

# Juvenile Justice Report

February 14, 2023



This report contains information related to the Division of Juvenile Services pursuant to 34-A § 7010

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### **Introduction:**

This report is submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety pursuant to Title 34-A MRSA § 7010 regarding the Department of Corrections' (DOC) efforts to reduce detention rates, expand community-based alternatives, and possible locations for secure, therapeutic residences for detained and committed youth.

### **2023 Juvenile Division Overview:**

Since reporting to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee last year, the Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Services (the "Division") has experienced both progress and setbacks in the ongoing effort to ensure a responsive and effective continuum of care for justice-involved youth in Maine.

Although the Division received approximately 200 more case referrals than it did in 2022 (2,128 up from 1,925), the total daily population of Long Creek Youth Development Center in 2023 remained low, at between 16 and 39 detained and committed residents, and the average daily population ("ADP") remained at 28 – the same as 2022. While many other states have seen the ADP of juveniles in secure confinement return to pre-pandemic levels, Maine has not. The ADP of Long Creek Youth Development Center was 86 in 2016, 59 in 2018, and 53 in 2019 – the year prior to the COVID pandemic. Long Creek's ADP dropped sharply to 28 in 2020 and has remained consistently low in the years that followed, at 31 in 2021, 28 in 2022, and 28 in 2023.

The Division continues to divert the majority of juvenile cases referred by law enforcement from the formal juvenile court process by resolving cases informally and referring youth and families to local community-based services. The rate of diversion for eligible cases in 2023 was 86% and has remained consistent over the past 3 years and is noticeably higher than in 2019 and 2020.<sup>1</sup>

In June 2023, representatives of the Division joined members of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) in attending a "Transforming Juvenile Probation" workshop in Baltimore sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Coalition for Juvenile Justice.<sup>2</sup> Maine and three other states were chosen to participate in an intensive day-long workshop that focused on diverting more youth from court and probation, and reforming juvenile probation practices to focus on individualized and effective interventions for those juveniles who are placed on probation. As a result of this workshop, the Division has been working with the JJAG and other juvenile justice practitioners to improve diversion efforts by utilizing a reliable screening tool (the YLS/CMI-SRV) to assess which youth are low risk for reoffending.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the table on page 3 for a data snapshot illustrating referral, diversion, probation, and confinement data over the past 5 years.

<sup>2</sup> The Juvenile Justice Advisory Group is Maine's state Advisory Group established under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (JJDP) to oversee the state's use of federal funding and implementation of relevant standards under the JJDP. More information is available at: <https://www.jjagmaine.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/JJAG-Who-We-Are-Factsheet-Jan-2023.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> More information about the YLS/CMI-SRV can be found at: <https://storefront.mhs.com/collections/yls-cmi-srv>.



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In addition to increasing the number of juveniles diverted from the formal juvenile court process, the Division is creating an “incentive-based” model of probation that focuses on strengths and rewards achievement of individual goals for those youth who are adjudicated and placed on probation. The Division is working with the Maine Judicial Branch, prosecutors, and attorneys who represent juveniles to modify the existing juvenile probation form by eliminating many of the standard conditions in favor of conditions that reflect the individualized needs of the youth. Finally, although the Court determines the length of probation for every youth, the Division is examining ways that long periods of probation may be reduced by filing motions to terminate probation early when a youth has achieved the goals identified in their probation case plan and no longer requires supervision.

