



Juvenile Justice
Advisory Group

Annual Report 2025

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New York State Juvenile Justice Advisory Group 2025

Annual Report

The U.S. Congress requires the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) to report to the Governor and Legislature annually. This report fulfills that requirement for 2025.

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I. Introduction and Background

The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) created the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to support state and local delinquency prevention efforts and juvenile justice system improvement, establish grant programs, and outline federal standards, known as core protections, for the care and custody of justice-involved youth.

Reauthorization of the JJDP in 2018 updated the core protections, restructured the prevention components of the law, expanded OJJDP research and evaluation purposes, and increased reporting requirements and accountability. These changes took effect Oct. 1, 2019, the beginning of the federal fiscal year.

New York State Executive Order 80 established the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) as the required state advisory group for overseeing the development and implementation of the state plan, supervising the distribution of federal delinquency prevention funds and monitoring compliance with federal juvenile justice mandates. Board members, appointed by the Governor, represent a wide range of juvenile justice stakeholders, including criminal justice, human services, court and research professionals, advocates, formerly justice-involved youth, community members and others.

The Executive Order also designates the state Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) as the agency that supervises the preparation of the state's juvenile justice plan, administers the plan, and manages federal delinquency prevention funding allocated to New York. The DCJS Office of Youth Justice (OYJ) provides administrative support to the JJAG and oversees the implementation and monitoring of contracts on behalf of the advisory group.

The JJAG annually oversees allocation of approximately \$2.1 million in federal grants, which fund delinquency prevention efforts, effective interventions for justice-involved youth, and improvements to youth justice systems. In addition, the JJAG monitors the state's compliance with the four core requirements of the federal law:

- Sight and sound separation of juvenile delinquents from adult offenders.
- Deinstitutionalization of status offenders.
- Removal of juvenile delinquents from adult jails and lockups.
- Reducing disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system.

II. Federal Mandates: Compliance and Monitoring

States receiving federal Title II formula grant funding must comply with those four core protections. DCJS contracts with the state Commission of Correction (SCOC) to monitor and ensure compliance with the following requirements, which are related to permissible methods of confinement for youth.

- **Deinstitutionalization of status offenders** prohibits placing a youth who has been determined to be a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) in secure detention

or correctional facilities.

- **Separation of juveniles from adult offenders** requires that juveniles who are alleged or found to have been delinquent and/or designated as a PINS must not have any contact with adult inmates awaiting trial or convicted of a crime.
- **Removal of juveniles from adult jails and lockups** prohibits using adult jails and lockups to confine juveniles for any length of time.

SCOC has statutory authority to monitor police lockups, local county correctional facilities and state prisons. Existing New York State laws meet or exceed federally mandated requirements for the custody and detention of status offenders and non-offenders; separation of juveniles from adult offenders; and removal of juveniles from adult jails and lockups. As a result, facilities statewide either meet or exceed federal requirements by complying with state law.

SCOC maintains a monitoring schedule to ensure all adult jails, lockups, and secure facilities for juveniles are inspected at least every three years. These facilities must report certain incidents to SCOC, which reviews them and acts as deemed appropriate. The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) are responsible for operating juvenile facilities throughout the state. SCOC and DCJS have agreements in place permitting onsite inspections and reviews of records in all juvenile facilities throughout the state to ensure they comply with federal standards.

New York's strategy for reducing racial and ethnic disparities (R.E.D.) in the youth justice system includes a state-level compliance management effort; support of local reforms; implementation of best practices that are designed to reduce disproportionate minority contact; and technical assistance to local government and nonprofit organizations. Title II funds partially support a full-time, statewide race equity coordinator at DCJS to monitor and improve the reporting of race and ethnicity-related data; identify and provide guidance on implementing best practices; and provide technical assistance and training on racial and ethnic disparities for local and state-level stakeholders.

The Race Equity Coordinator is responsible for monitoring compliance with strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system across the state, using a data-driven process to promote an overall equity initiative that supports training, programming, and changing policy and practice. This includes working with state and local entities to enhance the quality and quantity of data measuring disproportionality, collaborating with localities to investigate root causes of disparity when disproportionality is found and implementing strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities and increase equity.

