

**Monmouth County Youth Services Commission**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 2024**

Minutes

**Attendance:**

Trude Arnette, Tara Buckley, Myra Carter, Stephanie Cello, Ellen Cohen, Carlton Cummings, Achille Dejean, Thomas Fichter, Dr. Charles R. Ford, Jr., Carlos Gandulla, Laurie Gerhardt, Jennifer Hoffer, Chanta L. Jackson, Ivan Kaplan, Dustin Knoblauch, Honorable Lourdes Lucas, Caitlin Mejia, Kathleen Peterson, Raymond Santiago, Lynn Seaward, Kaitlyn Silagyi, Christine Talbot, Yolanda Taylor, Sebastian Trapani, Kathleen Wardlow, Desiree Whyte, Elizabeth Williams.

**I. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING’S ACT**

Desiree Whyte called the meeting to order and read the open public meeting’s act. A welcome and introductions of those in attendance was made. A motion was made, seconded and carried (Knoblauch: Silagyi) to approve the Minutes of the August 6, 2024, Youth Services Commission meeting.

**II. YSC Planning Committee**

Trude Arnette gave the YSC Planning Committee report and stated that the 2025 Monmouth County Comprehensive Youth Services Plan Update was e-mailed to Youth Services Commission members. Members of the YSC Planning Committee met on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, to review and comment on the draft of the 2025 Youth Services Plan Update. Trude reported that the 2025 Youth Services Plan Update includes the following sections:

I. Introduction

II. Planning Process

Description of the county’s planning process for determining funding decisions for the upcoming year. Description on how the county’s planning process continues to include participation by and input from youth, families, and the community. An update is given for each recommendation outlined in our 2024-2026 Monmouth County Comprehensive Youth Services Plan. The recommendations are categorized into the following sections: prevention, diversion (law enforcement, FCIU & Family Court), detention/detention alternative, disposition, and reentry.

A description of additional information helpful to the YSC in completing this Plan Update is included. Efforts made by the YSC to seek additional funding to supplement the funding received by the JJC. A chart is included that highlights other funding opportunities and sources that the County applied for that supplement and expands services for children and youth. Discussion points that were shared between the Youth Services Commission and the County Council on Juvenile Justice System Improvement and any activities that helped to facilitate the completion of the Youth Services Plan Update. Description how the YSC stays informed of best practices or evidence-based

programming for serving young people and families, and our efforts to ensure programs follow best practices or evidence-based programming.

### III. Monitoring Results for Funded YSC Programs

A chart is included that lists the YSC programs funded in 2024 that provides a brief description of the program with their contracted level of service, and the date of their monitoring and overall monitoring rating.

### IV. Continuum of Care

Definitions are provided for the various points of intervention (prevention, diversion, detention alternatives, disposition, and reentry). The CY 2024 Existing Services-Continuum of Care-Points of Intervention are provided in a chart that lists the programs/services and indicates annual level of service and funding source.

A motion was made, seconded and carried (Arnette:Jackson) to approve the 2025 Monmouth County Youth Services Plan Update as prepared to be recommended to the Board of County Commissioners for submission to the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission. A roll call vote was taken. It is our intent to have this item be placed on the Commissioners meeting of October 24, 2024, or November 7, 2024.

Trude Arnette stated that the Comprehensive County Funding Application for the State / Community Partnership Grant Program and the Family Court Services Program has been prepared. She indicated that CY 2025 is the first, one year renewal option to our three-year competitive contracting process, based upon the service priorities developed in our three-year Comprehensive Youth Services Plan for 2024-2026. Concurrently, funded programs have been asked to complete a 2025 streamlined funding request application that will be due to the Division of Child and Youth Services on October 29<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon. Trude Arnette reported that our 2025 funding application to the Juvenile Justice Commission for the State Community Partnership Grant and the Family Court Services Program maintains our existing funded programs and services based upon their monitoring results and satisfactory performance. If any changes are required in program profiles, they can be submitted to the Juvenile Justice Commission following our review of the streamlined funding request applications submitted by our funded programs.

Monmouth County's Comprehensive Funding Application to the Juvenile Justice Commission is for a combined total amount of \$1,055,394 for the period 1/1/25-12/31/25. This combined total is comprised of:

- \$90,000 in State/Community Partnership Grant- Program Management
- \$578,640 in State/Community Partnership Grant- Program Services; and
- \$386,754 in Family Court Services funds

The Funding Application includes:

- The Cover Sheet with required information identifying the county's Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, the YSC Administrator, and the Supervisor of the YSC Administrator.
- Attachment A - At a Glance (Programs & Services to be Funded). Lists the Profile Number, funding source, agency and program name, a brief description of the program and the amount to be awarded by point on the youth justice system continuum for calendar year 2025. The corresponding letter from the recommendations section of the Plan that the program/service will address is also indicated.

