



Final Report of the Cuyahoga County  
Council Juvenile Court Advisory  
Subcommittee

**Findings, Recommendations & Observations**

The Cuyahoga County Council Public Safety and Justice Affairs Committee



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# Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee Members

- The Honorable Ronald Adrine, Chair – Retired Administrative Judge of Cleveland Municipal Court
- Jennifer Blumhagen Yarham, Vice-Chair – Executive Director at Applewood Centers, Inc.
- The Honorable Robert McClelland – Mediator for the Court of Common Pleas and retired Common Pleas Judge
- Marvin Cross - Retired Commander of Cleveland Division of Police
- Bridget Gibbons - Deputy Court Administrator for Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court

## Subcommittee Support

- Janine Carter – Deputy Clerk
- Laura Black – Policy Advisor

## Special Thanks

The Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee members would like to thank the members of Cuyahoga County Council for the opportunity, resources, and time to explore critical and complex issues around youth justice and community violence. We would also like to extend our gratitude to each invested community member that provided testimonial or public comment including Ms. Cyan Blackwell, Ms. Ginger Van Wagenen, Mr. Pat Gleydura, Ms. Leah Winsberg, Mr. Mark Stanton, Ms. Hannah Wiltshire, Ms. Nikita Strange. A special thanks to those that participated as panelists of presenters to the committee meetings including Ms. Gabriella Celeste, Mr. Patrick McCarthy, The Honorable Thomas O'Malley, The Honorable Judge Kristin Sweeney, The Honorable Judge Jennifer O'Malley, The Honorable Judge Nicholas Celebrezze, The Honorable Judge Anne McDonough, Mr. Timothy McDevitt, Mr. Darian Johnson, Ms. Gabriella Nieves, Mr. Adam Csornok, Mr. Santino Montanez, Ms. Tenisha Walls, Ms. Tameka Potter, Ms. Jocelyn Rosnick, Mr. Patrick Gleydura, Mr. Cullen Sweeney, Ms. Brooke Burns, Mr. Sam Amata, Ms. Kenyatta Johnson, Ms. Keara Mullen, Ms. Sara Honig, Ms. Ashley Stebbins, and Ms. Leah Winsberg. Your expertise contributed greatly to committee member recommendations and findings and will be a part of youth justice reform efforts across the county.

# Subcommittee Creation

In April of 2024, Cuyahoga County Council President, pursuant to Rule 12E of the Rules of Cuyahoga County Council, appointed an advisory subcommittee of the standing Public Safety and Justice Affairs Committee of Cuyahoga County Council. The five-member subcommittee was asked to conduct a comprehensive review of existing programs, program outcomes, and rates of recidivism within Cuyahoga County's Juvenile Justice system and to submit findings and recommendations upon the completion of its work. As directed, the subcommittee elected its Chair who presided over the public body's activities and work.

## Background

Almost a year ago, amid scrutiny of the juvenile justice system at both local and statewide levels, the Cuyahoga County Council created a temporary subcommittee to review how the youth justice system was functioning and to make recommendations.

In late 2022, hundreds of residents of Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland attended a Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC) attended public hearing at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church in Cleveland to hear compelling information and facts about Cuyahoga County's use of Discretionary Juvenile bind-over—the process of transferring children under age 18 to adult court and, if convicted, sentencing as an adult. Following this event, GCC began organizing an effort to bring attention to the general public about bind-overs in Cuyahoga County. The group spoke with members of the county administration, judges, the county prosecutor, and the county public defender as they worked to learn more about the bind-over process and how to best advocate for children involved in the juvenile legal system. After reviewing bind-over data and speaking with the public defender and his juvenile division team, advocates lobbied the county—including County Executive Chris Ronayne—to provide additional funding for the public defender's office.

In early 2024, interest in the county's juvenile court surged due, in part, to media reports on its policies and procedures. That media attention began in March of 2024 with reporting from the Marshall Project—Cleveland, an online news outlet, which questioned the juvenile court's process for the appointment of counsel for indigent youth charged with delinquent behavior. Additionally, two local reporters spent seven months inside the juvenile justice system to better understand the influences that led youth to crime and how court services attempted to redirect them. The resulting media series, released over six weeks starting in June of 2024, explored the history of juvenile courts,

the laws permitting youth to be prosecuted as adults, and various court programs aimed at rehabilitating justice involved youth. The Cleveland Plain Dealer/Cleveland.com published about those impacted by the county's juvenile justice system included a recurring theme of poverty, violence, abuse and neglect, which not only contributed to delinquent behavior but also created obstacles to reform.

The series questioned how state laws created a direct pipeline from the juvenile system to adult prison and how a youth's life circumstances, role in the offense, or potential for rehabilitation weigh into those decisions. It also emphasized the need for increased staffing to support impactful court services such as Multisystemic Therapy and the Community-Based Intervention Center and highlighted the need for community services and supports before youth entered the justice system. Youth featured in the series expressed that greater emotional and financial support, along with access to educational, vocational, and recreational opportunities, might have altered their paths. Many also longed for a friend or role model, underscoring a critical need for mentorship.

Prior to the creation of the subcommittee, the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court received a \$450,000 grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to establish a continuum of care focused on early intervention and prevention strategies to address root causes of youth crime and divert kids away from the justice system. Once created the initiative, known as "Care First Cuyahoga," will aim to serve youth aged 12–17—particularly Black youth from marginalized communities with disproportionately high juvenile arrest rates—and their families by providing individualized development and support through trusted community organizations.

Towards the beginning of the public clamor and following consultation with the County Executive and the Judges of the Juvenile Division, County Council determined that a thorough examination of the efficacy of the court's current programmatic schema was warranted.

To that end, on April 1, 2024, this subcommittee of County Council's Public Safety and Justice Affairs was constituted and charged with responsibilities to:

- Examine The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court's Programming and Recidivism.
- Review the Juvenile Court's current programs and their effects on rates of recidivism.
- Assess the Juvenile Court's existing programs and identify any barriers or challenges in the current system.
- Identify juvenile justice best practices: Research and recommend additional programs and best practices Cuyahoga County's Juvenile Court, drawing from successful models implemented in other jurisdictions.

- Conduct Financial Needs and Resource Assessment, including the conduct of a thorough assessment of the financial resources required to implement recommended changes and improvements.
- Provide a detailed budget outlining the financial needs associated with proposed reforms.

What follows is a compilation of the subcommittee's work, findings and recommendations to Council flowing therefrom.

