



# BRIDGES FOR BETTER FUTURES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS IN ADVANCING YOUTH JUSTICE

MAY 27TH - MAY 30TH  
GRAND HYATT WASHINGTON





# CJJ'S EMERGING LEADERS COMMITTEE YOUTH SUMMIT

The 2026 Youth Summit Track theme is–

**FROM CONFLICT  
TO CARE:**



**CREATING JUSTICE  
FOR YOUTH, BY YOUTH**

This year's Youth Summit Track, facilitated by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice's Emerging Leaders Committee, empowers young individuals to share their insights with established juvenile justice professionals. The Youth Summit will explore how we move beyond systems that ask young people to merely survive and instead create pathways for them to truly thrive.

By uplifting the voices of young people who have experienced the system firsthand and positioning young people as co-creators – not just recipients – of justice, we reimagine what justice can mean when it is shaped by youth, for youth. Together, we will explore innovative approaches that prioritize people over titles, center culture in care, and create meaningful access to action and advocacy at every stage of youth development.

While some sessions are primarily reserved for youth attendees, more experienced professionals are strongly encouraged to attend open sessions to gain insights into youthful perspectives and take part in intergenerational collaboration.

Welcome,

On behalf of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) Executive Board, our Council of State Advisory Groups, members, and staff, welcome to the 2026 CJJ Annual Conference.

This conference brings together people who do the work—practitioners, advocates, system leaders, youth, and lived experts—because improving outcomes for young people requires collaboration and honest engagement. The 2026 conference theme centers on the power of collective action and partnership and how we move from discussion to results for youth, families, and communities.

For more than 40 years, CJJ has worked alongside states to strengthen compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act while improving how systems operate on the ground. This year, we are focused on what it takes to sustain effective systems of care—strong partnerships across agencies and communities, meaningful youth and family engagement, sound data, and practices that work.

Over the next few days, this conference will ask hard questions and focus on practical solutions:

- How cross-system collaboration can strengthen prevention, intervention, and reentry supports;
- How states can maintain compliance with the JJDP Act while building systems that serve youth better;
- How data, evaluation, and accountability improve decision-making; and
- How youth, families, and lived experts must be part of designing solutions—not after the fact, but from the start.

Youth leadership is not an add-on to this work. It is essential. Through the Emerging Leaders Committee and the Youth Summit, CJJ continues to elevate the voices of young people with lived experience as partners in system improvement. Their insights strengthen policy, sharpen practice, and remind us why this work matters.

This conference is also about action. It is about taking what we learn here back to our states and communities and applying it in ways that improve safety, fairness, and opportunity for young people. Every session, conversation, and connection is an opportunity to move the work forward.

Thank you to our sponsors, presenters, partners, and planning committee, and to the CJJ staff who made this gathering possible. Most importantly, thank you for showing up committed to making a difference.

We're glad you're here. Let's get to work.

Jack Martin  
Chair, Coalition for Juvenile Justice



# Wednesday, May 27th

## CJJ Hill Day, ELC Mixer, and Networking Event

- Attendees are encouraged to visit their members of Congress to inform them of state and local needs, interests, and accomplishments in juvenile justice and to urge them to support reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA). Participants are expected to schedule/arrange their own meetings in advance of the conference.

## Hill Day Packets available for pick-up

7:00 am – 1:00 pm Location: Renwick

## Skill Building: Hill Day Training (Session 1)

7:00 am – 7:30 am Location: Renwick

- Discuss talking points on current state/federal issues, juvenile justice funding, and JJDPA reauthorization with CJJ Staff and Act4JJ representatives prior to your Hill Day visits. This training is being offered twice.
  - **Facilitated by:**
    - **Lisette Burton, D.C. Juvenile Justice Advisory Council Member and Co-Chair, Act4JJ Coalition**
    - **Brock Landwehr, Associate Director, Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

## Skill Building: Hill Day Training (Session 2)

10:00 am – 10:30 am Location: Renwick

- Discuss talking points on current state/federal issues, juvenile justice funding and JJDPA reauthorization with CJJ Staff and Act4JJ representatives prior to your Hill Day visits. This training is being offered twice.
  - **Facilitated by:**
    - **Lisette Burton, D.C. Juvenile Justice Advisory Council Member and Co-Chair, Act4JJ Coalition**
    - **Brock Landwehr, Associate Director, Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

## Early Registration

12:30pm – 3:30 pm Location: Constitution Foyer (3B)

## Youth Summit Kick-Off (YOUTH ONLY)

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm Location: Penn Quarter AB

- The Youth Summit begins with a youth-only meet and greet session, which includes: introductions, icebreakers and games, casual freeform networking, and a preface of what's to come during the conference. This year, our kick-off theme is creating justice by youth, for youth.
  - **Facilitated by:**
    - **Ja'Miyah Levy, Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ**
    - **Stephanie Lorenzo, Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ**
    - **Rebekah Arnold, Emerging Leaders Committee Chair, CJJ**

