

Maine Department of Corrections

Division of Juvenile Services

2021-2022 Action Plan



Randall Liberty, Commissioner

Colin O'Neill, LCSW, Associate Commissioner

Sonja Morse, M.A. Juvenile Data and Research Coordinator

DIVISION OF JUVENILE SERVICES SUMMARY

The Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC), Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) is committed to the result that all Maine youth successfully transition into adulthood. The DJS's contribution to this result is to ensure that all justice involved youth experience a fair, equitable, and responsive juvenile justice system that provides them with positive outcomes. The DJS is committed to reducing the use of institutional secure confinement by increasing the capacity and use of community based programming and supports.

On February 25th, 2020, the Center for Children Law and Policy (CCLP), the Juvenile Justice Research and Reform Lab at Drexel University, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy completed the *Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment* (the “Assessment” hereafter). This Assessment was funded by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) and advised by the Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment & Reinvestment Taskforce.

The following action plan incorporates the recommendations outlined in the Assessment, stakeholder concerns, advocate concerns, and the concerns of those impacted by juvenile services. This plan outlines steps taken to improve outcomes for justice involved youth.

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

MDOC and the DJS is committed to reducing the use of institutional secure confinement by increasing the capacity and use of community-based programming and supports. Over the last five years, the DJS has significantly reduced the use of secure confinement by strategically investing in community-based programming for justice involved youth.



*Average LOS or Length of Stay, in days, for all youth committed.

Accordingly, the action plan identifies three priority areas that will lead the broad work of the DJS over the next two-years (2021-2022).

- 1. Reduce Institutional Secure Confinement**
- 2. Expansion of Community-based programs and Initiatives**
- 3. Cross-system collaborations**

The steps outlined in this document represent a first phase of a multi-year effort to develop community-based services and reduce reliance on secure confinement for justice-involved youth in Maine.

Prior to beginning the second phase the DJS will review detained and committed population levels at Long Creek Youth Development Center through the end of 2021, taking into consideration factors of COVID-19 vaccines, school re-openings and re-opening of other activities for youth outside the home. This review will enable DJS to make any necessary adjustments and develop the next phase of the plan.

Through the multi-year efforts DJS will continue to assess the impact of programs and services and the potential need for additional services, particularly in the central and northern part of the state. DJS will continue to work with the Office of Child and Family Services and other state agencies to develop and enhance behavioral health and community-based services, which will further contribute to reducing the number of youth at LCYDC and their length of stay. DJS will remain committed to the ongoing process of reducing the state's reliance on secure confinement and develop appropriate programs and services for as many youth as possible in the community, through collaborative means.

The CCLP Assessment outlines detailed narrative on the identified goals below. Each goal has the page number where the corresponding narrative can be found and/or the page number and recommendation number. To find the Assessment visit:

<https://www.maine.gov/corrections/juvenile-services/juvenile-reports-data>

Priority Area 1: Further Reduce Institutional Secure Confinement

1

Goal 1: Identify and develop community residences for youth transitioning out of Long Creek Youth Developmental Center (LCYDC), by using LCYDC staff and all other resources.

Goal 2: Repurpose identified vacant LCYDC positions to fund community-based programs.

DJS will redeploy a contingency of staff and resources from LCYDC into the implementation and staffing of community residences designed to provide a normative experience for youth in need of services. These community residences will further reduce the reliance on institutional secure confinement.

GOAL	DETAILS
Corresponding CCLP Recommendation: Page 6, 7, 16, & 52	
Create a community residence for boys (Bearings House) transitioning out of LCYDC.	Associated Cost from LCYDC all other and personnel budget: \$2,263,669.00
	Staffing: 18.75
	Timeline: 3-6 Months.
Corresponding CCLP Recommendation: Page 6, 7, 16, & 52	
Create a community residence for girls (STEPS Program) transitioning out of LCYDC.	Associated Cost from LCYDC all other and personnel budget: \$2,210,462.00
	Staffing: 17.75
	Timeline: STEPS Program—Completed.
Corresponding CCLP Recommendation: Page 126, Fiscal Recommendation 6	
Reallocate 14 vacant positions at LCYDC to all other funds for contracted community-based programming and repurpose an additional 2 vacant positions to Restorative Practice Coordinators (1 for Department of Education and 1 for MDOC). Contracted Community Programming to include, but not limited to*;	Allocation all other: \$1, 262, 798.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional Housing/Shelter • Independent Living Programs • Attendant Care • Rental Assistance/Vouchers 	Repurposed positions: \$189, 576.00
	Total \$1, 452, 374.00
	Timeline: 6-9 months.

- Racial and Ethnic Disparities Training/Programming
- Youth Advocate Programs
- Restorative Justice Practices/Training
- Transformative Mentoring

* To be data-driven by Regional Care Teams and subject matter experts.