One of the department’s greatest successes in 2023 includes creation of an independent juvenile-specific certification for corrections officers who work with youth. The need for training specifically tailored to those who work with adolescents was noted in the 2020 Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment report. Following publication of the report, the department began working with the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to develop a specialized juvenile justice certification for corrections officers who serve juveniles. The enactment of Public Law 2023, Chapter 341 in June, codified the department’s efforts and, in November 2023, the first Juvenile Corrections Officer certification class began.<sup>4</sup> The second class began on February 5, 2024. The six week specialized juvenile corrections officer training curriculum includes, among many others, the following courses:

- Adolescent Development (2 full days)
- Motivational Interviewing (2 full days)
- Juvenile Suicide Prevention
- Developmental Disabilities/Residents with Disabilities
- Adolescent Trauma
- Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (Dr. Ross Greene)
- Crisis Consultant Group (CCG) verbal de-escalation and non-violent restraint
- Diversity, Culture and Communication
- Creating Equity for LGBTQ Youth
- Mandated Reporting

Undoubtedly the greatest challenge for the Division in 2023 was sustaining two staff secure residences created to serve as alternatives to secure confinement at Long Creek Youth Development Center. This report provides data regarding staff recruitment and retention at Long Creek and the department’s efforts to increase both on pages eight and nine.

The Unity Place pilot program in Auburn was staffed through a contract with Day One, a leader in providing substance use and mental health services to adolescents and their families, and

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<sup>4</sup> P.L. 2023, c. 341 began as LD 42 in the 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature. More information is available at this link: <https://legislature.maine.gov/billtracker/#Paper/42?legislature=131>.



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served a total of 8 youth between September 2022 and March 2023.<sup>5</sup> This pilot program was created to determine the viability of a Department of Corrections operated program staffed by a community-based provider. Unfortunately, staffing challenges for Day One eventually resulted in the closure of the program in March. Despite good faith efforts from both the department and Day One, the inability to hire enough staff to re-open the program between March and September resulted in the department’s decision to consider alternative methods of serving male residents at Unity Place. The department has maintained the lease of the building used for Unity Place and intends to resume serving male residents when a sustainable program model is developed and the department is able to hire sufficient staff to serve the needs of those residents and that program.

In December 2022, the ACER program was opened to serve female residents in a residential building adjacent to Long Creek. On December 28, 2022, the only two girls at Long Creek were moved to the program. The program served female residents until February 2023, when the girls were returned to Long Creek after the building and its contents sustained damage due to pipe freezing in the sprinkler system. The building was repaired quickly and the two girls were returned to the ACER program. The program continued to operate until March 2023, with up to three females being housed at one time. At times the acuity of the youths’ behaviors necessitated moving one or two girls back to Long Creek, requiring both ACER and a separate unit of Long Creek to be staffed at the same time. Although the female population overall was generally less than 10 percent of the daily population at Long Creek in 2023, a disproportionate number of assaults on staff and incidents of self-harm were attributed to the female population. There were 33 assaults on staff, with 17 committed by female residents. There were 50 incidents of self-harm by residents during 2023, 25 of which were by female residents. Separating the female population between ACER and Long Creek often resulted in a single girl being isolated at ACER or in the Maple Unit at Long Creek. Due to the inability to safely staff both ACER and a female unit at Long Creek, the decision was made to return the females to Long Creek which provides additional safety for residents and staff and allows more immediate access to behavioral health services. The ACER program will resume as soon as sufficient staff are available to safely maintain the off-grounds staff secure program.

### Data Snapshot:

The table below is offered to provide Committee members with a quick overview of trends in Maine’s juvenile justice system over the past 5 years.

<b>Data Snapshot of Maine’s Juvenile Justice System Over the Past Five Years</b>					
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Juvenile Cases Referred to the Division of Juvenile Services	2,128	1,925	1,595	1,748	2,464
First Time Referrals	1,076	1,043	863	625	1,332
Diversion Rate of Eligible Cases	86%	87%	88%	74%	74%
Monthly Average Number of Juveniles on Probation	66	90	92	117	163

<sup>5</sup> More information on Day One is available at this link: <https://day-one.org/about-us/>.