To accomplish this work, the race equity coordinator provides training and technical assistance to local and statewide partners, helping to identify policies and practices that may contribute to disparate treatment of youth of color. Training includes both the historical perspective of race equity and the impact implicit bias has on decision making and everyday practice. In 2025, the coordinator:

- Partnered with the DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, which offers the Fundamentals of Probation Practice training for new probation officers, and trained those individuals about racial and ethnic disparities and the mind science of implicit bias, racial anxiety, and stereotype threat.
- Presented on racial and ethnic disparities at local and national conferences, including the NYS SNUG Annual Conference and the second annual “Lifting, Climbing, and Thriving Conference” hosted by the Black, Indigenous, Latinx and People of Color (BILPOC) Faculty Advancement Initiative at the University at Albany.

III. Juvenile Justice Advisory Group Activities

In 2025, the JJAG convened four quarterly meetings in March, April, October and December, which were focused on implementing its Strategic Plan.

A. Three-Year Plan for Juvenile Justice (2024 - 2026)

Federal law requires states to develop three-year plans outlining long-range strategies for use of Title II Formula funds. During interim years, states submit annual applications that update accomplishments, provide juvenile justice data and demonstrate compliance with the federal law’s core protections. The JJAG approved its three-year strategic plan for years 2024 - 2026 and began implementation of its new priority areas. To implement strategies in a sustainable and cost-effective manner, the JJAG will use a three-category designation for funding investments, *small*, *medium*, and *large*. This includes funding for:

Transformative Youth Justice Hubs: Creation of four Transformative Youth Justice Hubs designed to coordinate and sustain partnerships and cross-pollinate prevention efforts and best practices at the local level.

Youth, Family, and Community Toward Success (YFACTS) Center: Development and support of data infrastructure, in collaborative communities, for the creation of standardized metrics of youth success and system equity.

Direct Service Programming: Invest in direct youth-serving programming that strengthens promising strategies and addresses racial and ethnic disparities, while advancing prevention efforts for youth and young adults with a focus on adolescent development. Funding will be directed toward programming that increases meaningful youth, family, and community engagement, while increasing access to trauma, healing and behavioral supports.

Race Equity Work

The race equity coordinator developed the state’s three-year plan to advance racial equity. As part of the data-driven, outcome-oriented plan, New York State will work to increase equity for Black youth by 5 percent, as evidenced by an increase in the use of prevention programs and a decrease in the number of Black youth arrested and referred to court. New

York State has utilized the data from the preceding two years to identify this target.

To achieve this goal, the state also identified the following youth justice policy and programming priorities for the next few years, all of which lay the foundation for New York State's R.E.D. plan for 2024- 2026:

- Continued enhancement of data capacity, collection, and analysis to target interventions and measure outcomes.
- The re-engagement and development of New York State R.E.D. Advisory Committee priorities aimed at providing guidance for best practices on R.E.D reduction strategies.
- Yearly conference convening for youth justice practitioners, community members, youth and families centered around advancing equity and promoting healing centered engagement.
- Assessment of New York City data by borough to identify areas for targeted reduction efforts.
- Provision of training and technical assistance for state and local youth justice systems and stakeholders.
- Monitor the implementation of systems change through an equity lens to ensure that all youth benefit from reform efforts regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.

Race Equity Trainings & Technical Assistance

In May 2025, OYJ staff delivered a train-the-trainer course in implicit bias and race equity to 18 new trainers across the state as part of the Fundamentals of Probation Practice training offered by the Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA). OYJ staff presented effective equity-driven community-based prevention and intervention strategies at the 2025 Annual SNUG Conference held in November.

The Statewide Race Equity Coordinator provides ongoing technical assistance to local government and community-based organizations and supports counterparts in other states as they address racial and ethnic disparities within their jurisdictions. OYJ staff participated in the second annual "Lifting, Climbing, and Thriving Conference" hosted by the Black, Indigenous, Latinx and People of Color (BILPOC) Faculty Advancement Initiative at the University at Albany. The session was attended by approximately 75 individuals.

Establishment of Youth Advisory Committee

The direct impact that juvenile justice programs and policies have on the youth population gives rise to informed initiatives and planning. The youth, families, and communities with involvement in the systems provide a unique perspective on program needs and outcomes. Recognizing the power of youth voice, , the JJAG approved funding at its quarterly meeting in June 2024 to partner with a community-based non-profit to assist in establishing a Youth Action Committee. The Youth Action Committee will act as an entirely youth-led, decision-making subcommittee that will offer recommendations to the JJAG. Grant funds will compensate youth JJAG members for

their participation in meetings, related projects, and professional development. This funding opportunity will be included in a Youth Development RFA to be released in early 2026.

