

Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Meeting
April 10, 2024
Washington, D.C.
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

Coordinating Council Meeting Participants

Amy Solomon, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs
Liz Ryan, Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and Vice Chair, Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Julie Herr, Designated Federal Officer, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Bonita Williams, National Program Leader, Division of Youth and 4-H, USDA National Institute of Food and Nutrition
Calvin Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Deborah Spitz, Group Leader, Teachers, Leaders, and Special Populations
Office of School Support and Accountability (SSA), U.S. Department of Education
Kellie Blue, Associate Administrator for the Youth Justice System Innovation Division, OJJDP and Co-Chair, Programs and Practice Subcommittee of the Coordinating Council
Jennifer Kemp, Department of Labor, Division of Youth Services
Liz Simons, Chair of the Board, Heising-Simons Foundation and Marshall Project
Lourdes Rosado, President and General Counsel, LatinoJustice
Kristen Kracke, Associate Administrator for the Policy Division, OJJDP and Chair, Policy Subcommittee of the Coordinating Council
Marcy Mistrett, Senior Policy Specialist, OJJDP
Mary “Tib” Campise, Associate Director for Child Youth and Advocacy, Department of Defense
Meghan Bishop, Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Michael Mendoza, Consultant, Juvenile and Criminal Justice, Reentry and Second Chances
Michael D. Smith, Chief Executive Officer, AmeriCorps
Miranda Lynch-Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Human Services Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Nataki McMurray, PhD, Office of National Drug Control Policy
Rebecca Zornick, Deputy Director of the National Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy Laboratory, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
The Honorable Renee Rodriguez-Betancourt, Judge, 449th District Court, Hidalgo County, Texas
Shaina Vanek, Senior Policy Analyst, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Introductions

Liz Ryan, Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and Vice Chair, Coordinating Council

Administrator Ryan welcomes participants and said that we will soon hear from Amy Solomon, Assistant Attorney General (AAG) for the Office of Justice Programs. AAG Solomon was nominated by President Biden and confirmed by a bipartisan vote about a year ago.

Amy L. Solomon, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice

AAG Solomon noted that her work with the Federal Interagency Reentry Council gives her much affection for this body because when we bring together experts from across the Federal government with our practitioner leaders, there are so many walls that we can bring down. She said that meeting attendees have generated tremendous momentum over the last year. She noted that members have gathered insights and perspectives from practitioners and experts, listened to testimonies from youth with lived experience, learned about new programs, and heard about the challenges youth-serving professionals face. The subcommittees have identified a number of recommendations for meeting those challenges. AAG Solomon said that we are entering the next important stage of the work: prioritizing the recommendations that will help us create a plan of action.

The AAG said that we have made great strides in recent years to improve system response to system-involved youth. The number of youth in residential placement has dropped substantially, about 77 percent between 2000 and 2020. She said that many young people are being diverted from the justice system and getting treatment, services, and support. More States are taking steps to keep youth out of the adult system. Policymakers and practitioners are relying more on evidence-informed approaches to take developmental factors into account. These are all very positive developments in the youth justice field. There are some troubling signs that we need to pay close attention to, AAG Solomon mentioned. Violent crime is down nationally after a couple years on the rise, but there is a false narrative that crime is getting worse and that young people represent a particularly dangerous threat to our community. We take any reports of crime and violence very seriously, but the facts indicate that only a very small share of violent crime is attributed to juveniles.

We know that purely punitive sanctions, especially where youth are involved, are not the answer. We know from research that young people naturally age out of most criminal behavior, and we also know that two things work against the aging-out process: trauma and incarceration. We also know that young people have been confronted with some serious challenges over the last few years. We had a global pandemic that kept kids out of school and isolated from one another, many lost caregivers and loved ones. Now that the public health emergency has lifted, and public benefits have expired, we also know that many families and their children are falling back into poverty.

Opioids and other drugs have taken a huge toll on kids and their families. Children are more likely to suffer physical and sexual abuse when they are in households where someone has a substance use disorder, and the mental health of our young people is approaching a point of crisis. Levels of depression, anxiety, and self-harm have increased significantly in recent years to unprecedented levels.

Many kids who face these challenges end up in the juvenile-justice system or the justice system. AAG Solomon said that we need to find ways to address the needs collaboratively without deepening involvement in the justice system. We want to put them on a path to success. We are going to hear about a new initiative designed to support positive intervention and deeper

connection with families and communities: the Continuum of Care for Youth and Communities Framework.

The goal is to provide services and opportunities built around protective factors to create environments that foster positive development. The framework sets up a network of support for youth that reduces exposure to community risk by involving school engagement, supporting healthy families, and connecting youth to mentoring, positive recreational opportunities, job training, and other pro-social activities, which is a large part of OJP's mission: to build up community infrastructure and to strengthen the role of the community as co-producers of safety and justice.

AAG Solomon said that during today's meeting, members will begin prioritizing the recommendations from the Council subcommittees so that they can inform a report to the President and Congress.