# Executive Summary

## ***Problem***

In the year prior to the subcommittee’s creation advocates voiced concerns regarding Cuyahoga County’s statistics, the quality of Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court’s programs and services, and the qualifications of counsel provided to the region’s youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

In 2023, 75 juveniles were bound over to adult court in Cuyahoga County. Twenty-seven were for murder or aggravated murder charges, 10 attempted murder, 29 aggravated robbery with a weapon, and 9 had other felony charges. 97% of all youth bind-overs included a weapon.

Cuyahoga County has the highest number of young people transferred to adult court in the state. A majority of county youth who interact with Juvenile Court and 90% of those sent to the adult system are Black youth. Additionally, more than two-thirds of youth involved in Cuyahoga County’s juvenile system have prior involvement in the child welfare system.

There is a growing volume of research illustrating carceral solutions to juvenile delinquency issues do not improve outcomes and often exacerbate behavior. Therefore, more emphasis needs to be placed on community-based prevention strategies to reduce the number of young people who become system involved.

Successful efforts to reduce recidivism involves trauma informed support and wrap around services addressing underlying disparities impacting education, employment, mental health, and overall quality of life.

The youth justice is faced with complex issues that require a balanced approach to maintain community safety and the rehabilitation of young people into productive members of the community.

## ***Objective***

The Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee was charged with identifying primary challenges facing the court system. The Subcommittee was further charged with the responsibility of identifying, both new and existing, court programs to implement, elevate, and amplify additional success through behavior modification, recidivism reduction and community safety, through expanded funding.

The intent and focus of all of our work is the production of an annotated report with supportable conclusions County Council finds realistic and actionable.

### ***Questions***

The Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee considered several questions as it conducted its review of the region's juvenile justice system. Those questions included:

- What programs are currently utilized by the Juvenile Court and what is the specific purpose of each?
- How does the court assess the effectiveness of its programming in reforming delinquent behavior and addressing underlying causality?
- How does the Court address issues that result in disparate contact with the juvenile justice system for members of certain racial groups, i.e., Black males?
- What role does the Court play in fostering community engagement in juvenile justice system improvement?
- How would the county's provision of significant additional fiscal resources enhance the Court's ability to improve individual outcomes for justice system-involved children and to lower their rates of recidivism?
- How does the county ensure that justice system-involved children are afforded effective assistance to navigate the system?

### ***Methodology***

Over the course of nine months, the Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee conducted a series of public meetings to engage with stakeholders in the juvenile justice system. During these sessions, members gathered both qualitative and quantitative data through various means, including public comments at the meetings, presentations from invited speakers, and written submissions from interested parties. Members also sought out written recommendations. The recommendations have been framed to reflect the subcommittee's sentiments regarding the necessity to invest in a full continuum of care. The subcommittee's findings and recommendations also highlight the importance of strongly investing in front end services while also addressing the needs of multi-system youth who are involved in the deep end of the juvenile justice system. The recommendations are ordered as such and start with prevention, diversion and end with deeper system involvement recommendations for most intensive interventions.

### ***Key Findings and Recommendations***

The Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee's work culminated in a number of findings and recommendations offered by stakeholders of the system. The subcommittee's

membership also developed several action items associated with these findings and recommendations in the following areas:

1. Funding for Prevention, Early Intervention, and Community-Based Alternatives
2. Collaboration, Planning & Engagement for a Continuum of Care
3. Probation Staffing to Provide Case Management Support
4. Workforce Planning for Behavioral Health and Trauma Services
5. Advancing Racial Equity and Inclusive Practices
6. Fostering Community Safety & a Public Health Approach to Gun Violence
7. Facility and Infrastructure Reform
8. System Accountability & Data
9. Support for Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

### ***Suggestions & Aspirational Goals***

The subcommittee has also included several suggestions and more aspirational goals for stakeholders addressing the following common themes:

1. Access to qualified counsel
2. The unique needs of young people engaged in the youth justice system
3. Assignment of counsel
4. Language vilifying young people
5. A shift in the countywide vision of youth justice
6. Structural inequities
7. Convene stakeholders to conduct high level review of youth bind-over data and trends

### ***Juvenile Court Wish List***

Pursuant to a request made during a meeting between the subcommittee and Juvenile Division Judges, the Court submitted a list of resources to improve the effectiveness of the Courts, enhance public safety, and improve the lives of children in Cuyahoga County. Six areas were addressed including: residential treatment funding, the alternative to detention continuum, greater coordination between systems, probation officer staffing, prevention for youth between 9 – 11 years old, and a police drop-off/intervention center.

# Key Findings & Recommendations

## Funding for Prevention, Early Intervention, and Community-Based Alternatives

**Finding:** County funding can be strategically directed to address youth justice issues and reduce systemic involvement. This can be achieved through thoughtful planning, dedicated personnel, and targeted programming. Additionally, Juvenile Court's Variable RECLAIM allocation is dependent on the number of youth committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services. While there are numerous funding categories in RECLAIM Grant that are not formula driven, the Variable RECLAIM funds can vary significantly from one fiscal year to the next, resulting in steep influx and reductions of funds. The program's funding formula may result in the need for County funds to continue critical intervention programs in fiscal years of significant reductions.

**Recommendation:** The Council should allocate sufficient resources to comprehensively address youth justice challenges in the region. Funding should support initiatives for children at risk of system involvement, youth who encounter the justice system, and youth who are detained. As needed, County should provide additional funding to supplement the State's RECLAIM grants by allocating additional funds for youth programming.

### **Action Items:**

- Provide funding to expand access to community-based alternatives to detention (e.g., respite care, group homes) for a total of **\$1 million** to support multi-system youth in need of safe spaces in lieu of detention.
- Invest in diversion programming to enhance supports for the Early Intervention and Diversion Center (EIDC).
- Fund healing-centered approaches across the continuum such as Restorative Justice Programs.
- Increase funding for prosocial and vocational activities (e.g., culinary arts, hair design).
- Improve transportation access to support out-of-school activities.
- Continue to fund Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and other intensive in-home programs to reduce family stress and recidivism.
- Fund cognitive-behavioral and wraparound interventions to reduce violence.

# Collaboration, Planning & Engagement for a Continuum of Care

**Finding:** Enhanced coordination and collaboration across the region are essential to effectively addressing youth violence. A continuum of care is needed to support youth at all stages of involvement in the County's child welfare system and other youth serving systems.

**Recommendation:** The County should support the work of the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) grant of **Care First Cuyahoga (CFC) Continuum of Care Initiative** through the convening of community stakeholders to system map and provide gap analysis the neighborhood supports, juvenile justice system and develop a unified strategy. This forum should highlight existing and emerging initiatives, strengthen interagency collaboration, and engage grassroots organizations, volunteers, and youth justice professionals in a shared effort to create a continuum of care to support young people and their families and reduce reliance on the youth justice system.

