2026

YOUTH JUSTICE IN ACTION CONFERENCE

Coalition *for* Juvenile Justice

PITTSBURGH, PA

WYNDHAM GRAND PITTSBURGH DOWNTOWN

OCTOBER 13TH - 15TH

Welcome to the 2026 Youth Justice in Action Conference

Greetings,

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

We are especially honored to gather with you during **Youth Justice Action Month (YJAM)**, a national movement that brings together young people, advocates, practitioners, policymakers, and community leaders to raise awareness and take action on behalf of youth impacted by the legal system. October is a powerful reminder that meaningful change happens when communities come together to elevate youth voices, strengthen opportunities, and advance justice.

This year, we are particularly excited to celebrate and uplift young leaders and lived experts who are helping shape the future of the youth justice movement. Throughout the week, we will highlight individuals, youth leaders, organizations, and state and local reform wins, elevating stories and impactful leadership of youth advocates and practitioners whose vision and dedication continue to challenge us to build systems that are more equitable, responsive, and rooted in community.

As we convene in Pittsburgh, we face a critical moment for youth justice. Across states, territories, Tribal Nations, and communities, leaders are developing innovative approaches to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, strengthen community trust, expand opportunity, and ensure that youth and families are true partners in decision-making. The conversations, workshops, and connections that occur during this conference are designed to move those efforts forward through shared learning, collaboration, and action. Together, we will explore:

- Strategies that advance youth-centered and community-driven approaches to system improvement.
- Effective efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities and promote equitable opportunities for young people.
- Cross-sector partnerships that strengthen outcomes for youth, families, and communities.
- Approaches to elevating youth voice in policy development, implementation, and evaluation.
- Innovations that help states and communities strengthen compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act while advancing positive youth outcomes.

We are also pleased to honor **Tara Kelly of Kentucky** with the **2026 Andrew Smith Award**, recognizing her outstanding leadership, commitment, and contributions to advancing racial and ethnic equity and improving outcomes for youth. Tara's work exemplifies the spirit of collaboration, courage, and community-centered leadership that this award represents.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our sponsors, exhibitors, presenters, featured speakers, planning committee members, youth leaders, SAG members, and CJJ staff whose dedication and support make this conference possible.

Whether you are joining us as a longtime member, a youth advocate, a state leader, a practitioner, or a first-time attendee, your presence strengthens this community. Thank you for bringing your experiences, ideas, and commitment to this work. We look forward to learning alongside you, celebrating the progress we have made together, and building momentum for the work ahead.

We are grateful to be in community with you during YJAM and throughout this important week of learning, connection, and action.

Sincerely,

Jack Martin
National Chair

Janelle Ridley
National Vice Chair

Melissa Milchman
Executive Director

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

October 13th – *Early Registration, Networking Mixer*

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm
King's Garden Foyer

Early Registration Opens

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
King's Garden Foyer

Exhibitor Set-up

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
King's Garden Ballroom 4 & 5

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 provided.

October 14th – *Conference Opening, Plenaries, Workshops, Executive Board Meeting*

7:30 am – 5:00 pm
King's Garden Foyer

Registration and Exhibitor Hall Open

8:00 am – 9:00 am
King's Garden Foyer

Breakfast

9:00 am – 10:40 am
King's Garden Ballroom 4 & 5

Conference Welcome & General Session
Introduction and Opening Remarks
Janelle Ridley, *CJJ National Vice Chair*

Land Acknowledgement
Miguel Sague Jr, *Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center of Pittsburgh, Board of Directors and Community Outreach and Education Representative*

Keynote: "Begin with the End in Mind"
Bruce Edwards, *Juvenile Family Magistrate, Circuit Court for Prince George's C**ounty***

Opening Plenary
Pennsylvania State Advisory Group and System Leaders
Kim Berkeley Clark, *SAG Chair, Retired, Judge Allegheny County*
Teresa Willcox*, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program Manager*
Robert Tomassini, *Executive Director, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission*
Russell Carlino, *Retired, Allegheny County Juvenile Probation Chief*
Hunter Hurst, *Director, National Center for Juvenile Justice*

10:40 am – 10:45 am

Break

CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSION #1

SESSION CATEGORIES

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

10:45 am – 12:00 pm

King's Garden 1

Bridge to Opportunity: Financial Capability, Mentorship, and Pathways to Independence

Presenters

Coby Madison, *Co Founder of Bridge the Gap Foundation/CO Emerging Leader*
Taylor Young, *CO Emerging Leader*
Elizabeth Higgs, *CO Emerging Leaders*

King's Garden 2

School Discipline, Juvenile Justice Involvement, and Academic Attainment: Cross-System Collaboration through Data Sharing

Presenters

Katherine Perry-Lorentz, *Senior Director of Strategic Innovation Massachusetts Department of Youth Services*
Jonathan Zaff, *Professor and Chair, Department of Applied Psychology Bouvé College of Health Sciences, Northeastern University*
Ismanuela Denis, *Program Associate Juvenile Justice Strategy Group, Annie E. Casey Foundation*

