategy for data collection and analysis discussed at retreat
 - c. **Juvenile Justice Principles:** Review and discuss the core principles of juvenile justice at next meeting.

Adjourn at 12:30