

# **Juvenile Division 2025 Annual Report**



## **Maine Department of Corrections**

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To: Pinny Beebe-Center, Senate Chair, Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee  
Tavis Hasenfus, House Chair, Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

From: Randall A. Liberty, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Corrections  
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cc: MaryAnne Turowski, Senior Policy Advisor, Governor Mills

Date: March 14, 2025

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report is submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety pursuant to Title 34-A M.R.S.A. § 7010 Regarding the Department of Corrections' (DOC) efforts to reduce detention rates of juveniles, expand community-based alternatives to detention at and commitment to Long Creek Youth Development Center, and possible creation of DOC-operated residences to reduce the number of youth at Long Creek.

## **2024 DIVISION OF JUVENILE SERVICES OVERVIEW**

Since its report to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee last year, the Maine Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Services (herein after referred to as the "Division") has witnessed a slight reduction in referrals from the previous year. A vast majority of the juvenile cases referred to the Division continue to be diverted from the formal juvenile justice system and diversion rates have remained consistent over the past three years. Similarly, the number of juveniles being supervised on formal probation has decreased though many juveniles are supervised while on informal adjustment, court-ordered conditions of release, deferred disposition with supervised conditional release, and community reintegration status. The average length of probation, however, increased by 22 days between 2023 and 2024.

Although the total number of detentions increased from 166 detentions to 201 detentions, the average length of stay in detention (32.7 days in 2024) was almost the same as the previous year (32.5 days).

Court-ordered indeterminate commitments remained exactly the same in 2024 as they were in 2023 with 18 youth being committed to Long Creek Youth Development Center. The only recent year with fewer commitments was 2020 which saw 14 youth committed during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic. Although the average length of stay in commitment increased significantly to 244.6 days from 2023's average of 102.2 days (the lowest number in six years), it's important to recognize that with such small numbers, one or two outliers can significantly influence the average length of stay in either direction.

One notable change in the population served by the Division of Juvenile Services in 2024 is a significant increase in the number of youths subject to the Interstate Compact for Juveniles that governs the supervision of youth who transfer residence between states and the return of juveniles who abscond or run away from their home state and are located in another state. The following table illustrates the number of youths from other states transferred to supervision in Maine, the number of Maine youths being supervised in other states, and the number of youths arrested or taken into custody in Maine who reside in other states.

### INTERSTATE COMPACT FOR JUVENILES CASES PROCESSED IN 2024

Youths adjudicated in another state transferred to supervision in Maine	11
Youths adjudicated in Maine transferred to supervision in another state	13
Youths being supervised in Maine who violated conditions and were held at LC	2
Youths located in Maine with active warrants in other states	8
Youths arrested in Maine and detained at LC who reside in other states (no warrant)	4
Runaway youths from other states located in Maine and held at Long Creek	2
Runaway youths from other states located in Maine but returned within 24 hours	3
Youths arrested on Maine warrants in other states and securely returned to Maine	4

Although there was no increase in the number of juveniles detained as runaway youth from other states or failed placements in Maine, the number of youths located in Maine with active arrested warrants issued by other states doubled from 4 to 8, and the number of youths who reside out of state and arrested and detained for criminal conduct in Maine also doubled from 2 to 4. Cases involving the Interstate Compact often require attention from multiple agencies in Maine and the youth's home state and may take weeks or months to finally resolve.

The Division continues to be engaged in state-wide system reform efforts including the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Probation Transformation Initiative and Family-Engaged Case Planning throughout 2024. Additionally, the Division is participating in a new cross-agency initiative spearheaded by the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future: The B.E.S.T. (Building Ecosystems Statewide for Thriving) Youth Initiative sponsored by the Forum for Youth Investment. To learn more about the B.E.S.T. Youth Initiative visit <https://forumfyi.org/cross-systems-consulting/best-youth-initiative/>.

Maine was chosen as one of five states to participate in the B.E.S.T. Youth Initiative, a three-year cross-agency project, through a competitive process. Representatives of the Division are collaborating with representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, and three youth and one parent with lived experience to strengthen positive youth development programming in the state with a focus on peer and near peer mentoring programs as a means of improving positive outcomes for young people in Maine as they transition to independence. The local individuals participating in

the initiative are known as the “Core Team.” This effort is targeting youth who are disengaged and disconnected from schools, employment and institutions, many of whom are in or may be at risk of entering the juvenile justice system. Members of the Core Team meet regularly with staff from the Forum for Youth Investment, including site visits to Maine, and are completing the “discovery” phase of the project where information about Maine systems has been collected through conversations with many stakeholders throughout Maine including representatives of state agencies, community-based organizations, other youth-serving agencies, and youths and families directly impacted by state systems.

As explained further below, collaboration between the Division and The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is stronger than ever. As a result of the Settlement Agreement between the United States Department of Justice and the State of Maine, both agencies will collaborate to effectively implement aspects of the agreement that apply to justice-involved youth. The Division has met with leadership at Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health, Children’s Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) to begin discussing implementation of the Settlement Agreement that became effective December 20, 2024. Regular meetings will occur as implementation continues. As fully explained below, the Division will provide de-identified data regarding youth at Long Creek to the Department of Justice every six months to monitor the State’s compliance with the Settlement Agreement.

The Division has met with CBHS leadership to consider ways in which the Division can support efforts to establish Treatment Intensive Homes and sustain and expand the Youth Alternatives Intercept program – an evidence-based, intensive in home program with family support available 24 hours per day proven to reduce the likelihood of a young person being detained or committed to Long Creek Youth Development Center.

The Division is collaborating with the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of MaineCare Services (OMS) to implement federal requirements of Section 5121 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA). Long Creek will serve as the “pilot” site for Maine and will be first to establish a cross-agency system for implementing the Section 5121 mandates. These mandates include ensuring that all committed juveniles have full MaineCare coverage restored 30 days prior to release, have physical and behavioral health assessments 30 days prior to release, and are offered case management services and 30 days prior to release and referrals to care 30 days prior to release and 30 days after release from Long Creek Youth Development Center.

The Division is collaborating with the Department of Education to improve the quality of education services provided at Long Creek Youth Development Center and fully utilize federal education grant funds received by the A.R. Gould School.

The Division is partnering with the Department of Labor (DOL) to ensure that youth have access to resources available through the DOL’s including the pre-apprenticeship program as well as vocational rehabilitation services available to youth with disabilities.

## DATA SNAPSHOT

The table below provides data on key points in the juvenile justice system over the past six years. Data from 2019 is included to demonstrate changes in diversion, probation, detention, and commitment prior to, during, and after the COVID 19 pandemic.

### Data Snapshot for Maine's Juvenile Justice System Over the Past Six Years

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Cases* Referred to Division of Juvenile Services	2,073	2,128	1,925	1,595	1,748	2,464
First Time Referrals	984	1,076	1,043	863	625	1,332
Diversion Rate of Eligible Cases**	86%	86%	87%	88%	74%	74%
Monthly Average Number of Juveniles on Probation	60	66	90	92	117	163
Number of Juveniles who Started Probation	83	84	112	66	65	101
Probation Violations Filed with Court	34	20	52	54	70	96
Average Length of Juvenile Probation	354	332	329	405	383	400
Detention Admissions (not individual youths detained)	201	166	100	107	136	277
Average length of stay in detention	32.7	32.5	31.9	24.4	21.9	18.4
Number of Youths Serving 1-30 Day Periods of Confinement (court-ordered dispositions)	14	10	12	19	14	29
Number of Youths Committed to Long Creek	18	18	20	19	14	29
Average Length of Stay During Commitment	244.6	102.2	169.7	343	360.8	450.3
Average Daily Population (ADP) at Long Creek	36	28	28	31	28	53

\* A youth may be referred more than once in a calendar year; consequently, "cases" does not reflect the individual number of youths at any point in the juvenile justice system.