## Welcome and Networking Mixer

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm Location: Consitution Ballroom

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

- **Presentation: When Kids Lead the Courtroom**
  - **Presenter:**
    - **Cayden Brown, Executive Director of the Trespass Project**
- **Sponsorship Presentations**
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Jennifer Gurss, RI Learning**
    - **Sasha Barab, Lifelab Studios**
- **From Voice to Partnership: Youth Leadership Requires Adult Collaboration**
  - **Presented by Mikva Challenge's Safety & Justice Council:**
    - **Layla Vaughn, Youth Advocate**
    - **Owen Carpenter, Youth Advocate**
    - **Oyinkansola Adeosun, Youth Advocate**

## Youth Game Night (YOUTH ONLY)

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm Location: Bulfinch/Latrobe/Renwick

# Thursday, May 28th

## Opening Plenary, Exhibit Hall, Workshops, Awards Luncheon, Meetings

### Registration

8:00 am – 5:00 pm Location: 3B Registration Desk

- Registering, be sure to check out our **Exhibit Hall** located in the **Bridge Rooms**.

### Breakfast

8:00 am – 9:00 am Location: Constitution Foyer

### Youth Networking and Breakfast **YOUTH ONLY**

8:00 am – 9:00 am Location: Penn Quarter AB

- A time for all young people, youth members, and students to introduce themselves and network before the conference kicks off. Featuring a short guided meditation led by Kim Mettler from the Association on American Indian Affairs.

### Juvenile Justice Specialists' Meeting (Closed Meeting)

8:00 am – 9:00 am Location: Declaration A

- A forum for state Juvenile Justice Specialists to network, share resources, and discuss emerging issues.
- **Facilitated by:**
  - **Kiley Komro**, *National Juvenile Justice Specialist, CJJ*

### R/ED Coordinator/Ethnic & Cultural Diversity Committee Meeting and Breakfast (Closed Meeting)

8:00 am – 9:00 am Location: Declaration B

A forum for state R/ED Coordinators and Ethnic and Cultural Committee members to network, share resources, and discuss emerging issues.

- **Facilitated by:**
  - **Victoria Key-Walker**, *National R/D Coordinator, CJJ*
  - **Barbara Wallace**, *National Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Chair, CJJ*

### Conference Welcome & General Session

9:00 am – 10:30 am Location: Constitution Foyer

- **CJJ Welcome by: Jack Martin**, *National Chair, CJJ*
- **ELC Welcome by: Rebekah Arnold**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Chair, CJJ*
- **Keynote:** The Continuum in Action: Advancing Youth Justice Through Partnership
  - **Presenter:**
    - **Liz Ryan**, *Doris Duke Distinguished Visiting Fellow, McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University*
- **Opening Plenary Session:** Meet Them on the Bridge: Transforming Hesitation into Collaboration
  - When partnership feels impossible, start here. Many youth justice professionals encounter hesitant partners (families, law enforcement, and community members, etc) shaped by mistrust or difficult past system experiences. This workshop shares practical strategies for rebuilding trust, engaging reluctant partners, and fostering collaborative problem-solving.
    - **Presenters:**
      - **Gianina Horton**, *Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities Coordinator, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance (OAJJA), Colorado Division of Criminal Justice*
      - **Hanna Mackintosh**, *Diversion Coordinator, OAJJA*
      - **Shelly Myskiw**, *Compliance Monitor, OAJJA*
      - **Tom Harbaugh**, *JJDP Council Liaison, OAJJA*

# SESSION CATEGORIES

 YOUTH AND/OR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

 MODEL PROGRAM

 MODEL POLICY OR SYSTEM-LEVEL BEST PRACTICES

 STORYTELLING, DATA, AND EVALUATION

 EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND TECHNOLOGY

## Break

10:30 am – 10:40 am

## Concurrent Workshop Session #1

10:40 am – 11:45 am

### The Next Generation Panel **YOUTH TRACK**

Location: Penn Quarter AB

- The Next Generation Panel unlocks youth voices with lived experience to help navigate complex systems by equipping them with the skills, confidence, and opportunities needed to grow as effective and informed leaders in their communities. It creates an intentional and inclusive space where current leaders, decision-makers, and stakeholders can actively listen, engage, and learn directly from young people whose voices are often underrepresented in traditional spaces. Through open and honest dialogue, youth share the challenges they face, highlight systemic barriers, and offer thoughtful, experience-driven solutions aimed at improving and transforming the systems that impact their lives and futures.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Pray'Eon Jackson**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
    - **Damareus Jackson-Martin**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
    - **Audi Espinoza**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
  - With contribution from **TJ Puller**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
  - Moderated by **Rebekah Arnold**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Chair, CJJ*

