

2025
YOUTH JUSTICE IN ACTION
CONFERENCE



THE ROYAL SONESTA
MINNEAPOLIS DOWNTOWN

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

OCTOBER 14TH - 16TH

2025 CJJ Youth Justice in Action Conference

Letter from National Chairman

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Tuesday, October 14th

Early Registration, Networking Mixer

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Denmark Commons

Early Registration Opens

3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Denmark Commons

Exhibitor Set-up

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Denmark Commons

Networking Mixer and Community YJAM Activity

Please join us at our welcome mixer to network with partners and experts from around the country. Small snacks and beverages will be provided.

Wednesday, October 15th

Conference Opening, Plenaries, Workshops, Executive Board Meeting


SESSION CATEGORIES

 Youth and/or Community Partnership

 Storytelling, Data, and Evaluation

 Model Program

 Education, Training, and Technology

 Model Policy or System-level Best Practices

7:30 am - 5:00 pm
Denmark Commons

Registration and Exhibitor Hall Open

8:00 am - 9:00 am
Denmark Commons

Breakfast

8:00 am - 9:00 am
Scandinavian Ballroom 1

ECD Committee Open House Breakfast

All attendees are invited to attend the ECD Committee open house. The ECD Committee advises CJJ on ways to ensure that diversity representative of race, gender, and ethnicity of youth and families involved with the juvenile justice system and issues related thereto are incorporated into CJJ activities and strategic goals.

9:00 am - 10:40 am
Scandinavian Ballroom 3 and 4

Conference Welcome & General Session

Introduction and Opening Remarks:

Keynote:

Presented by

Dr. Yohuru Williams - Racial Justice Initiative at The University of St. Thomas - Minnesota

Plenary: TBA

10:40 am - 10:45 am

Break

10:45 am - 12:00 pm

[Concurrent Workshop Session #1](#)
Session descriptions on Page 8

Scandinavian Ballroom 1



Compliance Monitoring 101: Practical Tools, Tips, and Strategies for New and Experienced Compliance Monitors

Presenters:

Samantha Armendariz - Compliance Coordinator, New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department

Chris Yeager - Compliance Monitor, Missouri Department of Public Safety

Norway 1



Rise To The Challenge! Creating Public Safety With Healing, Accountability And Positive Relationships.

Presenters:

Julie Hilt - Founder & CEO, ARC Uncuffed

Damon Cooke - Founder & Director of Community Integration

Josh Varner - Youth Presenter

Chris Brodsky - Youth Presenter

Norway 2



Co-Creators of Change: Partnering with System-Impacted Youth to Transform Policy Through Story, School, and Strategy

Presenter:

Candace Jones - Founder & CEO of Expanded Educational Services

Norway 3



Stories + Data = Change: Youth Shifting Narratives and Building Power

Presenters:

Julian Spencer - Movement lead, Good Trouble

Jose Perez - Chief Troublemaker, Good Trouble

Haben Ghebregish - Director of Movement Organizing, Good Trouble

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Lunch on Your Own

Scandinavian Ballroom 3 and 4

R/ED Coordinator Meeting
(Closed Meeting/Lunch Provided)

2:00 pm - 3:15 pm

Concurrent Workshop Session #2
Session Descriptions on Page 9

Scandinavian Ballroom 1



We Can Solve This: Community-Led Youth Justice Transformation in Kent County, MI

Presenters:

Mark Woltman - Managing Director of ConnectUS

Lauren Conrad - Senior Consultant at ConnectUS

Cole Williams - Executive Director of The Delta Project

Norway 1



Authentic Engagement: Turning Youth Storytelling into System Solutions

Presenters:

Erin Condon - Member of the Emerging Leaders Committee, CJJ & Project Associate at the Behavioral Health Crisis Hub, University of Illinois Chicago

Isaiah Polk - Member of the Emerging Leaders Committee, CJJ & Juvenile Probation Case Manager, Montgomery County Juvenile Court in Tennessee