\*\* Current data collection limitations limit diversion rates to only first-time referrals charged with a juvenile crime that would constitute a civil violation or Class D or E crime if committed by an adult. Diversion of second or subsequent offenses and Class A, B, or C crimes do occur although not reflected in the diversion data.

For comprehensive data regarding youths served by the Division of Juvenile Services including monthly overview updates, log onto <https://www.maine.gov/corrections/juvenileservices/reports>.

## **INTERAGENCY EFFORTS TO INCREASE DIVERSION AND REDUCE DETENTION:**

Over the past year, the Division of Juvenile Services has been engaged in several interagency efforts to increase diversion of youths from the juvenile court process and reduce detention at and commitment to Long Creek Youth Development Center. These efforts consist of both formal and informal collaborations with one or more other youth-serving State agencies and/or community organizations, driven by the Administration's focus on providing services that best meet the needs of youth in the State.

**The Children's Cabinet Juvenile Justice Working Group.** Staff involved in the work of the Children's Cabinet meet twice per month. Typically, during one of the monthly meetings members of the Children's Cabinet Juvenile Justice Working Group focus on opportunities for greater coordination and collaboration to meet the needs of justice-involved youth and young people at risk of becoming involved in Maine's juvenile justice system. Meetings are facilitated by the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future and attended by representatives from the Division, the Department of Health and Human Services including the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (MCDC), the Department of Education, and the Department of Labor. Members of the Children's Cabinet Juvenile Justice Working group identify ways in which multiple agencies can collaborate to improve positive outcomes for Maine Youth and reduce systemic barriers to services youth need to thrive.

This coordination through the Juvenile Justice Working Group has provided an opportunity for youth-serving State agencies to understand each other's available resources, mandates, and limitations in meeting the needs of Maine youth. For example, as a result of a presentation by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention regarding results of the 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIHYS), the MCDC will provide training to all Juvenile Community Corrections staff regarding the increase in self-harm behaviors and suicidal ideation among Maine youth. Representatives of the MCDC's Adolescent and School Health Program will provide training on identifying signs of possible self-harm and/or suicidal behaviors and Juvenile Community Corrections staff with resources available in their communities available to assist youth experiencing mental health struggles.

A second collaborative effort resulting from the Children's Cabinet Juvenile Justice Working Group is a stronger partnership between the Department of Corrections and the Department of Labor with a shared commitment to helping older justice-involved youth find meaningful employment opportunities. Representatives of the Department of Labor will attend each of the three Juvenile Community Corrections Regional staff meetings to share information regarding programs for youth available through DOL such as the pre-apprenticeship and career exploration programs. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has also assigned a vocational rehabilitation counselor to work directly with Long Creek residents with disabilities to provide services such as career exploration and planning and work-based learning. Connecting youth with meaningful work reduces the chances of a youth entering the juvenile justice system.

**B.E.S.T. (Building Ecosystems State-wide for Thriving) Youth Initiative.** Several members of the Children’s Cabinet Juvenile Justice Working Group along with four young people with lived experience participate in the Forum for Youth Investment’s B.E.S.T. Youth Initiative. In May 2024, the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future submitted an application to participate in the B.E.S.T. Youth Initiative. Through a competitive process, Maine was one of five states chosen to participate in the three-year initiative focused on strengthening youths’ connection to community and breaking down traditional silos within state government and implement positive youth development programming in collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs). Maine chose to focus on enhancing and expanding peer and near peer mentoring programs as a way of bringing together state agencies, CBOs, young people with lived experience and youth involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system to achieve a common goal: improved outcomes for young people in relation to school completion, career training, and professional development. Mentoring is widely recognized as one of the most effective services for keeping youth out of the juvenile justice system and reducing recidivism.

**Regional Care Teams (RCTs).** The Division of Juvenile Services supports Regional Care Teams consisting of local multi-disciplinary teams of youth-serving providers who meet regularly to conduct case reviews for complex cases referred to the teams by Juvenile Community Corrections Officers (JCCOs), attorneys, or community-based program providers. Regional Corrections Administrators for each of the three Juvenile Community Corrections regions co-chair the Regional Care Teams with partners from the University of Southern Maine. In addition to providing staff resources, the Division supports the Regional Care Teams through a Cooperative Agreement with the Catherine Cutler institute to provide administration, facilitation, coordination, development and evaluation of the RCTs as a community reinvestment and reintegration model. Regional Care Teams also provide low-barrier access to “flex funds” for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Flex funds are used for items youth need to thrive when there is no other available source of funding. For example, one month’s rent, internet access, work boots, business-appropriate clothing, etc. In Fiscal Year 2025, the Division appropriated \$40,000 to the Regional Care Teams to support immediate needs of youth and families. To learn more about Maine’s Regional Care Teams, visit: <https://usm.maine.edu/news/maine-regional-care-teams-supported-over-165-justice-impacted-youths-over-initiatives-three-years/>.

**Implementation of Requirements of the DOJ-State of Maine Agreement.** On December 20, 2024, a settlement agreement (the “Agreement”) between the United States of America and the State of Maine was approved by the United States District Court, District of Maine. Representatives of the Division of Juvenile Services and the Department of Health and Human Services have begun meeting to discuss implementation of the elements of the Agreement that require action by both State agencies. For example, the State must provide joint specialized training on Care Coordination according to the Wraparound Planning Principles to all behavioral health care coordinators, including Juvenile Community Corrections Officers. The Agreement requires that all children who are covered by the Agreement be offered a Single

Assessment if “arrested and referred to the Maine Department of Corrections pursuant to 15 M.R.S.A. § 3203-A.” Of note, the single assessment for medium to high intensity behavioral health services will be made available for all Medicaid eligible youth, regardless of being covered by the Agreement or engaged with the Department of Corrections. Current collaborative efforts to implement the requirements of the Agreement, thereby reducing the chances that youth will become involved in the juvenile justice system include: the Division’s participation in efforts to establish Treatment Intensive Homes in Maine utilizing the Treatment Foster Care Oregon Model and aligning contracts for wraparound services.

**Implementation of Section 5121 of the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act.** Over the past year, the Department of Corrections, including the Division of Juvenile Services, has worked with the Department of Health and Human Services Office of MaineCare Services, and Wellpath to develop an implementation plan that ensures Maine is at least substantially compliant with Section 5121 of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act no later than January 1, 2026. Section 5121 of the CAA requires that states ensure that Medicaid eligible adjudicated youth under age 21 (under age 26 if formerly placed in foster care) have full MaineCare coverage restored 30 days prior to release from confinement. Section 5121 of the CAA also requires that states:

- Provide physical and behavioral health screenings within 30 days of release from confinement
- Provide case management services and referrals to care 30 days prior to release and 30 days after release from confinement
- Suspend rather than terminate Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage

Long Creek Youth Development Center will serve as a “pilot” facility for implementation of Section 5121 requirements in Maine. Representatives of OMS, DOC, and Wellpath are in the process of developing an operational system that will ensure efficient exchange of data between State agencies. Additionally, a plan will be developed to identify and engage community providers who can serve committed juveniles prior to and immediately following release from Long Creek. Current data exchange limitations will require person-to-person communication between Long Creek staff and the DHHS Office of Family Independence (OFI) when residents are more than 30 days from release, however, the implementation plan includes automating to the extent possible the process of restoring full MaineCare coverage for eligible juveniles 30 days prior to leaving Long Creek.

