



# PENNSYLVANIA JUVENILE JUSTICE

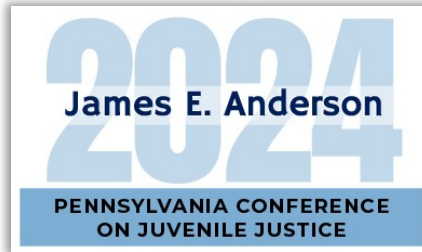
The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

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## 2024 JAMES E. ANDERSON PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

The 2024 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice, sponsored by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC), the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (PCCJPO), the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), and the Juvenile Court Section of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges (PCSTJ), was held on November 6-8, 2024, at the Hilton Harrisburg. The conference theme was "Maximizing Impact, Minimizing Footprint: Success Strategies." This year, over 900 individuals registered for the conference.



### Judges/Hearing Officers Training

Juvenile court judges and juvenile court hearing officers convene annually and participate in a training program developed and hosted by the JCJC. This year's session: "A Conversation on Educational Stability and Youth Competency in Juvenile Justice" was organized in a two-part course focused on the role of the juvenile court judge and best practices relating to educational stability and competency in juvenile courts. The first conversation on education stability was led by Dr. Carrie Rowe, Deputy Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education and Dr. Carole Clancy, Bureau Director of Special Education. The session focused on level setting of education in non-educational settings, current intersections between placement in non-secure facilities and education, and considerations for juvenile court judges when making placement decisions. Additionally, the purpose and background of Act 1 of 2022 was presented with a focus on identifying and supporting youth experiencing educational stability. The goal of this conversation was for all in attendance to gain a stronger understanding of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's perspectives for the purpose of enhancing united processes. The second presentation on youth competency in juvenile justice was led by Hon. John F. Spataro, President Judge, Crawford County; Hon. Angela R. Krom, Administrative Juvenile Court Judge, Franklin and Fulton Counties; and Dr. John "Jack" Rozel, Medical Director, resolve Crisis Services, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Western Psychiatric Hospital. The session focused on judicial challenges associated with youth competency, gaining knowledge of the mental health aspects associated with determination of competency, and best practices for addressing youth competency. Additionally, participants received updates regarding planning for the 2025 Juvenile Justice Academy and the work of the Juvenile Delinquency Benchbook workgroup.

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## Juvenile Defender Training

The Juvenile Defender Association of Pennsylvania hosted their annual training program for juvenile defenders. Approximately 40 juvenile defenders from across the Commonwealth attended the training to learn more about critical issues in the field. Topics covered during the training included recent updates impacting the prosecution of firearm offenses, importance of understanding and appropriately matching services to youth with complex needs, and educational rights for justice-involved youth. Additionally, representatives and members from several Youth Justice Advisory Boards (YJAB) were in attendance to share with the juvenile defenders their recent efforts to enhance the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan to the Governor. This work focused on the development of youth-driven solutions to five identified areas of interest from the plan. After their presentation, the representatives from the YJAB engaged in a Q&A session with the juvenile defenders.

## Professional Caucuses

The **Chief Juvenile Probation Officers Caucus** was facilitated by Don Corry, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Chester County Juvenile Probation Department, and President, PCCJPO. Over 40 chief juvenile probation officers and deputy chief juvenile probation officers from across the state were in attendance. Following a welcome and opening remarks, a Youth Justice Advisory Board from Philadelphia County gave a presentation on their program. Second, a healthy and lengthy discussion was had about the Juvenile Probation Services Grant (JPSG). Ideas were exchanged around how any potential increase to the JPSG may be spent and how to best support all counties via the JPSG. The caucus decided this topic should be discussed further at regional meetings with any recommendations shared with the PCCJPO. The next topic was workforce development and retention. Juvenile probation departments statewide are struggling to obtain quality applicants and fill open positions. The consensus within the caucus was that chief juvenile probation officers do not want to lower the requirements to become a juvenile probation officer. Insightful conversation took place among participants to possibly increase usage of the exceptional persons exam with applicants who lack a bachelor's degree in criminal justice or a related field and the necessary academic credits in the social sciences. The chief ju-

venile probation officers described their positive experiences with career fairs and internships. The caucus explored creative solutions for getting more exposure to juvenile justice and telling juvenile probation's story, including via a larger digital footprint. For example, some juvenile probation departments use social media platforms to post job openings, share informative resources, and feature productive community outreach.

Representatives from district attorneys' offices participated in the **District Attorney Caucus** to discuss common issues of concern. The primary topic of discussion was the lack of detention beds and residential placements, which are creating concerns for community safety. The district attorneys expressed that the lack of detention beds often requires them to choose between letting a youth remain in the community on an electronic ankle bracelet, when, in fact, they may not be safe for the community. The participants acknowledged efforts to add detention beds but stressed that a shortage of detention beds and residential placement options remains.

The **Juvenile Probation Officer Caucus** was led by Alyssa Konas, Lancaster County Office of Juvenile Probation, and Emily Jackson, Mercer County Juvenile Probation Department, with 55 juvenile probation officers in attendance. Two important, timely topics were discussed. First, the availability of secure detention beds was explored. The caucus described the difficulty for smaller counties who lack the ability to access and hold beds except on an ad hoc basis, and the dilemma of secure detention facilities which can refuse to accept high-risk youth who are most in need of secure detention to protect the community. The caucus supported evidence-based tools such as Effective Practices in Community Supervision and risk assessments, which have proven to be useful when working with high-risk youth. The second topic discussed was transgender youth. The caucus posed several questions related to the residential placement of these youth. For example, do the juvenile courts place the transgender youth in a residential placement based on their self-identified gender, and what are the criteria for a residential placement to accept (or refuse to accept) transgender youth?