- Attachment B-1-2025 Programs and/or Types of Services to be Funded. Provides the Allocation of Funds Per Program Category & Funding Source.
- Attachment B-2- CY 2025 Line-Item Budget, Program Management/Administrative Costs
- Attachment C- Program Profiles for CY 2025
- Attachment D-The Youth Services Commission Membership List, the 2025 YSC Meeting Schedule, the YSC Bylaws, and the Subcommittee Membership Lists.
- Attachment E-Partnership 1/3 Set Aside Justification (Not applicable).

A motion was made, seconded and carried (Arnette:Taylor) to approve the 2025 Monmouth County Comprehensive Funding Application for the State Community Partnership Grant and Family Court Services Program as prepared to be recommended to the Board of County Commissioners for submission to the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission. A roll call vote was taken. It is our intent to have this item be placed on the Commissioners meeting of October 24, 2024, or November 7, 2024.

### **III. Division of Child and Youth Services Report**

Dustin Knoblauch reported that it has been 10 months since the Division of Child and Youth Services was established. She indicated that this Division combines the Youth Services Commission, Juvenile Detention Alternatives, and the CIACC with other youth-based contracts and the work of the Positive Youth Development Hub. Dustin indicated that the Positive Youth Development Hub is planning a workshop on the impact of social media on youth. Once finalized the specifics will be shared with the Youth Services Commission.

### **IV. YSC Administrator’s Update**

Ellen Cohen shared that the monitoring of the YSC funded programs were completed in August and that the reports were sent out to the agencies regarding our findings. Ellen stated for the most part the monitoring was positive for all the programs and there were only a few items that additional information was requested, or a correction needed. Ellen reminded the YSC members that they are invited to attend the NJ Youth Justice Conference being held on October 10<sup>th</sup> to October 11<sup>th</sup> entitled, “Partners in Progress: Celebrating 20 Years in JDAI and Youth Justice Reform in NJ”.

### **V. Prosecutor’s Office**

Prosecutor Raymond Santiago stated the reduction in juvenile detention facilities in NJ is a problem in other counties and a potential concern for us, although the number of beds we have, has been sufficient thus far. Conferences with other Prosecutors statewide has identified this as an issue especially for counties without their own facility. Thomas Fichter reported on the change of Assistant Prosecutors handling juvenile matters within his unit- two Assistant Prosecutors replaced with one, who is a seasoned attorney. The Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office- Monmouth County Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Team conducted a training, open to all Monmouth County School Threat Assessment Teams, School Resource Officers (SROs), School Psychologists/Counselors, School Administrators and School Board Attorneys. The School Based Threat Assessment Team Training was held on September 24, 2024, at the

Monmouth County Fire Academy. Presentations by members of the US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Stand with Parkland were included. There were over 200 people in attendance and the training was well received. Dr. Charles Ford attended the training and stated that the Vocational School district is adding - individuals to their threat assessment team, for back up. Thomas Fichter reported on a new initiative in development, using restorative justice circles in schools to reduce incidents in schools. The Prosecutor's Office is looking at the RJ model used in Mercer County. Tom reported that the Prosecutor is very supportive of this initiative, and that Chris Decker was coordinating training for it and that they hoped to get it off the ground this school year.

## **VI. Overview of the 2023 Data & Trends**

### **Court Processing**

Kathleen Wardlow provided an overview of the 2023 court processing data.

In 2023, there were 318 juveniles docketed, 60 juveniles diverted, and 220 juveniles adjudicated delinquent by Monmouth Vicinage. In 2023 compared to 2022, there were 78 additional juvenile docketed, 10 more juveniles diverted, and 55 more juveniles adjudicated delinquent.

In 2023, there were 473 cases docketed, 64 cases diverted, and 328 cases adjudicated delinquent. In 2023 compared to 2022, there were 83 more cases docketed, 10 more cases diverted, and 38 more cases adjudicated delinquent.

In 2023, there were 910 offenses docketed, 81 offenses diverted, and 651 offenses adjudicated delinquent. In 2023 compared to 2022, there were 43 more offenses docketed, 12 more offenses diverted, and 132 fewer offenses adjudicated delinquent.

As it stands in 2023, juveniles aged 15-16, once again, comprise the largest number and percentage of juveniles docketed, diverted, and adjudicated delinquent.

Overall, males continue to comprise the largest number and percentage of those docketed diverted and adjudicated delinquent compared to females. In 2023 compared to 2022, males showed an increase in docketed, diverted, and adjudicated delinquent cases. However, despite the increases in males' numbers, males showed a decrease in percentage for juveniles docketed and adjudicated delinquent. Whereas females showed an increase in the number and percentage of juveniles docketed and adjudicated delinquent but a decrease in the number and percentage of juveniles diverted as compared to 2022.

The race / ethnicity data for 2023 docketed, diverted and adjudicated delinquent juveniles still seems to indicate that the 'Hispanic' ethnicity system indicator is still not accurately captured in the data report for the large majority of juveniles. The vicinage will be reviewing the data further to determine a way for the data to accurately capture the 'Hispanic' ethnicity indicator noted in the system.

In 2023, simple assault (purposely/knowingly cause bodily injury) comprised the largest number of charges for juveniles docketed and diverted and was the second highest offense for juveniles adjudicated delinquent. The offense of violation of probation was the highest for juveniles adjudicated delinquent.