Corresponding CCLP Recommendation: Page 68, Recommendation 11

<p>DOC will create a separate Juvenile Certification/Training Curriculum for staff working in secure confinement and community residences, to be used at the Criminal Justice Academy. The enhanced trainings will include (but not limited to);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent Brain Development • Adolescent Trauma • Mental Health/Substance Use • Motivational Interviewing • Working with youth in non-secure settings • LGBTQ/GNC Youth • Restorative Justice • Suicide Prevention 	
---	--

Anticipated Impact & Indented Outcomes

Success will be measured by:

- Further reduction in population in secure confinement at LCYDC
- Identification of funding streams for community-based residences
- Increase funding for housing
- Improved diversion
- Reduced use of detention for “care”
- Increased number of youth served in community
- Ability to focus community-based services to youth of color, LGBTQ/GNC, female

The proposed goals in Priority Area 1 will aid in the overall reduction of funding at LCYDC and will reallocate funding into community-based programming. The estimated reallocation and elimination of the vacant positions at LCYDC to serve community residences and increase community programming by approximately **\$6,000,000 and reducing the LCYDC fiscal cost to approximately **\$12,000,000**.**

2 Priority Area 2: Expansion of Community-Based Programs and Initiatives

Goal 1: Provide evidenced-based, gender-responsive, community programs to front-end youth, high-risk youth, youth of color, and female youth. The community programs will aid in the reduction of recidivism and divert all youth at a higher rate.

MDOC seeks to expand Youth Advocate Program's, Credible Messengers Programming, Restorative Justice Capacity, and community alternatives. Additionally, MDOC seeks to expand *Change Companies* interactive journaling curriculum to improve positive youth outcomes of youth on probation and developing a Diversion Team in the Lewiston/Auburn area to increase diversion of youth of color.

GOALS

Corresponding CCLP Recommendation: Page 9-13, 52-53, 79 Recommendation 3 &7, 90 Recommendation 2, 111 Recommendation 1, 126 Fiscal Recommendation 5 & 7.

Expand Youth Advocate Program by securing funds for front-end youth and hiring additional advocates.

Expand Credible Messengers Programming by securing state and/or federal funds for Region 1 and Region 3.

Expand Change Companies Programming to Region 1 and Region 2. *

Anticipated Impact & Indented Outcomes

Success will be measured by:

- Reduction of use of secure confinement
- More youth receiving services in community
- Increase of community-based alternatives for youth of color, LGBTQ/GNC youth, and female youth.
- Seek applicable solicitations
- Implementation of awarded funds

*The *Change Companies*® is an evidenced based program which uses Interactive Journaling, Motivational interviewing, Transtheoretical Model of Change, Structured Expressive Writing, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to improve thoughts and behaviors of the participants.¹ Interactive Journaling is a method of behavior change through a structured writing process.

**Youth Advocate
Programs has
served 28 youth
from 2019-2021.**

**100% of youth who
completed *The Change
Companies*® journals
showed positive
improvement in
knowledge, skills, and
attitudes.**

3 Priority Area 3: Cross-System Collaborations

Goal 1: Continued utilization of Regional Care Teams (RCT) and increase the use of the RCT's to provide data-driven decisions to determine local and regional needs of justice involved youth.

Goal 2: Partner with child-serving agencies on shared goals and programs.

MDOC will partner with agencies in Maine to increase capacity for restorative justice programming for justice involved youth and to expand substance use treatment to rural youth, and collaboratively work to create a process for integrating data systems across child-serving agencies.

GOALS

Corresponding CCLP Recommendation: Page 9, Page 51, Recommendation 3 & Page 127, Recommendations 1

Scale up and expand Regional Care Teams role in identifying, developing, and overseeing local treatment programming for local justice involved youth.

Partner with Department of Education to build capacity for restorative practices in schools.

Partner with Office of Child and Family Services to expand substance use services and treatment to rural youth.

Work collaboratively with child-service agencies to monitor cross-system youth and increase data sharing when possible.

Increase public access to juvenile data.

Anticipated Impact & Indented Outcomes

Success will be measured by:

- Development of a Restorative Justice Position (s)
- Schools developing Restorative Practice Programs
- Reduction of secure confinement
- Increase of Community Alternatives
- Public and Provider Satisfaction
- Seek opportunities to increase substance use assessments and treatments, especially in underserved and rural communities
- Development of Data Sharing Agreement

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

Over the next two years, MDOC and DJS administrators will be responsible for ensuring their staff's work and focus falls within these priority areas and seek to accomplish the goals outlined above. It is expected that new resources, as well as current work in the DJS will be dedicated to these priority areas and objectives. The monitoring of success and enhancement will be an ongoing effort throughout the course of this action plan, and subsequent next phases, an effort that will be guided by current contracted subject matter experts, current contracted data analysts, and DJS Administrative team.

To find ongoing monthly, quarterly, and yearly DJS reports, visit:

<https://www.maine.gov/corrections/juvenile-services>