Administrator Ryan said that she is grateful for the many partnerships represented at today's meeting. She thanked AmeriCorps for partnering with OJJDP to hire system-impacted young people. She thanked USDA for joining OJJDP in an interagency agreement with the Institute for Youth, Family, and Community and the Division of Youth and 4-H. Together, we are funding a mentoring program that incorporates 4-H programming and values. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture will implement the mentoring program targeting young people from rural communities and youth who are involved in or at risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Administrator Ryan said that the focus of today's meeting is to talk about OJJDP's Continuum of Care for Communities Framework. OJJDP's framework emphasizes evidence-based programs and practices so that young people can access needed resources and services where they live and at every point in the juvenile justice system.

This framework takes a holistic approach to young people and their families. It focuses on prevention and early intervention for youth and supports both those who are at risk for delinquency and those at risk for victimization in their communities. For young people at higher risk of deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system, the framework emphasizes intensive, targeted, evidence-based programming. Communities that implement a continuum of care for youth are better able to assess youth's needs, identify gaps in programs and services, and allocate resources accordingly.

Administrator Ryan mentioned that she will be in Harrisburg, PA, on April 11 to announce the recipients of OJJDP funding under fiscal year 2023 Building Local Continuums of Care for Youth Success Initiative. OJJDP has awarded more than \$17 million to 26 grantees, which includes 6 States, 17 local jurisdictions, and 3 training and technical assistance providers. Two of the grantees are in Pennsylvania. During the event, the grantees will tell us about the initiatives they have designed, and how they will use OJJDP funding to address youth needs and pursue the goals outlined across OJJDP's Continuum of Care Framework.

She said that the Continuum of Care is a long-term commitment for OJJDP and our grantees, but it can also serve as an important tool to guide the Council’s activities and recommendations. We will prioritize those recommendations as well as the many others we have received from presenters, members, and panelists over the course of the last several Council meetings. These recommendations will help inform our activities moving forward as well as our Annual Report to the President and Congress, which is due in January of 2025.

Agency and Practitioner Introductions

Members and participants introduced themselves.

OJJDP’s Continuum of Care for the Coordinating Council

Kristen Kracke, Associate Administrator for the Policy Division, OJJDP and Chair, Policy Subcommittee of the Coordinating Council

Administrator Ryan welcomed Kristen Kracke, the Associate Administrator of the Policy Coordination Division at OJJDP and the chair of the Policy Subcommittee for the Council, to the podium. Kristen will talk about the Continuum of Care.

Kristen said that she has talked to both subcommittees about the Continuum of Care Framework, and she is happy to share the framework with the full Council. The Continuum of Care is for communities serving justice-involved youth. OJJDP uses it as a framework to highlight the range of programs necessary to support youth from prevention to early intervention through high intervention in the community to out-of-home placement to reintegration.

Kristen said that the two subcommittees have reviewed the continuum and found that the continuum will help to organize and coordinate Federal interagency work for the Council.

Services that the Council uses through the wheel should be evidence-based and developmentally aligned. System reform and cultural competencies are core principles that can and should be overlaid throughout this wheel. Kristen said that by building and strengthening the continuum, the community ensures that youth needs can be addressed at any point along the way. The socio-ecological framework—sometimes referred to as a public health approach—is at the center of the Continuum of Care, with children in the center, surrounded by family, and then community supports. In this framework, schools are incorporated and embedded in that community. This is a long-standing evidence-based approach, and Kristen notes that it is used across disciplines and service fields, so this Continuum of Care Framework used for youth justice might resonate with people in other service sectors.

The youth justice field recognized a need for a continuum early on because of the strong foundation of research that exists regarding what works and what does not work when it comes to delinquency. The youth justice field has turned to research to inform the best approaches and strategies in preventing, intervening with, and reducing youth crime and violence, and in redirecting youth to have more productive lives building in those off-ramps.

Research over the past 30 years has shown that prevention continues to be a sound investment and that the further youth progress into the justice system, the worse their outcomes, which

applies to education, employment, health, and life expectancy. When compared to community-based alternatives, confinement of youth results in higher rates of recidivism, so it does not actually accomplish public safety.

The Continuum of Care is a framework for youth justice that can work as a conceptual tool at multiple levels. It reflects juvenile justice practices and programming and represents community-level system of supports and services that are responsive to the needs of individual youth and families, as well as to the larger community's goals of public safety and accountability. It is a framework for building community resources.

The youth justice Continuum of Care provides a variety of adolescent diversion programs and informal interventions to prevent youth from getting more deeply involved in a formal system. The community can respond with intensive programming and supervision for high-need and complex care needs of youth, including those that need out-of-home placement and during reintegration to the community. The Continuum of Care also helps ensure that public safety is prioritized, and that limited funds are spent in the most cost-effective ways, moving those services and programming upstream to catch and support youth and families when they need it most. This is about helping youth and families receive the right services and supports at the right time: early. OJJDP is using and adopting this framework as a tool for assessing and supporting our own Federal efforts, providing training and technical assistance and support to communities to use this framework to advance effective youth justice practice and policy.