Approximately 30 juvenile probation supervisors participated in the **Supervisor Caucus** facilitated by Amanda Imboden, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Lehigh County Juvenile Probation. To kick off the

meeting, YJAB members joined and enthusiastically shared the YJAB's purpose and goals in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Following the YJAB's presentation, participants engaged in an open discussion which included current strengths and challenges their juvenile probation departments face. Participants spoke candidly about staffing, detention availability and alternatives to detention, use of diversionary programming, officer safety, and evidence-based programming. Ideas about county policies and practice were shared amongst the group to encourage further discussion and possible changes in the juvenile probation supervisors' counties.

The **Victim Services Caucus** was facilitated by Angie Mackley, Deputy Chief, Franklin County Juvenile Probation Department, and Chair, Victim Services Committee, PCCJPO. The conversations during the caucus began with the YJAB members sharing an overview of the program and their experiences with it. Following the YJAB's presentation, the caucus discussed several items such as how restitution is ordered in different counties, restorative practices statewide, and the training needs regarding victims for juvenile probation departments. The caucus also reviewed the completed 2024 Victim Community Awareness Curriculum (VCAC) Train the Trainer workshop, upcoming conference workshop entitled "An Introduction to the Victim Community Awareness Curriculum," and planned 2025 VCAC Forum and VCAC Training for Facilitators workshop.

### Youth Justice Advisory Board

YJABs from across Pennsylvania reunited at the conference to engage with various system stakeholders and participate in their second YJAB Convening of 2024. The hour-and-a-half session, attended by over 40 people, focused on the theme of "Storytelling the Youth Experience" facilitated by the JCJC, PCCD, and the We Speak Philadelphia District Attorney's Office YJAB. Kicking off the event, the YJABs "broke the ice" with a game called "A Bag of Stories" in which groups pulled mysterious household items out of a bag and worked together to craft a story based on the items selected. The JCJC then led the youth through an activity called the "Juvenile Justice System Road Map." All groups were provided practice cases on youth in the juvenile justice system and asked to identify ideal action steps by system actors at each system decision point and case setting. The convening concluded with a juvenile justice Jeopardy game facilitated by

the youth members of the We Speak Philadelphia District Attorney's Office YJAB. Youth were split into two teams and tested on their system knowledge and their rights as youth. The youth were very engaged and knowledgeable.

### Chief/Provider Forum

The Chief Juvenile Probation Officer and Service Provider Forum was structured as a panel discussion at this year's conference. The panel was comprised of Dr. Ashley Yinger, Penn State University; Prof. Stephanie Jirard, Shippensburg University; Matt Yonkin, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Lycoming County Juvenile Probation Office; and Dr. Jeff Ralph, Justice-Works Youth Care, and moderated by Terry Clark, President and CEO, Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth & Family Services. Topics focused on the benefits of higher education students interning in the juvenile justice field, challenges for those students to access employment, and strategies for enhancing successful acquisition and retention of college graduates. The session was attended by over 100 people, including chief juvenile probation officers and their staff, service providers, and higher education professionals and students.

### Youth Awards

On Wednesday, November 6, 2024, the 2024 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice hosted the Youth Awards Program to recognize youth from across Pennsylvania for being selected as winners of the Creative Expression Contest and recipients of the Outstanding Achievement Award. Additionally, the Juvenile Court Section of the PCSTJ presented three deserving youth with the James E. Anderson Juvenile Justice Scholarship. The Youth Awards Program concluded with a presentation from this year's Youth Awards speaker, Leon Ford, The Hear Foundation. Prior to attending the Youth Awards Program, youth award winners were given the opportunity to engage in a workshop session with Leon.





## Morning Plenary

The Morning Plenary was presented by Dr. Tammy Hughes, Professor, School of Education, Duquesne University. The plenary, titled “Wait, Doesn’t Everyone Have Trauma?,” provided participants with an understanding of how trauma impacts a youth’s ability to engage in rehabilitative treatment. The session educated everyone on the necessary questions to ask justice-involved youth to inform the service delivery and curriculum development most appropriate to meet the needs of the youth. Dr. Hughes explained that responsivity factors, such as trauma, are critical to Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy. Recognizing the importance of appropriate interventions to meet the criminogenic needs of youth is essential to juvenile court judges’ decision-making in delinquency proceedings. Participants gained a deeper understanding of trauma symptoms and necessary approaches to ensure youth who have experienced trauma receive the appropriate treatment and service delivery.

## Workshops

Over 700 conference attendees participated in 17 diverse workshops, including youth-focused programming, professional development, and data-driven outcomes. To allow participants to attend a variety of interesting topics, workshops were offered during both the morning and afternoon sessions. Workshop materials are available at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/jcjc/program-areas/annual-conference.html> in the “Workshops” accordion.

## Afternoon Plenary

Thursday afternoon’s plenary presentation, titled “Maximizing Youths’ Academic Success: A Panel Discussion on Educational Stability,” was facilitated by Hon. Royce L. Morris, Juvenile Court Judge, Dauphin County, and Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission Member, with contributions from panelists Dr. Joseph Abraham, Cofounder and President/CEO, The IMPACT Project, Inc.; Angela Bell, JD, Assistant District Attorney, Montgomery County District Attorney’s Office; Dr. Michael D’Antonio, Executive Director, Bux-

mont Academy; and Joseph Gifford, Juvenile Probation Officer, Dauphin County Juvenile Probation Department. The session focused on the importance of engaging systems and educational partners to advance the principles of balanced and restorative justice and improve outcomes for system-involved youth. The session also explored strategies to appropriately resolve incidents occurring in schools, further enhancing juvenile court judges’ ability to conduct informed delinquency proceedings within their respective jurisdictions.



## Annual Awards Program

On Thursday, November 7, the 2024 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice hosted the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Program to honor



both individuals and programs for their outstanding work in Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system (see Award Winners

on pages 5 and 6). Nearly 500 conference participants attended the event to celebrate and recognize award recipients.