### First Contact, Last Chance for True Diversion: Police as Community Partners in Prevention

Location: Declaration A

- The first contact between youth and the justice system is a too often overlooked opportunity for problem resolution and true diversion. This session presents a trauma-informed, relationship-based training model for police – grounded in research and informed by conversations with youth about their experiences – that improves youth encounters and reduces the likelihood of arrest. Participants will explore the evidence, examine the model, and leave with practical tools to replicate this approach in their own jurisdictions.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Jeffrey Aaron**, *Juvenile Justice & Behavioral Health Program Manager, Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services*
    - **Kim Simon**, *Founder, S2C LLC | Safe Schools & Communities*

### Bridges to Services: Connecting Court Referrals to the Community's Continuum of Care

Location: Declaration B

- When families miss work to follow court orders but are referred to closed or unavailable programs, it creates a fractured “ghost network.” After a 2023 gap analysis, our Juvenile Court replaced outdated, siloed provider lists with a unified digital system—a Stakeholder Site with vetted Provider Levels (1–5)—to ensure accessible, active, and safe care. But technology alone isn’t enough. Following rollout challenges, the Court launched a strategic “relaunch.” This workshop challenges the field to stop viewing referral systems as bureaucratic outputs and start viewing them as the essential “bridge” that translates a judge’s order into real help, real healing, and real rehabilitation for children and families. The presenters will facilitate a series of situational scenarios and a “ghost service audit” discussion. Participants will be challenged to identify where their own jurisdiction’s data might be leading families to dead ends, ensuring no child falls through the gap between the courtrooms and the community.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Jessie Dryden**, *Administrator, Research & Data Visualization, Memphis & Shelby County Juvenile Court*
    - **Hari Priya Veeradimma**, *Evaluation Coordinator – Referral Process, Memphis & Shelby County Juvenile Court*
    - **Kimbrell Owens**, *Interagency Manager, Memphis & Shelby County Juvenile Court*

## Seeding the Ecosystem: Partnership Lessons from Building a Healing-Centered Youth Justice Vision

### Location: Burnham

- What does it take to build a youth justice ecosystem rooted in healing, liberation, and lived experience – and what gets in the way? In partnership with Catalyze Justice, this workshop draws on The Hive's journey developing a transformative, healing-centered campus in Richmond, VA. Through honest reflection and facilitated dialogue, participants will explore the structural barriers community organizations face and leave with actionable recommendations for funders, practitioners, and system partners.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Trey Hartt**, *Director of Collective Visioning, The Hive*
    - **Vidhya Ananthakrishnan**, *Co-Founder and Managing Director, Catalyze Justice*
    - **Vincent Lau**, *Senior Manager of Advising and Learning, Catalyze Justice*

## CJJ 2026 Awards Luncheon

### 11:45am – 1:15 pm Location: Constitution Foyer

- CJJ recognizes the accomplishments of its national award recipients who have been nominated and selected by CJJ members.
  - **Moderators:** **Jack Martin**, *National Chair, CJJ* and **Janelle Ridley**, *National Vice Chair, CJJ*
    - **Tony Gobar Outstanding National Juvenile Justice Specialist Award**
      - Recipient: **Leahann Romero (ID)** – Presented by: Honorable Judge Mark Ingram
    - **Spirit of Youth Award**
      - Recipient: **Pray'Eon Jackson (OK)** – Presented by: Les Thomas
    - **A.L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award**
      - Recipient: **Maximilian R. Mendoza (KS)** – Presented by: Tyler Williams
    - **Marion Mattingly Lifetime Achievement Award**
      - Recipient: **Carol Miller (OK)** – Presented by: Shel Millington
- **Sponsorship Presentation:** **Katie Hatley**, *Graduate Arkansas, Inc.*
- **Presentation: Partnerships for Youth Success: A Cross Sector Partnership Chat with the CJJ National Chair and Foster Youth to Success Initiative Leadership**
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Jack Martin**, *National Chair, CJJ*
    - **Chris Patterson**, *HUD Regional Administrator & National Lead for Foster Youth and Independence Initiative*

## Break

### 1:15 pm – 1:25 pm (coffee available in Constitution Foyer)

## Concurrent Workshop Session #2

### 1:25 pm – 2:30 pm

## Empowerment Through Expression YOUTH TRACK

### Location: Penn Quarter AB

- This workshop invites attendees to explore advocacy through art, offering young people a chance to advocate for youth justice in a way that resonates most with them. Participants will create expressive pieces across various art mediums while engaging in meaningful discussion and storytelling. Artwork from past and present ELC members will also be showcased, highlighting the power of creative voices in advancing justice.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Rebekah Arnold**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Chair, CJJ*
    - **Ja'Miyah Levy**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*