2025 Youth Justice Conference

The 2025 Youth Justice Conference took place on May 14-15, 2025 at the Hilton Hotel-Albany. The theme of this year's conference was “elevating youth voices.” This two-day conference convened youth service providers and practitioners, credible messengers, mentors, and peer advocates; law enforcement, probation, education, child welfare and court professionals; and youth and families. Building upon the work begun last year, the conference explored national research and best practices, innovative programs, and leading practices across the state. The goal was two-fold: (1) to continue discovering ways to collectively amplify the voices of youth and families, which is critical to the advancement of programs and services for justice-involved youth, and (2) broadening access to prevention opportunities that address health, education and social well-being for all youth.

The conference welcomed over 400 registered attendees, who heard from 83 speakers through two plenary and 30 workshop sessions that addressed topics such as: elevating youth voice, credible messaging, leveraging data to promote change, workforce development, mentoring, growth mindset, restorative practices, positive youth and law enforcement relationships, and youth reentry.

Feedback from conference attendees was overwhelmingly positive for the second year in a row. Survey participants commented that they felt the conference was well-organized and provided needed information for their work moving forward.

Transformative Youth Justice Hubs

In June 2024, the JJAG approved funding to establish four Transformative Youth Justice Hubs designed to coordinate/sustain partnerships and cross-pollinate prevention efforts and best practices at the community level. Two urban and two rural hubs will operate as partnerships to coordinate and provide support to youth and families at prevention and re-entry points. Each partnership will be diverse and may include, for example, faith-based organizations, parent-focused/lead organizations, youth service organizations (e.g., community-based organizations), schools, courts, law enforcement, mental health serving organizations, and government entities. Each hub will maintain a lead fiscal partner and coordinating partner, and a board with co-chairs of different backgrounds. Their partnerships will provide prevention support services that center youth well-being domains (i.e., physical health, mental and behavioral health, family, community, economic stability, and education) with a specific priority towards adolescent aged youth.

Hubs will be closely connected to the New York State Youth Justice Institute (YJI), which will provide oversight and support through its new Youth, Family, and Community Toward Success (YFACTS) Data Center.

Activities of the Hubs could include the following:

- Build relationships with youth, adults, and families.
- Issue guidance and resources relevant to youth justice.
- Use trauma-informed, healing-centered, and violence reduction methods to decrease incidents of harmful behavior.
- Increase participation in vocational and educational programming.
- Encourage participation in mental health and well-being programs.
- Establish relationships with law enforcement agencies and the court system to support diversion services.
- Improve the socio-emotional and behavioral response of youth in the community.
- Foster peer-to-peer and traditional mentoring activities and programs.
- Envision, create, and implement innovative learning community of best practices and resources in collaboration with the YFACTS Center.

In 2025, the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), released a Request for Application (RFA) to establish four Hubs. The response was overwhelming with a total of 26 applicants: 21 urban and 5 rural. The following organizations were awarded to implement Hubs across New York State:

- Long Island University: serving high level communities of Bushwick, Williamsburg, East New York, Ridgewood, Elmhurst and Corona.
- Community Connections for Youth, Inc.: serving the Harlem and South Bronx communities.
- Wayne County Action Program doing business as the Finger Lakes Community Action (FLCA): serving Wayne County and the surrounding counties of Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca, Yates, Livingston, and Orleans.
- The Research Foundation for the State University of New York, implemented by Binghamton University Community Schools (BUCS): serving the Windsor, Whitney Point, Maine-Endwell, and Harpursville of Broome County.

A kick-off event is scheduled for the beginning of 2026 with the first phase of the project to begin in the first quarter of the year.

Youth, Family, and Community Toward Success (YFACTS) Data Center

In 2024, the JJAG authorized funding to establish the new Youth, Family and Community Toward Success (YFACTS) Data Center (the “Center”) in conjunction with YJI. The Center will coordinate the measurement, gathering, and dissemination of youth justice data (qualitative and quantitative) on prevention services, efforts, and impact, especially in the communities served by the newly established Transformative Youth Justice Hubs. The Center’s long-term work is organized around two functions:

1. Data Measurement, Gathering, and Dissemination with and for the Hubs

This includes developing common measures through participatory processes, field testing

and piloting tools, and supporting implementation. The Center will offer training and technical assistance to help Hubs build systems for monitoring inputs, outputs, and outcomes, and will help connect Hubs with local researchers to strengthen long-term, data-informed practice. One of the first activities toward this function is to administer a Data Capacity Assessment to the awarded Hubs to identify their unique strengths and needs (see more information on that later in this report).