**Juvenile Probation Transformation Initiative.** Several representatives of Juvenile Community Corrections, in collaboration with the Maine Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG), are actively engaged in the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Juvenile Probation Transformation initiative. In addition to representatives from each of the three Juvenile Community Corrections regions and JJAG, members of the Juvenile Probation Transformation team include: a

prosecutor who specializes in juvenile justice, a defense attorney who specializes in juvenile defense, a representative of the Maine Judicial Branch, representatives of the University of Southern Maine's Center for Youth Policy and Law, a member of a non-profit organization that serves youth, and a youth who has experienced Maine's juvenile justice system. The Juvenile Probation Team meets regularly with Annie E. Casey representatives to gather and analyze data and implement the identified goals of the project, which include increasing diversion opportunities to reduce the number of juveniles referred to the Division of Juvenile Services and to improve the quality of supervision provided by the Division to those youths who do become involved in the formal juvenile justice process. Supervision improvement includes adopting a philosophy of the JCCO as a "coach" rather than a "referee" and providing supervision that is strength-based, time-limited, rooted in relationship-building and community partnership, and focused on positive youth development, meaningful accountability, and healing.

**Family Engaged Case Planning.** In combination with the Juvenile Probation Transformation initiative, Juvenile Community Corrections staff from each region including a Regional Correctional Administrator, a Regional Correctional Manager, and multiple Juvenile Community Corrections Officer participate in Family Engaged Case Planning (FECP), a complimentary training program provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Maine's FECP team includes a member of a community-based organization that serves youth and a young person who has experienced Maine's juvenile justice system. This comprehensive training includes five modules, combining virtual and in-person training sessions that promote a family-engaged case planning model that empowers those who supervise juveniles to collaborate with young people and their families, set personalized goals, and connect with community supports.

**Children's Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) Program Coordinators.** There are currently several Children's Behavioral Health Services Program Coordinators assigned to work closely with Juvenile Community Corrections and Long Creek Youth Development Center staff to facilitate services for justice-involved youth receiving services from CBHS. Some CBHS Program Coordinators have office space available in Juvenile Community Corrections offices to ensure effective communication and information sharing. Members of the Division meet every other week with CBHS Program Coordinators to discuss the status of every juvenile detained at Long Creek and committed residents with anticipated release dates in the near future. These meetings allow DOC and CBHS to coordinate efforts to facilitate release of Long Creek residents as soon as possible.

**Funding community-based programs.** The Division of Juvenile Services provides supplemental funding to support programs primarily administered by Children's Behavioral Health Services. For example, the Division provides funding for Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Multisystemic Therapy Problem Sexual Behavior (MST-PSB), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), and High-Fidelity Wraparound services to ensure that non-MaineCare eligible youth receive services and that programs can be sustained and expanded. A full list of all community-based services funded by the Division can be found at the end of this report as Appendix A.

**State Council for Interstate Juvenile Supervision.** As a state participating in the Interstate Compact for Juveniles, Maine is required by law (34-A M.R.S.A. § 9909) to establish a State Council for Interstate Juvenile Supervision. Members of the Council include representatives of the Division of Juvenile Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child and Family Services, the Department of Public Safety, the Maine Judicial Branch, a prosecutor and a defense attorney with experience in the juvenile court, and a representative of a victims' interest group. The Council implements and oversees Maine's participation in the Interstate Compact for Juveniles and helps state agencies develop policy concerning operations and procedures related to administration of Interstate Compact for Juveniles. The Compact governs transfer of supervision of juveniles on probation or re-entry status between states and the return of juveniles who have been reported missing or absconded from their home state but located in another state.

**Participation in the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group.** Commissioners for the Department of Corrections, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Labor, and Department of Public Safety designate representatives of their agencies to serve as "Ex Officio" voting members of Maine's Juvenile Justice Advisory Group. Ex Officio members for DOC, DHHS, DOE, DOL, and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) attend regular meetings of the JJAG and participate in committee meetings where they provide information to JJAG members regarding activities of the State agencies. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Group also consists of volunteer members appointed by the Governor as required by the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, as Amended by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018. Members include individuals employed by local and municipal governments, youth serving community-based organizations, persons who work with justice-involved youth, and youth members who must be under age 28 when appointed. Participation in the JJAG promotes sharing of information regarding current successes and challenges within Maine's juvenile justice system. The JJAG invests hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in direct service programs designed to reduce youth involvement in Maine's juvenile justice system and reduce the number of youth detained at and committed to Long Creek Youth Development Center.

All of the interagency collaborations listed above will continue throughout 2025 and 2026.

## **SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES IN EXPANDING ACCESS TO COMMUNITY-BASED THERAPEUTIC SERVICES**

**Acuity of Juveniles' Needs.** Efforts to divert youth from the juvenile justice system and reduce the numbers of youth detained at and committed to Long Creek have been enormously successful. While that success has resulted in a lower number of youths at Long Creek it has also resulted in a higher percentage of those detained and committed youths having the most serious conduct or significant behavioral health needs. This is because youths with acute behavioral needs, especially aggression and violence toward others, are more likely to be denied access to in-home and residential services. Long Creek remains the State's provider of last resort

for that particular population, as it is the only facility in the state that cannot refuse to admit a youth. Furthermore, the juvenile court lacks authority to order a juvenile placed anywhere other than Long Creek.

The acuity of Long Creek residents' needs is reflected in the tables below containing information provided by Wellpath, the state's contracted provider for medical, dental, mental and behavioral health services at all DOC facilities.

Service Provided	On-site hours	On-call hours
Physician	8 hours/week	24 hours/day
Nursing (Registered Nurse)	24 hours/day	
Health Services Administrator	40 hours/week	
Assistant Health Services Administrator	40 hours/week	
Dentist	4 hours/week	
Psychiatric Practitioner	8 hours/week	24 hours/day
Mental Health Director	40 hours/week	
Mental Health Coordinator	40 hours/week	
Mental Health Professionals	80 hours/week	24 hours/day
Mental Health Technician	40 hours/week	
Dental hygiene (residents receive every 6 months)		
Chronic care follow up with providers every 30 days		
Annual medical and dental exams		

Mental Health Response/Intervention Provided	
Risk and Safety Assessments	1,016
Mental Health Watches	189
Average watches per month	16
Individual Therapy Sessions	1988
Average individual therapy sessions per resident	Approx. 55
Self-harm interventions	21
Residents engaging in self-harm	6%
Psychiatry sessions	343
Residents prescribed psychotropic medications	91%
Residents prescribed MOUD	8
Hospital Crisis Assessments	17

### **Limited Availability and/or Access to Community-Based Treatment Services.**

Despite many dedicated and compassionate individuals providing excellent services and support to justice-involved youth in Maine, barriers remain that prevent youth from accessing much needed services. In many parts of the State, particularly rural areas, there are a limited number of services providers. Mental and behavioral health services are often delayed due to long wait lists, and some of the more rural areas of the state are characterized as “service deserts” with no meaningful access to services recommended for a particular youth. There are only two residential Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment programs in Maine. The program for boys in New Gloucester serves up to 12 boys and the program for girls in Windham can serve up to 6 girls. Although residential SUD treatment is effective in many cases, admission to the programs is purely voluntary and youth are often reluctant to agree to remain separated from friends and family by hundreds of miles for the time required to successfully complete a treatment program.

