

# Youth Justice Council Charter

## Vision

We envision an equitable, fair, and effective Hennepin County Juvenile Justice system that implements evidence-based policies and practices, and provides culturally appropriate services, support, and resources for youth and their families. We strive to empower youth to live productive, self-sufficient, and law-abiding lives that positively impact communities and enhance community safety. To achieve this vision, we must develop and implement policies, programs, and practices that eliminate disparities in the Juvenile Justice System based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and disability.

## Purpose, Goals, and Governance

The Hennepin County Youth Justice Council (YJC) is a collaborative effort across system stakeholders, and community members who promote community safety and are committed to the youth justice council vision that produces positive outcomes for youth, their families, and communities. Our mission is to improve and reform the juvenile justice system by eliminating the unnecessary use of secure detention, eliminating disparities based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability and providing resources to effective community-based and culturally appropriate services for youth and their families.

As a true collaborative, the governance structure of the Hennepin County Youth Justice Council consists of a Steering Committee and the following subcommittees: Reducing Racial Disparities (RRD), Youth Advisory Board (YAB), and Underserved Youth. Additional workgroups will be created to address specific concerns, practices, and policies that may arise. The committees and workgroups will be comprised of committed internal and external stakeholders and community members.

## Youth Justice Council

The Youth Justice Council will be chaired by the YJC Steering Committee tri-chairs. Participants of the Youth Justice Council will consist of members of the YJC Steering Committee, sub-committees, workgroups, and representatives from the larger community, who are interested in improving and increasing positive outcomes in the lives of those impacted by the juvenile justice system.

Participants of the Youth Justice Council are committed to the following:

- Participants should be personally committed to the vision and purpose as stated above and willing to volunteer enough time and resources to help achieve that mission.
- Participants are committed to ensuring a respectful, productive, and collaborative dialogue and approach as outlined in the [YJC Grounding Statement](#).
- Participants should reflect the diversity of the juvenile justice constituencies.
- The Youth Justice Council meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend.
- Meetings will be held every other month from 3:30- 5:30pm. Meeting locations may vary between, in person, hybrid and virtual.

## Role of the Chairperson(s)

The chairs of the council will be responsible for setting the agenda, leading, maintaining order at the meetings, and ensuring fairness and equality. The chairs along with the YJC Steering Committee will also be responsible for ensuring members continue to be reflective of those being served.

## YJC Steering Committee

### Role and Oversight of the Steering Committee

The YJC Steering Committee serves as the governing body of the Youth Justice Council and makes the final recommendations to its members. The oversight of the YJC steering committee includes and is not limited to: Identify priorities based on input from the participants of the Youth Justice Council; Convene and delegate initiatives to workgroups and committees to move established priorities; Monitor and review of on-going projects from each subcommittee and respective entities on the YJC Steering Committee at regular monthly meetings; and approve recommendations from the sub-committees and workgroups regarding modifications to Hennepin County policies and practices relative to juvenile justice practices.

The work of the Youth Justice Council is guided by the following core principles:

- Secure detention will be used per statute definitions only for those youth who pose a risk to community safety, and who despite the use of alternatives to detention, fail to appear in court;
- Promote and enhance community safety by recognizing and investing in the strengths of youth, families and their communities while ensuring access to resources and opportunities;
- Decisions regarding who should be held in secure detention will be based on an objective and validated Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI);
- No youth shall be disparately impacted at any stage of the juvenile justice system based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability;
- Evidence-based, culturally responsive and trauma informed community-based services will be developed for youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system to maximize positive outcomes for youth, their families, and the community;
- Community members, youth, and their families will be encouraged to participate within all aspects of the Youth Justice Council;
- Data collection and analysis will be used to assess the status of our practices, identify areas for improvement within the juvenile justice system, and evaluate programs and practices to drive policy decisions and system reform.

## Decision-Making Process

1. The decision-making process of the YJC Steering Committee shall be based on the principles established in the purpose section and shall always strive toward building consensus. Decisions shall be assessed with three core principles in mind:
  - a. It is in the best interest of youth.
  - b. It reduces disproportionate minority confinement and eliminates disparities based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.
  - c. It promotes community safety.
2. The YJC Steering Committee will continuously approve work plans presented by respective entities. Subcommittees and ad hoc workgroups will be responsible for implementation of specific work plan tasks, recommending policy changes necessary to accomplish work plan tasks, and submit monthly updates to the YJC steering committee.
3. Decisions will be made via consensus. Consensus is defined as; *agreement of all committee members that they will either support the decision or at least not block it from going forward. 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.* The goal in effective consensus decision-making is to find ways to say "yes" wherever possible and to say "no" only when necessary.

