

2. Program Narrative

1. System description: Structure and function of the juvenile justice system.

Key elements of, and recent, and pending changes to the state youth justice response:

Vermont's formal youth justice response system is placed within the state-centric child welfare system, and the Family Division of the Vermont Superior Court. The Department for Children and Families, Family Services Division (DCF FSD) has 12 district offices covering 14 counties. The courts' jurisdictions are divided by county. The state-centric aspect of services allows for more consistency across districts, and the sharing of resources. Both systems are State-funded.

Informal parts of the justice system are also largely state funded. A statewide network of homeless and runaway youth programs provide shelter to runaways in licensed community homes and provide short-term family counseling and mediation to prevent those children from entering state custody. That same network provides services to transition-aged youth up to the age of 21 who choose to engage in those supports beyond the age of 18.

There are two types of community-based restorative justice responses in Vermont. The first is the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Program which provides case management and other supports for youth and families referred by DCF FSD. This program primarily serves youth under probation supervision, at-risk youth and truant youth. The second restorative justice response is a network of Community Justice Centers (CJCs) developed by the Department of Corrections to restore and repair victims and community from the harm caused by crime. These programs are typically municipally-based. They receive core funding from the State and are augmented by in-kind and cash matches from cities and towns. The CJCs serve several hundred youth per year, especially through their pre-charge programs set up to divert minor offense cases from the court system and to avoid bringing low-level offenders unnecessarily into the formal justice system.

Court Diversion programs have county-wide jurisdictions corresponding with the courts. These programs are state-funded through the Attorney General's Office and augmented with local funds and user fees. These services are part of the formal justice system in that a charge is formally filed before a referral is made to a Diversion program. Diversion is available to both youth and adult offenders. Another formal diversion response is available through the 'rapid response' mechanisms when offenses are related to drug and alcohol use and require a defendant to enter treatment early in case processing.

The Youth Substance Abuse Safety Program (YSAP), operated out of the county Diversion programs (also state-funded), provide a diversion response that requires screening, assessment, and treatment for alcohol or substance use disorders as indicated. It prevents court cases while holding youth accountable for possession of alcohol and marijuana.

There is also a statewide network of domestic and sexual violence programs that operate educational and prevention programs for youth which address sexual and dating violence and teach youth consent and healthy relationship skills.

Legislation regarding the court jurisdiction of youth:

Vermont is in the process of implementing several reforms to its juvenile justice system. Two years ago, it passed significant time-phased legislation that mandated most 16 and 17-year-old delinquency cases to the Family (juvenile) court instead of Criminal (adult) court. The Youthful Offender option that extends juvenile jurisdiction to youth age 16 and 17 was also expanded to youth up to age 21.

The core values of juvenile justice reform, supported by the state advisory group (SAG) highlight the methods and beliefs that have developed across community and state system responses over years of refining evidence-informed practices. The designated state agency (DSA) responsible for youth justice uses a balanced and restorative justice approach, a developmental model of working with youth in a proactive and affirming way (*Youth Thrive*), and an evidence-informed screening, assessment, and case-planning tool (*YAST*).

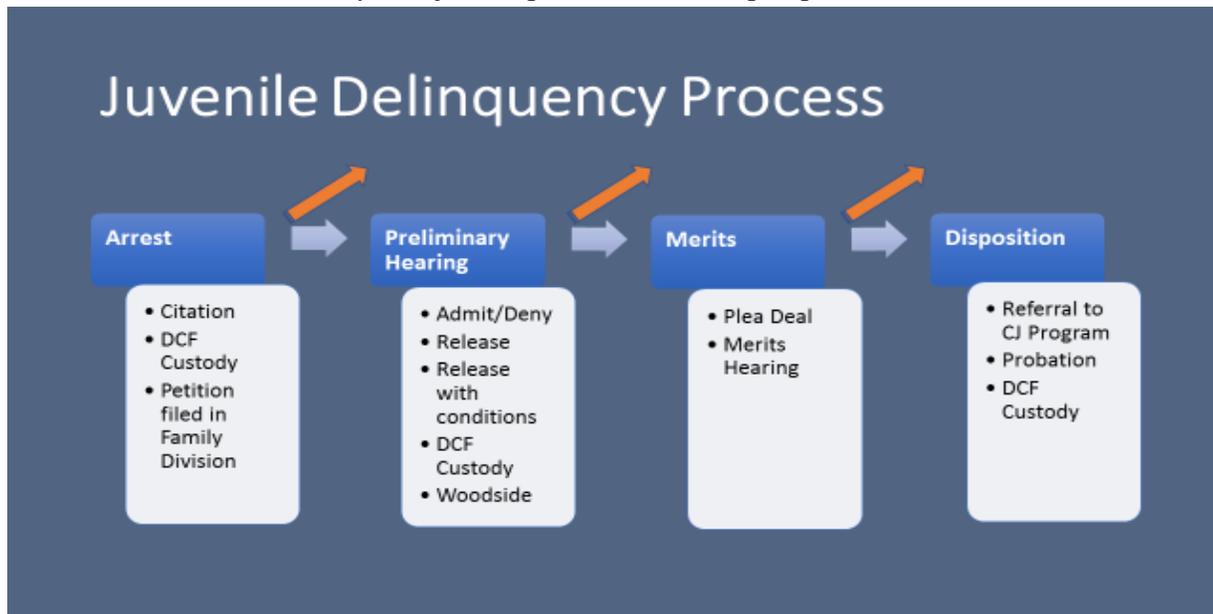
The youth justice system is strengthening and codifying the premise that youth should be kept out of the justice system whenever possible. Once a youth comes to the attention of authorities, there are many opportunities to be diverted from the system through community-based interventions. Legislation that will become effective in 2018 further codifies the expectation that most charges against youth be diverted unless there are compelling reasons counter to justice accepted by the Court.