Faria Tavacoli - Member of the Emerging Leaders Committee, CJJ & Public Health Student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Norway 2

THIS SESSION IS INVITE ONLY: Youth Reentry Roadmap App Session - Center for Improving Youth Justice

Facilitated by:

Brendan Donahue - Data and Technology Director at the Center for Improving Youth Justice

Jaclyn Cirinna - Executive Director at Youth Leaders Network

Norway 3



How to be an Effective Team when Implementing Evidence-Based Programming for Youth

Presenter:

Vincent C. Crawford - Judge, Dekalb County Juvenile Court

3:15 pm - 3:30 pm

Break

Scandinavian Ballroom 1



From Punishment to Prevention: Better Approaches to Addressing Youth Gun Possession

Presenters:

Richard Mendel - Senior Research Fellow for Youth Justice at The Sentencing Project

Gregory N. Jackson - President of The Rocket Foundation

Freddy Barton - Executive Director of Safe & Sound Hillsborough

Norway 1



Real Stories, Real Outcomes. Advancing Change Through Storytelling

Presenters:

Kelly Williams - Chief of Marketing and Communications, Youth Advocate Programs™ (YAP®), Inc.

Diamond Rice - Advocate, Hamilton County, Ohio Youth Advocate Programs™ (YAP®), Inc.

Norway 2



From Voices to Futures: Youth-Driven Education

Presenters:

Daniel J. Sheridan - Co-Director of Behavior Analytic Services at the Department of Youth Services, Auburn University

Ashley N. Anderson - Co-Director of Behavior Analytic Services at the Department of Youth Services, Auburn University

Norway 3



A Conversation on Doing our Work: Advancing JJDPa RED Compliance

Presenter:

Pastor Edward Palmer - Pastor Edward Palmer, Pastor, Sign of the Dove Church, Radcliffe, KY

5:00 pm - 8:30 pm
TBA

CJJ Executive Board Meeting (Closed)

Thursday, October 16th

Workshops, Regional Meetings, Workshops, Award Luncheon

8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Denmark Commons

Registration Opens

7:45 am - 3:00 pm
Denmark Commons

Exhibit Hall Opens

7:45 am - 10:00 am
Denmark Commons

Breakfast

8:00 am - 10:00 am

Regional Breakfast Meetings

Attendees are invited to participate in a regional breakfast. This meeting is for information sharing, problem-solving, networking, sharing recent innovations, and successes with juvenile justice professionals in your area. All are invited to attend. A list of states by region can be found on page 8.

Scandinavian Ballroom 2

Midwest

Facilitated by CJJ Staff

Norway 1

Northeast

Facilitated by CJJ Staff

Norway 2

Southern

Facilitated by CJJ Staff

Scandinavian Ballroom 1

Western

Facilitated by CJJ Staff

10:00 am - 10:15 am

Break

10:15 am - 11:30am

Concurrent Workshop Session #4
Session Descriptions on Page 11

Scandinavian Ballroom 1



Putting Students First: Creating a District Guide for School Resource Officer Contracts

Presenters:

Erin Sandsmark - Executive Director of Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition

Margaret Sullivan - SNS Steering Committee & Ed Allies Programs and Outreach Manager

Jill Ruggiero -

Norway 1



“Bridge Builders” - Advancing Youth Restorative Justice Circles and Practices to improve Police-Youth Relations

Presenters:

Omoré Okhomina - Administrator for Adolescent Services, National Center for Children and Families (NCCF)

Kameko Johnson-Styles - Administrator for Training Management and Program Fidelity, National Center for Children and Families (NCCF)

Norway 2



NextWave Leadership: Investing in Justice-Involved Youth as Changemakers

Presenters:

Michelle A. Diaz - Executive Director of Canary Impact
Adriana (Audi) Wodrazka Espinoza - Chair of Iowa’s Youth Justice Council