The framework is grounded in our statute. The Continuum Care is literally a part of the law that established OJJDP. The latest reauthorization of 2018 supports a Continuum of Care for at-risk youth and youth who come into contact with the justice system.

Kristen explained each wedge of the wheel:

- Prevention: refers to programs that reduce risk factors and promote protective factors, such as mentoring and arts and recreation, supporting children exposed to violence or healing and centered care, trauma-informed services from a primary prevention standpoint.
- Intervention:
 - Low – represents where we can most effectively meet youth where they are; match their programs to the level of need. This includes pre-arrest, diversion, and mediation. Focuses on pre-court involvement.
 - Medium – illustrates youth formally involved in the justice system and engaged in court processes. It may involve specialized services and programs such as treatment courts or restorative justice approaches.
 - High – involves intensive supervision for high-risk youth; includes cognitive behavior therapy, wraparound services, and specialized education.
- Out-of-Home Placement: involves more than youth solely in the justice system. It can involve youth in the child welfare system or youth in therapeutic foster care group homes, secure placement, correctional facilities. It represents multi-systems because of the intersectionality between child welfare and the juvenile justice system.

- Community Reintegration: includes aftercare services provided to support youth transitioning to home and communities. Support can include employment, housing, education programs, partnerships with volunteer organizations, and reconnection to the community.

Kristen emphasized that this graphic reflects a process and a framework of service provision; it does not reflect the volume of the population impacted; therefore, all these wedges are equal in size. An effective Continuum of Care should mean that the vast majority of youth are within the prevention, early intervention, or low intervention wedges of service. The volume of youth should get smaller as we proceed around the continuum, with the lowest number of youth in out-of-home placement arrangements.

The graphic also does not reflect those types of policy changes and systems improvements that impact that flow. This is really just about the service provisions. We spend most of our resources in the most expensive and least effective part of our system—out-of-home placement—which impacts the fewest number of our youth.

Understanding movement of youth across the continuum helps us at the Federal level to look at how we are effectively setting policy and practice and allocating those resources so that we get better results and outcomes for youth.

The ring that includes “community” in the middle includes schools. Many of our Federal agency programs represented on the Council focus on the green and blue areas, and there is a lot of need for youth returning to the community in the community reintegration.

Federal agency programs work across every slice of the wheel, but they are concentrated as a whole. If we look across the Council, programs are concentrated in prevention, the early intervention, and community reintegration. In the subcommittee, we talked about the power of this framework at the Federal level to be interactive and to align our Federal agency work along this continuum.

Kristen said that this framework has potential for organizing Federal and interagency programs and policies. It is critical that we speak from one common framework.

We can use the framework as a tool to guide Federal interagency work for youth justice to assess gaps in practice and policy; identify opportunities for youth that may not exist or may not exist to scale, coordinate agency activities, and realign investments to the front end where impact is greatest and most effective.

Kristen said that subcommittees think it would be helpful for the Council to use this framework to organize the Annual Report.

Kristen emphasized that it is critical that we all speak from one common framework, even if our agencies only impact one piece of the Continuum of Care for youth. The framework can serve as a common messaging tool. We can use it as a research-driven model that aligns closely to what young people are saying they need. This framework does that.

Administrator Ryan mentioned that in a recent Dear Colleague letter, DOJ included information stating that youth under the age of 18 are assumed indigent and unable to pay fees and fines. The Department is working to ensure it is implemented across the States.

Rebecca asked about the green prevention area. She said that SAMHSA does a lot with prevention and behavioral health, and she wanted to know if universal prevention and more targeted prevention are captured in the wedge.

Kristen said that this was an excellent point and ties back to what she was saying about the debate in the fields, the sectors, and the disciplines. She said that developers of the framework tried to build it in a way that was broad and general enough to try to avoid some of those debates because we want something that cuts across disciplines. Kristen noted that the work that Rebecca and SAMHSA would define as prevention is also prevention for OJJDP, and even some of their intervention is prevention for OJJDP because we are the deep end of the system, and kids flow into our system after other interventions in earlier systems have not been effective.

The Department of Justice has this idea of the sequential intercept model, which is also familiar to SAMHSA. It is very linear, meaning that once we get to one end of the model, then that is the end; there is no longer a need. It helps us to think about the intersection of all of our various issues, whether or not we see this from an issue around poverty, around unemployment of youth, whether we are talking about truancy, delinquency, substance use, or mental health. The commonality of the young people we work to address and to support is very much born out in the research, and so where things may differ from field to field, they do fit on this wheel. Rebecca said she supports the idea of having this continuum, even though there may be some slight movements around the wheel depending on the lens we use to look at it.