## Resource Day

The conference concluded with Resource Day on Friday, November 8, with almost 50 resources and over 500 juvenile justice professionals in attendance. Conference participants had the opportunity to learn about new, innovative, and creative approaches to working with justice-involved youth. The resources included representatives from private and public residential programs, informational and technology organizations, and other juvenile justice-related activities.

**SAVE the DATE!! SAVE the DATE!! SAVE the DATE!! SAVE the DATE!!**

The 2025 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice is scheduled to be held on November 5 - 7, 2025.

The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission congratulates all of the

## *2024 Award Winners*



DR. ANTHONY F. CEDDIA  
AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING  
SCHOLARSHIP IN  
JUVENILE JUSTICE  
Emily Jackson  
Mercer County



DR. THOMAS L.  
AUSTIN  
UNDERGRADUATE  
SCHOLARSHIP AWARD  
Kira Green  
Shippensburg University

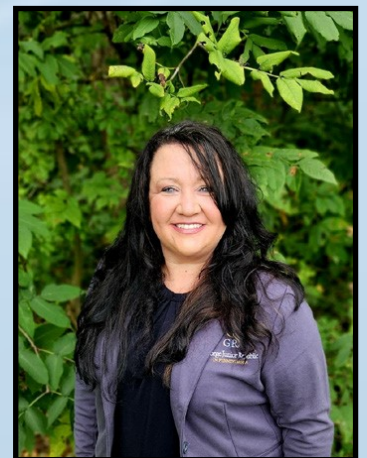


RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM OF  
THE YEAR  
Sal Costanza  
The Summit Academy



COURT-OPERATED  
PROGRAM OF THE YEAR  
Paul Vizza  
Violence Prevention  
Partnership

MERITORIOUS SERVICE  
AWARD  
Maranda Addison  
George Junior  
Republic



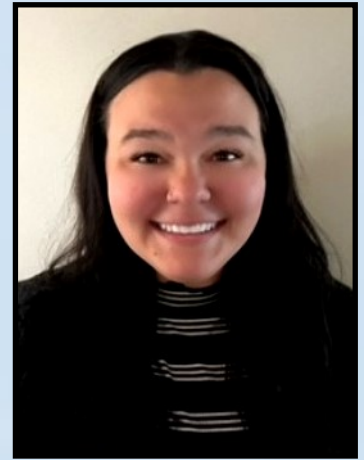
*Congratulations!*

The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission congratulates all of the

## *2024 Award Winners*



COMMUNITY-BASED  
PROGRAM OF THE YEAR  
Will Kiefer  
Bench Mark Program



VICTIM ADVOCATE  
OF THE YEAR  
Hayley Weaver  
Allegheny County  
Center for Victims

JUVENILE COURT SUPPORT  
SERVICE AWARD  
Kimberly Walton  
Fayette County



JUVENILE PROBATION  
OFFICER OF THE YEAR  
Corallys Fernandez  
Lehigh County



JUVENILE PROBATION  
SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR  
Amy Warner  
Philadelphia County

CHIEF JUVENILE PROBATION  
OFFICER OF THE YEAR  
Andrew Benner  
Cumberland County



*Congratulations!*



# MYTH



VS.

# FACT



The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission continues its monthly series, "Myth vs. Fact," which addresses common misconceptions about the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system. Using a combination of Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System data and scholarly research conducted by the field more broadly, this series will provide data-driven facts on all topics juvenile justice.

This month's installment addresses a circulated myth surrounding youth who are dually involved in the child welfare system and juvenile justice system.

## MYTH

Among youth dually involved with the child welfare system and juvenile justice system, those in foster care (versus not in foster care) are treated more harshly by the court, resulting in more punitive case outcomes.

## FACT

Youth with concurrent child welfare and juvenile justice involvement who are in foster care do not experience more punitive outcomes than dually involved youth who are not in foster care. In fact, youth in foster care are generally less likely to have a charge adjudicated, be placed under court-ordered supervision, and enter secure detention than dually involved youth.

Researchers from the Pennsylvania State University recently published a study (Goldstein et al., 2024) examining Pennsylvania youth with dual system (child welfare and juvenile justice) involvement. Using data from Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Information Solution and PaJCMS, the study evaluated the likelihood of "processing bias" among dually involved youth to determine if certain youth were more likely to receive more punitive outcomes. In the study, dually involved youth in foster care were compared against dually involved youth not in foster care.

The study determined that dually involved youth in foster care do *not* experience more punitive outcomes than dually involved youth not in foster care. According to the research findings, cases involving dually involved youth in foster care were less likely to have an adjudicated charge, a serious disposition, and enter secure detention. Specifically, cases involving youth in foster care were 2% less likely to have any charge adjudicated and 3% less likely to have a serious disposition than youth concurrently involved with the child welfare system but not in foster care.

The study posits that stakeholders may feel that foster care, while perhaps insufficient to completely replace juvenile justice services altogether, still has value due to the increased resources, oversight, and services provided, thus warranting less intervention from the juvenile justice system. Additionally, stakeholders may believe additional moves to another placement setting are not necessary because the foster care youth is already in a placement setting outside of the home.

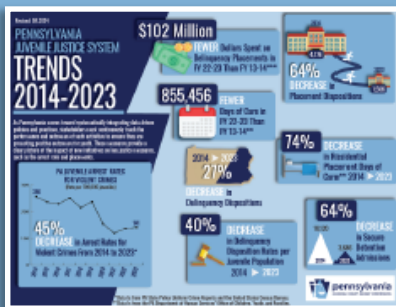
Click [here](#) to read the full article.

### References

Goldstein, E. G., Font, S. A., Kennedy, R. S., Connell, C. M., & Kurpiel, A. E. (2024). Do foster youth face harsher juvenile justice outcomes? Reinvestigating child welfare bias in juvenile justice processing. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 1-34.