Within DCF FSD, youth are not considered to be “offenders”, but children that need to learn more adaptive behaviors, make amends for offenses committed, and as needed, receive mental health, substance abuse or other treatment to help them to become healthy adults. Such a system recognizes that a high rate of those youth charged as delinquent or Youthful Offenders will be from families with very limited resources and frequent exposure to trauma and toxic stressors of every type.

Some of the more recent alternative options allowed for in legislation will need to be promoted through education and training to the field to achieve full implementation. This is established as a priority for SAG funding and advisory work.

Effective January 2018, state statute specifies that most cases involving youth under the age of 18 are to be cited and processed in the Family (juvenile) Division of the state courts. This is a significant and hard-won achievement by the SAG past and present, the DCF Commissioner, and other advocates.

The chart below shows the youth justice process from the perspective of court involvement.



Orange arrows indicate “off-ramps” where community-based alternatives through Diversion, CJs and BARJ help to keep youth out of the formal justice system.

Prior to court involvement: The CJs provide pre-court, concurrent and post-court interventions in Vermont. These programs have been serving adolescents in pre-charge interventions for many years and are responsible for keeping hundreds of youth out of the court system. State’s Attorneys direct law enforcement as to what types of cases may be referred to the CJs instead of court.

More recently, the DCF FSD has re-allocated resources formerly designated for delinquent youth towards some pre-court interventions through the BARJ programs, in response to the FSD’s increase in truancy referrals. BARJ services were originally funded with state OJJDP JABG for the neediest delinquent cohort. This information is included to underscore 1) that the state legislature sustained partial JABG funding loss and 2) shows that a declining youth justice caseload coupled with criminogenic-focused probation response has allowed for earlier community interventions with existing resources.

The DCF is monitoring data to determine the impact of seventeen-year-olds entering its system this year following legislative change. The impact of changed jurisdiction for sixteen-year old last year had imperceptible impact.

Sealing criminal records:

During this 2018 legislative session, and within the juvenile statute revision, there are several bills focused on efforts to remove the stigma of criminal records that impinge on citizens’ ability to work. State employment applications do not ask about criminal convictions and bills are pending that would

increase automatic sealing of criminal records for a variety of charge types following completion of sentence requirements with no additional offenses.

Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center:

Vermont does not have a history of detaining children prior to an initial court hearing except in atypical emergency procedures. Children & youth are securely placed at the Woodside facility when their behavior is considered a danger to themselves or others. Woodside is a secure residential treatment facility with 30 beds. State compliance monitoring for JJDPa does categorize this facility as a detention and corrections facility due to public authority placements. The legislature has appropriated funds to plan for a new, same-size facility that will help to create a more therapeutic environment in keeping with current programming. Provisions for due process are in place.

- 2. Analysis of juvenile delinquency problems (youth crime) and needs.** *The analysis is developed to inform the state's proposed plan. The plan is to include a description of the manner in which proposed activities and funded programs are expected to resolve the identified juvenile crime problems and juvenile justice and delinquency prevention needs and to link identified problems and needs with the state's proposed budget, goals, and priorities.*

Most of arrests and court referrals of youth in Vermont are at a misdemeanor level. Overall, court referrals of youth have declined by 20% in the past five years. For 18 – 20 year old youth, there was close to a 50% drop in cases referred to court; the most dramatic drop occurring the year that possession of small amounts of marijuana was decriminalized. Possession of marijuana is a civil offense now and will become legal for adults over the age of 21 in 2018.

There are geographic discrepancies in Vermont. Arrest and court referral data has consistently shown the same counties to have higher than average referrals relative to the population. Understanding what is driving those higher rates is important to help determine appropriate interventions or applying additional resources. Having access to timely and accurate CJs data would help to inform this view. If those counties with the highest rates of charging are not utilizing these community-based resources, then an examination of the practice and obstacles perceived by charging authorities would be helpful in creating effective change. If high-charging counties have higher rates of crime and delinquency, then determining why that occurs would inform any intervention. This geographic discrepancy may be the topic of a small study in the next three years.

Very small numbers of referrals to some of the existing court alternatives in some counties (pre-charge community justice options), overall low and declining use of the Youthful Offender option and not using other alternative resources such as post-adjudication referrals to CJs all indicate a need to promote increased use of the full continuum of responses developed by the legislature. Legislative changes have not consistently been followed by changed behavior by decision-makers. There is a clear need for implementation training, support, and tracking. The SAG expects to play a role here.

Twenty-five to thirty percent of all youth cases filed in court are referred to Court Diversion, and

80% of those are successfully resolved. Unfortunately, the Court Diversion program does not have adequate data collection and management making it impossible to assess trends in unsuccessful completion rates by youth category or geography. Young adult cases in the Criminal Division are resolved by Diversion about fifteen percent of the time. It seems likely that there is far more room to refer more young adult cases to Court Diversion, and the legislature has re-adjusted the Youthful Offender statute to increase and *assume* diversion referrals rather than court interventions in low-level offenses.

Legislative change does not always create structural or practice change. The SAG finds that one of the ways it may best support jurisdiction reform is by supporting decision-makers to *implement* the changes and to make sure that the community services are adequate, responsive to criminogenic risk and victim impact, and that resources are similarly used across geographic jurisdictions.

