

# Hennepin County Youth Justice Council

## Underserved Youth Sub-committee Charter

### Mission

The mission of the Youth Justice Council's Underserved Youth sub-committee (UYS) is to focus on the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations within the Hennepin County juvenile justice system, working as advocates and implementers of system-level change that reduces disparities and improves outcomes for affected youth. We commit to utilizing a youth-centered model of collaboration in this work to empower youth and foster community wellness and safety.

### Goal, Objectives, and Governance

The UYS recognizes that within the already vulnerable population of justice system-involved youth, there are subsets of young people navigating complex and intersectional disparities that impact their opportunities for a successful transition to adulthood and community reintegration. The UYS further recognizes that achieving its goals will require a data-driven lens to explore the disproportionalities affecting these underserved youth with a specific equity focus on social identities (race; ethnicity; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression (SOGIE); parental status; disability status), housing status, employment status, and the impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

### Goal

The UYS's primary goal is to recommend system-level change in response to service, access, and outcome gaps that disproportionately affect the subsets of justice-involved youth described above. The Youth Justice Council Steering Committee is tasked with identifying and prioritizing the gaps where the UYS will focus its efforts and the UYS will make recommendations designed to reduce disparities and improve outcomes for both youth and their communities.

This goal will be accomplished by using a data-driven equity lens to examine key decision points, policies, and/or practices within the juvenile justice system which could be changed or strengthened to better support underserved youth populations. Recommendations brought to the Youth Justice Council will integrate best practices to reduce re-traumatization and improve trauma responsiveness in court proceedings, in detention and placements, and throughout the delivery of services.

### Objectives

- 1) Gather relevant data and trend information; research current best practices; and seek feedback from key stakeholders including community youth and/or families with lived experience navigating the juvenile justice system.
- 2) Analyze gathered data and feedback and identify opportunities for strengthening and/or making changes that would reduce the identified disparities and better support the underserved youth populations.
- 3) Develop a recommended response to the identified gap and present it to the Youth Justice Council for review.

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## Governance

The UYS will be led by a tri-chair committee which includes at least one youth representative from the Youth Justice Council Steering Committee. The tri-chair committee guides the work of the UYS and are a part of the Youth Justice Council Steering Committee and the larger Youth Justice Council.

Participants of the UYS will include system stakeholders, youth-serving community organizations, and justice-involved youth. The UYS will act as a workgroup working on projects identified by the Youth Justice Council Steering Committee. An organization chart of the Council and Sub-committees can be found at the end of this document.

## Membership

- 1) The mission of the UYS is best served when membership includes justice involved youth—centering their voice in the process—along with a broad spectrum of stakeholders that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the communities most impacted by the Hennepin County Juvenile Court. All prospective members should have an interest or expertise in juvenile justice and be willing to devote time and attention to the mission of the UYS.
- 2) The names of prospective members shall be forwarded to the UYS tri-chairs for formal approval.
- 3) UYS members should be present at all meetings and attend the meeting in its entirety. Meetings are held every month on the third Thursday from 4:30pm –5:30pm.

## Decision-Making Process

- 1) The decision-making process of the UYS shall be grounded in principles of equity-focused data analysis, adolescent brain science, centering youth voice, positive youth development, trauma responsiveness and other supported/promoted evidence-based approaches that promote youth well-being in Hennepin County's juvenile justice system.
- 2) Decisions will be made via collaborative consensus in which all UYS members will be afforded equitable opportunities to contribute to and amend proposals. Consensus is defined as; *agreement of all committee members that they will either support the decision or, in the case of disagreement, agree not to block it from going forward. UYS members recognize that the goal in effective consensus decision-making is to find ways to say "yes" wherever possible and to say "no" only when necessary. A "yes" means that the decision will be actively supported, or, at a minimum, nothing will be done to undermine the success of the decision.*

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Org Chart: UYS Leadership & Membership