## **SUMMARY OF LONG CREEK YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INCLUDING STAFFING LEVELS AND CHALLENGES AT THE FACILITY**

**American Correctional Association Certification.** Between June 10 and 12, 2024, Long Creek Youth Development Center underwent a routine triennial accreditation audit by the American Correctional Association (ACA). The audit consisted of a review of 36 mandatory standards and 322 non-mandatory standards that apply to juvenile facilities. Long Creek was found to be in compliance with 100% of the mandatory standards and all but two of the 322 non-mandatory standards. Long Creek was determined to be non-compliant with the two following non-mandatory standards:

1. Standard #4-JCF-1C-01 – Access to toilets and a washbasin with hot and cold running water 24 hours per day without staff assistance. Many of the resident rooms do not contain toilets or sinks. Residents are in locked individual rooms during the night and are required to activate an in-room staff assistance button and their doors are electronically opened so the resident may gain access to a common bathroom. With regard to this standard, the audit report states, “The (audit) team members were informed by facility residents that they have never experienced a delay in being released from their room during the evening hours.”
2. Standard #4-JCF-6C-10 – The facility Administrator can document that the overall vacancy rate among staff positions authorized to work directly with juveniles does not exceed 10 percent for any 18-month period. With regard to this standard, the audit report states, “The Visiting Committee supports the request for Plan of Action and the proposed Plan of Action.” Recognizing the inability to meet this standard at the time of the audit, the Superintendent of Long Creek developed an Action Plan in advance that included implementing an internship program in collaboration with two local colleges, assigning a staff person to assist with outreach for online applications, and attending job fairs and

information sessions at Local colleges. Additionally, the Department's full time Recruitment and Retention Coordinator implemented recruitment campaigns utilizing social media and public announcements in the greater Portland area.

Both residents and staff of Long Creek were interviewed as part of the ACA audit process. With regard to interviewing residents, the report states: "The team interviewed approximately twenty residents. No significant complaints were received from residents. Residents reported feeling safe within the facility, that employees were responsive to their needs and appreciated the programs and services offered to the population." At the time of the audit, there were 33 residents at Long Creek.

With regard to staff interviews, the report states: "The team interviewed forty-five employees working within the facility. Employees were noted to be actively engaged in their duties and were eager to explain their areas of responsibility. All employees recognized their role in the supervision, care, and treatment of residents in this facility."

Long Creek will be required to undergo another American Correctional Association audit in 2027.

**Changes in Leadership.** The year 2024 saw many changes in key leadership positions at Long Creek including Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent in Charge of Operations, Deputy Superintendent in Charge of Programming, Principal of the A.R. Gould School, and Human Resources Manager. Those in the new leadership roles have provided a sense of stability and purpose for facility staff and the facility has seen an increase in the retention of newly hired Juvenile Program Workers. Of the 60 Long Creek staff positions filled in 2024, 38 (63%) remain working at the facility.

**Facility-designated Juvenile Community Corrections Officer.** In August 2024, a full time Juvenile Community Corrections Officer was assigned to be present at Long Creek daily to assist residents with remote court appearances, arranging phone and in-person contact between residents and their attorneys, and facilitating remote and in-person forensic and psychological evaluations. As a result of a dramatic increase in the use of "Zoom Court" and remote forensic examinations and recent changes in the law that require appointment of attorneys for all detained and committed residents, managing residents' remote and in-person participation in court, attorney contact, and court-related evaluations requires full time staff attention. Assigning a JCCO to Long Creek who can serve as a liaison between courts, attorneys, and evaluators allows Juvenile Program Managers and Psychiatric Social Workers to focus on their core functions and spend more time interacting with residents.

**Focus on Education Programming.** With the hiring of a new Principal and two new teachers, the A.R. Gould School is better positioned than ever to expand education services and vocational programs by fully utilizing federal education grant funds awarded. For example, year-long contracts with the Maine Academy of Modern Music and The Telling Room provide both

committed and detained residents opportunities to explore creative expression using music, poetry, and story-telling and other creative media.

**Management of Federal Education grants for A.R. Gould School Students.** One of the unfortunate outcomes of the COVID 19 pandemic was a disruption in supplemental education services available to Long Creek residents due to restrictions on entry to the facility. Over the past year, Division leadership has worked closely with representatives of the Maine Department of Education and administrators of the A.R. Gould School to develop a plan for utilizing available federal funds to the greatest extent possible. Efforts to enhance education services for Long Creek residents will include:

1. Expanding vocational program offerings using Perkins Career and Technical Education grant funds. Long Creek administration will consult with representatives of the Department of Labor, the Department of Education - Career and Technical Education, and Long Creek residents to determine which new vocational programs will be most beneficial to residents of Long Creek upon transition back to their home communities.
2. Continuing to ensure that all A.R. Gould School students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) receive Special Education services and accommodations as designated in their IEP. The A.R. Gould School receives grant funding to ensure compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Throughout 2024, these services were provided through a contract with a local Special Education Consultant who subcontracted for all required services such as education evaluations, speech therapy, occupational therapy, English Language Learner (ELL) services, etc.
3. Making education staff aware of professional development funding resources available through Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Although this award is modest (FY 2024 allocation is \$4,591.64), educators at the A.R. Gould School will be made aware of these funds and encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities as resources allow.
4. Providing supplemental education programming, transitional skills development, professional staff development, and improving technology using funds available using the school's ESEA/ESSA Title I, Part D(1) award. Examples of how these funds were utilized in 2024 include entering year-long contracts with the Maine Academy of Modern Music and the Telling Room to deliver supplemental education programs and re-establishing the "School Store" which provides incentives for students to engage in education programming and complete assignments.

**Creating a Culture of Care in Schools at the A.R. Gould School.** In the coming months, the Maine Department of Education's Maine School Safety Center will provide specialized in-depth restorative practices training to 3-7 members of the A.R. Gould School administration. Those

individuals will become the program’s implementation team. Members of the implementation team will receive in-person and asynchronous training focused on creating a restorative school culture that emphasizes building healthy strength-based relationships among school staff and students. Restorative Practice Coaches will provide four days of in-person training and follow up with the A.R. Gould School team as they implement elements of the program such as: collaboratively setting restorative norms, conducting restorative conversations, facilitating community circles, and addressing student misconduct in the classroom. Restorative Practice Coaches will also provide on-going support for the A.R. Gould School staff for one year and assist staff in creating Restorative Codes of Conduct. The “Creating a Culture of Care in Schools” training is available to all public schools without cost.

**Special Education Audit.** On December 18, 2024, members of the Maine Department of Education Office of Special Services Monitoring Team conducted a routine audit of Special Education practices at the A.R. Gould School including review of seven student Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.s). The school was found to be 100% compliant with 38 standards. The audit revealed noncompliance with three standards that resulted in a corrective action plan and some corrective measures have already been completed. The noncompliance findings relate to the following standards:

1. **Standard LREI** – The auditors found that the school was 71.43% compliant with documenting “why education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”
2. **Standard FOTS** – The audit reflects the non-compliant finding for this standard is based on “missing signatures.”
3. **Standard EREI** – The finding of non-compliance on this standard was stated as “Did not fill out form to dismiss when changing eligibility identification CED to SLD – only SLD form was filled out.”

As a result of the audit, the A.R. Gould School is rated as “Tier II” due to having “fewer than three federal findings, 70% or greater participation in alternate assessment, and indicators closed within one year.” Schools are rated on a scale of Tier I to Tier IV, with Tier I being the highest. The next audit of the A.R. Gould’s special education program will occur in four years.