Council Business: Subcommittee Reports

Kellie Blue, Associate Administrator for the Youth Justice System Innovation Division, OJJDP and Co-Chair, Programs and Practice Subcommittee of the Coordinating Council

Kellie updated the Council on the Programs and Practice Subcommittee's work over the past three months. At the subcommittee's most recent meeting, Kristen Kracke presented the Continuum of Care. Subcommittee members shared general excitement to see this happening in the youth justice space and several subcommittee members also commented on the notion of Continuum of Care approaches and how this lined up with the public health arena. We are making sure that when we look at the continuum that schools and education systems are included. We have also been working on reviewing and discussing recommendations for the Annual Report to Congress and also to inform the Council's action plan.

Kellie noted that at the subcommittee meetings, members have been discussing these recommendations. We prioritized the recommendations as well and we ended with a final list of 16 recommendations. Kellie also reported on the OJJDP National Conference to be held in November of 2024. To date, the subcommittee has submitted to the OJJDP Planning Committee 10 sessions for consideration. Seven sessions have been accepted. Based on the activities of the subcommittee in the past three months, the Programs and Practice Subcommittee makes the following recommendations to the Coordinating Council. The subcommittee recommends that

the Council adopt OJJDP's Continuum of Care as a guiding framework for its recommendations and work plan. The subcommittee recommends that the Council accept the seven proposed sessions for the OJJDP National Conference in November 2024. The subcommittee recommends that the Council accept its shortened top 16 recommendations list for further consideration.

Kristen Kracke, Associate Administrator for the Policy Division, OJJDP and Chair, Policy Subcommittee of the Coordinating Council

Kristen said that the Policy Committee has met four times since the last Coordinating Council meeting and during those four meetings, members reviewed and discussed recommendations for the full Council. Policy subcommittee members also discussed the Annual Report to the President and Congress. That report is due 120 days after the last Council meeting and will form the basis of the recommendations and the work plan presented in the Annual Report. The recommendations that we will be discuss later will undergird that report and that work plan. Kristen presented to the Policy subcommittee the Continuum of Care Framework. The Policy Subcommittee recommends to the Council the adoption of OJJDP's Continuum of Care as the guiding framework for its recommendations and work plan. The policy subcommittee also recommends that the Council accept its shortened top 16 recommendations list for further consideration.

By voice vote, the Council adopted the subcommittees' reports.

Formulating Recommendations for Council Action

Marcy Mistrett, Senior Policy Specialist, OJJDP

Marcy said that subcommittees gathered these recommendations from the various Council meetings to date, from the kickoff to the general public and feedback through our website. This represents a very broad range of input from people working in the field, from agency members and from young people in their own voices. We had nearly 100 recommendations for this Council to review.

We then reviewed, narrowed, and refined the recommendations. Over the past three months in both subcommittees, we looked at all of the recommendations. Each member of the Council prioritized those recommendations based on agency priorities and interests from the field, and then we matched those priorities and narrowed them and where possible, if there were duplicates, we merged them into one recommendation. We wanted to make sure that there was a balance between that programmatic and policy recommendations, and we organized them into themes. These themes are highlighted in gray on the spreadsheet. The gray areas are just the organizing principle, not actually the recommendations. The first two themes are:

- Expanding opportunities for investments and developmentally appropriate, culturally aligned and healing focus prevention and early intervention.
- Investing in elevating and researching culturally relevant community-based services as alternatives to detention.

We have between two and four recommendations that fall under each.

The last three themes are:

- Enhancing coordination of mental health and substance use services across the entire continuum of justice-involved youth.
- Expanding reentry opportunities for justice-involved youth.
- Building the knowledge and capacity of the workforce that serves this population.

We can see how these fall across the Continuum of Care. We tried to note in the recommendations where they might fall within the Continuum. We will spend time later this meeting prioritizing these recommendations.

Administrator Ryan reminded Council members that the purpose of these recommendations is to inform recommendations to Congress and to the administration and also to inform the Council's work plan. Over the next couple of months, the subcommittees will refine these recommendations and develop action steps based on those recommendations. We want to make sure that we consider the perspectives of Council members so that we can focus the subcommittees' efforts.

Miranda asked for a distinction between programs and practice and policy. Marcy said that programmatic recommendations impact program decisions. For example, a grant program, regulatory programs, legislative programs, or executive order directives.

Administrator Ryan added that policy recommendations are things that would involve additional steps from the administration or by Congress. Programmatic and practice recommendations are more geared toward things that all of our Federal agencies can do collectively from an operational standpoint.

Renee mentioned that the recommendations are very specific to the issues that she sees every day on the bench. She asked if each recommendation should touch on all aspects of the Continuum of Care. Marcy said that some will, but some will not.

Lourdes mentioned that some of the recommendations are general while others are specific. Administrator Ryan agreed that some recommendations are fairly general and we may need to do more research in a specific area, or we might need to pull some action steps from them in order to flesh them out more. The plan over the next few months is to make the recommendations more specific, especially for those where there is less specificity.

Nataki asked if we could have some thought or discussion around how the report is going to influence what OJJDP includes in the budget proposal for fiscal year 25/26. She also asked if there will be an opportunity to go back to the other recommendations that are not selected in this first round for continuing investment in a subsequent report or action plan for what OJJDP proposes in the budget.

