

Memorandum

**To: Senators Kitchel, Perchlik, and Westman
Representatives Lanpher, Scheu, and Wood**
From: Community Justice Centers funded by the Vermont Department of Corrections
Date: April 29, 2024
Re: FY 2025 Budget Request

In FY 2024, the Community Justice Centers (CJCs) received **\$3,547,311** in grants from the Department of Corrections for ongoing programming and staffing, which included long-overdue COLA increases. Although DOC used some one-time funds to pay for the COLA increases and other ongoing staffing and programming expenses, **the full \$3,547,311 was for ongoing base staffing and services** – not for any new one-time staffing or services.

In FY 2025, DOC only budgeted \$2,961,000 (a **\$586,311 cut**) for CJCs for staffing and services. Ironically, this deficit comes at a time when there were countless hours of testimony this session about the need to expand restorative justice services in Vermont, with high praise for the valuable and cost-saving services provided by CJCs – noting the reliance on CJCs in the coming year to help reduce the court backlog and prosecutor and defense caseloads.

This deficit will result in staffing and programming cuts at CJCs beginning in July, resulting in greater court backlog, caseloads, and criminal justice expenses to the state.

Requests

1. A total of **\$3,653,730** - FY 2024 funding (\$3,547,311) + 3% COLA (\$106,419)
2. Add the following **language** in E.338.1 to ensure transparency -
The Department of Corrections shall allocate \$3,653,730 in grants to the community justice centers to be allocated in the same proportion and for the same purposes as those funds were allocated in FY 2024.

FY 2024	House FY 2025	Senate FY 2025	CJC Need FY 2025
\$3,547,311 – includes COLA	\$2,961,000 – no 3% COLA (The House included \$750,000 for CJCS in H.880, but it did not make it into the House or Senate budget)	\$2,961,000 + \$96,330 (3% COLA) = \$3,007,330	\$3,547,311 (FY24) + \$106,419 (3% COLA) = \$3,653,730

Thank you for your consideration.