# 2024 JCJC DATA INFOGRAPHICS

The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission releases seven new infographics illustrating statewide statistics in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system.

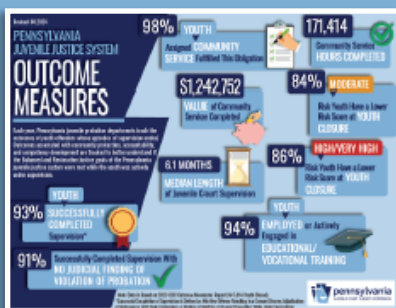
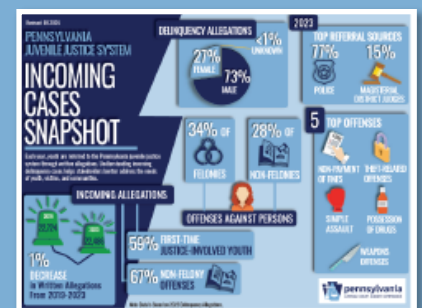


## Juvenile Justice Trends

The Juvenile Justice Trends infographic provides a clear picture of the impact of the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system on key measures, such as arrest, disposition, secure detention, and placements. This infographic presents data from 2014 to 2023.

## Incoming Cases Snapshot

The Incoming Cases Snapshot infographic provides readers the opportunity to understand incoming juvenile delinquency cases in Pennsylvania. The infographic includes the five top offenses, top referral sources, and incoming demographic breakdowns in 2023.

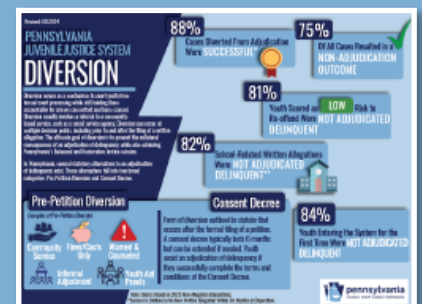


## Outcome Measures

The Outcome Measures infographic presents various statistics associated with the community protection, accountability, and competency development goals in the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system. The infographic illustrates measures like the completion of community service obligations, successful completion of supervision, and the engagement in education/ vocation training by youth.

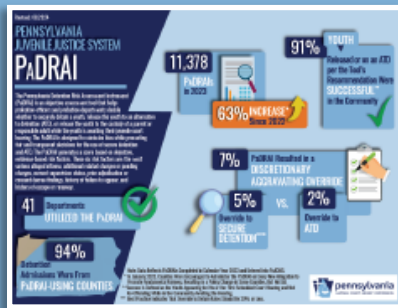
## Diversion

The goal of diversion is to prevent collateral consequences of an adjudication of delinquency, while also achieving Pennsylvania's balanced and restorative justice mission. The Diversion infographic provides information on various diversion options available in Pennsylvania, as well as information on the utilization and success rate of this important dispositional tool.



To view infographics, visit [www.jcjc.pa.gov](http://www.jcjc.pa.gov).



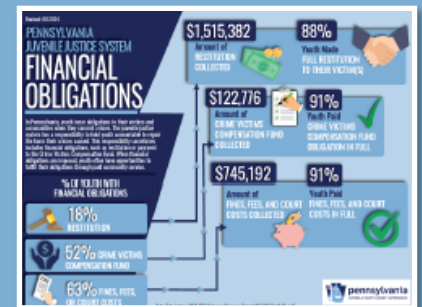


## PaDRAI

The Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI) is designed to minimize bias while promoting fair and transparent decisions for the use of secure detention and alternatives to detention. The PaDRAI infographic provides a statewide view on the use of the PaDRAI and secure detention.

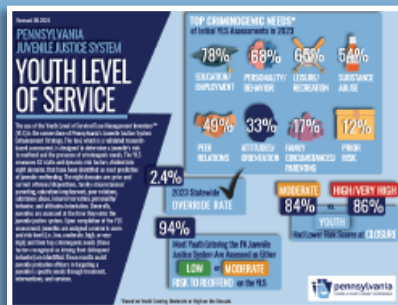
## Financial Obligations

Financial obligations can serve as a form of accountability to victims and communities. The Financial Obligations infographic displays measures in which obligations resulted in restitution, payment to the Crime Victims Compensation Fund, or fines, fees, and court costs.



## Youth Level of Service

The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory™ (YLS) is the cornerstone of the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy. The results of the YLS assist juvenile probation officers in targeting a juvenile's specific needs through treatment, interventions, and services. The YLS infographic provides insight into the criminogenic needs of youth and assessed risk levels at initial assessment and juvenile closure.



To view infographics, visit [www.jcjc.pa.gov](http://www.jcjc.pa.gov).

## 2024 YOUTH AWARDS PROGRAM SPEAKER LEON FORD'S SELF CARE HANDBOOK

Leon Ford describes his *Leon Self Care Handbook: From Surviving to Thriving* as:

created to support community wellbeing. Through Leon's journey, he realized he had been living in a state of trauma. He had focused on healing the community without first addressing his own healing. In a moment of transformation, he made a pivotal decision to first choose himself before choosing to please others. This moment was a metamorphosis to realize that he no longer wanted to just survive, which felt depleting, but instead changed his focus to creating a life of thriving.

In this journey, he utilizes many tools for healing, from conventional therapy to everyday practices of journaling, reading, fitness, meditation, time management, reflection, and overall wellness practices to transform his life. Leon's ongoing healing practice has been synthesized into this handbook to share with the world (p. 1).

This free, valuable resource is available at [Leon Ford - Self Care Handbook From Surviving to Thriving](http://Leon Ford - Self Care Handbook From Surviving to Thriving).