Administrator Ryan sees this as a collective effort, not just an effort from OJJDP. When the full report is issued, it could have implications for all of our agencies and she hopes that we will have found some ways where we see collective action.

Responding to Nataki's second question, Administrator Ryan said that idea with the dots is to get a sense of where we see these recommendations; it does not mean that we will not talk about the other recommendations. The subcommittees will likely continue discussing all of the recommendations, but this exercise will help us get a sense of what recommendations are the most urgent.

Marcy concluded by informing the Council that over the next two months, the subcommittees will refine the recommendations to add clarity and look at ways to make them more specific. When subcommittees are finished with that, they will identify overlaps or redundancies. When we meet in June, we plan to have recommendations that can be acted upon.

Prioritization of Recommendations and Discussion

Liz Ryan, Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and Vice Chair, Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Administrator Ryan noted that there were some questions surrounding the Continuum of Care and the recommendations, as well as the process and steps for drafting and finalizing the Annual Report. The Administrator invited Kristen Kracke back to the podium to elaborate on the Continuum of Care and answer questions around recommendations related to the continuum.

Kristen provided clarification on the recommendations and how to look at them in the context of the overall continuum. The continuum serves as a framework at multiple levels, how it interacts directly with youth and families, and how OJJDP uses it as a framework. If the Council uses it as a framework, then we will be working across the entire Continuum of Care through our Federal agencies.

The intention with the recommendations is to take a holistic approach as we look across that Continuum of Care.

Kristen mentioned that the voting is to get an idea on where we see the urgency and the priority now. That is still in the context of the larger continuum that we will continue to reflect on and use as a tool as we assess and identify opportunities. We might want to employ a strategy that picks recommendations that cut across the entire continuum.

Kristen said that we will continue to monitor and manage how that Continuum of Care maps across our Federal programs, where we need to allocate our resources, how we can leverage policy and practice to infuse support in areas of the continuum, where we see gaps, or where we see youth not being able to access the programs in the services in that part of the continuum.

Administrator Ryan asked if there were any questions about the information Kristen presented. The Administrator noted that this is the next step in the process of prioritizing the recommendations that subcommittees have gathered.

The recommendations will go into the Annual Report to Congress and the President. The recommendations will inform the work plan of the Council. Julie provided additional

information on the Annual Report, noting that as of this meeting, we envision three primary sections for the report. These sections are subject to change.

The first section will be a summary of all of the things that the Council has accomplished since our relaunch in October 2022. We will talk about the various meetings that we have had, and we will review the presentations and the information that we have collected. We will also capture the subcommittees' work. In general, this section will be a summary of everything that has happened to bring us to where we are now.

The second section of that report, Julie continued, will be the Council's prioritized workplan. This workplan will tell Congress and the President what we intend to do now and over the next few years, depending on how long-range we want to go with the workplan.

Julie noted that the subcommittees will have more conversations about how long-range they want the workplan to be. She said that we will look at the activities that the Council can do without additional action from Congress or from the Executive Branch. As we get our list of prioritized recommendations finalized, the subcommittees will figure out how we can break those recommendations down into more specific and actionable steps. For example, Julie said that there could be multiple action steps under each of the recommendations, and those could be our initial focus.

The subcommittees have done some preliminary categorizing of the recommendations as being related to either policy or to programming and practice. Some recommendations might straddle the line of both policy and programs, but as we continue discussions in the subcommittees, we will hopefully delineate between the two.

Programs and practices include things like a series of webinars, publications, or looking at internal agency policies that are not related to statute or regulations—that would be in the policy category.

The third piece will be the recommendations. We want to take into consideration what we have prioritized with the recommendations and identify areas that we believe there is a need for additional congressional or Executive Branch action. For example, if we prioritize a specific recommendation, but we believe in order to fully implement it, that additional funding might be needed in this area, then that would be an example of a recommendation we would make to Congress and the President.

Administrator Ryan said that the information Julie gave us about the recommendations and the report will help us as we go into this next piece where we will ask members to give us a sense from your agency and your perspective where you think urgent action is needed. Knowing that will help in terms of guiding where those pieces go into the Annual Report.

Michael Smith, from AmeriCorps, shared AmeriCorps is mostly in the reentry part of this work, but he thinks there is a role that AmeriCorps can play on the mental health side. He mentioned that AmeriCorps is about to launch a youth mental health core with Pinterest and the Schultz Foundation.

That initiative will bring AmeriCorps members in to support youth mental health. We work with the CDC on the Public Health AmeriCorps initiative, which currently has 4,000 public health AmeriCorps members working in their own communities doing work that focuses on topics ranging from opioid abuse to mental health. He said that he would love to offer AmeriCorps as a potential partner in the area of mental health.

Administrator Ryan appreciated the offer from Michael and AmeriCorps. She noted that it will help the Council learn who is doing what and in what spaces as we develop the recommendations.