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Total Number of Juveniles Who Started Probation	84	86	87	88	141
Total Number of Juveniles Who Completed Probation	84	112	66	65	101
Probation Violations	20	52	54	70	96
Average Length of Days on Probation	332	329	405	383	400
Detention Admissions ( <i>not</i> number of juveniles detained)	166	100	107	136	277
Average Length of Stay for Detained Juveniles (days)	32.5	31.9	24.4	21.9	18.4
Number of Juveniles Who Served 1-30 Days in Confinement	10	12	14	23	42
Number of Juveniles Committed to Long Creek	18	20	19	14	29
Average Length of Stay for Committed Juveniles (days)	102.2	169.7	343	360.8	450.3
Average Daily Population (ADP) at Long Creek	28	28	31	28	53

### **Inter-Agency Efforts to Increase Diversion and Reduce Detention:**

The Department of Corrections and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have a strong partnership and meet regularly to discuss both systemic challenges and individual cases that require coordination between agencies. Juvenile Community Corrections Officers (JCCOs) at DOC and Program Coordinators with the Children's Behavioral Health Services discuss individual cases of youth being served by both agencies and have almost daily contact with each other.

The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) has assigned four of its ten Behavioral Health Program Coordinators to serve each of the three DOC regions and Long Creek. The Program Coordinators communicate regularly with JCCOs, community case managers, and community providers regarding justice-involved youth who are awaiting in-home services or residential placement. The Program Coordinators also attend bi-weekly meetings hosted by the Division of Juvenile Services, at which there is discussion on all cases of youth detained at Long Creek, all youth anticipating upcoming release, and all committed residents on community reintegration status. Representatives of both agencies work together in an effort to ensure that youth who are detained or committed at Long Creek are released as quickly as possible and that community-based services are immediately available upon release. One of the challenges is that release to residential placements takes time and the acuity of needs or behaviors of some Long Creek residents often results in community-based and residential programs denying those residents' applications for services.

In addition to regular meetings between JCCOs and Program Coordinators, the Associate Commissioner for the Division of Juvenile Services meets monthly with the Director of the Office of Child and Family Services to discuss new initiatives, common challenges, and efforts to improve coordination between agencies. Leadership and managers from both agencies meet quarterly to discuss common concerns and challenges and ways to improve coordination between agencies.



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Another example of the combined efforts of DOC and DHHS to divert juveniles is the joint participation in Maine’s Regional Care Teams (RCTs). The Department of Corrections co-facilitates RCTs with University of Southern Maine staff in each of the three DOC regions. RCTs meet regularly (usually once a month) with representatives of DHHS who present for review individual complex cases requiring multi-agency problem-solving. The RCTs also meet with representatives of other State agencies and community-based service providers to identify systemic gaps and barriers to services for justice-involved youth. In 2023, the Division allocated \$20,000 for RCT “flex funds” which provide low barrier access to funding for emergent needs of justice-involved youth and their families such as rent assistance, technology devices, driving lessons, work boots, and more. The Division also provided approximately \$98,000 to the University of Southern Maine in fiscal year 2024 for administration of the RCTs.

Finally, both DOC and DHHS participate in the Interstate Compact for Juveniles Commission (ICJ). The ICJ governs the return of runaway and absconding youth who cross state lines. As nation-wide efforts increase to identify and safely return home youth taken across state lines who are being exploited or are at risk of being exploited, there has been closer collaboration between the Division and OCFS to coordinate the safe return Maine youths located in another state. Participation in the ICJ is a key part of that effort. At times, these collaborations have also included representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security.

### **Successes and Challenges in Expanding Access to Community-based Therapeutic Services:**

The Division helps fund several programs that provide community-based treatment services including, but not limited to, Multi-systemic Therapy (including Multi-Systemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behaviors), Functional Family Therapy, and High Fidelity Wrap-around Services.<sup>6</sup> The Department of Health and Human Services primarily supports in-home therapeutic services, but additional funding provided by the Division ensures that all youth have access to these evidence-based in-home services regardless of whether they are MaineCare eligible. In fiscal year 2023, the department invested \$1,208,237 to support evidence-based therapeutic programs for justice-involved youth in their homes.

