

Sec. E.203 RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WORKING GROUP; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Restorative Justice Working Group to evaluate the organization of Vermont's criminal justice system concerning restorative justice programming and services generally, with a focus on the administration and funding of pretrial services, court diversion programs, and community justice center services.

(b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following nine members:

(1) a local representative from a Community Justice Center currently funded by the of the Vermont Department of Corrections, selected by the directors of Vermont's Community Justice Centers;

(2) a county-level representative from the court diversion and pretrial services program, or an affiliated county-level restorative justice program, currently funded by the Office of the Vermont Attorney General, selected by the Vermont Association of Court Diversion and Pretrial Services;

(3) a district-level representative from a Balanced and Restorative Justice program provider currently funded by the Vermont Department of Children and Families director, selected by the directors of Vermont's Balanced and Restorative Justice program providers;

(4) a representative from the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs;

(5) the Chief Superior Judge of the Vermont Superior Court or designee;

(6) the Commissioner of Corrections or designee;

(7) the Vermont Attorney General or designee;

(8) the Vermont Defender General or designee; and

(9) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee.

(c) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall study the roles, relationships, and funding of the various entities providing restorative justice programming and services in the State of Vermont. The Working Group's study shall:

(1) identify any disparities or variation between administrative rules, policies, procedures, practices, and results of restorative justice programming and services in different areas of the State;

(2) evaluate the system of restorative justice programming and services that ensures geographic equity throughout the State, equal access for all Vermonters, and adequate resources for all providers;

(3) review and recommend any changes to ensure streamlined restorative justice programming and services, which coordinates the roles, responsibilities, and funding mechanisms of the Department of Corrections, the Office of the Attorney General, the Department for Children and Families, and any other entity that administers restorative justice programming and services in the State;

(4) recommend any changes to ensure a coherent statutory framework for all restorative justice programming and services in the State; and

(5) ensure that any proposed changes to restorative justice programming and services in the State reflect and serve restorative justice principles.

(d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Corrections, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Department for Children and Families. The Department of Corrections, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Department for Children and Families shall coordinate and

assist the Working Group in the writing of any reports. The Working Group may solicit input and participation from other stakeholders in furtherance of its purpose.

(e) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Working Group shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions, on Judiciary, and on Appropriations, and the Senate Committees on Institutions, on Judiciary, and on Appropriations with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Chief Superior Judge or designee shall call the first meeting of the Working Group to occur on or after July 1, 2022.

(2) The Working Group shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) The Working Group shall meet a sufficient number of times to fulfill its power and duties and issue a timely report.

(4) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(5) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 172, an action may be taken by the Working Group with the assent of a majority of the members attending and voting, assuming a quorum.

(6) The Working Group shall cease to exist on February 15, 2023.