# Attention! Attention!

## The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission Agency Guide Now Available!

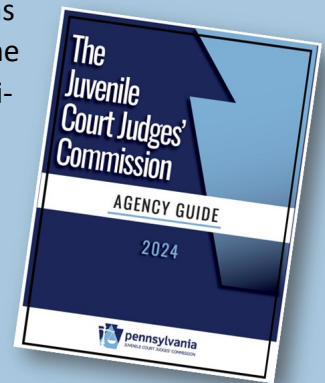
Have you ever wondered what the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) does?  
Need to educate other stakeholders in your community about the JCJC?  
Well, wait no longer!

The JCJC is proud to release its first ever Agency Guide. Designed as a tool to educate juvenile justice system stakeholders on all JCJC program areas and activities, the Agency Guide is the first agency-wide project of its kind. Developed by every JCJC staff member, the Agency Guide underwent 18 months of development and review. This publication is a product of the agency's initiative to improve efficiency, increase agency audience, and promote program knowledge sharing.



The Agency Guide is split into ten chapters covering all JCJC program areas. Each chapter provides detailed descriptions, timelines, definitions, quality assurance activities, and outcome measures used by the JCJC to operate and manage organization projects and initiatives.

To view the Agency Guide in detail, please visit the [JCJC website](https://www.jcjc.org/).



## PENNSYLVANIA COURTS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUMMIT

On October 29, 2024, representatives from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, and District Attorney's Association presented a workshop at the Pennsylvania Courts Behavioral Health Summit in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The workshop, "Diversion in the Juvenile Courts," focused specifically on the core value of connecting youth with resources to provide services without formal juvenile justice system involvement. Diverting youth from formal court processing has been a longstanding goal of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. In 2005, Pennsylvania created a Mental Health & Juvenile Justice Workgroup in conjunction with the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change initiative to better coordinate services for youth with mental health issues who become involved in the juvenile justice system. As part of these efforts, a Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Joint Policy Statement was established with the goal of diverting children from formal court processing to avoid the negative long-term consequences of an adjudication of delinquency.

Diversion can occur at various decision-making points in the juvenile justice system. It can provide alternatives for youth who have not yet entered the juvenile justice system but who are at imminent risk of being charged with a delinquent act, and it can channel juveniles away from formal court processing. Diversion can also occur at the school, law enforcement, magisterial district judge, and juvenile court levels. After looking closely at the reasons youth could encounter the juvenile justice system, a collection of risk/need, mental health, and trauma data was reviewed. This data represented the risk/need, mental health, and trauma information gathered by nearly one third of juvenile probation departments in Pennsylvania where an evidence-based intake session is conducted. How our system is progressing to identify these and other responsibility factors of youth is critical to divert youth from penetrating the juvenile justice system unnecessarily. Panelists then discussed local system improvements including policy and procedures, examples of diversion programs, and the importance of stakeholder engagement.

## TECHNOLOGY CORNER

The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) is excited to announce a new project that will be integrated into the Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System (PaJCMS). The project was initiated at the request of the Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee. This enhancement is scheduled for release in late 2024 and will provide juvenile probation departments with a streamlined solution to track youth documents sent to third parties, e.g., service providers. The objective of this enhancement is to support a more thorough and compliant process to track and destroy these documents, particularly following an expungement order by the juvenile court. This process will ensure alignment with the rules governing expungement procedures.

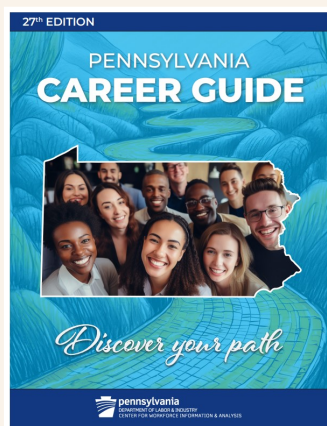
The enhancement will be designed as an easy-to-use pop-up within the Case Screen of PaJCMS, where users can track documents for a case by entering the document name and where it was sent. End users will be able to readily retrieve a list of all documents related to the case and the documents' recipients to facilitate expungement notifications to all relevant parties. Additionally, during the expungement process in PaJCMS, a message will appear to end users that third parties who previously received that youth's documents should be notified of the expungement.

If you have any questions regarding the forthcoming document tracking project, please contact the JCJC Help Desk at 717-477-1199 or [RA-JCJCHELPDESK@pa.gov](mailto:RA-JCJCHELPDESK@pa.gov).

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT MONTH

### PENNSYLVANIA CAREER GUIDE

*From the Department of Labor and Industry website.*



Information in this publication can be used by all individuals who are preparing for continuing education and/or entrance into the workforce. Whether you are a student, an educator, a first-time jobseeker, a parent, or a person considering a career change, you will find that the Pennsylvania Career Guide is a valuable resource as you make those all-important career decisions.

We are proud to release the 27th edition of our Pennsylvania Career Guide. Examples of the useful information that are found in this guide include career outlook highlights, an interest assessment tool, tips for marketing yourself, sources of financial aid, and contact information for many Commonwealth services, including PA CareerLink® locations and select state agencies.

To obtain printed copies, please complete this [order form](#) or contact CWIA via email at [workforceinfo@pa.gov](mailto:workforceinfo@pa.gov) or by phone at 1-877-493-3282.

[Download Pennsylvania Career Guide \(PDF\)](#)



## STAFF DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

### CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI) FORUM HELD IN STATE COLLEGE

On November 21, 2024, over 80 juvenile justice stakeholders gathered in State College, Pennsylvania, for the first Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Forum. The concept for this forum was born out of technical assistance efforts completed by Beth Fritz, CQI Consultant, Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (PCCJPO), as well as efforts from the statewide CQI Committee and Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy Stage 4 Committee.

The forum kicked off with opening remarks from Bob Tomassini, Executive Director, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission; Don Corry, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Chester County Juvenile Probation Department, and President, PCCJPO; and Nicole Mattern, Deputy Director, Dauphin County Juvenile Probation Department, and Chair, CQI Committee.