Youth of color are referred to court at a rate five times greater than white youth relative to arrest and nine time greater relative to population in Chittenden County. Youth of color are placed in secure detention at more than 1.5 times the frequency of white youth. Currently, the SAG is funding a large project in the jurisdiction with the most pressing racial disparity. Other jurisdictions do not show need in disparate referrals or outcomes gauged by DMC matrices.

Gender:

The rate of girls adjudicated delinquent declined slightly in the past decade. Girls account for one quarter of adjudications where they used to make up one third of cases adjudicated. There are no known trends that account for that small change. Also, in apparent decline is the rate of girls (relative to boys) that are adjudicated CHINs (beyond control of parent/guardian, status offender, and most commonly, running away).

- In court cases disposed for truancy, there are equal rates of boys and girls. During the last three-year period, approximately 60 cases were adjudicated truant.
- Addressing the needs of victims of human trafficking is work in progress in the DCF FSD and with partners in law enforcement and women’s services. An interagency workgroup has been offering training, case consultation, and planning best practice interventions and protocols across disciplines. More cases are being identified, and screening is now standard for girls who have run away and returned. Last year, there were 24 confirmed or suspected cases of trafficking; they occurred in all counties, were primarily female victims, and the majority were girls in custody of the DCF.
- A long-standing data-point affecting girls is their high rate of sexual abuse, one of the highest cohorts of abuse type found each year. Services to address the impact of sexual abuse on victims are adequate and available but generally require parents or guardians to assure access (support to participate; transportation & insurance). The VT child welfare system investigates and tracks all reports of sexual abuse, including non-familial cases.
- Trauma and toxic stress throughout childhood have significant impact on girls and boys.

Assuring that children, youth, and adults live in an environment that validates their experience, works to prevent the causes of trauma, hold accountable those individuals and institutions responsible, and teaches resilience is an important area of work. There is a newly-developed network of statewide trainers that confer with community groups on building and promoting resilience to counteract inter-generational trauma – ‘Building Self-Healing Communities’.

- The state has a network of Parent Child Centers, (PCCs) where the primary work is supporting young children and families’ quality of care. The PCCs offer parenting classes, quality child care, an accredited high school program on-site and serve a large population of pregnant and parenting teens. Older teens and young adults benefit from these Centers statewide.
- The state’s youth justice and child welfare agency has adopted a strong practice policy re: working affirmatively with LGBTQ youth.
<http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/FSD/Policies/76.pdf>
- Outright Vermont <http://www.outrightvt.org/> provides outreach, support, activities and education to LGBTQ youth and allies throughout the state and is a frequent recipient of delinquency prevention funds from the VT Title II Formula Grant.

Currently, the SAG finds no emergent clear or unmet need for expanded services or interventions specific to girls and young women. Youth justice and at-risk services are always *individualized* in small geographic districts. SAG members and staff are alert to specific needs for girls and target those as need appears.

Education priorities:

The youth justice and child welfare agency is focusing available resources on early intervention of truancy cases in advance of court involvement. This is showing positive effect. The SAG did fund truancy intervention models in multiple school districts for more than six years, ending nearly ten years ago. At that time, some school districts were able to provide some resources to the effort; some did not. The legislature and the Agency of Education did create the requirement for truancy protocols for school districts, but protocols alone are not an effective intervention to end truancy. This issue may need more legislative directives. In 2017, BARJ services worked with 275 truant children and their families. Only about 20 truancy cases are adjudicated in the courts annually.

The DMC intervention in Burlington is working towards developing early intervention and collaborative efforts to reduce the rate of youth of color suspended and expelled from school. Burlington and Winooski school districts are both working to develop restorative practices that can help to reduce suspension and expulsion. A statewide study by VT Legal Aid found that youth with disabilities and youth from non-white race categories were suspended from school disproportionately. The Burlington School District has identified reduction of racial disparities and closing the achievement gap that exists for youth of color as two of their highest priorities for several years. This

work takes time.

Alternatives to Justice System:

Informal responses to a youth's contact with authorities are primarily through the network of municipal CJs, and the BARJ services developed for youth. The services appear to be adequate to meet demand, but authorities in some jurisdictions do not utilize the resources to capacity, favoring the formal justice system. Pending and recent legislation is designed to increase use of informal interventions. While restorative justice responses are evidence-informed, some decision makers believe that a formal court response (or adult corrections response) has more 'teeth' in holding youth accountable, even though evidence suggests the opposite.

Despite their efforts, CJs do not have a database. Information is collected manually and maintained on individual spreadsheets. Failure to develop adequate reporting and tracking of community justice interventions is unfortunate:

- It is estimated, but unconfirmed, that the establishment of CJs throughout the state has been a main driver in the steady decline of delinquency and criminal cases seen by the court in the last fifteen years;
- Many of the CJs do a high volume of work involving youth;
- With the time-staged transfers of young adult cases to juvenile court over the next four years, it will be important to track the change in volume of referrals, to assure adequate local resources.

In Chittenden County, a community alternative to formal justice response resides within the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) Youth Program. This DMC project addressing prevention, early intervention, and system change has established working relationships with several key contact points and is receiving referrals for services from police, Woodside secure facility, and DCF FSD. More outreach is planned for the high schools.

Residential treatment, secure detention, and mental health treatment for youth in the justice system:

- Vermont uses the child welfare standards of least restrictive environment, and through policy, attempts to maintain all children in their home school placement. Foster homes are the least restrictive and most normal environment for children, followed by residential placements in small therapeutic community homes, some that have their own schools, and some where residents attend nearby public schools.
- The Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center for delinquent youth is the only secure facility in the state where public authority (courts and DCF FSD) can place youth. It is a treatment facility and provides a range of programming for youth. The Woodside facility will continue to be monitored as a juvenile detention and corrections facility.