**Facility Improvement Plan.** Throughout 2024, Division and Long Creek leadership developed a list of structural and programmatic changes they will complete, as resources allow, to improve the appearance and culture of Long Creek Youth Development Center. Identified changes the Division hopes to complete in coming years include, but are not limited to:

**Physical Plant Modifications**

- Enhance the appearance of common areas such as visitation room, dayroom spaces, housing units, etc. (consulting with a professional muralist)

- Designate a room with a more trauma-responsive appearance where evaluations and resident testing can occur
- Create a designated young child-friendly family visitation room where residents can meet with younger siblings or their own young children
- Update resident rooms in designated areas with beds and accompanying desks currently on site
- Create one or more designated staff wellness areas on facility grounds
- Enhance planting areas at the facility entrance and in resident outdoor spaces
- Renovate resident housing areas to ensure safety and security of residents and staff
- Create a safe room for residents experiencing acute behavioral health crises
- Capital improvement projects of the building requiring significant resources including updating or replacing HVAC system and access controls
- Dedicate a full-time staff position to effectively manage the agricultural program and improve outdoor facility grounds
- Create an outdoor visitation area where residents can meet with family members and professional providers as weather permits

### **Programming**

- Re-open staff secure building (ACER building) as soon as staffing levels are sufficient
- Designate a unit for residents who have achieved a certain phase (completion of programming) and level (behavioral compliance) that allows many privileges such as permission to wear non-uniform clothing, ability to leave and return to the building without processing through intake, ability to acquire outside food with a refrigerator and microwave for resident use in the unit
- Introduction of Viapath electronic tablet program will allow residents access to electronic tablets with many free features
- Review of the Behavior Management (Phase/Level) system for effectiveness and average time of completion
- Establish Maine Principals Association high school sports teams if populations allow
- Establish adolescent specific AA/NAA and LGBTQ support groups
- Enhance exposure to alternative religions and holiday activities

### **Support Services**

- Maintain communication and efficiency between Long Creek, the DOC business office, and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services
- Expand the garden to increase resident food production and incorporate resident recipes into meal planning
- Monitor all maintenance issues to ensure timely repairs and facility management

### **Operations**

- Review and update policies
- Review all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Post Orders and update as needed

- Complete documentation of compliance with American Correctional Association standards on an annual basis

### **Education**

- Increase vocational education programs
- Schedule “Trades Days” at Long Creek where colleges and local employers can expose residents to education and employment opportunities
- Complete A.R. Gould School’s “Vision of the Graduate” program creating an infographic that illustrates the values and principles students and education staff believe are most important to develop in students

### **Staff Training**

- Implement a mentoring program for newly hired staff analogous to the Field Training Officer (FTO) program currently utilized by Juvenile Community Corrections
- Implement a formal employee job shadowing program to promote professional development, long-term career goals, and retention of staff
- Provide Risk Reduction and Anger Replacement Therapy (ART) training for all Psychiatric Social Workers
- Designate one Psychiatric Social Worker position to serve as a “transitional specialist” to focus on facilitating release of both detained and committed residents as soon as possible and to facilitate implementation and on-going compliance with the Consolidated Appropriations Act Section 521 and Section 1115 waiver requirements.

## **LONG CREEK YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER STAFFING AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2024**

Although Long Creek continues to experience staffing challenges, retention rates for newly hired Juvenile Program Workers have improved over the past year. The Division has worked closely with the Department’s full-time recruitment and retention coordinator to revise job postings and expand recruitment efforts. For example, the Department’s website and social media sites have videos explaining the role of Juvenile Program Worker at Long Creek. Additionally, recruiting posters were created and placed in public locations where exposure would be greatest such as at the Portland Exposition Building during Maine Celtics games.

**Summer Student Internship Program.** One of the Division’s efforts to address work force challenges at Long Creek was the development of the Department’s first ever summer student internship program. The Division designated four Juvenile Program Worker positions for the program created in conjunction with the Southern Maine Community College in South Portland and St. Joseph’s College in Windham, both of which have criminal justice programs. Students from both colleges applied for the 11 week paid internship program. The four selected students earned college credit while working as Juvenile Program Workers at Long Creek and attending

the 6-week Juvenile Basic Correctional Training Program (JBCTP) authorized by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Upon successful completion of testing following the JBCTP, all four students became certified juvenile correctional officers. The Division intends to repeat the internship program in 2025 with the hope that students who participate in the internship program will seek full or part time employment as Juvenile Program Workers at Long Creek Youth Development Center.

Below is a full list of filled and vacant positions at Long Creek Youth Development Center as of December 31, 2025:

**Staffing at Long Creek Youth Development Center as of December 31, 2024**

Type of Position	Filled Positions	Vacancies	Vacancy Rate
Administration	14	0	
Security			
Director of Security		1	100%
Facility Operations Supervisors	5	1	17%
Juvenile Program Supervisors	9	2	18%
Juvenile Program Workers <i>(includes JPW/Cooks)</i>	41	31	34%
Program Providers			
Juvenile Program Managers	4 (1 on leave)	0	
Psychiatric Social Workers	1	3	75%
Juvenile Accuity Specialists	2	0	
Recreation Supervisor	1	0	
Restorative Justice Coordinator	1	0	
Correctional Trades Instructors	2	0	
Chaplain	1	0	
Food Services Supervisors	1	0	
Education			
Administration	4	1	20%
Teachers	14	0	
Resident Education Technology Steward	1	0	
Facility Maintenance Staff	3	1	25%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28%</b>

LCYDC JPW Demographics	Total	Male	Female	Veteran	White	Non-White
JPWs as of 02/04/2025	41	31	10	6	29	12
Percentage		76%	24%	15%	71%	29%

## **COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR JUVENILES RECEIVING FUNDING FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

The Division of Juvenile Services continues to support many community-based programs that serve youth and families throughout Maine. Attached to this report, as Appendix A, is a breakdown of all community-based programs funded by the Division in Fiscal Year 2025.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

In addition to the inter-agency collaborative efforts for diverting youth, noted earlier in this report (pages 7-9), the Division of Juvenile Services engages in joint strategic planning and collaboration activities with the Department of Human Services at several levels (individual case reviews as well as systems reform efforts) on a regular basis. Below is a non-exclusive list of joint activities involving partnership between the Division of Juvenile Services and the Department of Health and Human Services. This inter-agency partnership is driven by the vision and goals of the Administration and was solidified in statute under 34-A M.R.S.A. § 7010(1)(D).

**Office of Behavioral Health, Children's Behavioral Health Services.** The Division will work closely with the CBHS to implement the requirements of the settlement agreement between the United States Department of Justice and the States of Maine. Efforts will include:

- As of January 1, 2026, juveniles covered by the Agreement must be offered a voluntary single assessment to determine the clinically appropriate level of care to meet the individual's behavioral health needs and eligibility for High-Fidelity Wraparound Services whenever the youth is arrested and referred to the Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Services. To ensure compliance with this requirement, both agencies will provide training to their staff regarding the requirements of the Agreement as well as the process for referring youth for a voluntary single assessment. Additionally, though not required by the Agreement, the Division and CBHS are consulting regarding alignment of funding to ensure that all youth receive the same model of High-Fidelity Wraparound Services whether referred to the program by DHHS or by DOC.
- Youth covered under the Agreement must be transitioned, if appropriate and eligible, out of Long Creek. The Division currently works closely with CBHS whenever a youth who is receiving services through CBHS is detained or committed to Long Creek. Those efforts will continue and expand as necessary to ensure that all youth at Long Creek have access to CBHS services in a timely manner that allows the youth to be released from Long Creek. Representatives of the Division and CBHS currently meet every two weeks to review the individual circumstances of every Long Creek resident in detention and

individual cases of committed residents who are eligible for release. CBHS designates Program Coordinators to serve each of the three DOC regions. Program Coordinators participate in the bi-weekly meetings and individual team meetings to ensure that youth in the justice system receive services through CBHS when eligible.

- By December 20, 2025, the State must provide joint specialized training in Care Coordination according to the Wraparound Planning Principles to all care coordinators supporting children and families with behavioral health needs, including JCCOs. Both agencies will collaborate to ensure the goal of training JCCOs is met. Additionally, though not required by the Agreement, DOC and CBHS are working to align resources to support implementation of High-Fidelity Wraparound Services.
- Although not required, the Division will receive and distribute to youth covered by the Agreement and their families any information published by DHHS that describes available community-based services, how to access those services, and the rights of children under the Agreement. Where necessary and appropriate staff at Long Creek and with Juvenile Community Corrections will help youth and families connect with CBHS Program Coordinators to ensure timely delivery of services.

