



The Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council provides statewide leadership and advocacy to improve the juvenile justice system, prevent delinquency, ensure equal justice and accountability for all youth while maximizing community safety.

JJDP Council Meeting Minutes February 21, 2025/ 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Location: Hybrid - In Person or Zoom
690 Kipling St., Lakewood, CO 80215 /1st Floor Training Room
Call in information on Calendar Invite

Attendees:

Members: Jamin Alabiso, Rebekah Arnold, Brian Bumbarger, Lindsay Edwards, Al Estrada, Kelly Friesen, Rebecca Gleason, Will Hayes, Katie Hecker, Elizabeth Higgs, Kira Jukes, Claire Polini, Paula Ramaekers, Kyle Ragland, Daniel Sampson, Effie Seibold, Thomas Steele, Vashati Trujillo

Staff: Kelly Abbott, Kate Ferebee, Hanna Gootée, Tom Harbaugh, Gianina Horton, Audrey Nunez

Quorum Established: 9:15AM

Director's / DCJ Report

Matthew Lunn

Director Lunn discussed the uncertainties regarding the possible upcoming government shutdown. He acknowledged that it is not uncommon to change direction of the focus. With DCJ having 40% of their employees that work from a salary that is covered by Federal dollars he will continue to be as transparent as possible with them, and with key stakeholders like the JJDP Council members. He hopes to continue to collaborate in finding ways to look for solutions and diversify our avenues for achieving success and said this will only make us stronger in the future.

Kyle shared his appreciation for Dr. Lunn having these difficult discussions.

Subcommittee Reports

Emerging Leaders

Rebekah Arnold

Bekah shared compensation and larger vision of ways that Council members can improve their partnerships with young people. Bekah shared the national Emerging Leaders Committee's plan that they had been presented at the CCJJ Conference in Washington, DC. They recommended doing a mentor system with the Council members and the members of the Emerging Leaders. Bekah provided an example of how the mentorship would work by describing a scenario where the Emerging Leader needed help understanding an acronym or a topic being discussed at the full Council meeting. The mentor, being a more experienced Council member, can help decide how to best respond by providing a quick overview of what's being talked about, or asking to pause the conversation seeking background from the larger group.

Other opportunities for mentorship would be outside of meetings (e.g., preparation about what to expect prior to Council meetings, and debriefing after) Bekah will be working on a template and will send it out to the Council as soon as possible.

Bekah also proposed a new Council meeting time. She noted that some SAGs meet monthly on weekday afternoons from 4:30 – 6:00pm. This idea might increase youth engagement, as they may pay better attention for 2 hours rather than 8 hours and it would be after traditional work and school hours. A discussion ensued where Council members expressed concerns about monthly meetings being difficult and expensive for Council members who have to travel to the meetings, as well as those who might not be able to attend as often as they'd like due to their schedules. Kelly thanked Bekah for

starting the conversation and planting the seed.

Diversion Subcommittee

Brian Bumbarger

In the most recent 3 Year Plan, a priority was added around juvenile diversion, and that led to the creation of a juvenile diversion subcommittee. Hanna was hired as a diversion coordinator for the State for the first time. A goal in the subcommittee prioritizes the elevation in success, utilization, and awareness of diversion programs across Colorado, and the objective is to expand the sharing of best practices, training and resources for diversion programs while elevating awareness of diversion among key decision makers. Hanna is talking to all the diversion coordinators and diversion directors around the State, and learning a little bit more about what kind of programming they're offering, what kind of target populations they envision or are offering diversion to whether they're reaching their target populations, and really how they measure, how they identify, and the degree to which they are achieving their goals. Diversion is handled differently among programs across the state.

Children's Code Subcommittee

Rebecca Gleason

The subcommittee is going through the code line by line and has hit the halfway point at the time of this Council meeting. They are working to replace the word "juvenile" with "youth," because of the negative associations with the term, "juvenile." Rebecca noted that it cannot be changed everywhere because it is defined in law at times. The subcommittee is looking for experts on restorative justice, and dependency and neglect. Anyone interested in helping the subcommittee can contact Kelly Abbott.