- Community mental health services prioritize referrals from state DCF workers for youth involved in the system. This ensures that the highest risk and neediest children and youth receive timely intervention. Many schools have school-based mental health clinicians. Mental health agencies have emergency services teams that respond to calls throughout non-standard operating times, and a few of the largest police departments have their own social workers to assist police in community responses.
- The AALV hosts a UVM clinician from the ‘Cultural Connections’ project that provides culturally competent mental health services that are especially useful for New American youth and families.
- All mental health resources are responsive to the needs of rural families; the whole state is rural with only one significant city.

Coordination of youth services; expanded scope to young adult services

- Youth and young adult services are provided by non-profit and state agencies having responsibility for just a ‘slice’ of the whole array of service and response such as substance abuse, mental health, physical health, prevention, crisis response, justice, and recreation. These services are all funded and operated independently. There is no holistic system or one-stop-shop for youth, families, and allies. Some organizations have case managers that coordinate many of the services, but only the most at-risk are served by case managers.
- Another advisory council (other than SAG) to youth and young adult services, and a statewide coalition of after school programs have realized their disconnection and are joining forces in a youth policy coalition with the entity that is most able to influence the legislative process.
- The SAG has added young adult responses to its area of concern, following community and state services that have recognized young adult development and needs as being more fitting with the youth service and justice responses than with the adult models. There are just a few effective young adult models of service and accountability. These should be viewed carefully as Vermont designs its own system of young adult justice response.
- Small work-groups that include SAG members and Juvenile Justice staff are collaborating with the state Workforce Investment efforts and working to assess the training and sustainability needs of the nonprofit youth care workforce.
- The SAG and other decision makers will use the newly developed statewide youth and young adult resource map (a just-completed SAG project) to assist in coordinating the variety of services.
- Those youth with highest risks and needs are typically, but not always served by the state. The formal justice response is in one rather than two departments now that the jurisdiction is re-calibrated for youth under age 18. DCF, in collaboration with the Court Administrators Office,

is scheduled to consider the structure and logistics of an Office of Youth Justice that would help to put services under the structure of one main entity.

Use and analysis of youth and young adult services as portrayed in a statewide resource map developed in 2018:

The GIS map developed for and by the SAG is intended to provide easy access to youth and families to find resources, and to state and community planning partners to assess gaps in service. The SAG hopes to use these maps to identify unmet needs. Immediate tasks and future funding needs for this project include:

- Maintain and evaluate use of map; demonstrate its use for system stakeholders;
- Make the map publicly available as a resource for families and youth; and
- Use the map to identify essential service gaps that will help youth to successfully navigate the youth justice system, and to transition to adulthood.

Training and supports to the implementation phase of the state’s jurisdiction reform:

Implementation science, and the experience of justice system legislative changes show that change does not happen by simply changing the rules. The people who implement the rules need to be trained, have the needed resources, and report on targeted outcomes for deep systemic change to occur. The amount of change delineated by youth justice jurisdiction reform in the past few years, and the next few, will need the resources and means to carry out the changes as envisioned. While the DSA will access resources and develop a plan, not all parts of the system will be able to do that, and the SAG will want to identify the change needs and help to provide necessary resources.

DMC:

Following the completion of a three-year award to reduce racial disparities for youth of color referred to the justice system and to secure youth placement (anticipated end date of December 2019), the next steps will be to:

- Assess the program’s evaluation and recommendations;
- Assess core functions that the SAG may have limited resources for and decide whether to continue any aspect of the program beyond the traditional 3-year funding period; and
- Determine other targeted interventions in the Chittenden County area that will affect the reduction of race disparities and fit the budget constraints of the Title II Formula award

Arrest and referral:

Monitor referrals to court beyond those diverted to community response to determine types of referrals, and geography of referrals. Assess and promote, if funding allows, increasing use of community responses to youth offenses.

Youthful Offenders:

Integrating young adults into a youth justice response is a challenge to be met. It is known that in the current structure, young adults in the DOC/Criminal system are diverted less and convicted at higher rates than younger youth adjudicated delinquent. The legislation anticipates a much higher rate of diversions and the lightest approach possible if the youth is not deemed high need and high risk.

- Family Service Workers and Corrections Probation Officers will need training and development of practice and policies that fit the young adult population, separate from youth or adult policy and practice.
- The DCF is requesting funds from the legislature to study and plan the strategies to move forward the best services and response to this population.
- The Department is to consider structural change in the form of an “Office of Youth Justice”. Historically, most young adults from Corrections have received very light supervision, and those from the DCF side have had full case plans based on criminogenic risk, but also broader needs and protective factors. Small numbers of youth and young adults do not allow for designated Family Service Workers or Probation Officers to specialize except in 2 of 12 state districts. Including youth up to age 21 in a youth system may allow for that specialization.
- The DCF Family Service Workers are not yet geared up to address the unique needs of young adults w/ offending behaviors. The DOC Probation Officers who share responsibility for Youthful Offender cases are trained to focus only on criminogenic needs and risks, and not on the whole youth. The state has designated a central adult prison wing for 18 - 25- year old, but it has not yet developed an approach to this population that is developmentally geared and focused on building protective and promotive factors. Two staff from that prison facility have been trained as trainers in the protective and promotive approach to working with youth that Vermont is embracing – *Youth Thrive*.

