

Federal Reports Show Path to Youth Justice Reform

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About the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

The Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is mandated under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). Section 206 of the JJDP established the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Council) as an independent entity in the executive branch to improve the coordination of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention activities across the federal government. It is statutorily required to report to the White House and Congress.

Members of the Council include federal executive leaders from the following offices: Department of Justice (the Attorney General), the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Interior, Department of Labor, Department of Education, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of National Drug Control Policy, AmeriCorps, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Defense. In addition, the Council includes ten youth justice practitioner members.

Report to the White House and Congress

Through its latest published report, the Council adopted the Continuum of Care model as a framework for its recommendations on justice-involved young people. The Continuum of Care is a social and ecological model that identifies evidence-based interventions and supports for youth, including both those who have been victims of crime and those who are involved in delinquency. Several other federal agencies on the Council, including HHS, have also adopted a Continuum of Care framework.

In the report, the Council identified and outlined five core priorities around the Continuum of Care framework (see page 11 of the report).

- Direct and redirect funds, where possible, and concentrate investments, services, and support efforts towards culturally responsive, community-based approaches that address the root causes of justice involvement (such as poverty, absence of community development, poor health, lack of education, trauma, workforce disengagement, mental health, and substance use issues).

- Promote and ensure funding, training, and implementation support for community-based, culturally responsive, and developmentally informed trauma and healing responsive services for youth and families. These programs need to be effective, affordable, and accessible.
- Inform and support access to mental health and substance use prevention or treatment programs for justice-involved youth, including youth with disabilities, to prevent and reduce out-of-home placements. These programs need to be comprehensive, community-based, and culturally responsive (e.g., family counseling, peer-to-peer support, educational stabilization, mental health and substance use services, arts and healing-centered programs).
- Provide financial incentives and rewards for communities that successfully keep children and youth out of detention/commitment and with their families.
- Improve access to post-secondary education, supportive services, and career training for youth exiting the justice system.

In addition, the report includes 18 recommendations to the White House and Congress on how to support and operationalize the five priorities (see pages 12-13 of the report).

[Review the full report here.](#)

The Practitioner Report

In addition to the report to the White House and Congress, the ten practitioner members of the Council provided an accompanying Practitioner Report that discusses how the field can align their efforts in implementation. This Practitioner Report focuses on:

1. The current needs of youth, which reflect the trends and needs of young people across the nation;
2. Effective and promising approaches for justice-involved youth;
3. Adopting and strengthening the Continuum of Care for youth; and
4. Future opportunities to support youth in the areas of prevention, diversion and intervention, out-of-home placement, reentry and workforce opportunities.

Overall, the Practitioner Report identifies where opportunities may exist to meet critical needs of youth and families in their communities.

[Review the full report here.](#)

Call to Action

These reports symbolize federal consensus across agencies on key priorities and demonstrate leadership and collaboration among the different youth-serving systems in our nation.

Now, there is a critical opportunity for practitioners, advocates, and allies at national, state, and local levels to move forward and keep these priorities and recommendations alive. A key next step for the field is to identify opportunities, as outlined in the Practitioner Report, to pilot, implement, or scale responsive programs and initiatives in the communities they serve.

Continuum of Care Framework



Figure 1 Continuum of Care Framework adopted by the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention FY23-FY24 Report to Whitehouse and Congress (page 8)

Authors: This brief was developed in collaboration by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice and The Sentencing Project.

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