## **Action Items:**

- County leadership should ensure all youth serving agencies including Family Children First Council (FCFC), Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board (ADAMHS), Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CCBDD), and Educational Services Centers (ESC), and other community-based agencies to participate in the CFC process and meetings.
- Engage additional stakeholders including parents, law enforcement, and community partners.
- Establish a Parent Advisory Council and promote transparency in planning.
- Establish navigation services to improve access, coordination, and continuity of care as a diversion from the youth justice system.
- Support early intervention strategies to prevent crossover from child welfare to justice systems, such Fostering Healthy Futures Program (FHF)
- Encourage cross-system collaboration at the earliest points of system involvement will improve outcomes for youth and families.
- Once the planning for CFC concludes, fund the Care First Cuyahoga Continuum of Care to support young people in their communities and divert them from the youth justice system. It is specifically designed to divert Black youth, which aligns with the goal to fund programming to reduce deep-end involvement with serious cases for these young people. **Cost to be determined upon completion of planning and design phase.**

# Probation Staffing to Provide Case Management Support

**Finding:** Probation Officers are tasked with providing comprehensive supervision for increasingly higher-risk youth have caseload sizes too large for effective case management for high-risk youth. 75% of youth on probation have felony level offenses. Many cases involve gun-related offenses. Caseload sizes are average of nearly 30 cases per Probation Officer. Additionally, youth who are detained unfortunately have a higher rate of recidivism than those not detained.

## **Data Points Considered:**

- The average caseload size of probation officers was 31.29 as of 4/15/2024
- In 2020, 666 youth terminated from probation 71% did not incur a new delinquent charge within 1 year
- The Sentencing Project found, in a 2020 study funded by the Anne E. Casey Foundation, Inc., that incarcerated youth are 33% more likely to commit another felony, or re-offend, versus youth that are kept in the community or kept close to home.
- Approximately 40% of incarcerated youth in Ohio return to the Department of Youth Services (DYS) custody or enter the adult criminal justice system after release.
- Recidivism increases for youth that spend more than 6 months incarcerated.

**Recommendation:** The Juvenile Court's personnel budget should be expanded to hire additional probation officers, ensuring more manageable caseloads and enabling more effective, individualized support for each youth. The probation officers will further provide justice involved youth with opportunities for employment and wrap around supports for youth and their families upon their return from a youth detention, residential, or ODYS facilities.

## **Action Items:**

- **Provide \$1.2 million** in funding to Juvenile Court to hire 15 additional Probation Officers to reduce caseloads to an average of 20 youth per officer. This will allow for more individualized supervision and support, will aid in case management, and allow officers to embody a coach-like role to support young people.
- Support the Juvenile Court to align with Annie E. Casey Foundation Probation Transformation standards of reduced caseload size and improved access to diversion services.

- Fund Positive Youth Development Programming to supplement RECLAIM funding. This will allow young people access to prosocial supports in their community.
- Expand training for staff on adolescent development and best practices across all youth serving systems.
- Fund wraparound reentry services to support youth and families and reduce recidivism.
- Provide job training and employment opportunities across the entire spectrum of the youth justice system from diversion to reentry. Include a wide array of community organizations in these workforce development efforts including private, non-profit, and faith-based partners.
- Develop partnerships with local business owners, trade unions, and employment specialists to work with young people who are justice-involved.
- Use cost savings from reduced detention stays for family-centered support services reducing barriers to successful outcomes, including, but not limited to transportation and mental health treatment

## Workforce Planning for Behavioral Health and Trauma Services

**Finding:** The region has a shortage of professionals who provide critical support for young people involved in Behavioral Health and Juvenile Court. Effective recruitment and retention strategies are essential to build and support the region’s professional youth justice workforce.

### **Data Points Considered:**

From 2013 to 2019, demand for behavioral health services rose 353% statewide, according to data from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Demand spiked again in 2021, with providers reporting a 70% hike in need for adult and youth mental health services and a 60% increase in need for addiction services.

**Recommendation:** The County’s workforce development efforts should prioritize targeted initiatives to attract and retain professionals critical to youth support, including clinical counselors, social workers, and community health workers.

### **Action Items:**

- Conduct needs assessments and develop strategic plans for behavioral health services in community-based placements.

- Partner with DYS to implement BHJJ and other behavioral health initiatives.
- Establish a wellness policy for juvenile court staff.
- Fund behavioral and mental health services for all justice-involved youth.
- Support trauma-informed, healing-centered practices across programs and facilities.

## Advancing Racial Equity and Inclusive Practices

**Finding:** Black males are disproportionately represented in the region’s youth justice system.

### **Data Points Considered:**

- While Black children constitute approximately 42% of the county's youth population, they account for 90% of those in juvenile detention facilities.
- A 2018 evaluation by the Ohio Department of Youth Services revealed that 80% of adjudicated youth in Cuyahoga County were Black, and 86% were male
- Between 2012 and 2022, 94% of juveniles bound over to adult court in Cuyahoga County were Black, despite Black youth comprising approximately 40% of the county's youth population aged 10 to 17.
- As of September 2024, Black youth made up 72% of Ohio's youth prison population, while Black individuals constitute only 17% of the state's overall population.

**Recommendation:** The County should invest in programs aimed at reducing Black males’ involvement with the Juvenile Court system and addressing disparities within youth justice system. These efforts should include expanding access to mental health services, increasing employment opportunities, and promoting engagement in prosocial activities.

### **Action Items:**

- Fund multidisciplinary teams to reduce racial disparities at key points (e.g., diversion, probation, detention, adult transfer).
- Continue to foster and adopt trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices.
- Identify and support dual system youth early with integrated approaches that are strength-focused and represent supports from communities of high referrals to the youth justice system.

- Train stakeholders on equitable practices, implicit bias in the decision-making process cultural responsiveness.
- Address systemic discrimination and promote inclusion.

## Fostering Community Safety & a Public Health Approach to Gun Violence

**Finding:** Rising gun violence in the region is linked to more severe charges and sentences for youth in the justice system. Yearly violent crime rates in Cleveland are significantly higher than Cincinnati and Columbus. Young people who have contact with the youth justice system are particularly impacted by trauma, gun violence, and the impacts of poverty.

### **Data Points Considered:**

- In 2023, Cuyahoga County charged a record 41 juveniles with homicide, surpassing the previous year's count of 35.
- Between 2022 and 2023, there was a notable rise in juvenile firearm-related charges: Improper handling of firearms increased from 221 to 293 cases, carrying a concealed weapon rose from 195 to 230 cases, aggravated robbery charges went up from 167 to 190 cases.
- The youth firearm homicide rate in Cuyahoga County is over 30% higher than in comparable counties, such as Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) and Wayne County (Detroit)
- In 2023, the City of Cleveland recorded 1,703 violent crimes per 100,000 residents, making it the most dangerous city in Ohio and placing it among the most dangerous in the U.S.