In addition to collaborating to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Agreement as noted above, the Division is working with CBHS on the following initiatives:

- The Children’s Cabinet Juvenile Justice Workgroup as described on page 5
- Regional Care Teams as described on page 6
- Implementation of Treatment Intensive Homes for youth in Maine
- Sustaining, and if possible, expanding Youth Villages Intercept intensive home-based treatment program
- Complex case review of individual cases involving both agencies

**Office of Child and Family Services.** The Division works closely with the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) whenever a youth in the custody of DHHS is involved in the juvenile justice system at any level. Juvenile Community Corrections staff regularly communicate with DHHS case workers regarding individual youth and both appear at juvenile court hearings to explain services being provided by both agencies. Additionally, both agencies communicate regularly regarding youth who may be placed in the custody of DHHS through the juvenile court process.

Upon adjudication of a juvenile crime, a judge may order a juvenile to the custody of DHHS. By statute, the juvenile’s parents and DHHS must have been given notice at least 10 days prior to the dispositional hearing. Recognizing that 10 days is an insufficient amount of time for DHHS to gather information regarding the youth and family, the Division and OCFS have created a joint

protocol that requires the JCCO to make a referral to OCFS emergency intake at the earliest possible time. The protocol, though not required by law, allows the two agencies to share information and work together to reduce the likelihood that the juvenile will be placed in the custody of DHHS.

Perhaps one of the least understood parts of Maine's juvenile justice system is the Interstate Compact (ICJ) for Juveniles that governs the return of juveniles who have runaway or absconded from their home state and are located by law enforcement in Maine. Law enforcement officers have long known to contact a JCCO if the out-of-state juvenile located has an active arrest warrant or is arrested on new juvenile criminal conduct. Much less known by law enforcement, and until recently many within OCFS, is the requirement that law enforcement contact a JCCO if an out-of-state juvenile is reported missing in another state but is not arrested on juvenile criminal charges in Maine. To assist law enforcement and other state agencies in understanding the requirements of the ICJ, 15 M.R.S.A § 3509 of the Maine Juvenile Code was enacted in 2023 and reads: "When a juvenile who has left the care of the juvenile's parent or parents, guardian or legal custodian in another state without the consent of the parent or parents, guardian or legal custodian, who has absconded from probation or parole in another state, who has escaped from a detention or correctional facility in another state or who is accused of an offense in another state is found by a law enforcement officer in the State, the juvenile must be referred immediately to a juvenile community corrections officer and must be processed according to the provisions of the Interstate Compact for Juveniles." Although the Division is responsible for implementing the ICJ, contact with OCFS frequently occurs to ensure that contact is made with the child welfare agency in the juvenile's home state is made if necessary. If an out-of-state juvenile subject to the ICJ is in the legal custody of another state's child welfare agency, OCFS will work with that state's child welfare agency to ensure the juvenile's safe return home.

Similar to the complex case reviews that occur with representatives of CBHS, the Division meets with leadership in, and if necessary legal counsel for, OCFS when both agencies are serving youth with complex needs. Close collaboration between leadership in legal counsel for both agencies occurs several times per year and often results in process changes that improve coordination of services for youth with the most acute needs.

**Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.** The results of the 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) were published in 2024 and indicate an increased prevalence of mental health issues among Maine middle and high school students, especially girls and LGBTQ+ youth, which is consistent with national trends. In light of the survey findings, the Division of Juvenile Services is coordinating with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Disease Prevention, Adolescent Health and Injury Prevention, to deliver training to all Juvenile Community Corrections Officers on identifying when a youth may be at risk of self-harm or suicide attempt and local resources available to help youth struggling with mental health challenges. For complete MIYHS result reports, visit: <https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/2023-results>

**Office of MaineCare Services.** As noted on page 7 of this report, the Department of Corrections including representatives of the Division of Juvenile Services is collaborating with OMS to implement federal requirements of Section 5121 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act. Section 5121 requires states to ensure that all securely confined youth under age 21 (under age 26 if formerly in foster care) eligible for MaineCare have full active coverage 30 days prior to release from confinement. Section 5121 also requires that eligible youth do not have coverage through the Children's Health Insurance Program terminated while in confinement and that the youth receive physical and behavioral health screenings within 30 days of release from confinement and case management services and referrals to care 30 days prior to release and 30 days after release from confinement.

Long Creek Youth Development Center will serve as the pilot site for implementation of Section 5121 of the CAA which will require frequent and close collaboration and data sharing between the Division and OMS.

## **CURRENT EFFORTS TO CREATE SECURE ALTERNATIVES TO LONG CREEK**

Over the past three years, the Department of Corrections has put an enormous amount of effort into expanding community-based therapeutic alternatives to Long Creek in compliance with the requirements of 34-A M.R.S.A. § 7010 and Public Law 2021, c. 398 § KKKK-4. The department has diligently pursued the efforts to establish secure alternatives to Long Creek, despite the proposed funding for the requirements 34-A M.R.S.A § 7010(2) having been stripped from the bill establishing that section prior to it becoming law.

Those efforts resulted in two staff-secure residences operated by DOC. A standalone secure residence for girls, on the edge of the Long Creek property called ACER House, and a community-based residence in Auburn for boys known as Unity Place. Neither was sustainable for justice-involved youth due to the difficulties experienced with staffing those locations, providing security, and in finding a community partner organization equipped to meet the specific needs of the youth in our care.

The distance between Unity Place in Auburn and Long Creek in South Portland presented unique difficulties for both staffing and behavioral management. That location is now being repurposed and renamed as Way Point, a transitional living program facility specifically for adult women. Way Point will serve the Lewiston/Auburn area in a similar way as our other transitional living program facility in Bangor, Leading the Way. Both Way Point and Leading the Way meet the needs of adult DOC clients as they transition from confinement to the community by providing rent free housing for up to 6 months while the resident remains under DOC supervision. Neither program utilizes funding from the Division of Juvenile Services.

There are currently no Long Creek residents residing in the ACER building as of February 14, 2025. To date, there are an insufficient number of direct-care staff at Long Creek to safely manage three to four housing units inside the secure facility and an additional residence outside of the facility. When staffing reaches a sufficient level, committed male residents who have achieved off-grounds privileges by achieving at Phase 3 (completion of programming) and Level 3 (behavioral compliance) will be transitioned to reside at the ACER building. There are currently 3-5 males who are eligible for housing in the staff-secure residence.

In addition to plans for re-opening the ACER building, the Division has explored converting the former Region 1 Juvenile Community Corrections Office building adjacent to the Long Creek campus to serve as a second staff-secure residence. Establishing a second staff-secure residence in close proximity allows more youth to reside in a less-restrictive, more normative environment while continuing to receive medical and behavioral health, education, recreation, and volunteer resources from Long Creek. The ability to share staff with Long Creek also makes a second staff secure residence viable.

The Department of Corrections obtained an updated estimate for renovating the former Region 1 Juvenile Community Corrections building to serve 12 male residents SMRT Inc. Architects and Engineers provided a cost estimate of \$2,142,000 construction cost for renovating the existing building. This estimate does not include additional costs associated with design services, additional staffing, and furnishings and equipment (e.g., technology, internet connection, etc.), needed to operate the building as a staff-secure residence for juveniles.

Aside from creating the ACER staff-secure program for female residents and the Unity Place program in 2022, the Department of Corrections previously operated other staff-secure programs that were unsustainable due to funding and staffing challenges. The Bearings program for off-grounds eligible male residents operated from the ACER building between December 2019 and March 2020 but was discontinued due to COVID restrictions. Between January 2021 and May or June 2021, the STEPS program for off-grounds eligible females operated from the ACER building. That program was discontinued due to an inability to staff both the off-grounds facility and a secure unit for females inside Long Creek as necessary at that time due to COVID protocols. Earlier efforts to provide a community-based alternative to Long Creek include the RISE program that was staffed through a contract with a community-based organization and served males over age 18, on community reintegration status, and deemed appropriate for placement in a semi-independent living environment. That program was not sustainable due to staffing challenges within the community-based organization.