CRRED

Gianina Horton/Charles Gillford

The Coalition to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities (CRRED) recently conducted a Colorado Youth Forum for the first time ever. It gave an opportunity to hear from juvenile justice practitioners, advocates and community members about what's happening with the youth justice system. Where do we go from here? Jack from the Division of Criminal Justice's Office of Research and Statistics presented recent data on youth crimes, violence, victimization, etc. and attendees were given time to discuss the challenges that they face in their roles and their capacities. Some expressed the need to abolish punitive practices and others discussed how we reform the system. It was powerful to be in a place with people from various outlets and perspectives around the juvenile justice system.

Daniel added that there was a significant amount of representation from the community and some government entities. In the future, they'd like to expand it and develop true action items for the CRRED, and to grow the coalition to really activate services and bring in resources or support to certain legislation in the future.

YISS

Kelly Abbott

During the last subcommittee meeting a presentation was given by El Paso County around DHS intakes and how they make referrals. Sarah Troy, the executive director of the Juvenile Assessment Center in the 18th and 23rd judicial districts talked about their community-based program and the services that they are currently providing for that population that the subcommittee wants to focus on: Those kids who had DHS referrals but didn't reach the level of intervention. They are the ones that could utilize additional resources for themselves or their families.

Chair Report Ramaekers

Paula

Paula re-welcomed Hanna Gootee to the JJDP Council as the new Juvenile Diversion Coordinator for the Division of Criminal Justice. She also welcomed Tom Harbaugh, a former member of the Council and the newly hired JJDP Council Liaison for DCJ. Paula opened a conversation regarding November's minutes. A few council members had concerns about who was in attendance and asked for a revised copy to be sent. Once the council reviewed the revised copy of minutes it was accepted.

Brian Bumbarger moved to accept November Minutes and Rebecca Gleason seconded. Motion carried unopposed.

JJDP Council 101 Abbott

Kelly

Kelly shared a presentation on how history has shaped the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Council. She shared the three-year plan for Colorado juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. The Council provides statewide leadership and advocacy to improve the juvenile justice system, prevent delinquency, and ensure equitable justice and accountability for all youth while maximizing community safety. In addition, the Council assists Colorado's juvenile systems through intervening on behalf of children in the juvenile legal system, monitoring the conditions of juvenile services, and coordinating resources to affect changes in the social environment so as to empower youth to be productive members of society.

Kelly also discussed her role of Juvenile Justice Specialist for the State, which includes building relationships with the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes. Kelly has a trip planned that will open doors for collaboration. Vashti and others shared their excitement for the future of the relationship.

CJJ Membership Dues/Updates

Kelly Abbott

Membership to the Coalition for Juvenile Justice provides JJDP Council members access to training, workshops and discounts on conferences. The cost to renew membership is \$6,000. Jamin started a discussion by praising the membership. He has attended a few conferences and stated that it was an amazing experience.

Kyle Ragland moved to renew the membership. Rebecca Gleason seconded. Motion carried without opposition.

Celebrations

Paula Ramaekers/Brian Bumbarger/Kelly Abbott

Kelly shared recognition to Al Estrada, who is retiring from the Division of Youth Services. This is his last Council meeting. Al stated that it has been an honor to be part of the Council and has enjoyed being able to contribute to something positive. He said retiring is bittersweet especially after working with kids for over 40 years in some fashion. Many members of the Council shared their gratitude and memories of the friendship and collaboration. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council wishes Al all the best in his next journey.

New members of the Council were also welcomed and recognized.

OJJDP/ Legislative Updates

Kelly Abbott

Kelly shared some of the uncertainty that the Federal government is facing at this time but stated the Department of Public Safety is working hard to make sure that the victims' programs are not feeling the impact. OJJDP has been very transparent and has asked for patience as they are working on their side to keep up with funding and staff shortages. OJJDP announced that they are going to hold grantees to the February 28th deadline for Racial and Ethnic Disparities data submission. DCJ will watch for the 2025 grant solicitation, which is usually out in early March.