Julie began the voting process by informing the Council members that in each of their meeting packets are three colored sticker dots. The dots have are marked with the agency or with the initials of the practitioner member. In the front of the meeting room, two boards displayed the exact same recommendations. Council members were to assign their three dots to the recommendations that they believed should be prioritized in this phase of the Council's work. Julie informed the members that they do not have to assign one dot to each recommendation. If, for example, there is one recommendation on the list that they feel should be highly prioritized, participants can assign all three of their dots to the same recommendation. Members can split their voting any way they wish.

Council members made their way to the boards to vote on their recommendations. When members finished voting, Administrator Ryan asked what people thought of the process.

Michael Mendoza noted that it was difficult to make a decision on three recommendations out of sixteen. He said identifying "what's urgent now" is challenging because so many seem urgent.

Administrator Ryan walked up to the recommendations to report back to the Council. She said that recommendation 4—work together to address individual and collective historic trauma, promote and ensure funding for community-based culturally and developmentally informed, effective, affordable, and accessible trauma-responsive services for youth and families to keep them out of the justice system—garnered four votes.

Recommendation 7—enhance the success of justice-involved youth in their communities and reduce out-of-home placements by improving access to comprehensive, culturally-competent, supportive services like family counseling, educational support, mental health and substance use support—received seven votes.

Recommendation 8—create a grant program that provides financial incentives to communities that successfully keep children and youth out of detention/commitment and with their families in local communities where there are resources to address the root causes of delinquency—received four votes.

Recommendation 10 received five votes—meet basic needs first, be trauma-informed (including historical trauma), and arts and healing-centered.

Recommendation 12—encourage and approve state workforce innovation and workforce opportunity act waiver requests, DOL, that incentivize local workforce investment boards to serve justice-system involves youth in their youth programs—had three votes.

Recommendation 13—improve access to post-secondary education and training for youth exiting the justice system—received five votes.

Administrator Ryan noted that as she looked at both sets of recommendations, recommendation seven, on both boards, had many dots. Also, recommendation 11 had dots from one side of the room but none from the other side. She said that there are a few places where there are many dots, and then there are a couple recommendations where there is one dot.

Administrator Ryan asked Council members if, as we now see the voting on the recommendations, there are any themes that emerged.

Miranda said that she was curious how this did or did not resonate with members in terms of urgency. She noted that the two recommendations that focus on including families and young people with lived experience did not rise to the top of our urgency level. She said that we have had lots of discussion about that, and we acknowledge how crucial it is to have those who are impacted by these systems drive the solutions and help improve the systems that exist today.

Miranda said that she was surprised there were no votes in those areas. She wondered if that is because there is already good progress in those areas, i.e., including people with lived experience within local juvenile justice systems.

Judge Betancourt agreed with Miranda regarding the issue of “lived experience.” She said it could also be the formatting of the recommendation, using words like “support” and “encourage.” She said she does not think we should be supporting and encouraging. She thinks that we should be requiring the justice system to implement this for the probation department, especially if they are obtaining funding. For Judge Betancourt, it was about the wording. She did not place her dot on that recommendation not because she thought it was not needed—it is a needed recommendation—but the language was not ideal.

Nataki said that now that we have learned the importance of involving persons with lived experience throughout the planning, implementation, and the evaluation, it is now part of the process. It was assumed that we did not have to do something specific about it because now that we know it, we already plan to incorporate it. That was Nataki’s justification for why she did not think about lived experience as a separate need; she already understood it as an assumption going forward for how to operate.

Michael Mendoza said that his thought process focused on his experience as an adult with lived experience. He said he worries about how we meaningfully involve young people with lived experience in these kinds of conversations because it could be traumatizing when you re-live or discuss those experiences. It is very important to always have people involved with lived experience at these conversations, and I thought we did a great job with pulling the 100 recommendations from the field to do just that.

He asked how do we follow up with care for justice-involved people with lived experience, before and after the involvement, to ensure that they are taking care of themselves in a healthy way.

Liz Simons said that she also supported the second recommendation regarding lived experience. What drew her to that is the fact that it involved some oversight. Having a youth engagement coordinator along with the voices of youth helps with action. She noted that having that kind of oversight and ensuring that children's rights are respected is something that Human Rights Watch has worked on.

Administrator Ryan said that members probably wanted to put dots on all the recommendations, which underscores how difficult this exercise was. The Administrator asked if anyone else has additional reflections about this or anything we are seeing on the boards.

Deborah noted that one thing she thought about as she tried to pick three recommendations was which of those needed to be a multi-agency effort. She said that some of the recommendations need more than one agency to do them. When she thought about the urgency of the recommendations, she thought about which of those need to be cross-agency.