## From Custody to Community: Advancing Youth Reentry Through Evidence-Informed Partnerships

### Location: Declaration A

- Youth reentering communities face stigma, disrupted education, mental health needs, and limited support, increasing recidivism risk. This interactive workshop presents a comprehensive, evidence-informed reentry model grounded in trauma-responsive practice and cross-system collaboration. Participants will explore practical tools and partnership strategies to enhance youth outcomes, strengthen systems, and support long-term, community-based reintegration success.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Barbara Walters**, *Professor, School of Social Work, Eastern Michigan University*
    - **Jennifer Fritz**, *Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, Eastern Michigan University*
    - **Bonnie Miller**, *Lecturer, School of Social Work, Eastern Michigan University*

## Youth Voice, Youth Justice: Youth Participatory Action Research in Detention Centers and Beyond

### Location: Declaration B

- Members of the Youth Voice Commission will share insights from their conversations with youth in Wisconsin's secure detention centers about the impacts of mentoring, the need for services inside the facilities and in their communities, and policy changes needed to improve outcomes for youth in the system. The Commissioners will lead participants in a demonstration of the Talking Wall method they used to conduct participatory action surveys of youth in the facilities to turn quotes and notes into actionable recommendations for positive reforms. The content will be presented as a hybrid between a presentation by multiple youth voice commissioners and an interactive demonstration of the Talking Wall method of participatory action surveys.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Trevor Strickler**, *Commissioner, Youth Voice Commission*
    - **Ella Bostwick**, *Commissioner, Youth Voice Commission*
    - **Maurice Newton Jr.**, *Commissioner, Youth Voice Commission*

## Juvenile Fine and Fee Reform: Effective Strategies for SAG Engagement and Partnership

### Location: Burnham

- State Advisory Groups (SAGs) have tremendous power to influence juvenile fine and fee reform in their states. This session will explore why fine and fee reform should be a priority for every SAG, ideas that may be championed by SAGs, partnerships that can advance work in this area, and ways any SAG can leverage its role for real change that improves lives of youth and families.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Tim Curry**, *Policy & Research Director, Fines & Fees Justice Center*
    - **Cameron D. Clark**, *Attorney and Co-coordinator, Debt Free Justice*
    - **Andi Sabanal**, *Youth Committee Chair, Hawai'i Juvenile Justice State Advisory Committee, EPIC 'Ohana*

### Break

2:30 pm – 2:40 pm

## Concurrent Workshop Session #3

2:40 pm – 3:45 pm

## Taking the Next Step: Climbing The Ladder of Youth Advocacy **YOUTH TRACK**

### Location: Penn Quarter AB

- In this workshop we will be exploring what it truly means to step authentically into advocacy, sing the ladder of engagement to unpack power, lived experience, and how young people navigate and reshape social justice systems. Together, we will rethink who is seen as an expert, and examine how advocacy can be both meaningful and inclusive in practice. Participants will leave with a clear sense of their own “why” and how to move from just a seat at the table to holding power and creating sustainable change in justice spaces.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Faria Tavacoli**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
    - **Tori Ikeda**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
  - With contribution from **Annie Li**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*

## Deflection by Design: How Colorado Built a Blueprint for Sustainable Youth Investment

### Location: Declaration A

- In 2025, Colorado lawmakers created the Deflection and Community Investment Grant Program — a first-of-its-kind statewide funding mechanism for trauma-informed, pre-arrest juvenile deflection services. This workshop walks participants through the legislative development process, from evidence-building to bipartisan coalition assembly, to final passage and implementation. Attendees will leave with a replicable strategy for establishing dedicated deflection funding structures in their own states.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Jacob "Coby" Madison**, *Founder, Bridge the Gap*
    - **Logan Seacrest**, *Resident Fellow, R Street Institute*
    - **John Garcia**, *Assistant Chief of Police, Longmont, CO Police Department*
  - **Moderated by: Dana Flores**, *National Center for Youth Law, Colorado Campaign Coordinator, Youth Justice*

## Planting Prevention: A Trauma Development Framework for Youth Diversion

### Location: Declaration B

- This workshop introduces the Trauma Development Tree, a public health framework that maps how adverse experiences, social determinants, and system responses shape youth behavior and justice involvement. Participants will explore how teaching this model in detention facilities, alternative schools, and K–12 settings—engaging youth, officers, caseworkers, educators, and school resource officers—can shift responses from punishment to prevention, strengthen self-awareness, and interrupt pathways from trauma to incarceration.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Janelle Ridley**, *Brandeis University, National Vice-Chair, Coalition for Juvenile Justice*
    - **Breigh McKinney**, *Marymount University, Subcommittee Member, Coalition for Juvenile Justice*