## **OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

Five years have passed since the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) issued its Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment. The final report was issued in February 2020; however, the Juvenile Justice Task Force established at that time to review the findings and implement the recommendations in the report did not have any opportunity to discuss the report due to

disruptions caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. Nevertheless, many of the recommendations in the report have been achieved.

**Recommended Goals of the Maine Juvenile Justice System that have been Achieved:**

- **Develop a plan to present the System Assessment findings and recommendations to the Children’s Cabinet, identifying areas of overlap with existing Children’s Cabinet priorities.**

The Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment was presented to the Children’s Cabinet and continues to serve as a measure for successful reform of Maine’s juvenile justice system.

- **Secure funding to support the expansion of existing evidence-based programs (e.g., Youth Advocate Programs as an alternative to commitment and placement, Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy) and short-term temporary housing and crisis bed capacity, which will help to significantly reduce the incarceration of youth who are not a public safety risk. Ensure that any such expansion includes gender-responsive programming to ensure that all youth, including girls, benefit from these efforts.**

The Division of Juvenile Services applied for and received funding via the federal Second Chances Act to initiate the Youth Advocate Program (YAP) in Maine in 2019. Although the Second Chance Act funds have been expended, the Division continues to contract with YAP to provide transformative mentoring services to youth involved in the juvenile justice system both in the community and at Long Creek Youth Development Center. The Division also provides funding for Multi-systemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, and High-Fidelity Wraparound Services which reduce the likelihood of a youth being detained at or committed to Long Creek Youth Development Center. To address the housing needs identified in the report, the Division funds short term emergency housing, transitional living programs, and managed leased programs. See Appendix A at the end of this report for a complete list of community-based programs funded by the Division of Juvenile Services.

- **Continue diversion, but focus on aligning policies, practices, and programs with best practices outlined in the report. Ensure that gender-responsive programs are available to ensure equitable access to diversion.**

Participation in the Annie E. Casey’s Juvenile Probation Transformation and Family-Engaged Case Planning initiatives includes a focus on diversion of youth from the formal juvenile justice system. The Division currently participates in local efforts in Rockland and Old Orchard Beach to establish pre-arrest community responses that divert youth from the juvenile justice system instead of referring youth to the Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Services. One goal of the Juvenile Probation Transformation initiative is to create pre-arrest/non-DOC involved “pilot” programs in each of the three DOC regions to reduce the number of youths referred to the formal juvenile justice system.

- **Limit the use of detention to “provide care” and require specific findings about why detention was needed to begin to reduce the high number of youths detained to for that reason.**

In 2021, the Maine Legislature amended the Maine Juvenile Code (15 M.R.S.A. § 3203-A (4)(C)(2)) by eliminating the statutory purpose of detention that allowed juveniles to be detained “to provide physical care for a juvenile who cannot return home because there is no parent or other suitable person willing and able to supervise and care for the juvenile adequately.”

- **Revise the Detention Risk Assessment with objective criteria, points for only the most serious offense, and “mitigating” circumstances that demonstrate youth or family strengths.**

The Division of Juvenile Services has developed a detention assessment tool that is utilized by all Juvenile Community Corrections Officers when law enforcement requests detention of a juvenile. The Division is currently consulting with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to ensure that the tool is valid, compliant with principles of their Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative and produces equitable results regardless of the youth’s age, gender, or race.

- **End the use standard terms and conditions in court orders, focusing on individualized treatment goals for each youth.**

Over the past year, the Division has initiated discussions with the Maine Judicial Branch, juvenile prosecutors and defense counsel, and representatives of the Maine Center for Youth Policy and Law regarding elimination of most of the standard conditions of juvenile probation in favor of more individualized, strength-based conditions that assist youth in achieving positive outcomes. Revising the juvenile probation form in consultation with the Annie E. Casey Foundation is one of the goals of Maine’s Juvenile Probation Transformation initiative.

- **Eliminate the mandatory required year of commitment to DOC in Maine statute and create length of stay guidelines for committed youth in both law and practice.**

In 2021, the Maine Legislature amended the Maine Juvenile Code (15 M.R.S.A. § 3316 (2)(A) by eliminating the requirement that indeterminate commitments be for a period of at least one year.

- **Create a process for regular judicial review of commitments and out-of-home placements and codify that process in Maine statute.**

The Maine Juvenile Code (15 M.R.S.A. § 3315 (3)) has long required that juvenile courts reviewed all indeterminate commitments to Long Creek Youth Development Center at least once per year to determine whether reasonable efforts have been made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the juvenile from their home. In 2021, 15 M.R.S.A. § 3317 of the Maine Juvenile Code was amended to allow the juvenile to petition the juvenile court for a review of the court’s initial disposition, including commitment to Long Creek Youth Development Center and ordering the juvenile into the custody of the Department of Health

and Human Services. As amended, § 3317 now permits the Juvenile Court to make any of the dispositions allowed by law after considering efforts made by the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Human Services to reunify the juvenile with the juvenile's parents or custodians, shall make a finding regarding those efforts and shall return custody of the juvenile to a parent or legal custodian if the return of the juvenile is not contrary to the welfare of the juvenile.

- **Explicitly define the role of JCCOs to focus on skill development and create incentives for JCCOs to engage in those efforts.**

The Division of Juvenile Services has engaged Dr. Brian Lovins, President for Justice System Partners (JSP) and President of the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) from 2021-2023, to assist the Division in implementing his “coach rather than referee” model of juvenile supervision. In May 2024, Dr. Lovins presented on his “coaching” model of supervision at the Juvenile Community Corrections Summit attended by almost all Juvenile Community Corrections staff including JCCOs, Regional Correctional Managers, Regional Correctional Administrators, Office Associates, and other leadership within the Maine Department of Corrections.

- **Develop proposed data collection and analysis improvements within DOC that provide for a quality control system that ensures the accuracy of data coding and reporting, the retention of all collected data (e.g., all risk and needs assessment scores), and more comprehensive documentation of behavioral health, medical, and educational needs and services received during detention and commitment.**

The Maine Department of Corrections is currently in the process of replacing its existing CORIS database system. Over the past year, many members of the Division of Juvenile Services who work both at Long Creek Youth Development Center and within Juvenile Community Corrections have participated in meetings to share their experiences with the existing system and their suggestions for making the new system responsive to the needs of collecting data unique to juveniles and the practices of the juvenile justice system.

- **In partnership with the Vera Institute of Justice, agree upon a plan to end the use of incarceration for girls in Maine. 20. Within DOC, create and publicly publish a 3-year workplan that outlines how the agency will respond to and implement the recommendations outline in the System Assessment.**

In December 2022, the Department of Corrections succeeded in removing all female residents from Long Creek Youth Development Center by utilizing the adjacent staff secure residence known as the “ACER” house. At that time there were 3 to 4 detained and committed females confined at Long Creek. Unfortunately, the program was not sustainable due to insufficient staffing that would allow some girls to remain at the ACER house if girls with more acute needs and high-risk behaviors required more secure housing at Long Creek. In short, there were not enough staff to safely operate two female housing units and provide the one-to-one direct supervision residents sometimes require. Consequently, the ACER program was discontinued as of June 1, 2023.

- **Secure and make available resources to support the development of community-based continuums of care, directly funding programs and services in those jurisdictions.**

As noted above, the Division of Juvenile Services provides funding for many community-based programs that help youth thrive in their home communities. See Appendix A at the end of this report for a full list of programs funded by the Division of Juvenile Services.

