

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
Meeting Hybrid - Draft Minutes**

Sept 17, 2026, 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Public Location: Waterbury State Office Building, Waterbury email Sheri.Lynn@vermont.gov

Attendance: Karen Vastine, Donn Hutchins, Kate Hayes, Sparks, Zoe Souder, Stu Berry, Mike Loner, Laurey Burris, Jessica Barquist, Julia Brand, Linda Johnson, Peter Brown, Paul Groce

Absent: Hudson Rainey, Mercedes King

Partners: Sheri Lynn DCF

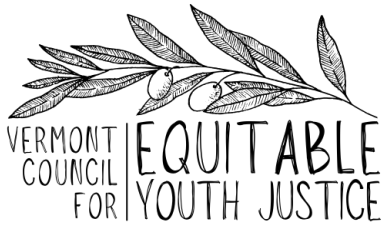
Karen called the meeting with the quorum at 10:33

Updates and Announcements (Federal, State, Local)

- Stu: Family Case Planning team meeting every 2 weeks. Oct 6 – 9 training in Baltimore. Completing pre-training and have youth, family and partner on the team. Stu is setting up site visits and support to develop the action team. Would like to have team meet with Council from the family and youth prospective. DCF (Dept for Children and Families) will join quarterly to update the council.
- Sheri: DCF was notified by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention the FY 25 grant award of \$488,929.00 for project period July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2030. DCF also received notification that the FY 22 grant will be extended one more year through Sept 30, 2027.
- Karen Dolan the new compliance monitor starts Sept 21, 2026

Annual Meeting

1. Bylaws: Donn motioned to accept and Peter seconded to accept the changes to the bylaws with the changes discussed and presented at the meeting and effective immediately. Motion passes.
 - i. The changes were discussed in June but were not voted on in August.
 - ii. These were warned of changes and will vote today.
 - iii. Key changes:
 - Article 3 requires annual report to Governor which is consistent with federal requirements.
 - Article 5 and 7 adds the leadership pipeline, a chair elect term for 1 year to serve on executive committee (EC) and liaison with the existing chair. The chair elect takes on the role of chair in next fiscal year. The other position “immediate past chair” has nonvoting member of EC.

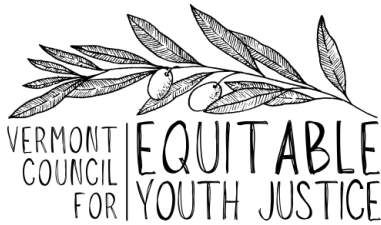


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- There are term limits on officers (3, 1-year terms consequently) and you can rotate to another officer role. The changes are effective after the vote today. Rotation in chair is fundamental change.
- iv. Changes: Kate asked for the term limits for council, to be consistent in language when reference Secretary or Treasurer and to add a comma.
- 2. Annual Election of Officers (Mike)
 - i. Candidates' brief comments. All officer nominations are uncontested.
 - Chair: Karen exciting things ahead RTA, HESOC, and her goal to focus on recruitment and succession planning.
 - Vice Chair: Jessica, happy to continue.
 - Secretary/Treasurer: Donn happy to serve another year and has seen the transition with the council engagement.
 - ii. Call for the vote. Stu and Kate motioned to accept the nominations as a plate. Motion Passes.
 - To elect "Karen Vastine" to a one-year term as Chair beginning Oct 1, 2026
 - To elect "Jessica Barquist" to a one-year term as Vice Chair beginning Oct 1, 2026
 - To elect "Donn Hutchins" to a one-year term as Secretary/Treasurer beginning on Oct 1, 2026.

CEYJ Business

1. Vote June Minutes: Donn motioned and Peter seconded the motion to accept the minutes with the discussed spelling corrections of Willa Farrell and Mathematica. Motion passes. Zoe and Paul abstain.
2. Executive Committee Votes on fiscal matter and inform the rest of the council of two votes.
 - a. EC voted to send up to three council members and cover travel expenses for Ken Schatz to the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) Conference, Oct 13 – 15 in Pittsburgh, PA. Karen, Ken Schatz and Hunter Hurst present a workshop about policy work with Raise the Age. Registration paid for as workshop presenters. We have an additional slot availability for a volunteer. The Vermont attendees will visit a facility that experienced similar issues to Woodside, which Hunter arranged. Paul had volunteered earlier to attend, and Peter said he was interested. Please contact Sheri if interested.
 - b. Domestic Violence Accountability Program (youth): The grantee could not staff the program. We are pursuing a request for grant application. Stu asked that we include family violence.
3. High End System of Care Priorities: Retreat outcomes discussion.