**Recommendation:** The County should adopt a public health approach to reducing gun violence among youth. Youth justice must be integrated into the region's broader gun violence reduction strategy, with targeted prevention, intervention, and remediation efforts tailored to young people and stakeholders of the system should be included as partners of the County's recently announced Office of Violence Prevention. Additionally, County Council should allocate sufficient resources to highly impacted and marginalized communities by reviewing the Court's database to narrow neighborhood to allocate resources.

### **Action Items:**

- Coordinate countywide efforts to address gun violence with public health strategies.
- Fund violence interrupters, credible messengers, and restorative practices.
- Strengthen social and economic protective factors (housing, education, jobs).
- Recognize social determinants (trauma, poverty, family stress) as key drivers of youth involvement and provide resources in communities most impacted by gun violence.
- Use data mapping to concentrate resources in communities of highest need for greatest impact for coordinating resources. Ensure equitable distribution of resources, especially in communities historically under-resourced.
- Supplement RECLAIM funding to increase funding for Credible Messengers in these communities.
- Supplement RECLAIM funding to elevate support for Restorative Justice Programming in these communities.

## Facility and Infrastructure Reform

***Finding:*** Cuyahoga County needs local community-based facilities to serve as alternatives to placement in secure pre-adjudicated placements. There is a lack of facilities to keep youth close to home and connected to their community. Such facilities are funded by ODYS.

### **Data Points Considered:**

- None of the state's current 16 Community Correction Facilities for youth are in Cuyahoga County.
- The average daily population at the county's detention center increased by 38% from 2020 to 2023 and illustrated that existing community-based alternatives are insufficient to meet the needs of at-risk youth.

***Recommendation:*** The County should continue its joint effort with the court to advocate for a state funded community-based correctional facility (CCFs) in Cuyahoga County and invest in community-based alternatives to ODYS commitments.

### **Action Items:**

- Develop smaller, community-based correctional facilities (CCFs).
- Identify specialized facilities for youth with disabilities.
- Create a master plan for coordinated facility planning, grant funding, and services.

- Assess and improve facility conditions and operations per Ohio Juvenile Justice Working Group recommendations.
- Provide additional funding for residential treatment for youth who are in need of placement. The Court anticipates a need for \$2 million for calendar year 2026. This will assist the Court to divert more youth away from ODYS.

## System Accountability & Data

**Finding:** Although the majority of violent crimes in Cuyahoga County are committed by individuals over the age of 18, young people in Cuyahoga County have been portrayed as the primary problem endangering public safety.

### **Data Points Considered:**

- In 2023, the majority of homicide victims in Cleveland were Black males aged 18–44, indicating that adults are both the primary victims and likely perpetrators of violent crimes.
- While there has been an increase in youth involvement in violent crimes, such as a rise in juveniles charged with homicide from 43 in 2021 to 82 in 2022, these numbers still represent a smaller portion compared to adult offenses.

**Recommendation:** Counter misinformation about justice-involved youth with credible data.

### **Action Items:**

- Fund improved data systems for juvenile justice such as the Court’s new case management system to accurately provide reports of juvenile delinquency matters.
- Audit financial costs of transfers and their public safety outcomes.
- Implement strategic plans and submit them for county review and accountability.

## Support for Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

**Finding:** Guardian ad Litem and Court Appointed Special Advocates play an important role in guiding youth and family through complex proceedings.

**Data Points Considered:**

- Research indicates that cases with GAL and CASA involvement have better outcomes for children, particularly in terms of permanency (reunification with family or adoption), safety, and overall well-being. Judges often find CASA volunteers and GALs to be instrumental in making informed decisions about a child's future.
- Over 1,500 youth in Cuyahoga County are in need of a CASA volunteer but have not been assigned one due to a lack of resources.

**Recommendation:** The County should review and assess funding allocations for CASA and GAL organizations to determine if increases are required to meet the region's need for these services.

**Action Items:**

- Review funding and reimbursements for CASA and GALs.
- Require consistent GAL-child contact and DCFS participation.
- Improve data collection, reporting, and training for GAL/CASA.
- Limit caseloads and increase recruitment efforts.
- Establish recognition and peer support structures for GAL/CASA.

# Suggestions & Aspirational Goals

The following are a list of suggestions and more aspirational goals for stakeholders. Common themes were expressed by panelists. While many recommendations from public comments were valid, this committee has limited our recommendations to those that County Council can actually influence. However, we do support the following aspirational goals and hope they will aid our county to address youth violence and juvenile delinquency from a collective approach to support the unique needs of young people who encounter the youth justice system.

1. Ensure justice involved youth have access to qualified counsel that provides age-appropriate advocacy. Attorneys appointed to represent youth should be committed to understanding root causes of delinquency and will advocate for proven and promising interventions tailored to meet their clients' needs and reduce delinquent behaviors.
2. Recognize the unique needs of young people who are engaged in the youth justice system and hold young people accountable in developmentally appropriate ways. As a county, we should encourage all system stakeholders to shift away from "adultification" and exhaust all the tools available within the juvenile justice system.
3. Encourage a practice of transparency regarding the assignment of counsel and the optimal utilization of the Public Defender as a resource in that regard.
4. Leaders will reject the use of harmful language that vilifies young people. This type of rhetoric blames young people for larger systemic issues and invokes a level of fear in the community that is not proportional to the data on youth violence.
5. Commit to a long-term cultural shift where all county departments and leaders see youth not as problems to be fixed, but as people to be embraced, healed, and empowered. Create a shared countywide vision of youth justice that centers dignity, potential, and community healing.
6. Confront the structural inequities—such as poverty, racism, housing instability, and school pushout—that drive youth into the justice system. Support cross-agency collaboration to prioritize upstream solutions that create safety through opportunity.
7. The committee unanimously agreed on the following aspirational goal:

Convene a stakeholder group including County Council, the County Executive, the Juvenile Division of the Court of Common Pleas, the County Prosecutor, The County Public Defender, and representation from the private defense bar, to discuss creation of a predicate panel to collaboratively conduct a high level review of bind-over trends, policies, and legislation to address systemic issues and address the service needs of the region's youth.

*Minority Statement from Judge Adrine and Marvin Cross Regarding this Goal:*

The suggested formation of a stakeholder group acknowledges Cuyahoga County's numerical disparity relating to the number of those bound over, and its unique circumstances in attempting to process the highest number of bind-over motions in Ohio. The suggestion to convene a stakeholder group is also an acknowledgement of the fact that the County Council lacks the legal authority to directly create or enforce bind-over policies, but may still play a role in local efforts at information and resource sharing aimed at safely reducing the number of young individuals transferred to the General Division of the Common Pleas Court.

