
**Report to
Vermont Governor Phil Scott**

**2017 Annual Report
Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs
Vermont State Advisory Group on Delinquency Prevention
In Accordance with: 42 U.S.C. 5633 [Sec. 223]**

Submitted to: Phil Scott, Governor
Al Gobeille, Secretary, Agency of Human Services
Ken Schatz, Commissioner, Department for Children and Families
House Appropriations Committee
Senate Appropriations Committee
House Human Services Committee
Senate Health and Welfare Committee
Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice

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Executive Summary

The Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs (CFCPP) is the state advisory board for juvenile justice, delinquency, and primary prevention as required by 33 V.S.A. § 3302, and the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) 42 U.S.C. 5633 [Sec. 223.] The Council consists of 21 members appointed by the Governor with consent of the Senate. The Council funds youth justice system change efforts designed to improve youth service and practitioner effectiveness; and contributes funds to the Vermont Children's Trust Fund which it oversees. The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

The Council has four primary functions:

- Monitoring state compliance with federal justice regulations;
- Advising state and federal government on delinquency prevention and intervention activities and priorities;
- Determining prevention priorities; and
- Providing grant funding that supports these priorities.

In recent years the Council has tracked racial disparity trends in Chittenden County regarding youth delinquency court referrals and detention, in particular, with new American youth. In response, the Council has engaged in a grant agreement with the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) to conduct prevention and early intervention work with youth, parents and service providers. This work has been met with great community support.

In line with this, the Children's Trust Fund has identified prevention of racial disparities as a funding priority. In 2017, more than \$900,000 was provided to community and State programs for children, youth and family services through the Council and the Children's Trust Fund.

The Council has helped facilitate a grant award from the Center for the Study of Social Policy to establish the *Youth Thrive* framework throughout Vermont. This framework is an evidence-based approach to working with youth. An estimated 200 service providers have been trained in this model focused on practice, policy and service.

The Council has partnered with a provider to build a Geographic Information System map of services and supports to youth and young adults statewide. This resource will be available online in the summer of 2018.

Over the last year, the Council has worked with the State Legislature on implementation of the juvenile justice act reform measures passed in the last session, engaged with the State's Marijuana Advisory Board and Opiate Coordinating Council, and proposed regulatory changes to the JJDP core protections.

We are excited about the work that has been done, and look forward to additional emphasis on coordination of youth services, policy, and practice in the coming year.

Introduction

The Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs (CFCPP) is the state advisory board for juvenile justice, delinquency, and primary prevention as required by 33 V.S.A. § 3302, and the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) 42 U.S.C. 5633 [Sec. 223.] The Council is assigned to the Agency of Human Services for administrative purposes.

The Council consists of 21 members appointed by the Governor with consent of the Senate. Members are selected for their expertise, guided by the JJDP requirements, and represent the State, community non-profit sectors, youth and family voices. The Council funds youth justice system change efforts designed to improve youth service and practitioner effectiveness; and contributes funds to the Vermont Children's Trust Fund which it oversees.

CFCPP Mission: The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

2017 Council Members:

Maria Avila	Caprice Hover	Andrew Longhi
Judy Brassard	Donn Hutchins	Kreig Pinkham, Chair
Laurey Burris	Linda Johnson	Michael Reyes
Stuart Berry	Michelle Kaczynski	Robert Sheil
Hon. Amy Davenport	Susan Kamp	Matt Wolf
Peter Hathaway	Michael Loner	

Activities:

The Children and Family Council has four primary functions:

- 1. Monitor state compliance** with the JJDP.
- 2. Advise** State and Federal legislative and administrative branches on delinquency prevention, intervention activities and priorities.
- 3. Determine prevention priorities** based on data, the experience of members, youth and families, and agency priorities. A three-year plan is informed by this information and guides funding and advisory work.
- 4. Make grants** in partnership with the Agency of Human Services (AHS) Department for Children and Families (DCF) that promote established priorities and identified service gaps. Administer and contribute funds to the Vermont Children's Trust Fund in concert with DCF Child Development Division and the Children's Trust Foundation.

Section I: Monitoring

Monitor Vermont's compliance with the core requirements of the JJDP

Core requirements:

1. Status offenders (youth with run away, truant behavior) may not be securely detained.
2. Youth adjudicated delinquent may not be detained in adult jails or police holding cells except to process and release.
3. Youth may not be subject to sight or sound contact with adult inmates while securely held.
4. The rate of minority race youth in contact with the justice system must be monitored to assess for disparity. Where disparity exists, the Council and DCF work with decision-makers and community members affected to assure an equitable response to all youth.