***Youth Thrive* and youth-young adult workforce training:**

Noted under collaboration is a workgroup that is assessing statewide youth care workforce needs for training and maintenance. The DSA and community partners including SAG members and Juvenile Justice staff have been working for two years to implement a statewide *Youth Thrive* workforce training, policy, and Communities of Practice model that will provide consistency and quality to all youth services. The parties are recipients of a technical assistance award from the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) that is providing on-going guidance to the state’s work. To date, we have trained nearly 40 trainers in the model and are currently engaged in planning the delivery of training to community and state youth workers, police, and others. This will be followed by developing regional Communities of Practice to support and adhere to model fidelity, and to measure impact on youth. The SAG has provided some limited funding and additional funding will be needed to implement the project vision.

Youth engagement:

Vermont will be submitting its Formula Grant application with less than adequate youth membership, lacking one seat on the SAG. More youth are desired for a separate youth advisory group that we will connect with other similar groups and a youth coalition. ‘Adequate appointments’ is not what the SAG is striving for. Over the course of the 3-year plan, all members have been asked to pair up and arrange for meetings with groups of youth most accessible to them and report back to the full Council. SAG meeting attendance requirements may look different for young people that are willing to be actively involved in the advisory and grant-making work of the SAG.

Membership is clear that it does not want token youth representation, but engaged youth input, whether those youth are members or not. Towards that end, there is a plan for the SAG to host multiple youth forums in a year, through technology use and in person. Some young people from those forums may want to apply for SAG appointment, but that is not assumed. Additional resources are needed to develop and facilitate the youth forums, and to assist the SAG and Juvenile Justice Specialist with maintaining a rolling roster of appointed youth members. The Specialist has begun to make recommendations to the SAG that open contracting and /or hosting an AmeriCorps position to facilitate both *Youth Thrive* supports and SAG youth engagement would be worthwhile to its mission and responsibilities. To be robust and meaningful, engaging youth should be the top priority of a designated person.

No Native communities in the state have governance or law enforcement authority; no funds or programs allocated.

Most Native people of the state are concentrated in the far northwest county. Native people do not show up in court data. The assumption is that they are classified as white. DCF does its own race identification and uses self-identification where possible so this data is different and shows more, but still few, native people.

b. Goals and objectives.

Link each goal and/or objective with the delinquency problem/need analysis.

With less than \$300,000 in grant funding from Title II annually, and with 1/3 of those funds purpose determined more by communities than SAG priorities, all areas of need and concern identified in the previous section cannot be funded or substantially addressed. At its annual planning retreat, the Vermont SAG decided that the priorities that it was engaged in from the most recent 3-year plan were still in progress and needed follow up activities to complete the anticipated goals.

Goals & Objectives to meet the needs identified in crime analysis. These are priority ranked.

GOAL #1 Reduction of racial disparities in youth services, justice response, and

Community resources

Program area # 21

Disproportionate Minority Contact

Data show that in the largest city in the state there are differential outcomes for youth of color at several important contact points such as school discipline and suspension/expulsion, arrests and referrals to court, and placement of delinquent youth in secure custody. There is evidence that youth of color receive early intervention services such as mental health treatment less frequently and less timely. Any community or state response that shows different outcomes for different population sub-groups needs attention to reform that can assure the best outcomes for *all* its constituents.

Objectives for Goal # 1

1. Reduce arrest and referrals to court of youth of color
2. Reduce secure detention of youth of color
3. Following completion of a three-year project by the Association for Africans Living in Vermont (AALV), and system improvement efforts addressed by them with the DMC Coordinator, the DMC Committee and Coordinator will assess data and information resulting from the AALV project and on-going community needs and disparities. It is anticipated that Vermont will want to contract for a fresh 'DMC Assessment' as one of the first steps in moving forward.
4. A revised DMC plan may include some of the same preventive and intervention activities as are being funded now:
 - Reduce school suspensions and expulsion;
 - Reduce arrest & referral to the justice system;
 - Support development and maintenance of culturally appropriate responses at all system levels;
 - Ensure that community resources are meeting civil rights requirements for meaningful access to services for those whose native language is not English; and
 - Ensure community resources are inclusive and culturally responsive.

DMC is prioritized as a core requirement and as a community quality of life issue for residents of Burlington and Chittenden County.

GOAL #2 Youth and young adult service coordination and enhancement; promotion of evidence-based and developmentally appropriate youth service and justice responses.

Program area 27 – System Improvement

Services, supports, and methods of accountability for youth are on a continuum matching the level of youth need, and are housed in state and community level programs, in private, nonprofit organizations, schools, and recreation programs. Funding may be municipal, state, or privately sourced, and some include fee-for-service. The State funds most of services to youth who are involved in justice and child welfare system as well as providing significant funding to many of the community-based nonprofit services that provide prevention and early interventions to keep youth out of state involvement where possible.

All those entities exist to provide some of a young person's needs. The services are generally prescribed by funders and there is no natural connection across service types or funding streams except where they are strategically developed. There is no single government entity that has oversight of all youth and young adult services which can contribute to the "silo-affect" of sometimes-disconnected services.

Expansion of young adult justice response and early intervention is a relatively new effort in the arena of youth services. State legislation phases in jurisdiction reform through 2020 so that young adults up to age 20 will be eligible for a youth justice response. This solidifies community efforts to serve young adults with a youth lens.

Several statewide youth policy organizations, including the SAG, are working on improved communication that supports coordination of services and mission clarity. The Vermont Afterschool Inc. has developed a policy coalition to focus on some of this policy work. There is legislation that asks the state to consider developing an "Office of Youth Justice" inclusive of young adults. The SAG Youth Committee is focused on program and youth workforce standards, mapping of resources, youth engagement, and coordination with other efforts.

