

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 Minutes (Hybrid)

March 19, 2026, 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Public Location: 109 State 4th Floor Conf Rm 410, Montpelier

Council Members Present: Karen Vastine, Jessica Barquist, Donn Hutchins, Zoe Souder, Julia Brand, Amy Davenport, Kate Hayes, Laurey Burris, Paul Groce, Linda Johnson, Peter Brown, and Mercedes King

Council Members Absent: Stu Berry, Sparks, Mike Loner, Katherine O'Day, and Hudson Ranney

Partners: Sheri Lynn, Dept for Children and Families

Public: None

Jessica called the meeting to order with a quorum at 10:40.

Welcome and Introductions

- Public Comments- none

Updates

- Legislative –
 - [H 642](#) amend Youth Offender law:
 - Submitted memo and testified to the house judiciary committee.
 - Focused on YO success: recidivism is much lower for those going through the YO Program- 1 year 10% and 2-year mark 16%.
 - [S 186](#) years with serious offenses to accept plea agreement which would normally be transferred to family division. Overcharging. Looks like it is going to happen.
- OJJDP Compliance Monitor Audit Notification: April 13 – 17.
- Sight and Sound Separation Noncompliance—amend the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) to help Vermont prevent noncompliance.
 - What about a special court for hearings on weekends?
 - Step: Sheri will review the demographics and situations of the FY25, 11 violations.

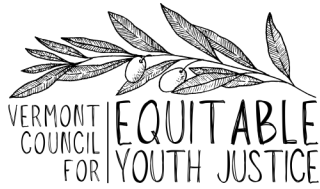
Road Map: Review list of recommendations as a menu to pick from

- **Surprises:**
 - Online youth programs are unexpectedly effective, especially given challenges in in-person engagement.
- **Excitement:**

- The council has made significant progress and is eager to continue moving forward. For example, SI is working on data dashboard.
- See collaboration across committees.
- **Missing Elements:**
 - Detailed solutions for enhancing youth engagement.
 - Data gaps and alignment on equity, particularly racial equity.
 - Not on the same page – need to work on this
 - Need for deeper discussions on racial equity beyond expanding glossaries.
 - Legislative and project work that takes time and resources
- **Strengths and Collaboration:**
 - Retreats and presentations have strengthened collective efforts.
 - Committees are integrating activities well, with SMART goals guiding progress.
- **Challenges and Concerns:**
 - Resource constraints and the need for collective effort and funding.
 - Uncertainty about forming stakeholder coalitions and enhancing statewide influence.
 - SMART goals will take time.
- **Priorities and Planning:**
 - Focus on poverty and racial equity, with a need to include legislative and grant-related activities.
 - Annual racial equity training is promising, potentially expanding to include class issues.
- **Intersectionality and System Improvement:**
 - Intersectionality is energizing, with a focus on improving systems across race, class, gender, etc.
 - Need to integrate intersectionality into the core business practices.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Continue discussions at the committee level to prioritize actions.
 - Discuss what things the whole council prioritizes.
 - Integrate these priorities into the next three-year plan.
 - Create effective coaching around the CEYJ structure (Conversations, Engagement, Youth, and Justice), especially in the context of collective decision-making and meetings.
 - Ensure on-going training and retreat.

Council Business

- **Approval of Minutes:**
 - Motion to approve the February 15 minutes was moved by Amy and Kate. There was 1 abstention, and the motion passed.



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- **NCJJ Allocation:**
 - Motion to approve the FFY 2022 allocation of \$41,570 to the NCJJ High End System of Care project was postponed to the April 16 meeting.
- **Youth Compensation:**
 - Motion to approve up to \$9,000 for Elevate Youth to compensate youth interviewed by NCJJ moved by Peter and Donn. Motion passed, with 2 abstentions.
- **Rainy Day Funds:**
 - Motion that youth services committee to set aside \$50,000 for youth serving organization to address service gaps. Discussion on process and implementation will continue in Youth Services Committee. Motion passed, moved by Peter and J.
- **Compensation for CEYJ Committee Meetings:**
 - Motion to approve a \$50 per diem for council member participation in full committee meetings. Motion passed, moved by Jessica and Zoe.
- **Mathematica Contract Amendment:**
 - Motion to amend the contract up to \$130,000 to include support at the retreat. Motion passed, moved by Peter and Linda.
- **DOC Training:**
 - Motion to approve \$42,500 FFY for DOC training. Motion passed, moved by Amy and Laurie.

Committee Report Out

- **Governance:**
 - Karen announced she will step down as the Council chair at the end of the year (Sept 30, 2026).
 - Succession planning is underway and establishing term limits.
- **Youth Services:**
 - A summit at Waterbury State Office Complex will bring youth together to discuss child welfare issues. Sheri will staff a DCF table to recruit for the Council members.
- **System Improvement:**
 - Three IT personnel met with Kate and Amy.
 - Lindy will be involved with court data.
 - A data dashboard is the goal, which will include a website presence.
 - Consider process for specific data requests and what is public information
 - The Judiciary has plans to improve race data and will hire personnel to support this.
- **Ethnic & Racial Disparities:**
 - Sparks is away.

Adjourn at 1:00