Alberto Lopez - Member of Opioid Affected Youth Initiative Youth Advisory Board

Norway 3



Disproportionality in Youth Incarceration: A Review of the Latest Nationwide Data

Presenter:

Josh Rovner - Senior Research Analyst, The Sentencing Project

11:40 am - 12:55 pm

[Concurrent Workshop Session #5](#)
Session Descriptions on Page 12

Scandinavian Ballroom 1



Money Talks: Investing in Youth-informed and Justice-informed Financial Literacy Education

Presenter:

Rissa Harris - CEO of BeRe Stewardship

Ethan Harris - President of BeRe Stewardship

Norway 1



These are Our Kids: New Tools and Strategies to Engage Youth, Families, and Communities to Advocate for Youth in Custody

Presenters:

Douglas Keillor - Executive Director, Juvenile Justice Advocates International

Rick Gaines - Chief Juvenile Officer at Family Court, St. Louis County Missouri

Porshia Haymon - Chief Program Officer, Café Momentum, Dallas, Texas

Norway 2



Advancing R/ED via State Plans: The Prospective of Advocates and System Impacted Experts

Presenters:

Victoria Chamberlin - Program Manager, Center for Youth Justice

Kimberly Martin - TTA Center Youth and Family Council member

Samuel Quiles - TTA Center Youth and Family Council member

Lucinda Cross - TTA Center for Youth and Family Council member

Norway 3



TBA

Presenters:

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Scandinavian Ballroom 3 and 4

CJJ Luncheon and Award Ceremony (Lunch Provided)

Andrew Smith Award Awardee: Haley Dunn-McKinney

Presented to her by:

Mitchell Burley - Intensive Probation Supervisor, DeKalb County Juvenile Court

Vincent C. Crawford - Judge, Dekalb County Juvenile Court

Moderated by Janelle Ridley - National Vice Chair

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Scandinavian Ballroom 3 and 4

Partner Presentation: TB

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Scandinavian Ballroom 3 and 4

General Session/Closing Remarks

Plenary: Rethinking the Narrative: Understanding and
Supporting Justice-Involved Youth

Presenters:

Shannon Massaroco - Chief, Program Development – RI
Department of Children, Youth & Families





John Scott - Senior Community Development Training
Specialist – RI Department of Children, Youth & Families

Closing Remarks by Melissa Milchman

SESSION CATEGORIES

-  *Youth and/or Community Partnership*
-  *Storytelling, Data, and Evaluation*
-  *Model Program*
-  *Education, Training, and Technology*
-  *Model Policy or System-level Best Practices*

Concurrent Workshop Session #1 Wednesday 10:45 am - 12:00 pm

-  **Compliance Monitoring 101: Practical Tools, Tips, and Strategies for New and Experienced Compliance Monitors**
The primary purpose of compliance monitoring within the context of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP Act) is to ensure that states and localities are effectively implementing and adhering to the Act's core requirements. This session explores how states may use the 8 elements of an effective compliance monitoring system to fulfill the core requirements of the JJDP Act. Participants will gain tools to build or enhance monitoring systems.
-  **Rise To The Challenge! Creating Public Safety With Healing, Accountability And Positive Relationships.**
RISE-Up House is California's first Less Restrictive Program (LRP), designed for justice-involved young adults ages 18–25 to serve the remainder of their confinement in a community-based, healing-centered environment. It's more than housing—it's where structure meets support, and personal accountability is met with radical empathy. Every day at RISE-Up is built around emotional growth, life skills, and repairing community bonds.
-  **Co-Creators of Change: Partnering with System-Impacted Youth to Transform Policy Through Story, School, and Strategy**
What happens when youth aren't just heard—but lead? This workshop showcases a powerful, community-based model where system-impacted youth and families become co-creators of change through storytelling, school, and entrepreneurship. From publishing books to launching businesses, young people shape real solutions to injustice. Come learn how to shift power, build trust, and partner with youth to create bold, lasting reform from the inside out.
-  **Stories + Data = Change: Youth Shifting Narratives and Building Power**
Good Trouble's Youth-Powered Justice workshop will share how youth at the margins can lead change as storytellers, researchers and policy co-creators. Led by two young leaders of Minnesota's Good Trouble movement who've faced justice-system experience, school failure and poverty, participants will experience our youth-led feedback process—combining lived experience, storytelling and data—to shift narratives and redesign schools. This interactive session offers concrete tools for meaningful youth–adult partnerships and replicable practices for community-driven system redesign.

