

**Community Justice Centers funded by the Department of Corrections
FY 2025 Budget Memo
March 1, 2024**

1. CJC Grants - \$3,902,042 Request

Restorative justice is an *integral* component of Vermont’s criminal justice system. Our services are in greater demand, and we are tasked with assisting in reducing caseload and court backlogs. As such, we are requesting a modest increase in our FY 2025 grants in order to meet the financial demands of increasing administrative and staffing expenses and expanded programming.

In FY 2024, CJCs received **\$3,547,311** in grants from DOC. We are requesting a **10% increase** over our FY 2024 budget - **\$3,902,042** - with the following budget language:

The Department of Corrections shall allocate **\$3,902,042** in grants to the seventeen community justice centers to be allocated in the same proportion, to the same organizations, and for the same purposes as those funds were allocated in FY 2024.

DOC has indicated that they want to reduce the FY 2025 CJC grants by \$250,000 (FY 24) and \$342,247 (FY 23), totaling \$592,247. They state that those funds were to be considered one-time funds. ***We emphatically oppose their position.***

- ***\$250,000 is ongoing base funding*** per the June 28, 2023 Statement of Legislative Intent for the FY 2024 Budget regarding the Justice Reinvestment of \$899,652 (of which the \$250,000 is a part), which states that these funds were “allocated ... ***as ongoing base increases.***” They are not one-time funds.
 - These funds were used for 3% COLA increases in FY 2024 and a very small grant to each CJC with the remaining funds.
- ***\$342,247*** was used for a 7% COLA increase (to cover multiple prior years) and \$8,000 grants to each CJC.
- ***This funding cannot be reduced.*** It would require reductions in staff compensation and programming cuts – at a time when the state is relying more heavily on our services.

2. Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) - \$108,700

\$108,700 was part of the \$899,652 in B.338.1 in the FY 2024 budget. As noted above, these funds are ***ongoing base funding***. Because these funds are included in the DCF budget, they should be included in the DCF budget section with accompanying language:

Sec. E.317 Department for children and families - family services
Of the above appropriation, \$108,700 in general funds shall be appropriated to the Department for Children and Families for the Balanced and Restorative Justice Program.

3. Three Separate Budget Sections/B.338.1

The title of Sec. 338.1, Justice Reinvestment II, is misleading, because only \$899,652 of the approximately \$10 million in this section is for Justice Reinvestment. Most of the funding goes to transitional housing and CJCs. As such, B.338.1 should be divided into three ***separate budget sections*** so that the funding purpose is clear, with corresponding E section budget language to explain the funding in each section.