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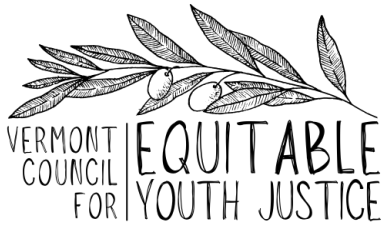
- a. Karen discussed the purpose of the retreat to develop priorities for the HESOC. Their members identified the principles reflected in the three priorities.
 - i. Access to family/chosen family,
 - ii. Early intervention/prevention, prevention of re-entry,
 - iii. Individualize case planning that is trauma informed.
- b. Peter asked about the transition and reduced recidivism. Discuss other measures besides recidivism and make sure that a person placed in HESOC gets out. This would be a plan in place to prevent them from coming back (wrap-round services). This is part of the system accountability. We added oversight to principles and prevention of re-entry to early intervention and prevention. We can work on this later.
- c. Linda mentioned the idea of a joint meeting with the Vermont Citizen Advisor Board monthly to discuss this. The reviews DCF policy. Karen will follow up with James Metz, Chair of the VT Citizens Advisory Board and Erinn Rolland Forkey Co-Chair.

Project Updates: CRG Study and Mathematica

1. Mathematica: Karen reported the amendment to the contract to help with implementation of things on the Racial Equity Roadmap and will meet with Lauren in a couple of weeks
2. CRG Study: This report is embargoed until release. It looked at the initial CRG report on 18 and 19 years old youth going through criminal division compared to 18-year-old in family court since Raise the Age.
 - a. Paul, Kate, and Karen are drafting.
 - b. Report may be issued and ready to share next week.
 - c. Paul, as a defense attorney, thinks with the report and the youthful offender program efforts, the council may consider other action steps. He was concerned about youth adults with DUI and the difficulty of paying the fines
 - d. Former chair Craig and Ken Schatz were recognized. There was discussion about a press conference. Jessica remarked it was hard to get press to statehouse when legislature is not in session.

Committee Updates

1. Governance Mike requested members pass along potential individuals to recruit. He can follow up unless the member has a relationship and is comfortable. Mike has talking points.
2. System Improvement – Kate, Lindy and Amy drafted edits to the MOU on how to share data. They are waiting for feedback and plan an RFP for the data dashboard.
3. Youth Services – Zoe reported the HESOC work involved three virtual focus groups with Hunter Hurst with a total of 12 youth participating and another 18 completed a survey. Everyone was compensated; The Moss Group has developed a plan to compensate youth and



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submitted the IRB. They will respond to questions and plan two in-person interview/focus groups in Burlington and White River Jct. The Youth Summit report and action items will inform future RFP.

4. Ethnic and Racial Disparities – Sparks noted the committee met and discussed the retreat and HESOC work. ERD committee is interested in development of an RFP for gathering at risk youth voice which is different than the Youth Services project that aims to gather justice involved youth voice. Think about RFP to hear from youth. The committee discussed the Great School Partnership project for alternatives to school suspension and engaged youth.

Housekeeping

Move the Oct 15 to Oct 22 meeting, Karen will send out 2 invites to see what has the most people. Oct 29 is a youth summit meeting if interested.

Committees will elect these chairs in Oct.

Adjournment 12: 21

Aug 4, 2026, and Sept 17, 2026, Council Meeting (see red text additions)

Council for Equitable Justice Retreat

Location: Silver Lake Park, Barnard

Attendees: Karen Vastine, Sparks, Kate Hayes, Linda Johson, Mike Loner, Julia Brand, Donn Hutchins, and Stu Berry

Guests: Lindsay Weiss (public member), Sheri Lynn (Dept for Children and Families), Hunter Hurst (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, National Center for Juvenile Justice)

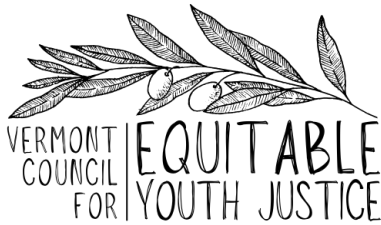
Goals and Priorities of the Council for High End System of Care (HESOC)

Summary: Discussed ethnic and racial disparities, **oversight**, Raise the Age, kids remain in Vermont, optimal size, and inclusion of youth and family voice as principles of the Council's three HESOC priorities:

- Access to family/chosen family,
- Early intervention/prevention, **prevention of re-entry**,
- Individualize case planning that is trauma informed.

List in order of most checks to least checks.

1. Access to family, chosen family and other supports **(6 checks)**
 - Family navigators/parent support to navigate system
 - Pleasant, homey, etc.
 - Family involvement



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- Access to family/chosen family and other supports
 - Greater \$ for prevention
 - More support for families
2. Ethnic and Racial Disparities **(5 checks)**
 - Data driven who is in where, race, age, what got them there
 - Ensure kids move through the system as quickly as possible
 - Reduces racial disparities in the system, community partners
 3. Early Intervention **(4 checks)**
 - Prevention school involvement
 - Prevention
 - Focus on primary prevention
 - Early intervention and prevention
 - Substance use disorder treatment
 4. Individualized Treatment for youth that is trauma informed **(4 checks)**
 - Enhanced community-based initiatives
 - Services to young women in a residential setting including secure
 - Mental health treatment
 - Deal with transfer laws/mental health
 5. Independent Oversight of Residential Facility Conditions
 - Accountability and oversight
 6. Right sized system/kids remain in Vermont (2 checks)
 - The optimal facility size for long term secure residential
 7. Ensuring Raise the Age is implemented through age 19 (1 check)
 - Ensuring RTA is successful
 - Can we locate young people transfer to adult criminal court with pre-trial juvenile?