Beth Fritz then presented an overview of the results of her CQI-centered interviews conducted over the last three years with juvenile probation departments, with a focus on shifting the mindset from "are we doing the practice" to "are we doing the practice well and fully integrating it into supervision." She also expanded on three major themes that emerged from her interviews:

1. The role of the supervisor in completing evidence-based practice case reviews
2. How data can be used to inform the CQI process
3. A need for a standard CQI position job description and performance appraisal

These three topics laid the foundation for the remainder of the morning, with a separate panel presentation occurring for each of the themes identified. During each of the three presentations, a diverse group of panelists from juvenile probation departments of varying sizes shared best practices and lessons learned from their CQI journey, drawing upon their unique experiences.

The afternoon consisted of breakout sessions in which attendees were able to meet with the panelists to learn more about the respective topics presented in the morning, foster dialogue about challenges faced, and discuss solutions found by others. Attendees were also encouraged to complete a departmental action plan, with a goal of implementing at least one CQI-related activity presented at the forum.

The training concluded with a summary of the CQI Committee's activities and a commitment to future forums to continue the work of CQI.

#### December

- 4 My Role in Community Collaboration - Virtual
- 11 Mental Health in Adolescence - Virtual
- 17 Graduated Response Technical Assistance and Mentoring Program Informational Session - Virtual

For registration, please visit [www.jcjcjems.pa.gov](http://www.jcjcjems.pa.gov).

#### DID YOU KNOW...

The Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy Leadership Team is comprised of representatives from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers.

# GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION

The application process for the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC)-sponsored Graduate Education Program at Shippensburg University officially kicked off on November 8, 2024. The JCJC and Shippensburg University Criminal Justice faculty had our first opportunity to meet many prospective students at Resource Day during the 2024 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice.

If you are interested in pursuing your master's degree and advancing your education in this nationally renowned program and would like to learn more about the Graduate Education Program, we invite you to join us for a virtual information session hosted by Shippensburg University on December 5, 2024, at 7:00 pm.

## SPREAD THE WORD!

### Administration of Juvenile Justice, MS Virtual Information Session

Thursday, December 5th  
7:00pm



### Register Today!

Visit

<https://apply.ship.edu/portal/online-gradsession> or scan the code below.



After the Fall 2025 semester, the program will transition from an annual cohort to a biennial cohort. Prospective students who do not apply for the Fall 2025 cohort can begin applying in November 2025 for the Fall 2027 cohort.

Please direct any questions about the Graduate Education Program to Sonya Stokes, JCJC Director of Professional Development, at [systokes@ship.edu](mailto:systokes@ship.edu).



### PREVENTION Learning Portal

The Prevention Learning Portal (PLP), a joint venture of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support project at Penn State, is a tool designed to help prevention practitioners better understand and incorporate the best practices of prevention science into their work with youth and families. The PLP serves as a one-stop-shop for service providers and practitioners, offering prevention resources, training, and self-paced learning programs. All available courses are free and have been developed by experts with significant experience in providing technical assistance to communities implementing prevention programming. To access the portal, please visit <https://plp.psu.edu/>. For more information, please contact Geoff Kolchin, PCCD, at [gkolchin@pa.gov](mailto:gkolchin@pa.gov).

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MONTH

*Submitted by Sue Christner, Chair, Family Engagement Committee, Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers*

November is Family Engagement Month, a time to celebrate and raise awareness for the importance of families in the lives of children. We recognize that families represent the foundation of a child's nurturing, care, learning, and social development. They are central in the lives of youth and critical to long-term behavior change. Family engagement activities are important for building and strengthening respectful, collaborative relationships between caregivers and juvenile justice professionals to improve outcomes for delinquent youth.

In 2009, [Pennsylvania's Family Involvement Monograph](#) was published with the purpose of shifting system involvement from one that is solely youth-centered to one that is family-engaged. Families were redefined as resources and partners, rather than barriers to effective supervision. As a juvenile justice system, we committed to the belief that families want their children to be safe, accountable for their conduct, and grow into competent adults. Juvenile justice professionals were challenged to improve their family engagement efforts and remove barriers to involvement.

The Family Engagement Committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (PCCJPO) would like to remind everyone that families are the child's primary emotional, social, cultural, and spiritual resource. If given the opportunity, they will act in the best interest of their child when provided with the knowledge, skills, and support to do so. Through open, honest, and transparent communication, parents can provide meaningful input and a willingness to partner in the rehabilitation of their child. It is important to recognize and celebrate the strengths within each family and utilize those to support long-term behavior change in children.

In addition to training, the Family Engagement Committee has created resources to support the positive engagement of families throughout the probation supervision process. The [Family Guide to the Juvenile Justice System](#) is an interactive resource designed to guide families through the stages of the juvenile justice process. The [Parenting Skills Workbooks](#), a total of four, help to build cognitive skills for caregivers. All of these resources are free and available for download from the [PCCJPO](#) and [JCJC](#) websites. Check them out or contact the Family Engagement Committee for more information.

## JCJC GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

**How do you use the Graduate Education Program's coursework related to research and statistics in your work as a juvenile probation officer?**

*As a community-based officer, my studies in cognitive behavioral therapy during my graduate education deepened my understanding and commitment to evidence-based supervision, especially as the JJSES paradigm shift unfolded in our system. I actively apply my coursework insights to evaluate our providers' effectiveness beyond just surface-level outcomes. In my capacity as a quality assurance officer, I engage with statistics daily. The program has equipped me with the skills to critically assess what is effective and what isn't, leading to process improvements within our department that enhance outcomes and optimize how we supervise youth.*

**Bethany Murtha - Class of 2012  
Lehigh County Juvenile Probation**





## CONSIDERATIONS WORKING IN JUVENILE JUSTICE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

*Submitted by Dr. Abigail Wilson, Director of Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Education Services, Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth & Family Services*

Working in juvenile justice during the holidays may present unique challenges both for youth and staff. The end-of-year holiday season is generally associated with family, food, and joy, but that is not always the case for youth in the juvenile justice system. Youth, especially, may experience heightened emotions from being away from family or family dynamics that require additional support from staff at any level in the field. Along with increased needs of youth during this time, there can be staffing issues leading to staffing shortages (Sheerin, 2023).