Separately, we assert the position that the Cuyahoga County Council is the appropriate body to convene local stakeholders to review and streamline bind-over protocols for better outcomes for youth and the community. Further, he maintains that it is important to note that the filing of a motion to transfer, whether granted or not, lengthens the time to disposition, increases stays in the Detention Center, and creates additional hearings for the court. In his judgment, the current process negatively affects minors and their families and increases court costs. He indicates that, according to the County Public Defender's Office, only a third of discretionary bind-over cases are granted and, therefore, it is reasonable to believe that convening a cooperative body of stakeholders that can conduct a comprehensive review of the management of these cases could result in advantageous outcomes.

# Juvenile Court Wish List

During the subcommittee's discussion with Juvenile Division Judges, the members requested the Court submit a list of wants or "wish list" associated with funding requests. The full letter submitted by the Court can be found in full here: [Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Juvenile Division Wishlist Letter—April 30, 2025](#)

In summary the Court requested the following:

1. Increase residential treatment options offering therapeutic environments for youth by increasing Juvenile Court's funding allocation to \$2 million in 2026 (currently allocated \$1.4 million).
1. Expand the Court's current detention alternatives, including Respite Homes, Trauma-informed Group Homes, and Dedicated Secure Residential Beds for youth with low-level charges or those violating home detention by increasing 2026 funding allocation to \$1 million.
2. Include funding for Care First Cuyahoga recommendations in 2026 Juvenile Court budget. Dollars requested will be determined once the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention planning concludes.
3. Provide funding for 15 additional probation officers, reducing caseloads to an average of 21 youth per officer by including \$1.2 million in the 2026 Juvenile Court budget.
4. Fund a juvenile delinquency prevention program for youth ages 9 -11 focusing on youth in foster care who are at risk of aging out into incarcerations by including \$162K for the program in the 2026 Juvenile Court budget. The program would include 30 week mentoring and skills groups for preadolescents in foster care.
5. Fund the establishment of a police drop off/intervention center for youth by including \$50K for the program in the 2026 Juvenile Court budget. The drop off center would reduce the time police spend processing youth and provide immediate assessments and interventions.

# Conclusion

It has been our profound honor to serve on this subcommittee, and we sincerely hope that our efforts prove useful in enhancing the experiences and outcomes of all those who find themselves involved with juvenile justice in Cuyahoga County.

We were charged with reviewing the programmatic thrust of the Juvenile Division of the county's Common Pleas Court. Our purpose in so doing was to identify where County Council, the executive branch of county government, could effectively provide assistance to the judiciary in furtherance of its mission to rehabilitate justice-involved young people and to enhance public safety.

Our review revealed that the court currently provides in the range of 100 distinct programs that focus on meeting the needs of justice-system involved young people and their families. Those programs span the gamut of possible interventions. They include a wide variety of prevention and diversion programs, as well as community-based residential housing for those who cannot safely be allowed to remain at home while under court supervision. Programs also include services to address mental health and substance abuse issues. There are programs to help the system-involved navigate the unfamiliar and intimidating waters of that system.

We were able to determine that the overwhelming majority of those who do find themselves before the court experience positive outcomes and low rates of recidivism. We found that a small percentage of young people are responsible for the most horrible crimes committed by youth. This group is also the most likely to recidivate. Unfortunately, these facts run contrary to public perception, a perception fanned by a media that highlights the most egregious acts committed by this cohort, while only occasionally showcasing the success enjoyed by the majority with whom the court interfaces.

We were able to determine that effective solutions for addressing the criminal behavior of young people abound, both locally and nationally. These solutions are both human and fiscal resource intensive. We realize that Cuyahoga County's resources are finite and, therefore, that the additional resources that it can bring to bear to help the court is likewise finite.

# Meeting Summaries

The Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee held eleven meetings in total. The meetings were in person and open to the public. The meetings were streamed and archived on the Cuyahoga County YouTube station and all meetings can be accessed on the [subcommittee's webpage](#). The meetings allowed the subcommittee to hear from subject matter experts, Court staff, independent experts and stakeholders of the juvenile justice system. Presentations included a range of topics including juvenile court programming, community needs, gun violence, youth advocacy, mental health services, and staffing levels. The subcommittee heard public comments from interested community members and proactively followed up on stakeholder requests to present at meetings.

## Summary of Committee Meeting, July 1, 2024

Cyan Blackwell, a Youth Justice Policy Associate representing the ACLU, delivered a public comment urging a comprehensive review of both the Juvenile Court System and the Juvenile Detention Center. Blackwell called on the committee to ensure that all youth receive competent, qualified legal counsel. She emphasized the importance of investment in local prevention efforts, including Alternatives to Detention and the Early Intervention and Diversion Center. She also urged greater support for healing-centered and restorative justice initiatives. In response, she recommended a full-scale examination of the juvenile court and detention systems, a strengthening of legal defense for youth, expansion of diversion and prevention programs, and sustained community engagement.

Ginger Van Wagenen, speaking on behalf of Greater Cleveland Congregations, provided public comment and echoed many of Ms. Blackwell's concerns. Her comment focused on the lack of adequate funding for the Public Defender's Office. Van Wagenen called for a deep investigation into the juvenile indigent defense system and a closer examination of attorney quality to prevent the unjust processing of children within the legal system.

The committee discussed its primary goals: reducing youth recidivism, addressing disparities—particularly those affecting Black males—improving legal representation, and strengthening diversion and prevention programs. They also discussed their authority. Although the committee is advisory in nature and cannot mandate court decisions or propose changes to state law, it can make local recommendations and advocate for improved implementation of existing policies. Key areas of focus include:

- Mapping how youth enter and move through the justice system
- Identifying gaps in services and programming
- Prioritizing interventions for first-time system-involved youth

- Engaging with specialists, system stakeholders, and formerly system-involved youth
- Conducting field visits to relevant facilities like the detention center and juvenile court

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJ0dF1MIHZc>

## Summary of Committee Meeting, August 19, 2024

Pat Gleydura, Policy Strategist with the ACLU of Ohio, provided public comment on behalf of the Greater Cleveland Youth Justice Collective, a coalition that includes the ACLU of Ohio, the Children’s Law Center, and the Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University. Gleydura advocated system-wide reforms that address the adultification of youth, enhance transparency, foster collaboration, and improve public access to information and materials related to the juvenile justice system.