## Back to Basics: Advancing Youth Justice Through Evidence-Driven Research and Healing-Centered Practice

### Location: Burnham

- This session introduces a new brief series from the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, guiding practitioners in implementing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) through research-informed practices. Presenters will discuss the series' foundational paper emphasizing youth's developmental differences and evidence-based care, in addition to discussing a new paper, *Addressing Childhood Adversity with Strategies for Healing and System Improvement*, which examines how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) influence youth behavior and system involvement. The paper emphasizes that ACEs reflect unmet needs and environmental stressors rather than individual deficits. The session will also preview briefs on additional key focus areas, including Trauma-Informed Care, Protective Factors, Alternatives to Arrest, and Community-Based Alternatives to Incarceration.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Melissa Milchman**, *Executive Director, Coalition for Juvenile Justice*
    - **Edward L. Palmer Sr.**, *Co-Pastor, The Sign of the Dove Church*
    - **Ashley Anderson**, *Director of Behavior Analytic Services, Auburn University, Alabama Department of Youth Services*

## CJJ Regional Meetings

3:50 pm – 5:00 pm

The challenges states and territories face can vary greatly based on geographical region. This meeting time is dedicated to information sharing, problem-solving, and networking for those looking to share concerns, recent innovations, and successes with juvenile justice professionals confronting similar issues. All are invited to attend. A list of states by region can be found on page 14 of this agenda.

- **Midwest**
  - Location: Declaration A
  - Facilitated by: Callie Hargett, *Midwest Regional Chair*
- **Northeast**
  - Location: Declaration B
  - Facilitated by: Larome Myrick, *Northeast Regional Chair*
- **Southern**
  - Location: Burnham
  - Facilitated by: Raymond Vincent, *Southern Regional Chair*
- **Western**
  - Location: Bulfinch/Latrobe/Renwick
  - Facilitated by: Max Mendoza, *Western Regional Chair*

## CJJ Executive Board Meeting (Closed Meeting)

5:15 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Bancker

## Write Night Event– On the Same Page: Poetry Exchange to Foster Community and Connection with Incarcerated Youth

5:15 pm – 6:15 pm Location: Penn Quarter AB

- **Presenters:**
  - **Tara Libert**, *Co-Founder and Executive Director, Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop*
  - **Sofia Dean**, *Community Engagement Coordinator, Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop*
  - **Immanuel Swann**, *Poet Ambassador, Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop*
  - **Victor Hernandez**, *Poet Ambassador, Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop*
  - **Deon Jefferson**, *Poet Ambassador, Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop*

# Friday, May 29th

Conference Plenary, Workshops, CJJ Business Meetings

## Registration

8:00 am – 5:00 pm Location: 3B Registration Desk

- After checking in, be sure to check out our **Exhibit Hall** located in the **Bridge Rooms**.

## Breakfast

8:00 am – 9:00 am Location: Constitution Foyer

## SAG Chair/SAG Member Networking and Breakfast

8:00 am – 9:00 am Location: Declaration A

- A forum for SAG Chairs to network, share resources, and discuss emerging issues.
  - **Facilitated by:**
    - **Brock Landwehr**, *Associate Director, CJJ*

## Compliance Monitor Meeting and Breakfast (Closed Meeting)

8:00 am – 9:00 am Location: Bulfinch/Latrobe/Renwick

- A forum for state Compliance Monitors to network, share resources, and discuss emerging issues.
  - **Facilitated by:**
    - **Samantha Armendariz**, *National Compliance Monitor, CJJ*

## Concurrent Workshop Session #4

9:00 am – 10:05 am

## Camp Compliance: An Open Community of Practice for Compliance Monitors (DSA STAFF ONLY)

Location: Bulfinch/Latrobe/Renwick

This peer-led community of practice space designed specifically for DSA staff to share practical tools, templates, and lessons learned, problem-solve together around compliance monitoring challenges and seasonal deliverables, and build relationships and normalize shared compliance pressures. This is not a traditional workshop, but a working space where participants can engage in conversations that matter most to them and contribute their own expertise.

- **Facilitated by:**
  - **Samantha Armendariz**, *National Compliance Monitor Chair, CJJ*
  - **Chris Yeager**, *Compliance Monitor, Missouri*

## Becoming Her: How Women Build Real Pathways Forward YOUTH SUMMIT TRACK

Location: Penn Quarter AB

- This workshop explores how young women can navigate the system by learning to identify meaningful connections, rebuild trust after trauma, and develop healthy, professional relationships while holding themselves to higher standards despite stereotypes. It focuses on how to turn limited or unequal programming into real opportunities by understanding rights, advocating for more, and taking initiative even when resources are underwhelming. It also touches on building self-worth, resilience, and emotional independence. Learning to cope with loneliness, change relationship patterns, and shift loyalty inward to avoid repeating toxic cycles for creating a stronger future.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Kayla Kessler**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
    - **Stephanie Lorenzo**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*