- **Create opportunities and options that allow law enforcement agencies to divert youth directly to programs and services.**

As mentioned above, Juvenile Community Corrections staff participate in law enforcement directed diversion in Rockland and Old Orchard Beach with plans to create “pilot” programs in each of the three DOC regions.

- **Develop and implement strategies to connect communities and police in a positive way.**

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Group has contracted with Strategies for Youth to deliver the “Policing the Teen Brain” program to law enforcement officers throughout Maine. This training will likely be offered again as JJAG resources permit.

- **Develop alternatives to detention that provide supervision without incarceration (e.g., day or evening reporting centers, intensive shelter care) in the highest referring communities. Ensure that any alternatives address the particular needs of vulnerable populations including youth of color, immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, disabled youth, and tribal youth.**

The Division of Juvenile Services and the Maine Juvenile Justice Advisory Group both provide funding to Tree Street Youth Center in Lewiston Maine to maintain an evening reporting center for justice-involved youth. Tree Street is a community-based organization that provides many services to Lewiston youth and their staff collaborate with Juvenile Community Corrections staff to meet the needs of Lewiston’s vulnerable youth.

- **Develop and formalize an official incentives-driven community supervision model, tracking its use and the outcomes associated with it.**

As a result of mandates imposed by the State Controller’s Office in 2023, state agencies are not permitted to distribute gift cards without having an articulated program approved by the Controller’s Office including an agency policy that governs the process. Throughout 2024, members of the Division of Juvenile Services worked with the Department’s Policy Development team to create a policy regarding distribution of gift cards as incentives for youth under supervision of the Division. The Department’s Gift Card Policy is near completion and will soon be submitted to the Controller’s office for approval.

- **Engage and expand the use of Youth Advocate Programs as an alternative to probation, or as a supplement to probation for youth with the highest risk factors and highest needs to avoid commitment and placement.**

As noted above, the Division of Juvenile Services has utilized and funded the Youth Advocate Program (YAP) since 2019. Even though the Second Chance Act which provided startup costs for the program has since expired, the Division continues to fund the transformative mentoring program provided by YAP. YAP mentors serve youth both in the community and at Long Creek Youth Development Center and provide crucial support to youth as they transition from Long Creek to their home communities.

- **Plan for and begin to develop options that could better address the needs of the small number of youths requiring a secure out-of-home placement because of a risk of public safety.**

The Division of Juvenile Services explored the possibility of creating a staff-secure placement for justice-involved youth on the Goodwill Hinkley campus in Hinkley, Maine. Unfortunately, efforts to establish a residence for justice-involved youth were abandoned as the result of failed contract negotiations. Two additional staff-secure residences were created in 2022, the ACER program for girls and the Unity Place program for boys, which consisted of a staff secure residence in Auburn. Both programs were eventually discontinued in 2023 due to significant staffing challenges (the Unity Place program was staffed through a contract with a non-profit organization that has residential programs for youth). Despite the best efforts of the Division and the community-based organization that provided staffing for Unity Place, staffing levels could not be maintained at a level that allowed justice-involved youth to safely remain in staff-secure residences.

- **Leverage and formalize a partnership with the Department of Labor to assist with workforce development for youth supervised in the community and youth in placement.**

As noted above, the Children's Cabinet Juvenile Justice Working Group has united representatives of the Department of Labor and Department of Corrections in collaborative efforts to connect justice-involved youth to services provided by DOL's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

- **Through the implementation of the strategies listed above, reduce the youth population at Long Creek by 50% in the next 18 months.**

Prior to completion of the Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment, 29 youths were committed to Long Creek Youth Development Center and the average daily population (ADP) of Long Creek was 53. Two years later, in 2021, 19 juveniles were committed to Long Creek and the ADP was 31. Detention admissions decreased from 277 in 2019 to 107 in 2021. Of course, the COVID 19 pandemic that began in March 2020 and continued throughout most of 2022 resulted in reduced confinement of juveniles and adults in Maine and throughout the nation. Consequently, it is impossible to determine whether policy changes, rather than the pandemic, cause reduction in Long Creek Population.

Although many states have seen juvenile confinement rates return to pre-pandemic levels, Maine continues to have fewer youth detained at or committed to Long Creek. During 2024,

18 youth were committed to Long Creek – a 28% reduction in commitments over the past five years. Reduction in the average daily population at Long Creek from 53 in 2019 to 36 in 2024 reflects a 32% drop in ADP. Although the reduction in Long Creek population over the past five years is less than 50%, significant reductions in the Long Creek population occurred even prior to completion of the System Assessment. Page 6 of the System Assessment acknowledges that between 2010 and 2019, there was a 56% reduction in the number of youths detained at Long Creek and a 68% reduction in the number of youths committed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Over the past year with leadership provided by the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, the Division of Juvenile Services has met regularly with other youth-serving state agencies committed to serving Maine’s most vulnerable youth and is engaged in several multi-agency initiatives. Partnerships with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, and the Department of Labor have never been stronger, and the coming year will see continued cross-agency collaboration. Efforts to build community capacity to respond to youth at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system are taking off in communities such as Rockland and Waterville with local collaboratives providing much needed resources for youth thereby keeping them from being involved in Maine’s juvenile justice system. Although larger more ambitious goals remain, such as integrating data sharing capacity among state agencies and expanding community based behavioral health services throughout the entire state of Maine, the Division of Juvenile Services remains committed to the goal of providing every young person the services and support they need in their community to help them grow, learn, and enter adulthood prepared for college or the workforce and building the future of Maine.

# APPENDIX A

## Community-Based Programs and Services for Juveniles Receiving Funding from the Department of Corrections in Fiscal Year 2025

Provider	Description of Services	FY25 Funding
New Beginnings	Emergency Shelter, Transitional Living Program, Master Leasing Program	\$216, 000.00
Shaw House	Emergency Shelter	\$25,000.00
Preble Street Teen Services	Independent Living & Master Leasing Program	\$218,000.00
Tree Street	Day/Evening Reporting Center & Educational Programming	\$180,000.00
Spurwink Services	Family Functional Therapy (FFT)	\$181,680.00
Kennebec Behavioral Health	Multi Systemic Therapy and Problem Sexual Behavioral (MST/MST-PSB)	\$416,201.00
Maine Behavioral Health	Multi Systemic Therapy and Problem Sexual Behavioral (MST/MST-PSB)	\$304,950.00
Carleton School	Alternative Educational Services	\$57,000.00
Opportunity Alliance	Hi-Fi Wraparound	\$350,000.00
Wings for Children and Family	Hi-Fi Wraparound	\$200,000.00
Family Functional Therapy LLC	Family Functional Therapy (FFT) Consultation Services for providers	\$1,500.00
Aroostook County Action Program	Restorative Justice	\$100,000.00
Restorative Justice Midcoast	Restorative Justice	\$225,000.00
Restorative Justice Institute of Maine	Restorative Justice	\$292,500.00
Youth LED Justice	Restorative Justice	\$375,000.00
Penquis C.A.P	Restorative Justice	\$67,500.00
Downeast Restorative Justice	Restorative Justice	\$54,000.00
Spurwink Diversion to Assets	Diversion Services	\$107,000.00
LearningWorks Service Works	Community Service Projects	\$262,200.00
Youth Advocate Programs	Transformative Mentoring and Advocacy	\$739,518.83
University of Southern Maine	Cooperative Agreement for Regional Care Teams, Evaluations and Consultations	\$165,262.00
Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services	Translating Juvenile Documentation	\$5,000.00
Spurwink Fire Safety	Fire Safety Program	\$5,000.00
Alfond Youth Community Center	Diversion, Prevention & Intervention Services	\$117,700.00
Jude David NECCD Speaker	Workshop Speaker at the New England Council on Crime & Delinquency	\$6,500.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,684,312.00</b>