Leah Winsberg, Senior Policy Attorney at the Children’s Law Center, provided public comment and referenced a letter submitted to the Subcommittee on July 5, 2024. The letter outlined critical concerns about overreliance on state facilities and the transfer of youth to adult court due to their harmful impacts. Winsberg emphasized the need for specialized, competent legal representation for youth and offered to provide additional resources and information. She suggested the committee organize information by topics such as prevention, intervention, and reentry, and called for effective use of county and state funding.

Bridget Gibbons, Deputy Court Administrator, provided a comprehensive overview of the juvenile justice system, including its mission, reform efforts, and current data and challenges

- Key Data and Issues:
  - o 70% of detained youth have a mental health diagnosis
  - o 92% have experienced trauma, and 66% have been involved in the child welfare system
  - o Research highlights the harm of unnecessary detention due to adolescent brain development
- Data and Outcomes:

- o *Racial Disparities*: 76% of referred youth and 86% of truancy/unruly filings involve youth of color
  - o *Probation Transformation*: Recommendations for reduced caseloads and more focus on felony and high-need youth
  - o *Detention and Placement*: Residential placements have decreased by 82% since 2017; in 2023, 91% of youth placed in ODYS were youth of color
  - o *Specialty Dockets*: Programs such as Safe Harbor, Drug Court, Phoenix (Mental Health), and Reentry Court provide tailored support for youth with complex needs
- Current Challenges:
    - o Shortages in behavioral health staffing
    - o Limited availability of respite and community-based placements as alternatives to detention.
    - o High probation officer caseloads (average of 31+)
    - o Ongoing impact of COVID-19 on staffing and placement availability

The subcommittee discussed key concerns and action items, including the need for a program evaluation to assess which initiatives were effective, underperforming, or redundant. They also called for cost-benefit analyses to guide funding priorities and investment decisions, and identification of underfunded programs and services. There was agreement on the importance of system-wide coordination and long-term strategic planning.

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEQo07ih5es>

## Summary of Committee Meeting, September 5, 2024

No Public Comment was provided.

Bridget Gibbons, Deputy Court Administrator, continued part two of the overview of the juvenile justice system. The presentation discussed the following:

- The court receives technical assistance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Catalyze Justice for Probation Transformation efforts to divert youth from official court involvement and only place youth on probation if their offenses require the level of supervision and supports that the probation department provides with an attempt to minimize probation caseload sizes.

- Alternative to Detention programs have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. This is an area of need for the court.
- Community Based Intervention Center (CBIC) - all males 14-17.5 years old for a half day afterschool program or full day report program for moderate to high-risk youth.
  - o 65% success rate for the CBIC program.
  - o 85% avoid ODYS or out-of-home placements
- Youth Care Centers (Raven's House and Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries) provide alternatives to detention for young people arrested for domestic violence cases through Project CALM, which has eliminated the admission of hundreds of youths a year from the detention center.
- Highlighted the importance of family involvement in all services.
- Home Detention – provide 24/7 GPS monitoring as alternative to detention option
  - o Outcomes of the Car Theft Program – 85% completed program successfully and only one youth that did not appear for arraignment following business day.
- Overview of Conditions of Confinement and programming overview. No funding for detention center programming, fully reliant on donations and volunteers.

Several key recommendations and concerns were brought to light. One of the primary recommendations was to increase funding for contracts that support trauma-informed group homes, respite care, and residential beds. These resources are essential for young people in need of safe and supportive environments. Additionally, there is an urgent need to expand both funding and capacity for alternatives to detention. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of encouraging service providers to collaborate with the court in offering therapeutic group homes, trauma-informed respite care, or residential placements. These alternatives are critical for young people who do not meet the criteria for detention but still require secure space while members of the service coordination team work toward identifying a more permanent, long-term solution.

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9YDOpSt-I4>

# Summary of Committee Meeting, October 28, 2024

The first speaker, Pat Gleydura from the ACLU, discussed juvenile diversion programs. Leah Winsberg, representing the Public Defender's Office, followed with remarks focused on bind overs, system outcomes, and the role of community engagement attorneys.

The remainder of the session featured a presentation by Catalyze Justice.

Gabriella Celeste, of Case Western Reserve University's Juvenile Justice Working Group, opened the presentation. She addressed the underutilization of Ohio's 11 community correctional facilities, emphasizing that although youth crime is trending downward overall, rates in Cuyahoga County remain disproportionately high. Celeste noted that many youths in detention face extended stays and that bind over rates in Cuyahoga County are three times higher than in the next closest county. She highlighted the vulnerability of system-involved youth, stating that two-thirds have a history of child welfare involvement.

Her recommendations included prioritizing smaller, local correctional facilities, improving conditions within existing local detention centers, and expanding access to behavioral health support

Patrick McCarthy of Catalyze Justice focused his presentation on youth gun violence. He outlined trends and contributing factors, noting that many young people report carrying guns for protection. McCarthy emphasized that gun violence often perpetuates itself and tends to be concentrated in specific neighborhoods with complex underlying causes.

He introduced the concept of "violence interrupters"—individuals with lived experience who can intervene with at-risk youth, whether they are potential perpetrators or victims. These credible messengers are often positioned in hospitals or communities and are effective at de-escalating retaliation, particularly in the critical 48-hour period following an incident.

McCarthy stressed the value of cognitive-behavioral interventions paired with wraparound services as a means of reducing violence. He recommended targeting high-risk individuals and geographic hotspots, deploying credible messengers to disrupt cycles of violence, and fostering trust and collaboration between communities and law enforcement.

Mr. McCarthy's key recommendations included:

- Working closely with law enforcement and judicial partners to raise awareness
- Engaging all relevant stakeholders
- Conducting assessments of current programs to identify capacity, impact, and service gaps
- Investing in re-entry support, especially job opportunities, to improve outcomes for formerly system-involved youth

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETcNhQFo3Ao>

## Summary of Committee Meeting, November 11, 2024

The committee met with the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court Judges to engage in a meaningful dialogue about the current state of the juvenile justice system and potential areas for improvement. The members of the Juvenile Bench who attended were Judge Thomas O'Malley, Administrative Judge Kristin Sweeney, Judge Jennifer O'Malley, Judge Nicholas Celebrezze, and Judge Anne McDonough. They were joined by Mr. Timothy McDevitt, Juvenile Court Administrator.

The meeting began with a public comment by a representative of CASA - Children and Family Advocates, Nikita Stange. Ms. Strange provided an overview of their role within the juvenile justice system, emphasizing the critical support they offer to children navigating the court process. They elaborated on the specific duties of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) and provided the committee with their contact information for future collaboration.

Following CASA's comments, Leah Winsberg, a representative from the Cuyahoga County Public Defender's Office made a public comment regarding the Public Defender's responsibilities and how their office operates within the juvenile court system. She shared insights into their day-to-day functions and also provided contact details for follow-up communication.