To provide the most effective responses to youth, providers need to have information about how all parts of the system work and what the key initiatives are. Where evidence-based practice exists, it should be made available and accessible to all parts of the youth system. For example, the *Youth Thrive* approach that helps to build protective and promotive factors in the lives of youth and that are designed within a positive development context should be shared and available to all parts of system response. Exploration of connecting *Youth Thrive* approaches with *Building Self-Healing Communities* is underway; it may be most efficient to assure that the

on-going training and support for practitioners and communities is aligned and coordinated.

The SAG Youth Committee's intent is to make sure that all youth resources are connected and visible, and that coalitions for youth work in tandem to leverage the work of each other for the benefit of youth and families.

Objectives for #2:

Youth Thrive promotion: Bring *Youth Thrive* training to cross-sections of communities; help communities to implement *youth thrive* approaches beyond staff training, expand to supervision, outcome measures, case planning and accountability. Work to connect *Youth Thrive* to *Strengthening Families*, a similar approach to working with families of children aged 6 and under.

- Outreach and disseminate information and training about new youth and young adult justice responses and community alternatives to all service providers.
- Inform and train organizations that are new and that serve small or isolated community groups to assure that organizations that serve girls, new Americans, or other groups are fully informed about justice responses and changes.

Youth engagement: advance and support meaningful youth engagement and youth voice. The immediate short-term objectives of the SAG to increase youth engagement are:

- All members are engaged in having youth conversations in their workplaces or neighborhoods to inform the SAG work and priorities. Information about SAG membership is offered to youth and young adults where appropriate and where there is interest.
- The SAG recognizes that its meetings are not built for all youth and young adults who may have interest in voicing their thoughts about youth services or systems. It will hold 2 – 4 focus groups per year with young people which may occur via video streaming.
- The SAG will consider contracting a part-time youth service outreach and engagement specialist who can devote time to recruiting, retaining, and developing meaningful conversations with varied special populations and homogenous groups of young people.
- An engaged youth group may have need to develop specific solicitations to their communities to make prevention funding awards to be administered with youth included as decision-makers.

Youth resources map:

- Sustain – Find ways to share the GIS map resource and costs state agencies or departments that may find it useful.

- Publish and promote the map and its use across sectors.
- SAG and other state planning entities will use the youth resources map for identifying resources geographically and to help in identifying gaps in essential services.
- SAG will fund the maintenance of this resource and look to state government to assist with sustained funding and maintenance.
- SAG will fund the evaluation of the resource and its usefulness to the public and community or state planning entities.
- SAG will fund and /or advocate for funding of service gaps at locations that have need.

GOAL # 3 Jurisdiction reform

Program area #27 System Improvement

After many years of data sharing and advocacy seeking state response to youth offending that is developmentally appropriate and that protects youth from public records, the state has raised the age of court jurisdiction for teens and has set a timetable for raising the age of jurisdiction for young adults through 2022.

The objectives for the implementation of this legislative reform are similar to those listed under the Youth Service Coordination and Enhancement priority and may include:

- Workforce training to system-wide decision makers and service providers with preliminary emphasis on courts and legal services
- Support the DCF in its assessments of best practices in young adult service and accountability
- Actively advise DCF
- Support various intersect points in scaling up to provide evidence-informed service and responses to young adults through grants, technical assistance, or training.

GOAL # 4 Primary Prevention

Program area #6 Delinquency Prevention

The SAG is grounded in prevention and has since its first participation in the JJDP, included primary prevention as a priority funding area. State statute defines this:

“Primary prevention means efforts to reduce the likelihood of juvenile delinquency, truancy, substance abuse, child abuse, and other socially destructive behaviors before intervention by authorities.”

Objectives to meet the goals of primary prevention are determined by community entities that apply for funding. Grants are sought and awarded for direct services to children, youth, and

parents and expand the type or quantity of service. Awards are very small, with most under \$10,000 - 15,000 per year.

The SAG allocates 1/3 of Formula grant funds available to the Children's Trust Fund each year and contracts with the foundation that raises funds to augment the federal and state funds available. In 2018, the solicitations for grant awards will begin to ask for proposals in keeping with the SAG 3-year plan priorities that fit with primary prevention for youth service coordination, and reduction of DMC.

GOAL # 5 Maintain adequate system of Compliance Monitoring

Program area 19 Compliance Monitoring

The rank of this program area reflects the status of the state's ability to maintain compliance with the 3 core protections. There were no federal violations of the three core requirements in FFY 2017. That said, the state monitoring is always in need of improvements and change. Current barriers and concerns are illustrated in the objectives.

Objectives for compliance monitoring:

1. Law enforcement training regarding working with youth is not strong. Few police jurisdictions are large enough to have designated youth officers likely to continue focused professional training in this area. The DSA and SAG have developed an inter-disciplinary leadership team that has been promoting training and implementation of the *Youth Thrive* model of supporting youth protective and promotive factors. This has begun and will continue to be a positive approach to supporting law enforcement in specialized training to better engage and work with youth.
2. Court holding facilities will receive more facility inspections in ffy2018 to better assess secure detention v. law enforcement custody situations in court facilities. Assess resource and training needs.

c. Implementation (activities and services). *In this section, states are to describe the activities, services, and projects proposed over the course of the 3-year plan to attain each goal and its subsidiary objectives. The narrative should be specific and concrete in elaborating how the state will achieve the goals and objectives.*

1. Reduce DMC

- Fund AALV to provide prevention, treatment and interventions, and re-entry services to new American youth in Chittenden County
- DMC Coordinator will coordinate system improvement efforts with AALV involving multiple community and state agencies: school, police, DCF FSD, prosecutor, and community justice

- Consider recommendations and findings from evaluation of a 3-year AALV DMC reduction project.
- Annual review of 3-year data and matrices
- Consider, in conjunction w/ annual data updates and AALV evaluation, whether a full DMC assessment is warranted.
- Consider new targeted DMC reduction activities or communities to fund and at what amount relative to total grant funds available.
- Seek out additional funding streams to maintain key elements of the AALV work.
- Assess training needs for decision makers and direct service providers in communities with significant diverse population.