The Division also provides funds to sustain six restorative justice providers throughout the state. Funding by the Division is not only available to serve justice-involved youth, but also to those who have not yet entered the juvenile justice system and are at risk of becoming involved. The commitment to supporting restorative practices for youth who have not been referred to the Division demonstrates the Division’s desire to “go up stream” and support programing that helps prevent and reduce future referrals to the Division. The department invested \$1,274,000 in restorative justice programming in FY 2023.

There are two key evidence-based programs supported by the Division that provide transformative mentoring to justice-involved youth: (1) Credible Messengers and; (2) the Youth Advocate Program (YAP). Credible Messengers relies on adult volunteers with lived experience

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<sup>6</sup> See pages 10 and 11 for a complete listing of community-based services supported by DOC.



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in the justice system to mentor youth both in the community and at Long Creek. Participants, referred to as “messengers” receive small stipends and are reimbursed for expenses related to their mentoring work. The Youth Advocate Program is a nation-wide evidence-based program that connects youth who are at risk of detention or are being released from Long Creek with mentors who offer comprehensive mentoring services in the youth’s home community. YAP supports youth in many ways and provides mentorship by a pro-social adult who can assist in meeting their needs and has the experience necessary to help them avoid confinement.

The Division also provides funding to Preble Street, New Beginnings, and Shaw House to support emergency shelters, transitional living programs, and a Master Lease Program. In 2023, the Division expanded its support to include Preble Street’s Master Lease Program for 8 justice-involved youth. The Master Lease Program allows youth 16 and older access to a private apartment where Preble Street holds the lease for up to one year. This program assures that youth who are not able to remain in or return to their home have an opportunity to live independently (sometimes with one roommate) with support from Preble Street case managers and, if still they are still justice-involved, their JCCO. The department’s investment in this area totaled \$707,127 in FY 2023.

### **Successes and Challenges in Expanding Community-based Programs and Services:**

#### Unity Place:

In February 2022, the department entered into a contract with Day One to staff “Unity Place,” a pilot program to serve juvenile justice-involved males in Auburn. The contract required Day One to provide around-the-clock staffing for the program in a staff-secure residential facility. Unity Place could serve up to four males in a transitional living capacity and up to two males in an attendant care (short term alternative to detention at Long Creek) capacity. The program required a minimum of two full-time staff for each shift to ensure safety of residents and staff. The first males were admitted to Unity Place in September of 2022. On March 3, 2023, the four male residents then at Unity Place were removed due to concerns for resident and staff safety. Following resolution of those concerns, the department intended to resume use of the program when Day One was able to hire sufficient staff to serve the program.

As of September 30, 2023, the department elected not to continue the Unity Place pilot program due to the uncertainty of when Day One would be able to hire sufficient staff. Between February 2022 and March 2023, a total of eight male youth were served in the program, three of whom made successful transitions from the program to more permanent housing.

The department has maintained the lease on the building and is meeting regularly to ensure that efforts resume programming for youth at Unity Place continue. The department is currently considering whether the design of the program should be expanded to allow admission of detained males who a judge has determined may be released to a less restrictive environment when one becomes available. The department is also discussing the most efficient manner in which to ensure youth in the program have access to necessary recreation, clinical, and education



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services including special education services. Finally, the department is exploring various methods of staffing the program and contracting with local community-based providers to ensure that the program remains effective and sustainable. The department invested \$1,349,476 in the Unity Place pilot program.

### ACER:

In December 2022, the department opened the ACER program in a staff secure residence adjacent to Long Creek Youth Development Center. The program was created to serve residents of Long Creek who identify as female. As noted above, on pages three and four of this report, sustaining the program was not possible due to low staffing levels at Long Creek and the frequent isolation of female residents in either ACER or at Long Creek.