King's Garden 3

Reform, Resistance, and Resilience: Vermont's Raise the Age Experience

Presenters

Ken Schatz, *Commissioner Retired VT Department for Children and Families*
Hunter Hurst, *Director National Center for Juvenile Justice*
Karen Vastine, *Chair Vermont Council for Equitable Youth Justice*

King's Terrace Room

Meet Our Culture, Share Our Culture

Pray'Eon Jackon, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, ELC*
Chanelle Grosbard, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member, ELC*

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Lunch on Your Own

King's Garden Ballroom 4 & 5

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

CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSION #2

2:00 pm - 3:15 pm

King's Garden 1

Together Toward Stability: Co-Designing Pathways Out of Justice Involvement for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Presenters

Cody Jost, *Co-Chair, Bill Wilson Center-Youth Impact Partnership*

King's Garden 2

Learning With, Not About: Reimagining Higher Education Through Shared Classrooms with Justice-Involved Youth

Presenters

Jenn Jacobs, *Co-Founder of Project Flex and Professor of Sport Psychology Northern Illinois University*

Jeremy Charles, *Graduate Student Instructor Project Flex, Northern Illinois University*

Jayse Booker, *Graduate Student Instructor Project Flex, Northern Illinois University*

King's Garden 3

From Conversation to Investment: Building Tribal Partnerships in Youth Justice

Presenters

Alison Humphrey, *Director of Reentry Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs*

Jennifer Francis, *Deputy Chief of Operations Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs*

Les Thomas, Sr., *Oklahoma SAG Chair Oklahoma State Advisory Group*

Brian Wahnee, *SAG Tribal Liaison Bureau of Indian Affairs Victim Services*

King's Terrace Room

Before They Become a Case File: Lessons from a Probation Officer on What Youth Need Before They Enter the Justice System

Presenters

Kim Malone, *Founder & Program Developer Reality Check By Kim*

Payton Malone, *Youth Engagement Specialist Reality Check By Kim*

3:15 pm - 3:30 pm

Break

CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSION #3

3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

King's Garden 1

From Tokenism to Partnership: Building Authentic Youth Leadership in Juvenile Justice Spaces

Presenters
Isaiah Polk, *CJJ Emerging Leaders Committee*
Chanelle Grosbard, *CJJ Emerging Leaders Committee*
Pray'Eon Jackson, *CJJ Emerging Leaders Committee*
Faria Tavacoli, *CJJ Emerging Leaders Committee*

King's Garden 2

Pennsylvania's Youth Justice Advisory Boards: Building Better Futures Through Youth Expertise, Partnership, and System Change

Presenters
Walker Michaels, *Violence Prevention Program Manager Youth Enrichment Services*
Cassandra Green, *Youth Development Leader Philadelphia District Attorney's Office – We Speak*
Cameron Boston, *Amachi Ambassador Coordinator Amachi Pittsburgh*

King's Garden 3

Vibe Check: A Youth-Led, Non-Punitive Tool for Reflection, Accountability, and Upstream Prevention of Peer Sexual Harm

Presenters
Drew Davis, *Director of Strategic Initiatives SafeBAE*
Shael Norris, *Founding Executive Director SafeBAE*

King's Terrace Room

Unexpected Paths: From Fellow to Fully Integrated Team Member – Supporting Young Professionals Through Change, Growth, and Belonging

Presenters
Tina Harris, *Assistant Fellow American Institutes for Research*
Diego Garcia, *Assistant Fellow American Institutes for Research*
Vivie Satorsky, *Technical Assistance Consultant American Institutes for Research*

5:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Sky Lounge

CJJ Executive Board Meeting (Closed)

October 15th – *Workshops, Regional Meetings, Workshops, Award Luncheon*

8:00 am – 5:00 pm King's Garden Foyer	**Registration Opens**
7:45 am – 3:00 pm King's Garden Foyer	**Exhibit Hall Opens**
7:45 am – 10:00 am King's Garden Foyer	**Breakfast**
8:15 am – 10:00 am	**Regional Breakfast Meetings** All attendees are invited to participate in a regional breakfast for information sharing, problem-solving, networking, sharing recent innovations, and successes with juvenile justice professionals in your area.
King's Garden 1	Midwest
King's Garden 2	Western
King's Garden 3	Southern
King's Terrace Room	Northeast
10:00 am – 10:15 am	**Break**

CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSION #4

10:15 am – 11:30 am

King's Garden 1

Together Toward Opportunity: Revitalizing Indigenous Restorative Justice Through Justice Education and Youth Court Development

Presenters

Raenna De Jesus, *Legal Administrative Specialist Pascua Yaqui Tribe Prosecutor's Office*

Lisa Valenzuela, *Program Coordinator Pascua Yaqui Tribe Prosecutor's Office*

King's Garden 2

How Do I Become Something I Don't See? Reimagining Support for Young Fathers Impacted by the Juvenile Justice System

Presenters

Cole Williams, *Executive Director The Delta Project*

Nicholas Deen, *Y-Fi Young Father Initiative - Young Dad Lead Coach The Delta Project*

Kahlil Richardson, *Y-Fi Young Father Initiative - Young Dad Coach & Media Content Creator The Delta Project*