Concurrent Workshop Session #2
Wednesday 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm

 **Authentic Engagement: Turning Youth Storytelling into System Solutions**

This workshop will focus on the power of youth storytelling to inspire and drive real systemic change. Through authentic engagement and lived experiences, participants will explore how youth voices can not only highlight challenges but also spark innovative solutions within the justice system and beyond. The session will delve into three key subtopics that demonstrate how youth-led narratives can create ripples of transformation: gender-responsive programming, community-based alternatives to incarceration, and youth-led accountability and policy design.

 **We Can Solve This: Community-Led Youth Justice Transformation in Kent County, MI**

Grand Rapids, Michigan is reshaping youth justice through a countywide cross-sector initiative. Grounded in data, community leaders co-developed a Community Plan including shared measurement, a Youth Justice Continuum, and Policy Recommendations. The work prioritizes systems-level alignment among key sectors - education, courts, and community-based programs - to address early risk factors, support youth and families in navigating the system, and align policy and funding. This session shares lessons, tools for systems mapping, and strategies for collective action.

INVITE ONLY - Youth Reentry Roadmap App Session - Center for Improving Youth Justice

The Center for Improving Youth Justice (CIYJ) invites participants to a collaborative and interactive session focused on outreach strategies for engaging young people transitioning from secure placement back to the community. As part of a national pilot, CIYJ is testing the Reentry Roadmap—a mobile app designed to support youth in navigating reentry through personalized guidance on housing, health, education, employment, and community involvement. Despite promising features and incentives, recruiting youth participants has proven challenging. This session will explore barriers to engagement, share lessons learned from the pilot, and invite attendees to co-create solutions for reaching and retaining young people at this critical reentry phase.

 **How to be an Effective Team when Implementing Evidence-Based Programming for Youth**

This session will focus on preventing team dysfunctions as the team implements evidence-based programs. The discussion will center around techniques the team can use avoid being ineffective in producing results.

Concurrent Workshop Session #3

Wednesday 3:30 pm - 4:45 pm

From Punishment to Prevention: Better Approaches to Addressing Youth Gun Possession

While rates of gun possession are not increasing nationwide, more and more youth – especially Black youth – are being arrested, prosecuted and harshly punished for simple gun possession. These punitive responses damage young people's futures and harm public safety. The workshop will detail the research on youth gun possession and describe a successful diversionary program for youth accused of gun possession and gun violence intervention models working with youth and young adults at highest risk.

Real Stories, Real Outcomes. Advancing Change Through Storytelling

The combination of data and storytelling empowers change. This is particularly true in our digital world where news of negative outcomes disproportionately pushes fear and hopelessness. Learn how to empower staff and young people to work together to tell positive outcomes stories that advance scaling of effective program models.

From Voices to Futures: Youth-Driven Education

This session presents an evidence-based, clinically driven approach to gathering feedback from youth to identify educational programming that is meaningful, relevant, and socially valid. Attendees will learn how to design and implement open-ended surveys and focus groups to engage youth, generate actionable data, and inform programming that enhances motivation, increases participation, and potentially supports long-term outcomes.

A Conversation on Doing our Work: Advancing JJDPa RED Compliance

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPa) requires states to identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities (RED) as a core component of youth justice reform. This session will provide RED Coordinators, state advisory groups, and youth justice leaders with practical insights, guidance, and examples of what meaningful compliance with the fourth core requirement looks like in action. To ensure the discussion meets the real-time needs of the field, we will poll national RED Coordinators in advance to gather the questions, concerns, and guidance they most need to do their work. The session will be tailored in response to those requests, creating space for a dynamic, solutions-focused dialogue.