## Coach or Referee? Shifting the Role of Juvenile Justice Providers

Location: Declaration A

- Over the past 50 years, the juvenile justice system has seen the pendulum swing from *parens patriae* doctrine to adopting tough on crime strategies to curb delinquency. Regardless of the philosophical approach adopted, we often find that staff working throughout the justice system are designed more like referees than coaches. Referees are trained to be impartial, monitor for fouls, throw flags, and issue penalties. On the other hand, coaches are designed to see a player's potential, invest in the success of their players, set expectations, and hold players accountable. In transforming those working in the field to coaches, the youth we serve have the greatest opportunity to be successful.
  - **Presenter:**
    - **Brian Lovins**, *President, Justice System Partners*

## Restoring the Circle: Indigenous Tradition in Youth Justice

### Location: Declaration B

- This interactive session, Restoring the Circle: Indigenous Tradition in Youth Justice, highlights the work of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Prosecutor's Office in blending traditional restorative practices with modern legal education. Drawing from the Tribe's Youth Justice Academy, participants will learn how community-based accountability, hands-on learning, and interagency collaboration can engage youth and reduce involvement in the juvenile justice system. The session will highlight the development of a Youth Court model rooted in tradition, responsibility, and relationship-building, while modeling interactive strategies such as discussion, debate, and game-based learning.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Raenna De Jesus**, *Legal Administrative Specialist, Pascua Yaqui Tribe Prosecutor's Office*
    - **Malena Acosta**, *Chief Prosecutor, Pascua Yaqui Tribe Prosecutor's Office*

## Using SMART Goals and Logic Models to Build Effective R/ED Initiatives

### Location: Burnham

- This interactive workshop empowers multidisciplinary teams to move beyond reporting and toward measurable impact. Participants will learn to bridge the gap between high-level requirements and daily practice by using practical system-design tools. By the end of the session, attendees will have the framework for a coordinated, data-driven workplan that drives equitable outcomes and strengthens local cross-sector partnerships.
  - **Presenter:**
    - **Amber Farn**, *Deputy Director for Certificate Programs, Center for Youth Justice*
    - **Michael Umpierre**, *Director, Center for Youth Justice*

## Break

10:05 am – 10:15 am

## Concurrent Workshop Session #5

10:15 am – 11:20 am

## Restorative Justice: Repairing Harm, Restoring Communities **YOUTH SUMMIT TRACK**

### Location: Penn Quarter AB

- This workshop explores restorative justice as a transformative approach that shifts the focus from punishment to accountability, healing, and growth for youth involved in the justice system. Participants will learn how restorative practices differ from traditional justice, examine real-world applications in schools, probation, and community programs, and discuss the benefits for both youth and systems. The session will include an interactive restorative justice circle, allowing attendees to experience how dialogue, reflection, and accountability can build bridges toward better futures.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Isaiah Polk**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
    - **Chanelle Grosbard**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*

## The Stage of Justice: Using the Listen-Act-Change Theater Curriculum for Systems Reform

### Location: Declaration A

- This interactive workshop explores Advot's "Listen-Act-Change" (LAC) curriculum—a theater-based intervention that transforms justice-impacted youth into powerful self-advocates. Rather than traditional mentoring, LAC uses expressive arts to help youth navigate "split-second choices" and communicate their needs to system stakeholders. Attendees will experience the Five Streams of Communication firsthand and see how these theatrical tools were used to bridge the gap between incarcerated youth and the LA County Board of Supervisors.
  - **Presenter:**
    - **Jarvis Griggs**, *Program Manager, Advot*

## The Court's in the Game: How Judges Drive Juvenile Justice Reforms

### Location: Declaration B

- In this session, we explore how judges move from the sidelines to the center of change, using their unique position to guide reform and improve outcomes for youth. Judges aren't just referees; they can be coaches, strategists, and playmakers, driving meaningful change in individual cases and the system as a whole. Attendees will hear practical strategies for leading reform from the bench: promoting alternatives to incarceration, implementing trauma-informed approaches, and fostering collaboration with families, agencies, and community organizations. Real-world examples will show how judicial leadership can create momentum, streamline court processes, and help youth achieve positive, lasting outcomes. This session also addresses the balance judges must maintain – staying impartial while stepping into a proactive role – and the ways courts can model collaboration and accountability. Participants will leave with a new perspective on how judges can influence both the system and the lives of the youth they serve, demonstrating that leadership from the bench can transform not only cases, but entire communities.

- **Presenter:**

- **Karen Braxton**, *Judge, 3rd Judicial Circuit of Michigan*

## Bridging Systems and Youth Voice: A Replicable Model for Addressing Root Causes of Delinquency

### Location: Burnham

- This interactive workshop explores how systems can move beyond traditional intervention models by partnering directly with youth, families, and communities to address the root causes of delinquency. Participants will be introduced to a replicable co-creation framework that bridges schools, community-based organizations, and juvenile justice stakeholders. Through guided activities and real-world examples, attendees will gain practical strategies to integrate youth voice into policy and program design to strengthen prevention efforts and reduce system involvement.