### Goodwill Hinckley:

In 2022, the Department of Corrections contracted with SMRT Architects and Engineers to complete a Facility Conditions Assessment of the “Alfond Cottage” on the campus of Goodwill Hinckley with the hope of leasing the building to serve as a DOC-operated staff-secure residential program for up to five juvenile justice-involved males. The assessment was completed in August 2022 and estimated that a cost of \$1,090,080 dollars would be necessary for the building to serve as a staff-secure placement. Following the assessment, negotiations between the Department of Corrections, the State Bureau of General Services, and the Board of Directors of Goodwill Hinckley continued in earnest to enter a lease agreement satisfactory to the State and Goodwill Hinckley. In August 2023, the Department of Corrections elected not to continue efforts to open a staff-secure program for justice-involved males on the campus of Goodwill Hinckley when the parties were unable to reach a mutually agreeable contract.

### **Current Efforts to Create Secure Alternatives to Long Creek:**

The department has been engaged in continual efforts to create secure alternatives to Long Creek since 2021. The department initially investigated 17 properties throughout the state including existing state-owned and privately-owned buildings and parcels land that could potentially be utilized to create alternative secure juvenile facilities. Many of the properties were deemed inappropriate for use as a juvenile facility, even with extensive renovations. During the past three years, the department has created two staff-secure alternatives to Long Creek, neither of which were sustainable due to issues addressed above. The department continues to work diligently to resume operations of the two programs that would provide alternatives to secure confinement.

As noted above, the Department of Corrections will resume operation of the ACER program as soon as it can be staffed at a level that ensures resident and staff safety and is identifying a sustainable model for reopening the Unity Place program in Auburn. Additionally, the department has requested from SMRT Architects and Engineers an update of an assessment they conducted in January 2020 of a State-owned building on Westbrook Street in South Portland previously occupied by Juvenile Community Corrections.





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### Long Creek Youth Development Center:

Staffing shortages and the acuity of residents’ needs were the greatest challenges at Long Creek Youth Development Center throughout 2023.

The chart below provides data on the number of new staff hired to work at Long Creek since January 1, 2019, and the number of staff who have left employment at the facility for various reasons including retirement, resignation, transfer to another position within the department, and termination as of December 1, 2023.

### Long Creek Youth Development Center – New Hires and Separations 2019 through 2023

Year	Total New Hires	Total Separations	JPW New Hires	JPW Separations
2019	19	17	19	13
2020	14	13	11	12
2021	20	30	19	28
2022	42	47	39	36
2023 (as of 12/1/23)	46	37	36	29
<b>Five Year Totals</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>118</b>

The Department of Corrections has undertaken extensive efforts to recruit and retain qualified staff to serve the residents of Long Creek. The following is a non-exhaustive list of efforts the department has taken throughout 2023 to recruit staff to work at Long Creek:

1. Hired a full time Recruitment and Retention Coordinator;
2. Created positions to enhance staff support including a Faith and Wellness Coordinator and a Staff Wellness Committee,
3. Updated department’s website to include information, including a short video clip, on becoming a Juvenile Program Worker at Long Creek Youth Development Center:  
<https://www.maine.gov/corrections/careers/jpw;>
4. Created easy on-line application process:  
<https://mainebhr.hire.trakstar.com/jobs/fk0vsjdhttps://mainebhr.hire.trakstar.com/jobs/fk0vsjd;>
5. Posted videos to YouTube describing work at Long Creek with a link to on-line application: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2wh1puIfFQ;>
6. Utilized Indeed and Maine JobLink recruitment tools;
7. Enhanced Facebook page to allow position application on cell phones;
8. Attended numerous job fairs and hiring events;
9. Created visual media campaign with posters to be displayed at Maine Celtics games and on Portland Metro buses;



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- 10. Currently developing paid internship program for students attending Southern Maine Community College and St. Joseph’s College to begin in May 2024.
- 11. Currently conducting weekly interviews of eligible candidates with ongoing hiring. Newly hired Juvenile Program Workers (JPWs) are allowed to start work immediately as “shadows” pending completion of the Juvenile Basic Correctional Officer Training and certification by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