Panelists will discuss the intent of the JJDPa and the responsibilities of states to not only collect data but to develop and implement actionable strategies that move beyond compliance toward systemic change. Participants will explore pressing questions, including: What clarifications and technical assistance are most needed at this time? What barriers continue to challenge states in addressing RED? What guidance and tools can help states align their efforts with the spirit of the JJDPa?

Through a facilitated dialogue, attendees will gain a clearer understanding of current federal expectations, learn about innovative practices, and leave with actionable strategies to strengthen their state's RED efforts.

Concurrent Workshop Session #4
Thursday 10:15 am - 11:30am

“Bridge Builders” - Advancing Youth Restorative Justice Circles and Practices to improve Police-Youth Relations

This workshop explores how restorative justice (RJ) practices are used to improve police-youth relations in the District of Columbia and Maryland, with a focus on the impactful work of nonprofits like the National Center for Children and Families (NCCF). Participants will learn how RJ—through initiatives such as youth advisory councils, community events, and therapeutic art and self-expression—can foster mutual understanding, reduce racial disparities, and promote healing and accountability between law enforcement and youth.

Putting Students First: Creating a District Guide for School Resource Officer Contracts

Solutions Not Suspensions has spent the past year developing a district contract guide for School Resource Officers grounded in community input and student-centered values. This workshop will share our methodology, highlight the current state of SROs in Minnesota, and explore how districts can create transparent, equitable agreements. Participants will engage in discussion and leave with tools to strengthen accountability and support positive school climates.

NextWave Leadership: Investing in Justice-Involved Youth as Changemakers

The NextWave Leadership Program invests in youth ages 18-25 who have been impacted by the criminal legal system as powerful changemakers, addressing systemic barriers to leadership, economic mobility, and civic engagement. Through financial investment, mentorship, and capacity building, NextWave equips young leaders with tools to drive systemic reform. This workshop shares the program's youth-driven model, real-world successes, and strategies for integrating lived expertise into policy and practice. Participants will gain practical tools to create sustainable, equity-driven leadership pathways within their organizations and communities.

Disproportionality in Youth Incarceration: A Review of the Latest Nationwide Data

The latest Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement reveals that Black-white and Tribal-white youth incarceration disparities are now at their highest levels since data collection began in 1997, and Latino-white disparities are on the rise. The workshop will show how disparities are calculated and reveal state-by-state differences in youth placement over time.

Concurrent Workshop Session #5
Thursday 11:40 pm - 12:55 pm

[These are Our Kids: New Tools and Strategies to Engage Youth, Families, and Communities to Advocate for Youth in Custody](#)

TBA

 [Money Talks: Investing in Youth-informed and Justice-informed Financial Literacy Education](#)

Our workshop invites participants to create youth and justice-informed financial literacy solutions, which are crucial for overcoming racial and economic disparities. Through storytelling and hands-on small group activities, attendees will identify the financial literacy education needs of justice-involved youth. Participants will leave the workshop feeling motivated to center youth voices in the co-creation of financial literacy programming. BeRe co-facilitators will share insights from their own experience of creating a youth-informed and justice-informed financial literacy program

 [Advancing R/ED via State Plans: The Prospective of Advocates and System Impacted Experts](#)

This session will feature Youth and Family Council Members from the TTA Center for State Compliance with the R/ED Core Requirement having an open discussion about how they see the goals outlined in their states' R/ED plans being realistically implemented within their jurisdictions. The Youth and Family Council Members will also consider and offer recommendations for opportunities that exist for enhanced impact. This session will offer real life perspectives on what is occurring in the YFC members' states and how what their state's plan offers can be realized on the ground. Included in this session will be R/ED Coordinators to discuss how the data is used to create, implement, and assess the impact of the R/ED plan. The bi-directional relationship between the two entities will be lifted up as a way to encourage coordinators and advocates to strengthen local partnerships in this work.