Michael Mendoza added that he chose recommendations 7, 10, and 12. Top of his mind when he considered these was urgency. He said that in his daily job, he noticed that in a lot of reports he reviews, he reads about how States are worried about the workforce shortage. He sees a lot of work where organizations are partnering with juvenile halls and ensuring that youth are given workforce readiness support. He thinks it is critical not to overlook a population that is talented and has a lot to offer. For Michael, recommendation 12 was urgent in terms of filling jobs and employment. He sees recommendations 10 and 7 as very inclusive. They are protective. They involve more than just the youth, the family, and community. They hit the entire continuum. This past year, we have talked about how we are focusing on mental health and the effects of the pandemic. He thinks these recommendations urgently require that we focus on the mental health of our youth in the justice systems. He noted that States like California, for example, have instituted a Youth Bill of Rights, which ensure that every county and location provide youth in custody with the care they need, such as mental health therapy.

He noted that the Council has talked a lot about adverse childhood experiences and adverse childhood trauma. These are not often addressed within the juvenile justice system, which is why he identified recommendations 10 and 7 as urgent. Mental health and workforce development are all critical as long as we ensure that they are being done in a meaningful way with supportive services.

Calvin Johnson said that regarding common themes, there are four things he noted. Recommendations 4, 7, 10, and 13 have the most votes by any color. Of those, recommendation 4 is the only prevention activity. The other three are related to justice-involved youth. Calvin noted that we are probably light on prevention, and we are heavier on dealing with kids who have already had contact with the system and trying to mediate those risk factors and address them as they engage and navigate the community.

Of the four recommendations (4, 7, 10, and 13), we see trauma, mental health, education, counseling, and post-secondary education as themes.

For recommendation 13, Calvin noted that we are talking about community reintegration. For recommendation 7, we are talking about community involvement and community-based activities, and for recommendation 4, he is assuming that it is already embedded, but many of the things that we do not see and maybe we assume are included is community development activities that try to provide productive pro-social activities for youth on the prevention side.

Also, community development would include housing activities that provide youth and their families with more opportunities. This could include moving to neighborhoods of opportunity, moving to neighborhoods with many more amenities for their kids, so that their kids are doing more of the things we want all our kids to do, such as play at the playground, and be part of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. He thinks those things are actually embedded and assumed, but we should not lose track that these kids live in communities that put them at risk.

As we are thinking about services that are community-based, as we think about community engagement and community reintegration, we also want to think about the assets within the communities that we should be leveraging and what are some of the challenges within those communities to which we should pay close attention.

Administrator Ryan said that those are really good insights, and she liked how Calvin looked at the different recommendations and pulled out some themes, but also noticed areas that we may have assumed things. We want to make sure that we are not assuming. We want to articulate the work that needs to be done as we move forward.

Meghan Bishop spoke about strengths in communities. She said that is why the Department of Interior selected recommendation 3. The local community knows what is best for the community, especially from the tribal perspective. Interior supports self-determination and sovereignty and we try hard to braid its mission with that of Tribes and ensure that everything is tribally led. Interior ensures that Tribes are consulted at every stage of the funding or program.

For recommendation 4, and in the context of Tribes, when considering the genocide that was perpetrated against Native American and Indigenous communities in the United States, there is a level of generational trauma. When “trauma-informed” is discussed, Meghan said that we need to ensure that we address the generational trauma that our tribal youth experience as well as the trauma they experience from current situations, especially on reservations. She said that Interior did not choose recommendation 8—creating the grant program that provides Federal incentives to communities—but they did discuss it. Meghan noted that Tribes are resistant to grants because they are overly burdensome with a lot of administration. Additionally, grant writing can be very difficult for some tribal members. When agencies think about creating grant programs, it is important for them to advocate for tribal set-asides. We want to make sure that the grants process, the application process, and the administration process, is as streamlined as possible, which will reduce that administrative burden. This is all included in Executive Order 14112, signed by President Biden in December 2023. The Order directs all agencies to look at how they are funding Tribes to make it easier for them to access that funding.

Judge Betancourt added that she put her sticker on recommendation 3 because of the focus on local communities. She noted that grant writing or grant resources are often lacking in local communities. Her priority was recommendation 3, noting the importance of supporting local communities and identifying their problems, and then applying a lot of these other recommendations to that as well. She placed a sticker on recommendation 10—make mental health treatment more readily available, accessible, and culturally relevant to justice-involved youth. She mentioned that it does not have to be just justice-involved youth. She sees cases where children are placed in detention because they are having a mental health situation. It is not because they are engaging in delinquent behavior because they are aggressive, but something has triggered them. We lack readily available mental health treatment, and that goes back to helping local communities identify the concerns and individual needs.

She put her remaining sticker on “expand investments in training for judicial and law enforcement personnel.” She said that judges could use additional training. Some might not understand trauma-informed care or are not presented with research on trauma-informed care. They make decisions based on what information is given to them. She thinks judges should be educated on what the larger concerns are, not just what is within the law or what is presented to them in a case docket. Additional training could help judges understand that if you are going to preside over juvenile cases, you need to understand the factors that bring these children before you.

Lourdes based her selections on the information that Assistant Attorney General Solomon provided. Lourdes recalled that AAG Solomon talked about how most kids, as they grow up, desist from offending behavior. The two things that interrupt that desistance are trauma and incarceration, and that is why Lourdes chose recommendation 4, which is about having an interagency approach to addressing trauma in kids’ lives. She also chose recommendation 8, which prioritizes and incentivizes keeping kids out of facilities.