Despite robust recruiting efforts, getting Long Creek fully staffed remains a challenge. Due to the low number of staff available, Juvenile Program Workers and Juvenile Program Supervisors are scheduled to work 12 hour shifts for seven days during a two week period. When scheduled staff do not report to work, those already at the facility are mandated to stay beyond their regularly scheduled 12 hour shifts, up to 16 hours. Staff commonly work 16 hour shifts multiple days per week. Low staffing levels and frequent mandates to work overtime make retention of staff an on-going challenge. The table below outlines the staffing at Long Creek as of December 1, 2023. Also included is a table providing information on clinical staffing services contracted through and provided by Wellpath.<sup>7</sup>

**Long Creek Youth Development Center Staffing as of December 1, 2023**

There are 149 positions appropriated by the Legislature, which does not include clinical positions contracted for through and provided by Wellpath. Positions under “Filled and Vacant” add up to 144 (numbers provided by Human Resources).

Type of Position	Filled Positions	Vacant Positions	Vacancy Rate
Administration	15 (1 on Leave)	1	6%
Security			
Director	1		--
Facility Operations Supervisors	6		--
Juvenile Program Supervisors	5	6	55%
Juvenile Program Workers	42 (5 on Leave)	30	42%
Program Providers			
Juvenile Program Managers	4 (1 on Leave)		
Psychiatric Social Workers	3	1	25%
Juvenile Acuity Specialists	1	1	50%
Recreation Supervisor	1		--
Restorative Justice Coordinator	1		--
Correctional Trade Instructors	2		--
Chaplain	1		--
Food Service Supervisor	1		--
Education			
Administration	2 (1 on Leave)		--

<sup>7</sup> Information about Wellpath is available at this link: <https://wellpathcare.com/>.



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Teachers	12	3	20%
Maintenance	3	1	25%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>101 (8 on Leave)</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>30%</b>

**Wellpath Providers at Long Creek as of December 1, 2023**

Provider Service	Hours/week	FTE	
Physician	8	.20	
Psychiatrist	6	.15	
Registered Nurses	252 (24/7 coverage)	6.3	
Dentist	4	.10	
Dental Assistant	4	.10	
Dental Hygienist	8	.20	
Health Services Administrator	40	1.0	
Mental Health Director	40	1.0	
Mental Health Professionals	80	2.0	
Mental Health Technician	40	1.0	
Administrative Assistant	20	.50	
Administrative Assistant - MH	20	.50	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>13.05</b>	

Clinical services for both detained and committed residents at Long Creek are provided by Wellpath. As reflected in the table above, there are full-time mental and behavioral health providers and nursing staff. Psychiatry, dental, and medical services are provided on both part-time and emergency bases.

**Acuity of Residents’ Needs:**

Although the number of residents at Long Creek on any given day remained less than 40 throughout 2023, the acuity of their behavioral and educational needs presented continuous challenges for both programing and educational staff.

The Division is responsible for providing free and appropriate education services to residents committed to Long Creek. The department also provides education services to detained residents whose home schools choose to have them participate in classes at the A.R. Gould High School. Of the 16 committed residents on December 1, 2023, nine were receiving special education services that include speech therapy, occupational therapy and other accommodations identified in the students’ individual education plans. The department contracts with Erin Chase Special Education Consulting to provide Response to Intervention (RTI) support and development. Ms. Chase works with A.R. Gould and Long Creek staff to increase RTI practices and develop strong Tier 1 and 2 interventions, meant to support all students receiving regular and special education services. This contracted role fulfills legal requirements for Special Education leadership presence and provides A.R. Gould staff with expertise in supporting students with specific learning needs. Ms. Chase provides A.R. Gould staff with guidance around Section 504, Individualized Education



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Plan (IEP), and English Language Learners (ELL) plan development and implementation to ensure that all students, both general and special education, are receiving appropriate interventions and support in the classroom.