2. Youth and young adult service coordination and quality standards

- SAG youth committee and SAG will use the newly developed Youth and Young Adult Resources GIS Maps to assess service density and gaps across geographic regions. Grant solicitations to communities may use this tool to assess community needs – understanding that the map is not complete unless 100% of resources complete the survey.
 - Youth Resources Map – outreach and demonstrations to planners and community leaders
 - Youth Resources Map – sustain regular updates and maintenance and seek state government funding to augment maintenance costs in conjunction with other public resources.
 - Outreach to youth and young adult groups & providers; social media marketing so that map can be utilized by young people.
- SAG will consider contracting for youth engagement coordinator to recruit, engage, and create dialogue between community youth groups and SAG members to inform plans and funding.
- Youth engagement coordinator will help to ensure adequate youth membership on SAG, and active, meaningful involvement.
- Youth committee, SAG members, and JJ Coordinator will work actively within various external, interagency working groups to
 - Promote *Youth Thrive* implementation to broad sectors of communities
 - Assess realistic SAG intervention points identified in youth employment and training efforts, and youth care workforce training and standards,
 - Collaborate with another statewide interagency youth council – the Youth Services System Enhancement Council to better leverage the resources of each Council.
 - SAG members and staff will work with a multi-sector youth policy coalition to advance statewide youth policy and statute to promote and protect youth and young adults.
- Contribute to funding and organization of statewide youth care workforce conference.

3. Jurisdiction reform

- Assess and survey needs of justice system – decision-makers, probation services, and allies to implement legislative change including 19 – 20 year olds.

- Consider a statewide conference, written guidelines and decision-trees, and disseminate emergent best practices in young adult justice
- Advise the DSA Commissioner in best practices for youth well-being and development
- Consider and fund information and resources for young adults and their families where there is justice involvement
- Plan for young adult justice implementation in any part of the system with need
- Fund related efforts
- Partner with the SAG Youth Committee where appropriate

4. Primary Prevention

- Provide JJDP funding for community prevention efforts
- Include SAG priorities in Children’s Trust Fund (CTF) grant solicitations
- Consider CTF designated awards for youth and young adult advisory groups’ priorities for funding
- Help to recruit and maintain active youth engagement in SAG governance and planning

5. Compliance with JJDP core requirements

- Maintain adequate system of compliance monitoring
- Disseminate and consider state policy that differs from OJJDP requirements, especially regarding holding youth who are charged with status offenders, or non-offenders in ‘non-secure’ police departments
- Address barriers to compliance as they emerge
- Keep SAG fully informed of compliance status and barriers

The state's plan must include the following required information:

Population-specific plans.

States are to detail plans for the provision of

(1) gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of youth delinquency:

- a. The DSA has increased its gender-oriented residential treatment programs for young women over the last five years with more focus on issues most common to young women.
- b. The DSA, along with other state and community partners, has been developing policy, practice improvements, screening, and cross-systems training to all those who may encounter girls who have been trafficked. Boys are also trafficked, but girls are more often the victims. Longer-term evidence-based treatment for girls who have been trafficked needs more attention.
- c. The state has a very low rate of teen pregnancy. For teens who do become parents at a young age, the network of Parent Child Centers, one in each county, provide comprehensive assistance, support, and on-site high school and child care for those who choose to participate.
- d. The SAG and DSA have not seen data-based needs for any of the two standard gender identities that demands intervention at this time.
- e. LGBTQii youth are clearly underserved by nearly all intercept points. The DSA developed a strong policy for working with these youth during the past year. This provides good guidance to the state workers that provide probation or status offenders' service and accountability, as well as guidance to foster parents and treatment providers. <http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/FSD/Policies/76.pdf>
- f. The DSA manages reports and investigations of all child sexual abuse allegations regardless of whether the perpetrators are family or non-family members. Thus, the rate of sexual abuse findings in the child welfare data is high. Adolescent and school-aged girls are one of the highest cohorts of abuse victims found. The victims' families are offered resources and treatment options, but not necessarily on-going social services. The outcomes of girls' recovery from abuse is unknown.
- g. The DSA and community services serve small populations and provide individualized services. Within the DSA, the YASI screening tool focuses case plans on criminogenic needs, leverages a youth's strengths, and encourages increased use and development of a youth's natural supports and connections.
- h. SAG priorities of jurisdiction reform, coordination and quality improvement in youth services, and DMC reduction encompass services to young women. The SAG has no immediate plans to build new approaches to girls' needs or to augment the work being done within the child welfare –youth justice system. If needs are identified that can fit within the mission of the SAG and the OJJDP requirements, they will be considered by the SAG.

(2) ***Prevention and treatment of youth delinquency in rural areas*** – the entire state of Vermont is considered rural. There is one city (Burlington) that could be categorized as a metropolitan statistical center. Thus, all intervention and prevention activities are developed for rural populations.

(3) ***Mental health services to youth in the juvenile justice system***: generally, youth with the highest criminogenic or behavioral health needs are supervised, or in the custody of the DSA. The DSA has agreements with the designated community mental health agencies (DSA and MH both in the same agency) that prioritize referrals for community-based behavioral health care from the DSA. There is state statute and a system of interagency teams (local interagency teams) that mandate all relevant state-supported departments and agencies to collaboratively develop plans assuring effective treatment for children and youth. The state youth justice department’s single secure youth facility is now accredited as a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF).

