

**WASHINGTON STATE  
PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL ON  
JUVENILE JUSTICE**  

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**WA-PCJJ**

**Raise the Age Workgroup**

**Meeting Summary**

**Wednesday, February 14, 2024**

**2:00-4:00 PM | Via Microsoft Teams**

**Welcome & Introductions**

Workgroup Co-Leads Drew Hill and Heidi Sadri welcomed the group and provided opening comments. Meeting attendees shared introductions.

Attendees: Heidi Sadri, Drew Hill, Norrie Gregoire, Jack Murphy, Izzy Eads, Paul Daniels, Judge Jennifer Forbes, Jenny Young, Julian Cooper, Prachi Dave, Julissa Sanchez, Nicholas Oakley, Lael Chester, Roxana Gomez, Katie Hurley, Stephanie Budrus, Nicole McGrath

**Shared Agreements for Engagement**

Drew offered principles and practices for how the group will cultivate belonging:

- Seek to understand and be understood. Avoid acronyms. Use plain and accessible language.
- Be solutions-oriented. If you identify a problem, try to offer a solution or willingness to work towards a solution with the group.
- Respect the privacy of anyone sharing their lived experience.
- Close decisions and follow up. Identify necessary actions and follow through. The co-leads are committed to accountability through follow-through.
- Create and support flexible options for participation.
- The degree to which we focus on engaging well is the degree to which we make good decisions.
- Added from the group: No one knows everything, together we know a lot.

The group was invited to add to the list on an ongoing basis.

**Project Overview**

Heidi provided an overview of the project:

Scope (set by the budget proviso)

By June 30, 2025, report to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature recommendations regarding implementation of juvenile court jurisdiction expansion to encompass persons 18, 19, and 20 years old. Recommendations shall include:

- An implementation plan for the expansion, including necessary funding, essential personnel and programmatic resources, measures necessary to avoid a negative impact on the state's child protection response, and specific milestones related to operations and policy.
- The implementation plan shall also include a timeline for structural and systemic changes within the juvenile justice system for the
  - juvenile rehabilitation division;
  - the department of children, youth, and families;

- the department of corrections;
- and the juvenile court pursuant to chapter 13.04 RCW.
- The implementation plan shall also include an operations and business plan that defines benchmarks including
  - possible changes to resource allocations;
  - a review of the estimated costs avoided by local and state governments with the reduction of recidivism and an analysis of cost savings reinvestment options; and
  - estimated new costs incurred to provide juvenile justice services to persons 18, 19, and 20 years old.

### Timeline

- During a discovery phase, we will inventory everything we will want to address through our recommendations – all questions to answer, needs to address, opportunities to take; making sure we are in collaboration with the right people to craft recommendations
- In developing recommendations, we will break out and address areas of impact separately; the co-leads will develop a proposal for how to structure this process
- We will engage technical assistance providers for expert guidance, data analysis, and cost analysis
- Beyond the workgroup, we are engaging people from impacted and lived expert communities as well as people who can offer systems insights. Heidi is working through different community-based organizations who convene youth advocates to collaborate with them.

### **Presentation: Emerging Adult Justice Project**

Lael Chester, Director of the Emerging Adult Justice Project (EAJP) at the Columbia University Justice Lab, provided a presentation to the workgroup:

- The burgeoning field of emerging adult justice
- Defining emerging adults
- Psychological and sociological factors impacting emerging adults
- Racial disparities in adult criminal legal system and recidivism for emerging adults
- Relationship between justice involvement and delay/prevention of achievement of healthy developmental milestones
- Specialized practices for emerging adults in diversion, courts, probation, and corrections
- Specialized policies and laws addressing emerging adults

Please refer to the EAJP Slides attachment.

Group discussion is captured below:

- Caution about focusing too heavily on individual choice and accountability detracting from attention to root causes like poverty, historical/intergenerational trauma, and oppression. Priority should be to make better choices available to young people rather than trying to convince young people to make better choices.
- Youth justice practitioners in WA build positive reinforcement and recognition into collaboratively constructed treatment plans, and set prosocial goals with youth to support them as they work to make positive changes. Those processes are baked into how we conduct our

work using risk/need/responsivity. We work hard with each youth to "find the hook" and move forward.