King's Garden 3

Beyond Optics, Toward Power: Building Authentic Youth Partnerships in Youth Justice

Presenters

Andre Simms, *Founder & Executive Director DayOneNotDayTwo*

Rachel Godfrey, *Program Director DayOneNotDayTwo*

Rahsaan Stanback, *Youth Leader Organizer DayOneNotDayTwo*

King's Terrace Room

Education Without Interruption: Building Cross-System Partnerships that Keep Youth Connected to Opportunity

Presenters

Erica Mason, *Senior Academic Reentry Navigation Coordinator SUNY Office of Higher Education in Prison*

Kathryn O'Sick, *Dean of Student Affairs SUNY Adirondack*

Thomas Mims, *Regional Supervisor- Capital District & Mid-Hudson CMSO NYS Office of Children and Family Services*

CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSION #5

11:40 am – 12:55 pm

King's Garden 1

Reimagining Possibilities for Black Youth with Cross-System Involvement: Introducing the R-BAE REIMAGINED Framework for Centering Lived Expertise, Families, and Communities

Presenters
Rae Arrington-Epperson, MSW Student University of Michigan School of Social Work

King's Garden 2

Building Your R/ED Strategy: A Practical Roadmap for Systems Change

Presenters
Gianina Horton, *Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED) Coordinator Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance*

King's Garden 3

Practice Makes Perfect: Using Performance Art to Repair Relationship and Learn Life Skills

Presenters
Christine Allen, *Teen Court Coordinator Northern Hills Diversion*

King's Terrace Room

Bridging Research and Reform: Partnerships That Strengthen Youth Justice

Presenters
Mitchellie Woodson, *Legal Director Pillars of the Community*
Safiya Warsi, *Racial Justice Act Student Intern Pillars of the Community*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

King's Garden Ballroom 4 & 5

CJJ Luncheon and Award Ceremony (Lunch Provided)

Hosted by:

Victoria Key-Walker, *National R/ED Coordinator*

Andrew Smith Award Awardee

Tara Kelly, R/ED Coordinator of *Kentucky*

Presented by
Deonte Hollowell

R/ED Spotlight

Youth Star Performer Spotlight

Presented by

Chanelle Grosbard, *Emerging Leaders Committee Member*
Isaiah Polk, *Emerging Leaders Committee Chair*

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

King's Garden Ballroom 4 & 5

Plenary: A Seat at Our Table: Conversation with Café Momentum

Facilitated by
Cheyenne Tyler, *Executive Director Café Momentum Pittsburgh*
Amanda Timpson, *National Program Manage Café Momentum*

Panelists
Terrance Parham, *Café Momentum Second Year Ambassador Café Momentum Pittsburgh*
Neveah Hollis, *Café Momentum* *Freshman Ambassador Café Momentum Pittsburgh*
Neiko Wilson*, Café Momentum Second Year Ambassador Café Momentum Pittsburgh*

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

King's Garden Ballroom 4 & 5

Closing Plenary– If Only You Were Brave

Dr. Christian H. Bijoux, *Executive Director of the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health at the Connecticut General Assembly*

Youth Justice Action Month Highlights

Closing Remarks

Isaiah Polk, *Emerging Leaders Committee*
Melissa Milchman, *Eexcutive Director Coalition for Juvenile Justice*

4:15 pm – 5:00 pm

King's Garden Ballroom 4 & 5

ECD Committee Open House

All attendees are invited to stay for an informal conference debrief and ECD Committee open house. The ECD Committee advises CJJ on strategies and partnerships that ensure CJJs policies, programs, and strategic goals remain inclusive, representative, and informed by the different races, genders, ethnicities, ages, geographies, historical and cultural experiences, and lived and professional expertise of our members and partners.

Sponsors and Exhibitors

Michigan
Juvenile Justice Advisory
Council

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.

Midwest
Illinois*
Indiana*
Iowa*
Michigan*
Minnesota*
Missouri*
Nebraska
North Dakota*
Ohio*
South Dakota*
Wisconsin

Northeast
Connecticut*
Delaware*
Maine*
Maryland*
Massachusetts*
New Hampshire*
New Jersey*
New York
Pennsylvania*
Rhode Island*
Vermont*
Virgin Islands
Washington, DC*

Southern
Alabama
Arkansas*
Florida
Georgia*
Kentucky*
Louisiana
Mississippi*
North Carolina*
Puerto Rico
South Carolina*
Tennessee*
Virginia*
West Virginia

Western
Alaska*
American Samoa
Arizona
California*
Colorado*
Comm. No. Marianas
Guam
Hawaii*
Idaho*
Kansas*
Montana
Nevada*
New Mexico*
Oklahoma*
Oregon*
Texas
Utah*
Washington*
Wyoming

*CJJ member states (List last updated August 2026)

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.

CJJ SAG and State Agency membership dues are renewed on annual basis and follow a calendar year schedule (January 1 - December 31). Membership renewal reminders are sent out in early November prior to the start of the year and are due at the end of January.

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: 2026 CJJ Youth Justice in Action Conference
Dates: October 13-15
Location: Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown, Pittsburgh, PA

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