Consultation and participation of units of local government.

Generally, social and justice interventions are not funded or provided by municipalities or counties but are state-centric. Other than recreation centers, the only significant service relevant to youth justice that is partially supported by local government is the network of community justice centers developed over the last fifteen years by the Department of Corrections (adult justice) and the Agency of Human Services. Youth are served from these justice centers and generally, the resources are adequate to meet the needs of communities. State AHS funding is provided to all centers, often hosted by local government. Direct services are provided by staff and trained volunteers. The JJ Specialist, on behalf of the SAG, maintains connections to the CJC network. The SAG funding to these centers has been project specific – e.g. for truancy or precharge (diversion) interventions and time-limited.

Collecting and sharing juvenile justice information. *To inform the development of information technology and better convey to OJJDP an understanding of the difficulties state agencies that administer the Formula Grants Program encounter in collecting and sharing juvenile justice information inherent to and/or as specified in the JJDP Act at 34 U.S.C. §§ 11133(a) (4), (5), (7), (8), (9), (26), (27), and (28),*

states are encouraged to include in their proposed 3-year plan the following information:

6. *Describe the state’s process for gathering juvenile justice information and data across state agencies—i.e., state departments of education and welfare, mental health services, and local law enforcement—and how the state makes this information available across agencies and incorporates the data into its comprehensive 3-Year Plan and Annual Plan updates.*

Data collection and performance reports in the state are ‘siloes’ but available as public records or through MOU when the information is confidential. Unfortunately, these records are not compatible – e.g. they are gathered and stored in different applications or formats. A few agencies have robust data published and readily available, while others require special requests, and sometimes result in virtually unusable data. The process for gathering, analyzing, and incorporating this information in to the OJJ three-year plan is a challenge for the single FTE JJ staff and PTE compliance monitoring contractor.

Statewide court data is the single best source of information to assess the ebb and flow of cases that move through the courts. It is made available to the DSA staff through an MOU. As more of the case flow in youth justice is pushed out to communities per legislative design, information may become harder to access and track.

7. *Identify specific barriers the state encounters with the sharing of juvenile information on at-risk youth among state agencies, including local law enforcement—i.e., where state statute, regulation, or policy prohibits the sharing of this information.*

- State-wide arrest data is not timely or accurate. Over the last five years, JJ staff have found that even when the on-line arrest reports are approved as completed about 3 years after incidents, the data continues to change, and this has resulted in significant change to DMC matrices after reports are completed.
- Race data transfer from police records to the court is not consistent across all counties. Elected county prosecutors may or may not choose to pass on reported race data from law enforcement to the courts despite a court rule established est. 2014 directing them to do so.
- Data from the Agency of Education is often not useful or meaningful, and they do not report small numbers by districts.
- Health Department does publish accurate and timely data, analyses, and reports.

a. Formula Grants Program staff.

Organizational chart:

<https://vermontgov.sharepoint.com/sites/AHSIntra/DCF/AboutUs/OrgChart/Commissioner%27s-Office.pdf>

Name	Lay-Sleeper
Title	JJ Coordinator (specialist)
Funding sources	Federal @ \$40,000 State @ \$40,000
% time to FG	100%
Duties	http://humanresources.vermont.gov/staffing/classification/job-specifications?code=074300

<http://humanresources.vermont.gov/staffing/classification/job-specifications?code=074300>

Name	Krug	
Title	Compliance Monitor	
Funding Source	Federal – Formula Grant @ \$18,000	
% time to FG	est. .45 of FTE	
Duties	Job Description	Appendix O

4. Plans for Compliance and DMC – submitted on-line, April 2, 2018

5 Additional **requirements** – 28 requirements of JJDPA – appendix I

6. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for This Solicitation’s Performance Measures

Applicant is aware of and understands the performance data reporting requirements for the Formula award to states. Information to complete the performance data report is compiled from subgrantees’ quarterly reports to the DSA. Performance data is required each quarter in conjunction with financial reports and requests.

7. Budget, narrative, and associated documents are separately attached as directed.

8. Indirect cost rate agreement <http://humanservices.vermont.gov/departments/office-of-the-secretary/cost-allocation-plan>

9. Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire attached

10. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities attached

11. Additional Attachments

a. Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications there are no pending applications for funds that would duplicate those goals or activities in this application.

b. Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity

Review of this application shows no apparent conflicts of interest for any planned program evaluations.

- In one instance, the DSA and SAG will request a competitive bid for evaluation of a GIS map and its utilization.
- In a second instance, a subgrantee is working with a volunteer from the University of Vermont to evaluate its project. If there are human subjects involved in the evaluation, the UVM has its own approved IRB process.
- Potentially, a DMC Assessment will be conducted during this 3-year period. It is most

likely to be awarded to the State Statistical Analysis Center that has developed DMC knowledge.

No research is anticipated.

- c. **Demonstration of compliance with additional requirements of the JJDP Act.** Refer to items 1 to 28 listed in Appendix I.

Appendix c: waiver requirements for pass-through

The JJDP Act at 34 U.S.C. § 11133(a)(5) requires states to expend at least 66 and 2/3 percent of funds that they receive under the JJDP Act at 34 U.S.C. § 11132—unless waived at the discretion of the OJJDP Administrator—through units of local government, local private agencies, and to provide funds for programs of eligible Indian tribes.

In Vermont, services for delinquent or other youth are organized primarily on a statewide basis and funded by the state, however, the SAG provides more than 66.6% of its' available grant funds to community-based private entities. **No waiver is requested.**