 [From the System to the Solution: How Directly Impacted Youth Are Changing the Game Together](#)

This workshop brings together directly impacted youth leaders who have experienced the juvenile justice system and are now driving community change. Together, we'll share personal stories, successful community-led programs, and actionable solutions that reduce racial disparities, elevate youth voice, and challenge systemic injustice. Participants will learn how youth can lead and collaborate to create transformative policy, narrative change, and sustainable systems of justice.

Sponsors & Exhibitors



THE ANNIE E. CASEY
FOUNDATION



charlie health



Youth **Advocate**
PROGRAMS, INC.



MATTER

BERE
STEWARDSHIP

COALITION FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE (CJJ)
REGIONS OF STATE ADVISORY GROUPS

The composition of the JJDPAs State Advisory Groups (SAGs) regions is defined in the CJJ Bylaws. Each region's members are represented on the CJJ Executive Board by a Regional Chair and 1-to-2 Regional Representatives. Memberships in CJJ are granted to all SAG members, as well as the state staff that work on JJDPAs matters with the SAG (including the state Juvenile Justice Specialists, DMC Coordinators, and Compliance Monitors).

The Chair/Chair-designee of each CJJ member-SAG has a vote in all proceedings of the CJJ Council of SAGs. The Council is responsible for Bylaws, electing Officers to the Board, and approving major policy positions. The Council of SAGs shall meet at least once annually. The CJJ Executive Board convenes at least 4 times per year to act as the governing body for legal, fiscal and strategic decisions, reflecting the views of CJJ members and stakeholders.

<u>Midwest</u>	<u>Northeast</u>	<u>Southern</u>	<u>Western</u>
Illinois*	Connecticut	Alabama	Alaska*
Indiana*	Delaware*	Arkansas*	American Samoa
Iowa	Maine*	Florida	Arizona
Michigan*	Maryland	Georgia*	California
Minnesota	Massachusetts*	Kentucky*	Colorado*
Missouri*	New Hampshire*	Louisiana	Comm. No. Marianas
Nebraska	New Jersey*	Mississippi*	Guam*
North Dakota*	New York*	North Carolina*	Hawaii*
Ohio	Pennsylvania*	Puerto Rico	Idaho*
South Dakota*	Rhode Island*	South Carolina*	Kansas*
Wisconsin	Vermont*	Tennessee*	Montana
	Virgin Islands	Virginia	Nevada*
	Washington, DC*	West Virginia	New Mexico*
			Oklahoma*
			Oregon*
			Texas
			Utah*
			Washington*
			Wyoming

*CJJ member states (List last updated on July 2025 and is subject to change.)

Questions? If you have any questions about the CJJ Council of SAGs, Executive Board, CJJ Regions, or CJJ Membership, please contact Melissa Milchman CJJ Executive Director, at milchman@juvjustice.org.



Due to the varying requirements of different jurisdictions and disciplines, CJJ does not seek prior accreditation of educational programs for CLE/CEUs. Please consult the rules of your jurisdiction regarding procedures for receiving continuing education credits.

Sponsor: Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Activity Level: CJJ Youth Justice in Action Conference
Dates: October 14- 16
Location: The Royal Sonesta Downtown Minneapolis
Minneapolis, MN

This program may qualify for up to:
15 hours CLE/CEUs based on the 60-minute hour

By signing below, I certify that I attended the activity described above and am entitled to claim

_____ CLE/CEU credit hours

(If attending the full conference, write 15 hours in the blank. Otherwise, please note actual number of hours attended).

Name (Please Print or Type)

Signature

Membership, Registration, or Supreme Court #

Date

State where credits are to be registered

NOTE: If you are required to report to more than one state, complete a separate form for each state.

Acknowledge by:

(Sponsor Representative)

Date