Several challenges currently faced by juveniles involved in the system were brought to light. The judges identified the following issues as significant barriers to progress:

- Limited access to transportation for court-ordered appointments
- A lack of positive male mentors
- Insufficient support groups and funding for such programs
- The need to realign existing resources to better meet juvenile needs
- A shortage of group homes for shelter care

- Long wait times before services are provided post-release, creating a "dead time" during which youth are at risk of reoffending
- The judges shared details of a new therapy-focused treatment facility that will soon open in the Greater Cleveland area. This smaller, specialized facility aims to provide more effective support for young people in need of therapeutic intervention.

The conversation focused on the challenges of gun violence in Cleveland, which has seen a sharper increase compared to other cities in Ohio. Despite these challenges, the judges affirmed their commitment to the youth in their care and expressed a strong interest in collaborating with community-based, positive support groups.

The committee also inquired about the attorney assignment process. The judges explained how representation is determined between the Public Defender's Office and private attorneys, including the guidelines that govern these assignments.

Another question focused on the issue of "bind overs"—cases in which juveniles are transferred to adult court. The judges noted an uptick in these cases, particularly those involving serious offenses such as gun violence and homicides.

Meeting Link: [2024.11.21 Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee Meeting - YouTube](#)

## Summary of Committee Meeting, January 27, 2025

The session featured in-depth presentations from both the Cuyahoga County and Ohio Public Defender Offices, with a particular focus on youth justice.

The discussion was led by several professionals deeply involved in youth advocacy and defense. Brooke Burns, Managing Counsel of Youth Defense at the Office of the Ohio Public Defender, presented alongside Cullen Sweeney, Cuyahoga County's Public Defender. They were joined by members of Sweeney's team, including Community Outreach Attorney Leah Winsberg; Sam Amata, Director of the Youth & Parent Defense Division; Vertical Defenders Sarah Honig and Brant DiChiera; Social Worker Kenyatta Johnson; and Mitigation Specialist Keara Mullen.

The Cuyahoga County Public Defender Office, as explained by the team, is structured into two primary divisions. The Youth & Parent Defense Division consists of multidisciplinary teams comprising attorneys, social workers, parent advocates, investigators, and paralegals. This division is responsible for representing youth in delinquency cases and parents involved in abuse, neglect, dependency, and child support cases. The Youth Defense Division, on the other hand, provides legal services that span trial, post-disposition, appeals, and post-conviction phases. It also manages intake and orientation for all youth committed to the Department of Youth Services

(DYS) or the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC), while addressing critical issues such as conditions of confinement, re-entry support, parole, and policy.

The presentations illustrated the complex and often interconnected challenges faced by youth in the justice system. Many of these young individuals deal with untreated mental health conditions, trauma, and histories of maltreatment. The team shared sobering data and direct testimonials to provide insight into youth perspectives—why children believe they ended up in the system, and the systemic gaps that failed to support them. From a parental viewpoint, the presentations underscored how placing children far from home can have long-term detrimental effects. Many parents, particularly in under-resourced communities, lack the support needed to keep their children out of state custody.

Several key recommendations emerged from the presentations. These included calls for sustained funding, expanded diversion opportunities, better support for court-appointed attorneys, cost-effective alternatives to detention, and limiting ODYS commitments to only the most serious felony adjudications (Felony 1 and 2).

The meeting also featured a presentation by CASA – Child and Family Advocates, highlighting the critical role of Court Appointed Special Advocates in juvenile cases. CASA volunteers serve as independent voices for children, investigating their circumstances and advocating for their best interests in court. CASA volunteers were presented as a vital supplemental resource, bringing consistency and advocacy to children navigating the complexities of the court system.

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/XZOcelbRmxc?si=TvXEGwg0sHDo0nqJ>

## Summary of Committee Meeting, February 26, 2025

The meeting began with a follow-up during the public comment period from Hannah Wiltshire of CASA. CASA is seeking funding to expand its volunteer base by providing training and onboarding resources for new recruits.

A panel discussion was held featuring frontline staff working directly with justice-involved youth. Panelists included several employees from the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court (CCJC) and Ms. Tameka Potter, Director of the Applewood Centers Residential Treatment Program. The CCJC staff panelists were Mr. Darian Johnson, Multi-Systemic Therapist (MST); Ms. Gabriella Nieves, Intervention Specialist; Mr. Adam Csornok, Phoenix Court Care Coordinator; Mr. Santino Montanez, Placement Aftercare Coordinator; and Ms. Tenisha Wells, Supervising Probation Officer.

Topics explored during the discussion included young people’s access to firearms, limitation to safe spaces as alternatives from ODYS commitment, such as Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Center beds at Applewood Centers, challenges around social media, challenges with parent engagement in services, the need for the expansion of diversion services, insufficient funding for diversion services.

Panelists also highlighted that families need basic needs such as access to food, housing stability, and job training opportunities. The panelists shared there is a great need for qualified clinicians to staff the Multisystemic Therapy Program, Integrative Co-Occurring Therapy, and other in-home therapy programs. Participants added that poverty and community violence can lead to transportation barriers for youth and interfere with their attendance to jobs and programs.

Key recommendations included the following: funding for mentorship opportunities, increase funding for Probation Officers to more effectively supervise high-risk youth, job training, supports for prosocial activities, career development, special resources for parents to help them earlier in the system versus criminalizing the youth due to poverty, education, and parental needs. Committee members, Jennifer Yarham and Bridget Gibbons recommended that the Care First Cuyahoga gap analysis, resource mapping, and the development of continuum of care should be supported by the County to address many of these issues.

Meeting Link: [\(1219\) 2025.02.26 Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee Meeting - YouTube](#)

## Summary of Committee Meeting, March 20, 2025

The Greater Cleveland Youth Collaborative, composed of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio, Case Western Reserve University’s Schubert Center for Child Studies, and the Children’s Law Center, Inc. of Cleveland, delivered a compelling presentation focused on the experiences of youth impacted by the justice system. The presentation was led by Jocelyn Rosnick, ACLU Policy Director; Pat Gleydura, ACLU Policy Strategist; and Gabriella Celeste, Executive Director of the Schubert Center.

The Collaborative’s primary aim was to amplify the voices of youth and families most directly affected by contact with the justice system. While the group acknowledged the importance of prioritizing public safety, they challenged traditional notions of safety by encouraging a broader, more inclusive understanding—one rooted in the lived realities and perspectives of young people. Central to their message was the recognition that youthful offenders often lack the cognitive maturity of adults, which affects their decision-making abilities. This distinction, they argued, must be considered in policy and practice when dealing with youth in the justice system.

