



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)**

Nov 20, 2025, 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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

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

Absent: Paul Groce, Hudson Ranney

Partners: Hunter Hurst (National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)), National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), Sheri Lynn (Dept for Children and Families-DCF)

The meeting was called to order by Karen 10:35 with a quorum present.

Welcome and Introductions

Federal, State, and Local Updates

1. **OJJDP Compliance Monitoring Audit:** Vermont is scheduled for an audit in 2026, involving document reviews and facility visits.
2. **Youth Services Committee:** A recruitment one-pager has been developed for youth and potential member recruitment. Feedback is requested from council members. **Next step:** a copy will be emailed to council members to review and provide feedback.
3. **Project Launches:** The High-End System of Care (HESOC) project, started Oct 1, facilitated by the National Center for Juvenile Justice. Meetings with stakeholders are ongoing.
4. **Annie E. Casey Foundation:** Four sites are working on Family Engaged Case Planning. Vermont is considering participation in the next cohort.
5. **Burlington School District Suspension Decrease:** Recognition of efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in suspensions. Discussion on maintaining progress and addressing other disparities for youth on IEP and other marginalize youth.

Council Vote: Kate motioned to approve the minutes with understanding that attendance will be added. Amy seconded and the motion passed. Sheri and Donn will confirm the attendee list.

Conferences:

1. **National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges ([NCJFCJ](#)) Conference :** Interest in attending should be communicated to Karen and Sheri. The conference will have track on high-end users of services



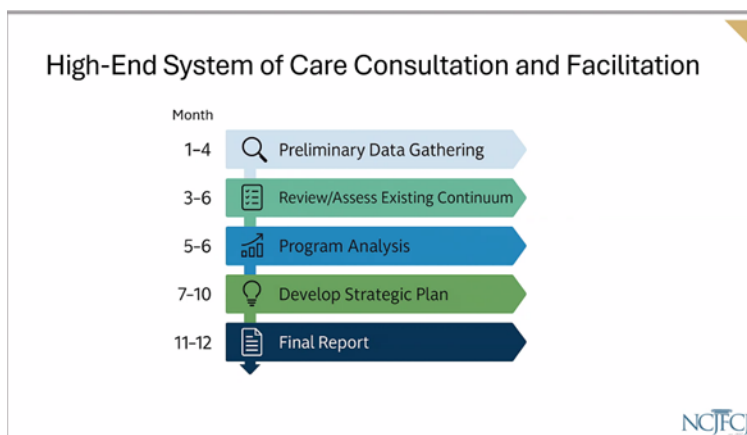
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relevant to the High-End System of Care project and multidisciplinary workshops. Budget considerations are ongoing about sending 1 or 2 people. Open to everyone. Vote in December about sending council representatives.

2. **CJJ Conference:** Highlights of youth leadership and adult relationships demonstrated at the conference. Discussions on involving youth as equitable community members and reintegration into the community. Powerful opening speaker. [Good Trouble](#) workshop focuses on youth led peer support. The Minnesota State Advisory Group has state prosecutors, corrections, and defense on the team to consider for CEYJ. Diversity of adult and youths of the global majority represented at the conference. We heard from youth, who had been in the system long term and their work to attend college, find employment, and lead other youth.

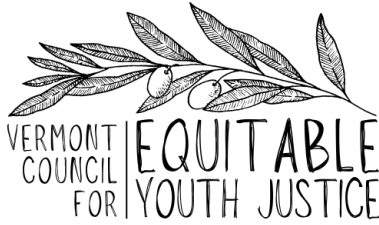
High End System of Care - Introduction of team and project

1. **NCJJ Overview:** The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) focuses on juvenile justice and child welfare research. The presentation covers its mission, values, and a specific project called HESOC.
2. **Vermont's Initiative:** Vermont is working on ways to help youth with complex needs in the least restrictive environments.
3. **Collaborative Approach:** The project uses a participatory process where group members work together to create solutions, guided by NCJJ as the facilitators.
4. **Project Structure:** The project is divided into five phases.



Questions/Discussion HESOC Project:

1. Discussed concerns about number of beds and looking at the data to ensure keeping kids in the community.
2. Making sure there is step down so kids don't stay too long and advocacy for the focus on the plan to come home.
3. Importance of oversight and checks and balances.
4. Continuum of services starting with first interaction with law enforcement to placement to reentering the community and transitioning youth to adult services.



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5. In summary: NCJJ are developing list of leaders to interview and listening sessions, standing regular with this CEYJ, facilitating planning workgroup and other consultants. Who else do they need to interact with?
6. **Next Step:** Develop a cheat sheet about how the idea got to this project.

Mathematica Update: Development of a Road Map with 4 key issues identified. Emphasis on embedding racial equity in all decisions. Pick up discussion in Dec.

Committee Report Outs:

1. **Governance:** Recruitment planning goals for 2025-2026 reviewed. **Next Step:** Provide feedback by Dec 15.
2. **Youth Services:** Meeting was rescheduled, no updates.
3. **System Improvement:** Did not meet but have focused on probation system improvements and potential recommendations. The committee will look at the retreat proposals and select one. Also received assistance from NCJJ on how to estimate the missing race data and offered to meet with ERD.
4. **Ethnic & Racial Disparities:** Recruitment of new members and collaboration with other CEYJ committee to accomplish this. Considering a different strategy to meet youth where they are and maybe focus on youth of color and their interaction with police. Will explore potential youth groups to reach out to. The question was raised about training in youth and adult partnership. RFP identified a bidder and DCF is negotiating the contract agreement.

Other Business:

1. Overview of the FFY24 budget and further discussion in Dec to vote on the budget to present to OJJDP.
2. There were no public comments (none).

Motion to Adjourn 12:45