



Goals & Objectives

The Maine JJAG's goals and objectives were developed in alignment with our values to provide community-based services in the least restrictive setting, reduce racial disparities, uplift inclusive practices, engage and empower youth and families, and integrate funding, cross-agency collaboration, and community partnerships. The goals and objectives aim to directly support prevention, intervention, or reintegration opportunities for Maine youth, further solidifying our commitment to being a model juvenile justice state.

Goal 1: Community-based Continuum of Care

The JJAG will leverage available federal resources in collaboration with other stakeholders to allocate resources and support efforts to develop and maintain a community-based continuum of care that includes more effective crisis responses, higher education and employment opportunities for upward mobility, mental health support, and tribal engagement for Maine youth involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. These objectives align with our inclusive community building values to provide community-based services in the least restrictive setting, reduce racial disparities, and integrate funding, cross-agency collaboration, and community partnerships.

A. Community-Based Responses:

- Inclusive supportive housing for system-involved youth with an emphasis on youth transitioning out of secure care.
- Restorative justice programs that effectively reduce system involvement and promote accountability to the impacted person and/or community and healing for the system-involved youth, their families, community, and persons harmed by the incident.
- Targeted diversion and related capacity-building efforts for girls, LGBTQIA+ youth, and historically or currently marginalized populations. This is in continued support of the goal to end the incarceration of girls in Maine.
- Prevention-based programming using research-based approaches to steer youth from being system-involved.
- Expand Regional Care Teams to help individual youth remain and thrive in their homes and communities.
- An asset map of the available continuum of care services is developed, published, and maintained.

B. Alternatives to Incarceration

- Support state efforts to expand community-based alternatives to incarceration and to develop smaller, more therapeutic residential options consistent with state legislation and the final [2020 Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment](#) recommendation to remove all youths from Long Creek.

C. Higher Education and Employment Opportunities

- Career development and job placement programs for transitioning youth.
- Career pathways that highlight apprenticeship and opportunities for higher education.

D. Mental Health Support

- Support for counseling and therapy services, early therapeutic opportunities for youth, and substance abuse support that include trauma-informed responses to delinquent behavior, adolescent development, and mental and behavioral health needs in collaboration with DOC, DHHS, and other stakeholders.

E. Tribal Engagement

- Fund youth representatives to attend tribal summits.
- Develop ongoing communication with tribes to identify program set-asides.
- Continue to support tribal initiatives that support reducing racial and ethnic disparities.

The community-based continuum of care provides direct prevention, intervention, and reintegration services. The JJAG's capacity to continue supporting our Regional Care Teams, restorative justice, mental health, and other services, remains central to our mission of reducing racial and ethnic disparities. The JJAG will continue to support smaller, community-based solutions over secure commitment facilities.

Maine strives to limit referrals into the youth justice system by providing robust diversion options and supporting the training of more people in restorative justice practices. JJAG will continue to support

gender-specific services to prevent youth delinquency, which is part of Maine's work on the deinstitutionalization of girls, a goal set out in collaboration with the Vera Institute. The JJAG has also supported the evidence-based and gender-specific programs of SMART Moves, SMART Girls, and Youth Advocate Programs (YAP) mentors.

Additional focus will be placed on higher education and employment opportunities to provide justice-involved youth with more aspirational opportunities during reintegration. The JJAG will explore the release of an RFP for agencies willing to provide placement services for higher education and employment.

The JJAG continues to support plans to increase the number of services to youth in rural areas. Some of this will be through the JJAG's work with Tribal members and groups, as referenced above. Other work will include engaging in alternative crisis responses for youth that foster partnerships between schools, agencies, youth, and families to avoid the involvement of local law enforcement.

Goal 2: System Changes

The JJAG will leverage available federal resources to support efforts to improve system policies and procedures consistent with national best practices and recommendations in the [2020 Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment](#). Informed by the R/ED & Gender Report, our goal is to become more present in policy guidance, allowing the expertise of board members and community input to steer our juvenile justice system. The R/ED & Gender Report will examine the state's data analysis and reporting process for juvenile justice to support more access to current data for juvenile justice stakeholders. Additionally, the study will gather community input on the various perspectives surrounding the goal to remove all youth from Long Creek Youth Development Center as recommended by the System Assessment. By further understanding the community's perspective of Maine's Juvenile Justice system, providing professional development opportunities, enhancing Maine's data reporting and analysis capabilities, and supporting more effective accountability measures within our juvenile justice system, the initiatives

underscore our inclusive community building values to reduce racial disparities, uplift inclusive practices, and engage and empower youth and families.

- A. R/ED and Gender Data Report.** The data report will address and recommend inclusive community-building strategies to help reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. It will also assess the juvenile justice data reporting and analysis processes, including gender-specific services. Using quantitative and qualitative approaches, Maine communities and counties will be engaged to understand their needs and perspectives on our juvenile justice system. The report will inform the goals and objectives outlined in the three-year plan and others that may arise consistent with the goals and values of the JJAG.
- B. Data Reporting Dashboard.** Develop a regularly updated juvenile justice data-reporting and analysis system, including disaggregated data on race, gender, age, and sexual orientation.
- C. Strengthen Diversion.** Support the use of individualized strengths-based needs assessments, provide policy guidance on coordinated services and their accessibility, and develop a roadmap of existing and needed diversion programs as a component of an asset mapping tool of community resources.
- D. Transforming Community Supervision.** Support state efforts to implement reforms recommended by the Probation Transformation Certificate program and related Capstone project through the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform.
- E. Independent Oversight Council/Committee.** Consistent with System Assessment recommendations, support establishment of a state-sponsored independent oversight entity that reviews policies, procedures, practices, and outcomes of Maine youth's well-being, care/level of abuse, mental health, and quality of life should be further explored.
- F. Professional Development.** Support ongoing racial equity training and leadership development opportunities that impact system changes and reduce racial disparities among decision-makers (such as law enforcement, courts, corrections, schools, and other relevant stakeholders) who are most affected by system changes and are also integral to leading change.

G. JJAG Strategic Placement. Identify opportunities to expose the public and county and state governments to JJAG’s expertise and capacity to provide policy guidance and to fund and support initiatives for Maine youth involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

Goal 3: Youth Engagement

The JJAG will leverage available federal resources to elevate and amplify the voices of youth involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system by supporting youth-focused events, establishing a database/network of youth-based organizations, and providing scholarships to system-involved youth authentically engaged in reform efforts.

A. Programming

- Strengthen youth engagement by supporting a Maine Youth Summit and larger network of youth-led and youth-focused organizations.
- Improve outreach and awareness by publishing a network of youth-based organizations and related resources.

B. Young People’s Caucus (YPC)

- Develop a JJAG onboarding process for YPC members.
- Enhance YPC’s organizational structure.

C. Scholarships

- Make the \$5K Paul K. Vestal, Jr. Award available by advertising, developing an application process, and scholarship sub-committee to manage the process.