While a significant volume of charges was identified as “Not Categorized” within the offense category data for 2023, the offense category with the highest number of docketed, diverted, and adjudicated delinquent were juveniles charged with Theft/Fraud/Forgery.

The statistics in this report do not reflect cases that were expunged. In 2023 Monmouth Family Court expunged 90 case records for 84 juveniles whose cases were ultimately dismissed. Kathleen (Katie) Wardlow stated that for next year they are creating items internally to track such as the municipalities highest offenses, types of diversions, or school-based complaints tied to a particular municipality. An update on changes in staffing within the Vicinage Family Division was provided. To streamline communication with the whole team, a FJ mailbox has been established. [MonFJ.mbx@njcourts.gov](mailto:MonFJ.mbx@njcourts.gov) Monmouth Vicinage was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in July for the reduction of backlog related to statewide court statistics. Katie acknowledged the work of the Family Division and Judge Lucas. She highlighted the work of Ivan Kaplan and indicated she hoped that an alternative reciprocal arrangement could be made with Ocean County. Ellen Cohen thanked Katie and shared that we wish her well in her soon to be new position at the Juvenile Justice Commission.

### **Youth Detention Center Admissions**

Sebastian Trapani provided an overview of the 2023 admissions of Monmouth County juveniles to detention. There were 37 admissions of Monmouth County juveniles to secure detention in 2023. 32 in Middlesex County Juvenile Detention Center and 5 in Ocean County juvenile detention center. This represents 17 fewer Monmouth County juvenile admissions to secure juvenile detention than in 2022. The average length of stay in juvenile detention for Monmouth County juveniles in 2023 was 72.9 days, which represents an increase of 7.5 days from 2022. There was 2,846 child-care days provided to Monmouth County juveniles. 2,527 at the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention and 274 at Ocean County juvenile detention center in 2023. This represents a decrease of 686 child-care days from what was provided in 2022. The total average daily population of Monmouth County juveniles detained in 2023 was 8.5 which, is .4 less than in 2022. The total number of Monmouth County Black juvenile admissions in 2023 was 26 which represents a decrease of 13 from 2022. The total number of Monmouth County White juvenile admissions in 2023 was 5 which, is the same as in 2022. The total number of Monmouth County Hispanic juvenile admissions 2023 was 6 which, represents a decrease of 4 admissions from 2022.

In 2023, the gender of the Monmouth County admissions to the juvenile detention indicates that 33 or 89% are male and 4 or 11% are female. There were 15 fewer Monmouth County males admitted to juvenile detention in 2023 compared to 2022 and 2 fewer female admissions. The municipalities with the highest number of admissions of Monmouth County juveniles to Juvenile Detention Facilities in 2023 were Asbury Park (10); Long Branch (6); and Neptune (3). Sebastian Trapani noted that in prior years Keansburg was on the list but is no longer.

Sebastian Trapani shared concern about the reduction of secure beds statewide that has taken place over the years, which has now created problems for some counties looking for space. Currently, there are 523 beds in 7 remaining facilities. At one time, there were 17 facilities in New Jersey. The statewide bed capacity is much lower than the number licensed for. He expressed a need to

have overflow beds in Ocean County in case Monmouth exceeds the number at the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention facility. Sebastian Trapani gave an overview of the secure beds across the state and indicated that in other states due to bed shortage they have had to send youth to other states at an astronomical cost.

### **Juvenile Detention Alternatives**

Ivan Kaplan provided an overview of the 2023 Juvenile Detention Alternatives admissions. He reported that in 2023, there were 17 participants on Home Detention /Electronic Monitoring, 3 admissions on Electronic Monitoring Expansion-Wireless/GPS, 2 admissions on House Arrest A, 1 admission on House Arrest B, 3 admissions to the Juvenile Shelter and 9 admissions on the STEADY transition program. In 2023, a combined total of 35 youth admissions were under the Monmouth County Division of Juvenile Detention Alternatives supervision. The gender of the 35 youth indicates 28 (80 %) as male and 7 (20%) as female. The race/ethnicity of the 35 youth indicates 22 (63%) as African American, 6 (17%) as White, 5 (14%) as Hispanic and 2 (6%) as “Other”. In 2023, there were a total of 31 (97%) successful completions and 1 (3%) non successful. *The departures include some youth carried over from the prior year.* In 2023, there was 1 unsuccessful termination. The one youth who violated in 2023 was open with CMO and had past DCP&P involvement.

### **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

Elizabeth Williams shared the sad news regarding the recent passing of Van Lane, who was a true champion to all the clients served by the Office of the Public Defender. Elizabeth described him as a great advocate who was very supportive of the work, she and Trude has been able to participate in with the Youth Services Commission. He will surely be missed, and it will be new territory without him. Elizabeth indicated their continuing to do good work for their clients, from the example he set, will be the best way for us to honor him.

### **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **X. ADJOURNMENT-**

### **The meeting was adjourned.**

The next meeting of the Monmouth County Youth Services Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 4:00 PM