Through these conversations, several recurring themes emerged. Youth described safety as a complex and deeply personal concept, shaped by their environments and experiences. Many expressed a nuanced understanding of the dual role guns play in their lives—both as a source of perceived protection and a symbol of danger. Grief and loss surfaced as common experiences, and many participants highlighted the impact of generational trauma and normalized violence on their mental health. Yet amid the hardship, they also identified protective factors: the importance of caring adults and the potential of community culture, which they saw as both a strength and a challenge. A significant portion of the youth voiced frustration over the lack of resources, particularly recreational opportunities, in their neighborhoods. They also spoke about the burdens of social media, suggesting that young people should be involved in shaping more positive and supportive digital spaces.

Issues of racial and economic inequality were cited as key barriers to safety and success. Many young people conveyed a deep sense that Cleveland is not a safe place to grow up, and that without targeted investment and support, they are being set up to fail. Still, there was a strong desire among participants to be part of the solution. They called for a greater role in shaping decisions that affect their lives and communities.

The Collaborative's presentation served as both a call to action and a reminder: to build a safer, healthier Cleveland, we must listen to and invest in its youth—those who know its challenges most intimately and who hold the clearest vision for a better future.

The Collaborative made the following recommendations:

- The Collaborative recommended age-appropriate, proportional interventions for youth involved in criminal or anti-social behavior.
- They stressed the need to counter widespread misinformation about youth crime. Citing 2023 data from the Cleveland Division of Police, they noted juveniles made up only 4% of all arrests and 3% of violent crime arrests. Despite this, media coverage often exaggerates youth involvement, undermining support for effective responses.
- Public officials were urged to use measured, accurate language to help correct these misconceptions.
- The Collaborative highlighted successful Juvenile Court initiatives that support and divert justice-involved youth.
- They called for a redefinition of public safety to include the conditions necessary for youth to thrive.
- A significant increase in county investment was recommended for youth-focused neighborhood infrastructure and resources, especially in high-need areas, to more effectively prevent and reduce crime.

- Reliable transportation was identified as a critical need, as many youth face access barriers to existing resources.
- Youth should be engaged in shaping solutions, including serving as a counter to harmful narratives on social media and participating in decision-making around interventions aimed at improving their outcomes.

Meeting Link: [2025.03.20 Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee Meeting - YouTube](#)

## Summary of Committee Meeting, May 1, 2025

Nikita Strange from CASA provided public comment. She thanked the subcommittee for its efforts and reminded it of the organization's core work and funding request.

The discussion turned toward the need for greater consistency in the summaries. It was agreed that the recommendations should be reviewed to remove redundancies and incorporate more brevity, enhancing clarity and focus.

The next steps for the recommendations were outlined. There was an agreement to consolidate the recommendations into specific categories. Currently, there are over a hundred recommendations, divided into actionable and aspirational sections, with each categorized by the relevant parties to whom they should be directed. However, the Committee recognized the need to streamline this further.

A significant point of discussion centered on how funding recommendations should be organized. Members debated whether they should be broken down by county, state, or federal grants. It was also emphasized that any items not supported by RECLAIM funding must be clearly highlighted.

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/51Xv1fhD1Gc?si=Rm3x7jTQUekAON5W>

## Summary of Committee Meeting, May 23, 2025

No public comment was made.

The subcommittee discussed the findings, recommendations and final report and provided feedback on what had been drafted to date. Ms. Gibbons shared an update on

the Court's RECLAIM funding and the members discussed the impact of the reduction on their recommendations included in the report. The members discussed themes to be included in the report including CARE First Cuyahoga, alternatives to detention, restorative justice, workforce development, and the need for additional probation officers.

The subcommittee briefly touched upon the County's recent announcement of the creation of an Office of Violence Prevention and expressed the overlap between their work and that of the initiative.

The subcommittee discussed their upcoming deadline and planned to finalize the report prior to the end of the month.

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/fb3QPlojThE?si=gHmSCauyKyKo5oUr>

## Summary of Committee Meeting, May 28, 2025

Mark Stanton provided public comment on behalf of Juvenile Court and thanked the subcommittee's membership for their efforts.

The subcommittee's members met and went through the draft report. The findings and recommendations were agreed upon by members and a number of edits were made to reflect the group's consensus.

Members voted to approve the final report with amendments incorporated based on the meeting discussion. Once finalized the report will be provided to Councilman Gallagher who is the Chair of the Public Safety Committee and Council President Miller.

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/zb354XG9A9g?si=KoRBikQffGC3vH22>

# Appendices

Letter Creating Subcommittee - April 1, 2024

[Letter Creating Subcommittee - April 1, 2024](#)

Letter from the Children's Law Center—July 1, 2024

[070124-letter.pdf](#)

Letter from Case Western Reserve University's Schubert Center for Child Studies—July 2, 2024

[070224-letter.pdf](#)

Letter from the Cuyahoga County Public Defender—July 26, 2024

[072624-letter.pdf](#)

Juvenile Justice Center Presentation - August 19, 2024

[juvenilejusticecenterpresentation-081924.pptx](#)

September 17th Statement of Magistrate Mark Stanton - September 24, 2024

[September 17th Statement of Magistrate Mark Stanton - September 24, 2024](#)

Ohio Juvenile Justice Working Group Overview - October 24, 2024

[ohiojuvenilejusticeworkinggroupoverview-102524.pptx](#)

Letter from the ACLU of Ohio, the Schubert Center for Child Studies and the Children's Law Center—October 25, 2024

[Microsoft Word - Greater CLE Youth Justice Collective Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee Recommendations.docx](#)

Letter from the Cuyahoga County Public Defender—November 13, 2024

[111324-letter.pdf](#)

Public Defender Presentation—January 27, 2025

[012725-publicdefenderpresentation.pptx](#)

Understanding the Role of the CASA Volunteer Presentation—January 27, 2025

[012725-casavolunteerpresentation.pptx](#)

Gun Violence Among Young People Presentation—January 27, 2025  
[012725-gunviolencepresentation.pptx](#)

Greater CLE Youth Justice Collective Presentation - February 25, 2025  
[greatercleyouthjusticecollectivepresentation-022525.pptx](#)

CASA Funding Request – February 26, 2025  
[CASA Funding Request February 26, 2025](#)

Greater CLE Youth Justice Collective: Amplifying Youth Voice Presentation—March 20, 2025  
[councilgcleycstakeholderpresentation.pptx](#)

Letter from Juvenile Division of the Court of Common Pleas re Resource Request – April 20, 2025  
[Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Juvenile Division Wishlist Letter—April 30, 2025](#)