2. Sharing Data on Prevention and Progress to Inform Statewide Policy

The Center will support efforts to compile and share prevention strategies and progress across the Hubs, highlighting common efforts and emerging needs to inform policy and practice aimed at reducing disparities and strengthening prevention.

Since the project launched, YJI staff have been engaged in a range of foundational and planning activities to establish the Center. These activities have included hiring staff, creating and obtaining approval for a Y-FACTS logo and branding kit, engaging with University personnel on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and procedures that will inform the Center, and beginning to review and compile resources and tools that will be part of the Center’s resource bank for the Hubs and for broader statewide use. Planning and timelines for supporting the Hubs and for other statewide collaborations are in progress.

The Center has also invested in a dedicated microsite (currently in development by a contractor) and identified a series of potential data literacy training topics that will be the focus of its quarterly data literacy trainings to prepare for full engagement with the Hubs. The first training will focus on Data Visualization strategies and will be offered by Stephanie Evergreen in March 2026. A contract with that vendor was also put in place in 2025.

In Fall 2025, in anticipation of the Hubs award announcements, the Center began a Data Capacity Assessment project that will be launched with the JJAG Round 1 Mini-Grantees in early 2026. Results from the Data Capacity Assessment will help inform the broader landscape of Y-FACTS offerings to support data literacy across youth-serving organizations in New York State, including the Hubs once activated. All aspects of this work will continue into 2026 with a focus on providing support to the Hubs during their Planning Phase, which is expected to last approximately six months following activation of the Hubs.

Mini-Grants

In 2024 the JJAG approved funding for 15 mini grants to grassroots and community-based organizations for direct service programming that aligned with one or more of the priority areas of the 2024-25 JJAG Strategic Plan. The programming period ran from November 1, 2024 – October 31, 2025. The selected programs represented a broad geographic area of New York State and are listed below:

Organization	Location
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Westchester	Westchester

Organization	Location
Bravehearts MOVE, Inc.	Westchester
Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)	Harlem
Community Mediation Services	Queens
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County	Jefferson and Lewis County
Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition	Buffalo
Global Kids	Brooklyn
Good Shepherd Services	Brooklyn
Infinity Visual and Performing Arts	Jamestown
Integrated Community Alternatives Network (ICAN)	Utica
Justice Innovation Inc, dba Center for Justice Innovation	Syracuse
Peekskill City School District	Westchester
RiseBoro Community Partnerships, Inc.	Brooklyn
Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship, Inc.	Buffalo
The Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services	Staten Island

Following the award notices, one selected organization, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, decided not to proceed with the grant due. However, the rest of the organizations successfully completed programming using these grant funds.

The programming offered through these grant funds was diverse and expansive. Programs included mentorship, restorative circles, clinical mental health services, afterschool and summer programming, social emotional learning, family engagement, visual and performing arts, credible messengers, activism, and youth led leadership initiatives, among others.

Through quarterly reports submitted by the organizations and site visits, OYJ was able to monitor the success of these programs and their impact on the community. Some of the programming that OYJ was able to observe during the site visits included:

- A restorative circle of youth in a facility completing a learning module about positive relationships/friendships as part of a five-week curriculum on social-emotional learning with the Hillbrook Restorative Response Project
- Credible messengers working with a youth cohort to create activism projects on social justice topics of their choosing that they would later present in the community at RiseBoro Community Partnerships
- A group of social workers matching mentor volunteers with mentees based on their needs at Big Brothers Big Sisters Westchester
- Youth participating in sports programming as part of a focused individual training prevention model with ICAN

Following the success of this round of mini grants, in December 2025, JJAG pledged its support for an additional round of funding to expand the work of the mini-grants into 2026. Additionally, DCJS be releasing an RFA in the new year for Youth Development Opportunities, which includes an award category for additional, expanded mini grants opportunities. It is anticipated that approximately \$1,000,000 will be made available to award additional mini grants for up to \$75,000 each.

The JJAG approved the following grant awards in 2025:

PROJECTS	AWARD
Mini-Grants Expansion	\$750,000
Youth Development Opportunities	\$1,250,000