- **Presenters:**

- **Dennis Ibude**, *Founder & Executive Director, Teach Emotions Inc.*
- **Abdul Lowrey**, *Co-Founder, Teach Emotions Inc.*

## Break

11:20 am – 11:30 am

## Concurrent Workshop Session #6

11:30 am – 12:35 pm

## Meet Our Culture, Share Our Culture **YOUTH SUMMIT TRACK**

### Location: Penn Quarter AB

- What is culture and how does it shape who we become? This youth-led workshop will unpack how violence, identity, shared spaces influence our realities, while building power through healing, cultural pride, and connection. Led by Black and Brown youth with real-life insights, we'll challenge stereotypes, share our truths, and reimagine a culture where we all belong and thrive.

- **Presenters:**

- **Audi Espinoza**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
- **Pray'Eon Jackson**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*
- **Damareus Jackson-Martin**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*

- With contribution from **Ron Ackerson**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, CJJ*

## Designing Healthier Transitions: A Hands-On Lab for Youth Reentry

### Location: Declaration A

- This interactive session bridges policy and real-world practice. After a rapid primer on new Medicaid reentry reforms (CAA 2023, 1115 waivers), participants work in teams to solve a fictional youth reentry case, identify implementation barriers, and design practical micro-solutions in a fun, creative environment. Using a mini-design sprint and group "pitch," attendees leave with actionable strategies and a visual roadmap to strengthen coverage, coordination, and continuity of care for justice-involved youth.

- **Presenters:**

- **Elizabeth Laferriere**, *Research Specialist and Human-Centered Service Designer, GWU*
- **Destiny Davis**, *Youth Advocate, Aged-Out Foster Child*

## Bringing Together the Youth Household: A Community-Based Diversion & Reentry Framework

### Location: Declaration B

- This interactive workshop highlights a community-based Reentry & Diversion model centered on youth voice, restorative practices, family stabilization, credible messengers, and workforce pathways. Participants will explore practical tools, real-world case application, and cross-sector strategies that reduce recidivism, strengthen accountability, and create sustainable second-chance opportunities for justice-involved youth. The session shifts the lens from "youth as the problem" to "youth as part of a household and broader system," emphasizing coordinated support across caregivers, schools, courts, employers, behavioral health providers, and community-based organizations. Attendees will leave with actionable tools, including a 90-day stabilization roadmap, stakeholder strategy mapping process, and planning frameworks adaptable to their own jurisdictions.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Janette Gonzalez-Graham**, *Founder & Executive Director, No Struggle No Success, Inc.*
    - **Tiffany Page-Cooper**, *Educator & Program Evaluator, No Struggle No Success, Inc.*
    - **Shannon McFadden**, *Executive Director, McFadden Educational Center*

## Student Conflict Resolution Toolkit: Youth-Led Strategies for Building Safer and More Accountable School Communities

### Location: Burnham

- Participants will examine core goals and principles of the Student Conflict Resolution Toolkit and explore how implementing core principles effectively can shift patterns of student conflicts that impact school climate and juvenile outcomes.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Jamal Jones**, *Executive Director, Baltimore Algebra Project*

## LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

### 12:35 pm – 2:00 pm

- 1:40 pm – 1:55 pm – Optional Guided Meditation presented by Kim Mettler in Bulfinch/Latrobe/Renwick

## CJJ Government Relations Committee Meeting (Closed Meeting; Lunch Provided– Please pick up at Registration desk)

### 12:35 pm – 1:45 pm Location: Declaration A

- **Facilitated by:**
  - **Monica Celli**, *Government Relations Committee Chair, CJJ*

## Concurrent Workshop Session #7

### 2:00 pm – 3:05 pm

## Youth Debrief **YOUTH ONLY**

### Location: Penn Quarter AB

- This session creates space for youth to gather, reflect on the conference, share feedback, and discuss what resonated with them. Together we will identify key takeaways and shape a collective Call to Action that empowers both young people and adults to carry this work forward and make their voices heard.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Audi Espinoza**, *Emerging Leaders Committee, CJJ*
    - **Chanelle Grosbard**, *Emerging Leaders Committee, CJJ*

## Bridge 2 Brilliance: A Partnership Blueprint for Youth-Led Diversion

### Location: Declaration A

- This interactive session highlights a replicable partnership model that brings together juvenile justice agencies, schools, community providers, families, and youth with lived experience to strengthen diversion, intervention, and reentry outcomes. Attendees will explore practical tools for cross-system collaboration, youth and family co-design, and JJDP A-aligned strategies that can be adapted in state and local communities.
  - **Presenter:**
    - **Randy Curtis Jr**, *Lead & Restorative Mentor, West County Community of Hop*