Liz Simons echoed what Calvin previously spoke about; the importance of a safety net. Some people might call this transformative justice, which makes sure that children have what they need in their environment. She noted that it is important to mention that in some ways, the reentry is also the prevention because children need access to education and they need access to work opportunities. These are things that people need when they are leaving the system, but there are also things that people need that can help people not enter the system in the first place. It is important to note that when we think about balancing between prevention, we can think of it as a circle, very similar to the wheel in the Continuum of Care.

Miranda spoke about the Annual Report. She knows that there is a lot of work to be done to get more granular when it comes to the report. She hears a lot of commonality in what meeting participants are saying. She thinks it might make sense to identify principles, threads, or themes that run through all of these recommendations. She suggested highlighting those themes as a separate exercise from the more granular policy and practice changes. Some of the themes she noted include:

- Trauma-informed.
- Healing focused.
- Culturally responsive.
- Engaging meaningfully with those with lived experiences.
- Not creating additional Federal silos.
- Addressing the entire continuum, because all parts of the continuum are important.
- Reducing administrative burden.
- Being community-based or community-led.

These themes might rise above some of these recommendations. We want to make sure we think of these processes no matter what recommendation might ultimately be taken up by Congress or the President. We might also want to identify some of these for posterity. There are some values or principles that we hold throughout them all.

Administrator Ryan appreciated Miranda’s contributions to identifying those common themes. She agreed with Miranda that the themes she identified are what resonated with the meeting participants. She noted that this “is a very wonderful conversation.”

Administrator Ryan said that Miranda helped us take the first step to identify themes. She asked of the recommendations that garnered the most votes—7, 10, 13, 4, 5, and 8—in that order—if anyone has preliminary thoughts about strategies that anyone sees as an actionable strategy that could be part of how we articulate that in the recommendations going forward.

Administrator Ryan recalled that someone said we could do a regulation, or we could propose a collaboration among the member agencies, or we could build some language into a grant program. She asked if there is anything from these that jump out to members that they want to share with the group.

Hearing no feedback, she suggested this could be a preview of what we are going to do over the next couple of months in the subcommittee meetings.

Calvin mentioned that when members are doing their day-to-day work, they might discuss the various ways agencies use the formula, block grant dollars. Some agencies might work on supportive housing work, and another agency might do something similar, and another agency might be doing something in the juvenile justice space focusing on the same neighborhood. He asked whether we want to consider if there is an opportunity to offer guidance or best practices around how agencies that are targeting any overlap among agencies’ work. He said that there was a strong likelihood that the member agencies’ population focus would be the same.

Calvin asked if there was a best practice guide that we should be using and trying to put before our principals. This could encourage our grant funds talking to each other. Get our grant funders talking to each other, so that your Byrne JAG grants are talking to our CDBG Program, for example. He said that it would be a powerful way of thinking about how, when we go about the business of awarding these grants, agencies are thinking about a whole-of-government strategy for addressing the challenges that are focused on juvenile justice, housing, mental health, and trauma-informed work, just to name a few. The work is needed in the same places.

Administrator Ryan noted how this was a “brilliant strategy,” and she saw many heads nodding in agreement as Calvin spoke.

Nataki mentioned that we are often talking about the same kids, families, and communities. In the substance-use world, we have data that show that we are typically talking about polysubstance use as the norm. We see various levels of issues and challenges in the individuals, families, and communities that we are assessing. Our interventions have to look at how we provide multiple impacts, and so our funding needs to be more. This is beyond the discussion of blended and braided funding. We want to have conversations about how we do that in a way that does not diminish funding nor look like duplication to GAO. We need to talk about blending and braiding our funding and our resources so that our interventions can provide multiple impacts. As Federal agencies and practitioner members, we need to think about how we measure multiple impacts. We know that there are co-related issues. Nataki said that when we house youth who are unhoused, they begin to show positive impacts in their mental health, in their academics, and in their employment. But how do we measure that? If the program that provides housing is based out of HUD, and they are seeing multiple impacts, how do we tell that story? She encouraged participants to think about how we can have more comprehensive assessment, how our interventions can have multiple impacts, and how we tell the story of those multiple impacts in a way that allows us to do more innovative funding.

Administrator Ryan appreciates the very rich conversation during today’s meeting. She said that going forward, we will go through these recommendations, pull out some strategies, including those discussed here today. When we meet in June, we will be approving the final set of recommendations. Over the summer, there will be an effort to write the report.

In September, we will approve the draft of the report, and during the fall, the report will go through the design and approval processes among the agencies. The final report will be distributed in January 2025.

Administrator Ryan closed the meeting by saying she applauds the effort that members have put in to the work we have done. We will continue to finetune the information and develop actionable steps. We want to think of things we want to do right now, but we will also lay out a multi-year strategy, identifying priorities and sequential steps.

Wrap Up and Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.