- What does this research field say about the adultification of young black men/older teens? How is Vermont doing? Vermont is a very white state with pronounced racial disparities. Coded language and fear-spreading are used to reference "those kids" (young people of color) being captured in an expanded juvenile system. Racism manifests in mythology and narratives. It will be important to distinguish between public narrative and what data tells us about youth crime.

### **Breakout Discussions**

The workgroup broke out into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- If juvenile court jurisdiction were expanded to include 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds, what would be the impacts to your work?
- Which other systems or areas does your work most interact with, and how do you foresee those being impacted?
- What other questions/issues would need to be addressed?
- What opportunities would this expansion present?

### **Full Group Discussions**

In the full group, we engaged in discussion with intentions to:

- Take an inventory of areas of impact and opportunity.
- Shape our understanding of issues, goals, needs that we may want to address in distinct subgroups/committees. Heidi will bring back a suggestion for this.
- Identify gaps in this workgroup where we need representation.

Discussion captured below:

- There are benefits to being in the juvenile system rather than the adult system: record sealing, investment in rehabilitation, etc. The fidelity of the existing system should not be compromised by adding more people to the system without also investing in that expansion. How do we make this change and keep the advantages of the juvenile system in place?
- If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right. This is a resource-dependent initiative and needs to be a serious investment in the young adult age group.
- Consideration of the 18+ right to a jury trial. How do we handle that? Give an option to this new age group of whether they want a jury trial vs. bench trial?
- We have worked to develop research-based tools and interventions like risk assessment tools. That research was done with datasets made up of under 18 youth. Re-doing that research and re-establishing effective tools to include emerging adults would be a cost.
- Are we talking about legal process and service provision only, or also custody? If all, then we need to consider all of the different developmental stages that would be in detention together. Safety considerations, federal requirements regarding sight and sound separation. Current federal law allows that youth/young adults may be in same facility as long as state identifies them all as "juveniles."
- The young adult population currently served/supervised by the state would become served at the local level. Counties will have pushbacks. Need to acknowledge the fiscal component and plan to address this. There are jurisdictions where there isn't funding for the population they are

already serving currently, much less to expand. Need consistent funding. This is a justice by geography issue.

- Are we talking about a third or hybrid system for this population? May be less complicated than pushing this population into the juvenile system in terms of funding. Because of our non-unified court system, it is hard to sort out the funding needs that would emerge at the local level.
- As we navigate the details and complexities, a guiding principle should be that we don't want people in facilities. We want them in community programs and supportive services. We have an opportunity to create new opportunities for this population – not just transfer them – but make community options available to them.
- This requires a massive and worthwhile investment in an effort to break a cycle of underinvestment. It will take many agencies fighting for this to make it happen. We don't want people entering the system at all, but if they are, we want it to be the one that gives them a chance at rehabilitation and a chance to move on.
- We would like to hear directly from stakeholders from Vermont to hear how it's going. Lael will invite them to a future meeting. It is a small state but has some big state problems dealing with rural poverty, opioid crisis, boarder issues.

### **Next Steps**

- Heidi to review the points discussed here and other research, and propose how to “bucket” this project.
- Heidi to coordinate bringing Vermont experts with Lael.
- Heidi has data from Washington State Center for Court Research on arrests, filings, convictions by offense category and demographics on 18–20-year-olds, and will prepare it for sharing and discussion.
- Would like to hear from community-based service providers who serve 18–20-year-olds. What is the current situation they are facing? Collateral consequences? Their treatment in courts? The services available to them?
- Think about how the service providers currently working with 18-20, and how they could potentially join with service providers for younger youth. What are the similarities? What work do they do with that age? What is the funding structure for services for young adults, especially as associated with their current court cases?
- Heidi and Drew are creating opportunities from youth/young adult representation and voice.
- There is an opportunity to look at other systems that expanded to serve this age group, like extended foster care. What barriers and challenges emerged? Not just an extension, but something new for people with different needs.
- Find a way to receive information to answer, “How are the young adults doing?” How is their experience? What are they able to access? What are their needs? Ask, survey them. Important to reach across the state.

### **Conclude**