In addition to the special educational needs of many Long Creek residents, some residents require ongoing mental health and behavioral health support. This is especially true of those residents who arrive at Long Creek immediately upon discharge from residential placement or a hospital. As noted above, DOC contracts with Wellpath to provide all medical, mental health, and behavioral health services. The following data provided by Wellpath reflects the acuity of needs among residents at Long Creek Youth Development Center during 2023:

- During 2023, Long Creek Healthcare staff conducted 864 Mental Health risk and safety evaluations and initiated 178 mental health watches.
- On average, residents at Long Creek each engaged with behavioral health 18 times per month.
- Excluding crisis contacts and assessments, on average, residents participated in 14.7 monthly behavioral health sessions each.
- All Long Creek residents (detained and committed) are offered weekly individual mental health therapy, weekly group mental health therapy, and weekly substance use disorder psychoeducation or treatment (depending on status and clinical need).
- Psychiatry held an average of 21 sessions with Long Creek residents monthly.
- Mental Health conducted 183 initial mental health evaluations.
- Approximately 80% of residents were offered weekly activity therapy with a behavioral health clinician.
- Approximately 33% of residents were also offered weekly family therapy (based on clinical appropriateness).

### **Inter-department Strategic Planning:**

The Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Human Services are currently engaged in several inter-agency efforts to improve services to justice-involved youth throughout the state, including the Children's Cabinet working group created pursuant to Public Law 2023, Chapter 425.<sup>8</sup> The working group is currently engaged in developing a coordinated plan involving all youth-serving agencies in Maine to ensure the agencies are working together to best meet the needs of all Maine youth involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.<sup>9</sup> The working group was created to promote coordinated policies, finances, programs, and service delivery systems to support juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system. To assist the working group in conducting a review of other states in regard to best practices and organizational structures for juvenile justice services, the Department of Corrections awarded a paid internship to a student from the University of Maine at Fort Kent.

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<sup>8</sup> P.L. 2023, c. 425 began as LD 155 in the 131st Legislature. More information is available at this link: <https://legislature.maine.gov/billtracker/#Paper/155?legislature=131>.

<sup>9</sup> Agencies involved include but are not limited to the Department of Corrections, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Labor, Department of Public Safety, and the Maine Center for Disease Control.



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Several members of the Children’s Cabinet working group also serve on the JJAG. In January 2024, the Children’s Cabinet Coordinator presented to the JJAG a summary of the working group’s efforts to complete a thorough inventory of services for justice-involved youth provided by each of Maine’s youth-serving agencies and community-based providers so that gaps in services and barriers to receiving existing services can be identified and addressed.

Both DOC and DHHS have representatives assigned as “ex officio” members of the JJAG who regularly attend monthly meetings. In November and December 2023, both agencies presented their current activities and work plans for 2024. As the JJAG prepares to draft its 2024-2026 Comprehensive Three Year Plan, representatives of both the Division, DHHS, and DOE will work closely with members of the JJAG to ensure efforts of the State agencies and the JJAG are in alignment and leverage existing resources to best meet the needs of Maine youth.

The DOC and DHHS are developing a joint strategic plan in coordination with current efforts of Children’s Cabinet working group and the JJAG.

### **Community-based Programs and Services Receiving Funding from the Department:**

As of December 31, 2023, the Department of Corrections held contracts with community-based program providers totaling \$4,279,482.50. Many of these programs are described in detail above. Currently funded community-based organizations include:<sup>10</sup>

Provider	Description of Services	FY24 Funding	Location
New Beginnings	Emergency Shelter, Transitional Living Program, Master Leasing Program	\$216,000.00	Community
Shaw House	Emergency Shelter	\$25,000.00	Community
Preble Street Teen Services	Independent Living & Master Leasing Program	\$218,000.00	Community
Tree Street	Day/Evening Reporting Center & Educational Programming	\$180,000.00	Community
Spurwink Services	Family Functional Therapy (FFT)	\$110,000.00	Community
Kennebec Behavioral Health	Multi Systemic Therapy and Problem Sexual Behavioral (MST/MST-PSB)	\$195,000.00	Community
Maine Behavioral Health	Multi Systemic Therapy and Problem Sexual Behavioral (MST/MST-PSB)	\$200,762.50	Community
Tri-County Mental Health	Multi Systemic Therapy and Problem Sexual Behavioral (MST/MST-PSB)	\$178,000.00	Community
Carleton School	Alternative Educational Services	\$46,000.00	Community
Opportunity Alliance	Hi-Fi Wraparound	\$340,000.00	Community

<sup>10</sup> This is only the amount used from the juvenile contracts budget.