Senate Bill 25-43: Youth Deflection and Community Investment Grant. This bill will focus on youth prior to coming into the system. It is designed to get preventative services in place at schools and with law enforcement where they can refer to youth instead of pulling them into the legal system with a ticket and/or summons. DCJ has proceeded to put forth a decision item with the Governor's office asking to refund the Delinquency Prevention program to leave room for the deflection bill. The goal is to combine both efforts into one bill.

Kira started a discussion that the bills do not currently have where local government could apply for the grants, and that would exclude some of the existing assessment centers who are already running community assessment programming and who are currently really aligned to this work. That might be a missed opportunity for some of those communities. Kelly contributed stating that the YISS subcommittee shared a presentation talking about their community-based programs and some of the work that they're doing with youth referred to human services that don't rise to that level of intervention but are getting referred over to the assessment center for assessment and connection to resources.

Juvenile Diversion Application

Kate Ferebee

Kate called for volunteers for the annual juvenile diversion application review. Juvenile Diversion funding is distributed to all judicial districts via a formula allocation. District Attorneys have an opportunity to accept, waive, or decline the funding. While not a competitive grant, the state still needs a mechanism to collect all the information about the program and how they are going to utilize the funding. Once they submit their applications the committee will review and submit the applications to DCJ's director Matt Lunn, to contract those agencies for the July 1 start date.

At the moment we do not have a specific date to start reviewing the applications. Once the start date is established Kate will reach out to those who are interested in assisting. Cheryl volunteered to help. For next year's cycle of applications DCJ will be coming to the board about what changes to the questions they would recommend and assisting in a possible revamping of the review process in a more formal group so the council can all participate.

Juvenile Diversion

Hanna Gootee

Hanna has been meeting with all the Juvenile Diversion programs that use state allocation money to get a better understanding of what they are doing, where their needs are, how their programs run and their past relationship with the state. After meeting with 26 programs, one of the trends Hanna has found is the perception of lack of trust and transparency. As the diversion coordinator Hanna will work on building relationships with diversion directors, letting them know that they can rely on the State for questions and accurate information. The other feedback that Hanna received centered on funding and resource allocation; in particular, how funding is decided and allocation. Hanna will work to break down the process in a way that helps everyone understand.

The programs would also like to collaborate more with each other, especially in the rural districts, where it is difficult find resources. To help programs interpret the data they collect so that they can articulate the needs of their program, Hanna has been working with Diane Fox from Infinite Frontier. Infinite Frontier is the contracted evaluator for diversion. They plan to meet with programs to discuss their data compares statewide and help them leverage their program in a better way. Hanna and the program directors will continue to brainstorm different trainings (e.g., motivation interviewing) that they can host in person with possible funding assistance from DCJ.

The 2025 Diversion Goals are to strengthen juvenile diversion programs by improving trust, transparency and collaboration among stakeholders while securing sustainable funding and resources. Especially for underserved and rural areas, Hanna aims to enhance program flexibility, support ongoing staff training and implement data-driven evaluations to ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness. Ultimately, by increasing community involvement and fostering innovation, DCJ hopes to create a more equitable and impactful system that meets the diverse needs of youth and reduces recidivism.

Three Year Plan

Kelly Abbott

Kelly asked the Council if they would like to make any changes to the three-year plan now that the subcommittees have begun and a lot of progress has happened on the diversion side. Brian suggested adding in a deflection piece. Kelly will reach out to him in the near future to start to formulate that. Daniel and Kelly have started a conversation for an education subcommittee and will continue to work towards the goals set forth in the plan.

Jamin brought up the overlap of education and delinquency, the number of youths that are seen in courtrooms every single day with a disability, whether physical or educational. Those can be two very different things. There is an unrecognizable gap in identifying those individual needs. Ellie and other emerging leaders have been working towards this important issue. Ellie has done a lot of work in designing an assessment tool or screening to look for learning disabilities. It may be working pursuing this in the three-year plan and using some of the Council's money for a consultant if the rest of the Council agrees.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 14:31.