



2025 Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SHAPIRO-DAVIS ADMINISTRATION

December 2025

Recommendation 1.1: Promote statewide policies that bring youth, family, and victim voices into the decision-making process.

- **Strategy 1.1.A.** Increase representation of impacted youth, families, legal guardians, and victims on state-level commissions, boards, and advisory groups.
- **Strategy 1.1.B.** Encourage incorporating youth experiences into juvenile justice-related policies, such as through entry and exit surveys.
- **Strategy 1.1.C.** Develop a sustainable funding stream and related policies to support meaningful youth and family engagement (e.g., stipends, transportation, training/development) across state agencies.

Recommendation 2.1: Champion common-sense approaches to reduce the accessibility of firearms by children and youth.

- **Strategy 2.1.A.** Direct state agencies to identify potential strategies they can advance to reduce youth gun access and reduce firearm-related injuries and fatalities among children.
- **Strategy 2.1.B.** Reduce barriers to gun owners obtaining devices to secure firearms and firearm safety training (e.g., explore tax credits or other funding mechanisms for individuals and community-based organizations), with an emphasis on reaching households with children.
- **Strategy 2.1.C.** Support Child Access Prevention legislation requiring secure storage practices for gun owners in households with children.
- **Strategy 2.1.D.** Continue to advance investments through the state budget process to improve the safety and well-being of youth, such as through PCCD's School Safety and Mental Health, Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) and Building Opportunity through Out of School Time (BOOST) grant programs, etc.

Recommendation 3.1: Advance policies and investments that increase youth-serving systems' and victim services programs' ability to effectively respond to youth mental and behavioral health needs.

- **Strategy 3.1.A.** Continue to advocate for policies and investments that enhance the mental health of youth, including PCCD's Violence and Delinquency Program and School Safety and Mental Health Grants.
- **Strategy 3.1.B.** Incentivize juvenile justice stakeholders through funding and policy reforms to coordinate with behavioral health providers and school entities to prioritize the co-location of behavioral health interventions in schools.
- **Strategy 3.1.C.** Continue to advocate for investments that would stabilize, sustain, and enhance Pennsylvania's victims' services and compensation programs.
- **Strategy 3.1.D.** Fund and advance strategies like the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model, and other approaches that equip law enforcement, first responders, crisis workers, and other professionals how to handle situations involving people in crisis.
- **Strategy 3.1.E.** Explore potential strategies to incentivize Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs) to accept more youth with complex cases and enhance RTFs' ability to effectively serve youth with complex needs.

Recommendation 4.1: Continue to invest in out-of-school time opportunities to meet the significant demand for upstream prevention and youth engagement strategies.

- **Strategy 4.1.A.** The Governor should continue to call for increased investments in the BOOST and VIP Grant Programs within the state budget, as well as propose strategies to enhance the state's Violence and Delinquency Prevention Programs (VDPP) and Substance Abuse Education and Demand Reduction (SAEDR) Grant Program.
- **Strategy 4.1.B.** The Governor's Office should direct relevant state agencies to identify opportunities to utilize their agency guidance, regulations, funding priorities, grant agreements, and other policy levers to increase educational and economic opportunities for youth, including the adoption of evidence-based prevention programs.

Recommendation 5.1: Reaffirm Pennsylvania's leadership as a national model for juvenile justice practice and ensure continued progress toward fairness and accountability.

- **Strategy 5.1.A.** Call for the Pennsylvania General Assembly to dedicate resources supporting the expansion of evidence-based practices, diversionary and restorative justice programs, and community-based supports. These investments and reforms should explicitly emphasize approaches that center victim restoration and elevate victim voice as core components of a fair, accountable and healing justice system.
- **Strategy 5.1.B.** Direct the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board to develop a statewide workforce assessment to identify gaps and emerging roles within juvenile justice, including possible training and certification pathways/alternate career ladders to strengthen retention and build a pipeline of diverse talent (e.g., credible messengers, peer mentors,

etc.). This assessment should also include an analysis of county juvenile probation departments and their pay, to identify any pay disparities across counties and encourage more equitable funding models.

- **Strategy 5.1.C.** Invest additional funding to increase compensation, training, and staff wellness initiatives (e.g., treatment, counseling, and team building) of juvenile justice system professionals to reduce turnover and burnout (e.g., increase the Juvenile Probation Services line item in the FY 2026-28 state budgets).
- **Strategy 5.1.D.** Pennsylvania should support strategies to improve visibility and understanding of LGBTQ+ youth needs, including exploring the addition of demographic information as an option within future administrations of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS).

Recommendation 6.1: Support policies and practices that strengthen Pennsylvania’s continuum of care for youth success, with a focus on advancing evidence-based diversion, trauma-informed care, and restorative practices.

- **Strategy 6.1.A.** Continue to advocate for policies and investments that enhance the well-being and long-term success of Pennsylvania’s youth and families.
- **Strategy 6.1.B.** Increase funding for programs and services throughout the continuum of care, from early upstream prevention to diversionary programs to trauma-informed care and culturally responsive healing practices, and aftercare/reentry services.
- **Strategy 6.1.C.** Explore increasing investments for assessment centers, situation tables, centralized intakes, and other models to ensure youth are receiving the care they need.
- **Strategy 6.1.D.** Support funding and policy reforms that encourage counties to integrate victim services/advocacy and trauma recovery services within diversion, restorative justice, and reentry programs ensuring victims are engaged and supported throughout the continuum.