Compliance with the JJDP serves two purposes:

- Protects youth and promotes their rights to due process.
- Ensures State eligibility for federal delinquency prevention funds.

The Council and Department hosted a successful federal audit of its compliance monitoring system this year.

2016 Status of Vermont Compliance with JJDP Core Juvenile Justice Protections:

During 2016, there was one violation of the prohibition against detaining status offenders when a young man in DCF's custody was placed at Woodside under a mistaken belief that he was eligible as a delinquent. He had completed his probation and so was not allowed to be placed at Woodside. The state is allowed a small number of violations each year and full compliance was maintained. The Department and Council are responsible for monitoring and assuring that all projects funded with federal dollars are adherent to civil rights requirements.

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) status:

The rates of racial disparity and equity are based on available data that has limitations, but has improved substantially from previous years. Indicators of disparity are monitored at nine designated contact points in the justice system. When indicators are present, closer examination and discussion occurs with decision makers and other parties to learn more about underlying causes.

Since 2015, we have followed trends of concern:

- Chittenden County youth of color are cited to court for delinquency offenses at substantially higher rates than white youth relative to the population.
- Chittenden County youth of color are sent to detention by DCF and the courts at higher rates than are white youth.

In 2015, a qualitative community assessment overwhelmingly directed efforts towards interventions and referrals of new American youth to justice responses.

A competitive solicitation resulted in a grant to the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) to conduct prevention and early intervention work with youth, parents, and service providers. The project is multi-tiered and ambitious. It has begun with strong community support and strong services to youth and families. Some highlights of the first six months of the project include:

- Over 40 providers, system leaders, and neighbors joined a kick-off meeting to offer assistance.
- The AALV created partnerships with University of Vermont’s Connecting Cultures behavioral health services and the Burlington Parks & Recreation Department to provide prevention services to youth and families.
- A new youth worker at AALV is working with police and schools to encourage early referrals of youth at risk.
- Several system change efforts are underway with key decision makers and AALV to look at *why* new American youth are referred into the system at such high rates, and *how* practices might be adjusted, or information shared, that could reduce those referrals and provide effective intervention and public safety sooner.
- A new mentoring program has been developed with assistance from Mobius Mentoring.
- A young men’s support and leadership development group has been established and a similar young woman’s group is planned.
- The Burlington district DCF Family Services Office and AALV staff are engaged in cross-training so that both organizations can better serve new American youth and families. Woodside and AALV staff have developed a strong partnership that has been helpful to youth, families, and staff from both organizations in improving services and supports.

The Children’s Trust Fund ensures that all grantees participate in cultural competency training that will strengthen programs’ abilities to serve diverse children and families. It has identified prevention of racial disparities as a funding priority area.

Section II: Advise and Inform

CFCPP is required by the JJDPA to advise government in delinquency prevention. The CFCPP attends to state and federal legislation affecting children and youth, engages with government partners, and advises on compliance with JJDPA. Recent advisory efforts include:

- Partnering with DCF and the legislature to further implement and adjust recent state legislative changes from Act 153 that aim to address more delinquent offenses in community-based programs before they reach court. The Council advocates for developmentally-based interventions for youth and young adults facing justice sanctions.
- Recommending consistent implementation of legislative directives in youth and young adult justice responses in community programs and the courts so youth in every part of the state can benefit from the most effective responses available.

- In partnership with the DCF, providing input to proposed regulatory changes to the JJDP core protections. The strong response to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) from states was useful in maintaining regulations that allow for small instances of error without risk of losing all federal funds.
- Engaging with members of the State’s Marijuana Advisory Board and Opiate Coordinating Council to consider collaborative recommendations and actions to protect children and youth from the effects of drug use.

**Section III:
Fund and Manage Grant Programs**

The Council prioritizes funding strategies based on documented need, best practices, and competitive requests from the community and State. It awards and monitors a continuum of prevention and early intervention grants with federal, State, and private dollars including the Vermont Children’s Trust Foundation and the Vermont Children’s Tax Check-off. Where youth justice or service interventions need improvement, the Council seeks community partners to design and implement long-term changes.

FY 2017 Grants:

In 2017, more than \$900,000 was provided to community and State programs for children, youth, and family services through Council and Children’s Trust Fund efforts.