Key points about the holidays and juvenile justice work (Sheerin, 2023):

- Emotional impact – Holidays can trigger feelings of loneliness, homesickness, and regret for their actions.
- Family/Caregiver impact – Facilities may see an increase in family visits during the holidays which can be both positive and challenging for youth. In general, youth involved in the system will see more family and friends in the community, which can trigger different emotions. It can also be a time for remembering losses or family members that are unable to be with them.
- Special programming – Ways to make connections with youth and recognizing the holiday can be uplifting for youth.
- Maintaining routine – A daily routine or regular check-ins during the holidays can ensure safety and stability for youth.
- Cultural sensitivity – Mindfulness of different cultural and religious traditions when speaking with and planning activities to be inclusive of all youth.
- Mental health support – Increased access to mental health services is important to address emotional distress that may arise among youth.

Approaching holidays in juvenile justice can be challenging. Staff can keep an open line of communication with youth, talking with them about their feelings and how they will be celebrating. Staff can encourage family, caregivers, and other adults important to the youth to get involved in the holiday activities. While disruptive behaviors may be more apparent, positive reinforcement can help youth to stay on track. Ensure staff are trained to support youth in the community and residential services during the holidays and how to manage challenges that may arise (NCTSN, 2022).

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### References

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2022). *Supporting children and teens during this holiday season*. [supporting children and teens during this holiday season final.pdf](#)
- Sheerin, C. K. (2023). *Supporting youth in residential placement during the holidays*. City of Philadelphia. <https://www.phila.gov/2023-12-22-supporting-youth-in-residential-placement-during-the-holidays/#:~:text=Facilities%20can%20honor%20youth%27s%20cultural,a%20youth%20residential%20treatment%20facility>



# EPIS

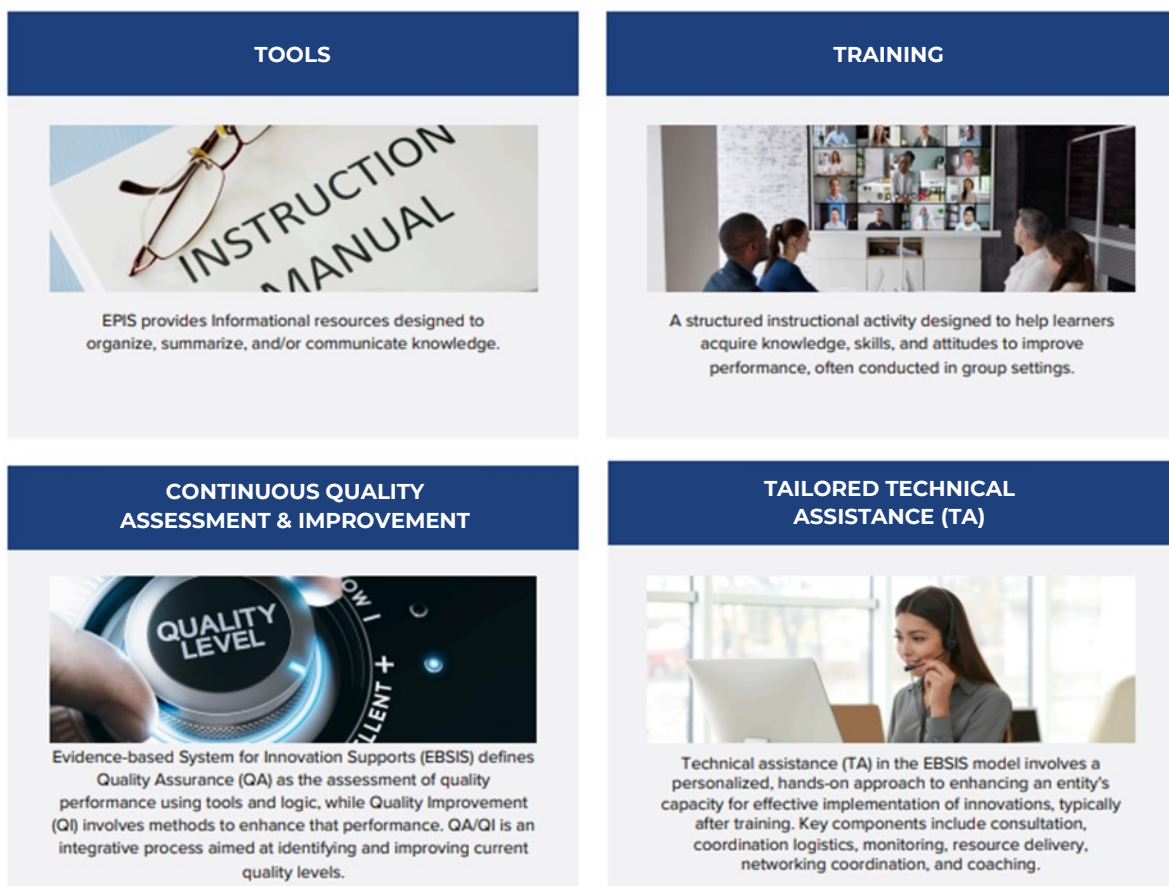
Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support

## Penn State | EPIS (Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support)

In Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system, Penn State EPIS has been mostly synonymous with the rollout of the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™). However, EPIS has wide-ranging capacity and provides implementation support services for a variety of practitioners across the continuum of care, helping individuals, groups, and organizations to improve practice.

Beginning in January 2025, EPIS will begin to roll out an Implementation Evaluation and Support model for services that cannot be assessed via the SPEP. Services falling into this category include diversion, prevention, and/or educational services, as well as other interventions that fall outside of the SPEP.