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Wings for Children and Family	Hi-Fi Wraparound	\$190,000.00	Community
Family Functional Therapy LLC	Family Functional Therapy (FFT) Consultation Services for providers	\$1,500.00	Community
Aroostook County Action Program	Restorative Justice	\$100,000.00	Community
Restorative Justice Midcoast	Restorative Justice	\$225,000.00	Community
Restorative Justice Institute of Maine	Restorative Justice	\$292,500.00	Community
Youth LED Justice	Restorative Justice	\$375,000.00	Community
Penquis C.A.P	Restorative Justice	\$67,500.00	Community
Downeast Restorative Justice	Restorative Justice	\$54,000.00	Community
Spurwink Diversion to Assets	Diversion Services	\$96,484.00	Community
Credible Messengers	Transformative Mentoring		
LearningWorks Service Works	Community Service Projects	\$232,000.00	Community
Youth Advocate Programs	Transformative Mentoring and Advocacy	\$739,519.00	Community & Facility
UMaine Comprehensive Evaluations	Psychological Evaluations and Sexual Behavioral Treatment	\$17,100.00	Community
University of Southern Maine	Cooperative Agreement for Regional Care Teams, Evaluations and Consultations	\$170,118.00	Community
Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS)	Translating Juvenile Documentation for Families	\$5,000.00	Community
TCMHC Fire Safety	Fire Safety Program	\$5,000.00	Community
	<b>TOTAL SPENT</b>	<b>\$4,279,482.50</b>	
	<b>TOTAL UNALLOCATED as of 12/1/23</b>	<b>\$ 415,531.00</b>	



## Maine Department of Corrections

### Other Relevant Information:

- Specialized Certification for Juvenile Corrections Officers:  
On January 4, 2024, eight newly-certified Juvenile Program Workers became the first class of specialized juvenile corrections officers after completing the customized curriculum approved by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. The Department worked for over three years to achieve this result which was noted in the 2020 Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment and mandated by the passage of Public Law 2023, Chapter 341 in June 2023.
- Mandatory Implicit Bias Training:  
Beginning in January 2023, all Division of Juvenile Services staff must participate in “Understanding the Neuropsychology of Implicit Bias,” a two-year series of in-person (live and virtual) and asynchronous (self-directed computer learning modules) sessions presented by Mindbridge. All staff of both Juvenile Community Corrections and Long Creek Youth Development Center are required to participate in the extensive training funded being exclusively by the Maine Juvenile Justice Advisory Group. Throughout 2023, Phase one of the training was delivered consisting of four training sessions with course topics addressing key elements of bias mitigation and anti-racist practice as essential elements in eliminating racial and ethnic disparities within Maine’s juvenile justice system. Phase two of the training began in January 2024 and will continue throughout the year.

The Department of Corrections remains committed to serving juveniles at every point along the juvenile justice system from diversion to community reintegration. The department’s mission, to make communities safer by reducing harm through supportive intervention, empowering change and restoring lives extends to the youngest clients we serve and their families.

The department’s Maine Model of Corrections guides all Division of Juvenile Services staff serving Maine’s youth and their families in the community and at Long Creek Youth Development Center. The Maine Model of Corrections, an operating philosophy founded in the principles of normalization and humanization with an emphasis on de-stigmatization, respect, and modernization of the Department as a whole, governs the Division of Juvenile Services in every aspect of serving Maine youth and families.



## Maine Department of Corrections



**Our Mission:** The Department of Corrections is making our communities safer by reducing harm through supportive intervention, empowering change and restoring lives.