Reduce racial disparities; increase cultural competence	\$177,066
Substance Abuse education / prevention	\$36,994
Effective, coordinated service to youth	\$182,504
Teen centers	\$40,383
Mentoring	\$85,165
After-school & school-based enrichment	\$63,342
Children and youth arts access	\$21,038
Early childcare, literacy, nutrition, & parent education	\$310,921
Total	\$917,413

**Section IV:
Evidence-Based Priorities for State Improvements**

The Children and Family Council utilizes a three-year strategic plan of system priorities as required by the JJDP. These priorities include:

1. Working with youth through evidence-informed approaches:

An example of an evidence-informed approach in working with youth and young adults is the *Youth Thrive* Framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). DCF and the Washington County Youth Service Bureau programs received an award for technical assistance from CSSP. The award enabled a learning exchange of the *Youth Thrive* Framework, and a ‘training of trainers’ that resulted in nearly 40 Vermont-based *Youth Thrive* trainers who are beginning to develop community training opportunities with the assistance of a State Implementation Team. DCF and other stakeholders are working on bringing the Youth Thrive framework into youth care work across the state. To date, an estimated 200 youth service providers and allies have been trained in this model of youth work and understanding. *Youth Thrive* is normed for youth ages 9 -25.

The training and practice improvements under the *Youth Thrive* model focus on implementing practice, policy, and service informed by: a) Youth resilience, b) Social connections, c) Knowledge of adolescent development, d) Concrete support in times of need, and e) Cognitive and social-emotional competence.

The Council was pleased to offer start-up funding for the *Youth Thrive* implementation and has continued to support its infusion into state and community practitioner work.

Expanding and improving collaboration in youth services: There is no unifying entity that provides or coordinates youth services, policy, or practice work. Such a force would strengthen and direct youth services work, elevating it to a level of importance that it deserves. There will be additional emphasis on this front in the coming year, in part spurred on by justice legislation changes, *Youth Thrive* training and practice implementation, and other topical areas from employment to early substance abuse intervention. Several statewide youth policy groups are active and have expanded their vision to include young adults through age 25. Now is the right time for these groups to increase collaboration and opportunities to leverage and seek elevation of this work. Council participants are active in the various youth and young adult policy workgroups and will continue to shine a light on the need for collaborative leadership and structure.

Youth service mapping: The Council has partnered with a provider to build a Geographic Information System map of services and supports to youth, young adults, and their allies statewide. This resource should be available online beginning in summer, 2018. The map is envisioned as a resource to individuals and family members, for planning and assessment of service gaps, and as a resource to multiple systems. For example, a State’s Attorney or school guidance counselor may find resources needed to support their work with youth.

2. Jurisdiction reform:

The Council has long championed the need for developmentally appropriate justice response for older youth who have faced the consequences of a life-long criminal record for minor offenses

committed as youth. The legislature has made positive changes towards reducing those consequences and supporting alternatives that are effective and improve public safety. The Council will continue to support implementation of these changes as needed with its limited resources.

3. Reduction of disparate contact of youth of color with the justice system:

Collaborative work has been previously described and will continue through 2018.

4. Primary prevention:

The CFCPP will continue to partner with the Children’s Trust Foundation to administer community grant opportunities aimed at creating conditions for children and youth to thrive.

Conclusion

During 2017, the CFCPP, in partnership with DCF and other State departments, law enforcement, and community programs administered the requirements of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act and 33 V.S.A § 3301-3307.

Primary outcomes have been:

1. Monitoring of all public authorities able to hold youth securely. Maintained compliance with the core protections of the federal JJDP legislation; participated in federal regulation development. Training was provided to law enforcement when needed. Hosted a successful audit of the State’s compliance monitoring system with the OJJDP.
2. Began addressing disparate referrals to the justice system of youth of color in Chittenden County through a broad-based grant award and convening of key decision-makers to further assess decisions affecting these youth.
3. Distributed grant funds to communities throughout the State for primary prevention, early intervention, and systemic improvement projects benefiting communities and youth.
4. Funded a study for the Vermont Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee on youth justice changes, and a Woodside screening tool for DCF. Supported the state legislative passage of Act 153 on juvenile justice changes.
5. Funded the development of an interactive Geographic Information System map for youth and young adult services that will be a planning resource and tool for community members and providers.
6. Built stronger collaborations and partnerships with other youth-serving organizations.

For more information please email:

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