As defined by the graphic below, general implementation support is provided in the following four ways:



Anyone interested in learning more about the EPIS Implementation Evaluation and Support model is encouraged to contact Kris Glunt, SPEP Project Manager, at [ktg10@psu.edu](mailto:ktg10@psu.edu).



**PennState**  
College of Health and  
Human Development

**EDNA BENNETT PIERCE**  
**PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER**

# Happy FALL from OCYF!



'Tis the Season for Change AND FREE Trauma Training!

Once again, the Office of Children, Youth and Families, in collaboration with the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, is pleased to be able to offer our PA child welfare community **FREE Trauma Training** facilitated by Lakeside Global Institute. As the colors of the leaves change, so can your organization's knowledge of applying trauma-informed care.

How do you get FREE trauma training? You may choose from a variety of trainings that are listed below, ranging from workshops to intensive courses, by clicking on the links below:

This link has the workshops that are currently available:

<https://register.lakesidetraining.org/pa-ocyf-workshops-2025/>

This link has the intensive courses that are available:

<https://register.lakesidetraining.org/pa-ocyf-intensive-courses-2025/>

Questions relating to any of these trainings can be directed to: [info@pacarepartnership.org](mailto:info@pacarepartnership.org).



## SAVE THE DATE

Family Group Decision Making Conference

Healing Through Connections: Empower the Family, Trust the Process

April 23 & 24, 2025

9AM-12PM Virtual Event





## NATIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements are reprinted from JUVJUST, an OJJDP news service:

### DATA SNAPSHOT SHOWS TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DELINQUENCY CASES

OJJDP has updated its [Statistical Briefing Book](#) with a new [Data Snapshot](#) on trends and characteristics of delinquency cases handled in juvenile court.

According to the snapshot, case-loads for all offenses increased between 2021 and 2022, but remained below pre-pandemic levels. The data also show that the proportion of delinquency cases involving person offenses increased from 26 percent in 2005 to 40 percent in 2022, and two thirds of adjudicated delinquency cases received a disposition of probation.

Developed for OJJDP by the [National Center for Juvenile Justice](#), the research division of the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#), the Statistical Briefing Book offers easy online access to statistics on a variety of juvenile justice topics.

#### RESOURCES:

- Access the full list of [Data Snapshots](#) and [Data Analysis Tools](#) available from the Statistical Briefing Book.
- Follow OJJDP on [X formerly known as Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



### JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS YOUTH VOICES AT THE 2024 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON YOUTH JUSTICE

On November 19, 2024, the Department of Justice issued a [press release](#) highlighting the [2024 National Conference on Youth Justice: Shaping the Next 50 Years](#) held November 19-21 in Washington, DC. The conference, cosponsored by OJJDP and the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, culminated OJJDP's year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act being signed into law in 1974. The Act established OJJDP and set national standards for how youth are to be treated within the juvenile justice system.

"We still have work to do and what better way to shape what's next than by partnering with youth," said OJJDP Administrator Liz Ryan. "This conference was informed by young people and provides a platform for young people to use their voice, share their perspectives and recommendations on how to address the challenges they face related to youth justice. At OJJDP, we believe in the possibilities of tomorrow and what we can accomplish together in the next 50 years of youth justice!"

The conference brought together more than 2,400 attendees representing youth advocates, justice professionals, community leaders, educators, and policymakers who are working to transform juvenile justice.

#### RESOURCES:

- Follow OJJDP on [X formerly known as Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

### OJJDP NEWS @ A GLANCE, NOVEMBER 2024

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) announces the availability of [OJJDP News @ a Glance](#), November 2024. One feature story highlights OJJDP's 2024 National Conference on Youth Justice, which marked half a century of progress and innovation in youth justice, aligning topics with OJJDP's continuum of care framework. The other feature spotlights the Office's \$420 million in fiscal year 2024 discretionary grants to states, localities, Tribes, and community-based organizations.

"From the Administrator's Desk" focuses on a panel discussion at the National Conference providing youth leaders an opportunity to develop a "Call to Action" for transforming youth justice. "From the Field" covers a roundtable held during the International Association of Chiefs of Police annual conference discussing ways law enforcement agencies can support programs and services for youth along a continuum of care. "Tribal Connections" highlights a Tribal listening session focused on youth programming.

Other features in this issue—

- [News in Brief](#)
- [New Publications](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)

#### RESOURCES:

- [OJJDP News @ a Glance, November 2024 \(NCJ 309607\)](#) available [online](#).
- Follow OJJDP on [X formerly known as Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

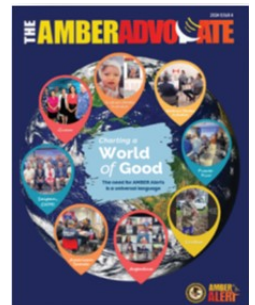
### NEW ISSUE OF THE AMBER ADVOCATE AVAILABLE NOW

OJJDP has released the latest issue of [The AMBER Advocate](#) newsletter. This issue features articles on:

- [The work of the AMBER Alert Training & Technical Assistance Program.](#)
- [The rescue of two boys in Texas using a new geolocator tool.](#)
- [A dramatic water rescue of a boy with autism in Florida.](#)

#### RESOURCES:

- Access [previous issues](#) of the newsletter.
- Read the [2023 AMBER Alert Report](#).
- Read about [AMBER Alerts on Instagram](#).
- Follow OJJDP on [X formerly known as Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



This publication is produced monthly by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. Guest articles are welcome; please submit by email to [ra-oajcjnews@pa.gov](mailto:ra-oajcjnews@pa.gov).

To subscribe to Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice, please send your request to [ra-oajcjnews@pa.gov](mailto:ra-oajcjnews@pa.gov) or scan the QR code to be added to the distribution list.

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