## Reframing Juvenile Detention: The TRUE Alabama Solution (ADYS)

### Location: Declaration B

- This session analyzes pressing challenges and opportunities within Alabama’s juvenile justice system, with an emphasis on achieving equitable outcomes for vulnerable youth. It examines the impact of the COVID cohort, highlighting systemic failures that disproportionately harmed Black children and other marginalized populations during the pandemic. The discussion explores avenues for transforming the lives of juvenile offenders, assessing how ADYS can deploy its resources to promote rehabilitation, accountability, and restorative practices. Policy and privatization receive critical scrutiny, with attention to strategies that reduce reliance on private detention facilities and protect low-income, disenfranchised communities from adverse effects. Finally, the session outlines collaborative actions—practical steps for coordination among government agencies, school districts, and community stakeholders—to sustain and scale reforms within ADYS. The session’s goal is a coherent, equity-centered agenda that advances meaningful, evidence-informed change for youth, families, and communities across Alabama.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Michelle Summers**, *Educational Strategist, The Department of Youth Services*
    - **Leroy Barrow**, *Educational Juvenile Guru, The Department of Youth Services*

## 30 Years of Creative Solutions for Justice Involved Youth

### Location: Burnham

- Big Thought’s Creative Solutions program is entering its 33rd year in partnership with Dallas County Juvenile Department. What started out as getting art access into the hands of justice-involved youth has evolved into an annual arts-as-workforce intervention program that has one of the lowest recidivism rates in non-residential services partnered with DCJD. Participants will learn the history of the Creative Solutions success and experience a hands-on song writing workshop.
  - **Presenter:**
    - **Vincent Coronado**, *Sr. Manager, Creative Voices, Big Thought*

## Plenary and Conference Closing

3:05 pm – 5:00 pm Location: Constitution Foyer

### Introduction:

- **Jack Martin**, *National Chair, CJJ*

### Closing Plenary – Knowledge is Power, Decreasing Delinquency by Empowering Youth

- Discover proven strategies to engage youth and empower informed decision-making through insights on brain development and motivation. Learn how research-backed approaches support the concept that when youth are well informed, they make more confident, deliberate, and effective decisions. Learn how to use Title II funds to fuel a prevention-focused scope of work that meets objectives embedded within a 3-year plan. Explore lessons learned from New Hampshire’s implementation of an informational education tool.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Jennifer Archer**, *Juvenile Justice Specialist, New Hampshire Division for Children Youth and Families*
    - **Kristen Wheeler**, *Director, Strategies for Youth*
    - **Katherine Muzzy**, *Juvenile Prosecutor, Londonderry Police Department*

### Closing Plenary – Community-Driven Continuum of Care in Practice: Lessons from DC

- **Presenters:**
  - **Kyla Woods**, *Chair of the DC Juvenile Justice Advisory Group*
  - **Naïké Savain**, *Co-Executive Director of Programs, The Black Swan Academy*
  - **Nicole Newman**, *Co-Executive Director, Critical Exposure*

### Youth Call-to-Action

- During the Youth Debrief, emerging leaders worked to address the issues and collaborate innovative solutions discussed at this year’s Annual Conference. At this time, members of CJJ’s Emerging Leaders Committee will share findings from their collaborative discussion.
  - **Presenters:**
    - **Chanelle Grosbard**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, ELC*
    - **Audi Espinoza**, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, ELC*

### Conference Closing Remarks:

- **Melissa Milchman**, *Executive Director, CJJ*

# Saturday, May 30th

CJJ Council of SAGs Meeting

## Continental Breakfast

7:45 am – 8:15 am Location: Constitution Foyer

## Council of SAGs Meeting & Executive Board Elections

8:15 am – 11:00 am Location: Constitution Ballroom

- All conference attendees are welcome to attend the annual meeting of CJJ's policy-setting body, comprising member-State Advisory Group Chairs/Chair-designees.
  - **Facilitated by:**
    - **Jack Martin**, *National Chair, CJJ*
- **Presentation: Beyond the Numbers: Leveraging Youth Justice Data for Smarter Title II Investments**
  - **Facilitated by:**
    - **Brock Landwehr**, *Associate Director, CJJ*
    - **Josh Rovner**, *Senior Research Associate, The Sentencing Project*
    - **Tom Woods**, *Senior Associate, Juvenile Justice Strategy Group Annie E. Casey Foundation*

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

The composition of the JJDPA 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 JJDPA 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
North Dakota*	New Jersey*	Mississippi*	Guam
Ohio*	New York*	North Carolina*	Hawaii
South Dakota*	Pennsylvania*	Puerto Rico	Idaho*
Wisconsin	Rhode Island*	South Carolina*	Kansas*
	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 April, 2026 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.



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