## Membership of the YJC Steering Committee

The YJC Steering Committee will meet monthly unless determined otherwise. The committee is responsible for providing oversight and input to the efforts necessary to achieve a juvenile justice system in Hennepin County that aligns with the Youth Justice Council vision. The number of committee members should be no less than fifteen and no more than thirty. Members are expected to attend all meetings. If unable to attend or no longer able to participate, it should be communicated to the YJC coordinator(s).

The YJC Steering Committee will consist of the following representatives:

- Hennepin County Attorney's office
- Public Defender's office
- DOCCR
- Juvenile Probation
- 4<sup>th</sup> District Court
- Juvenile facilities
- 2 youth representatives from the community
- 2 representatives from the Youth Advisory Board
- 2 Community representatives
- Community Organizations
- Education
- Law Enforcement
- Hennepin County Human Services
- Juvenile Probation Youth Equity and Innovation Program Manager & Staff

## YJC Sub-Committees/Workgroups Committee

### Reducing Racial Disparities Workgroup

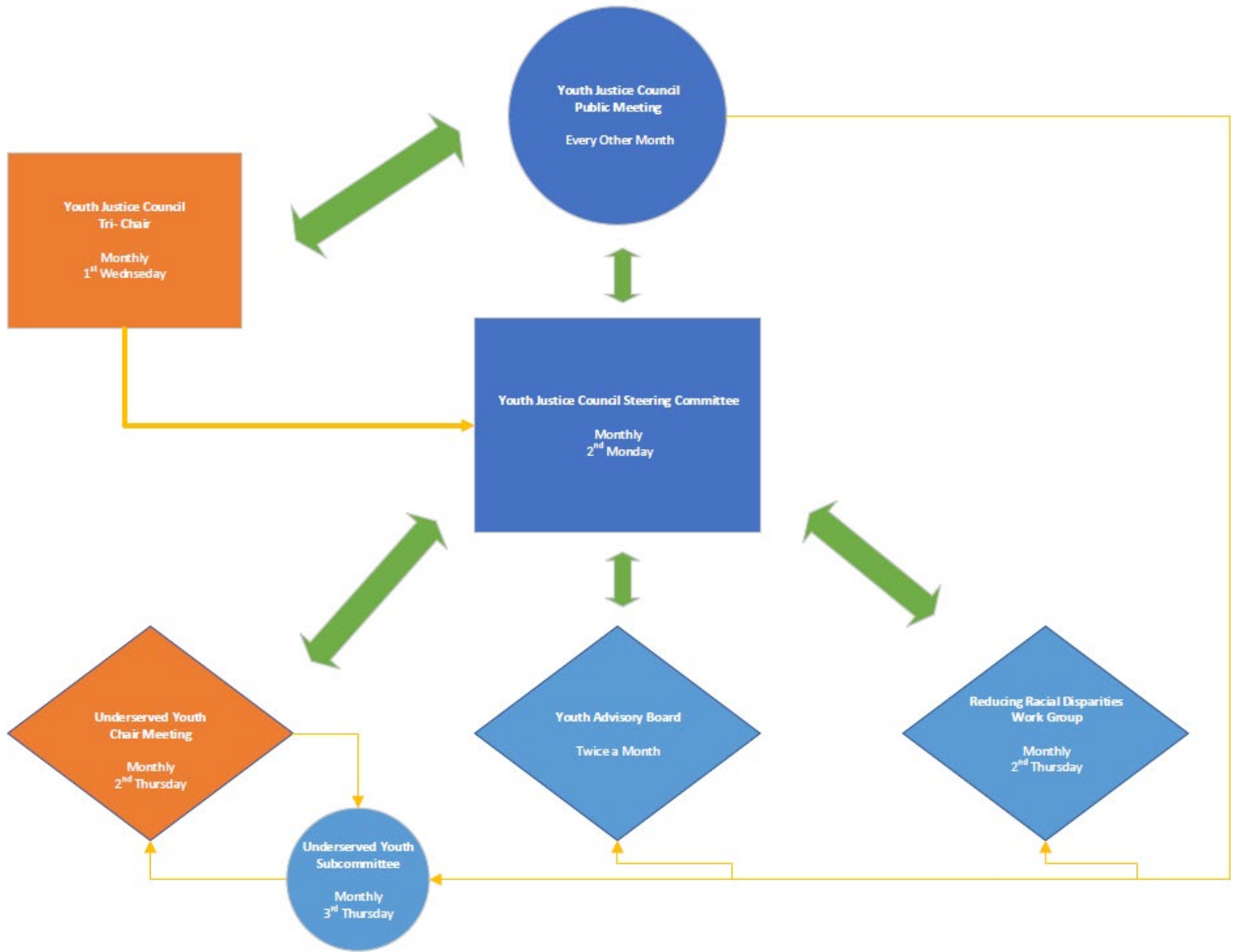
The Reducing Racial Disparities (RRD) Workgroup is a collaborative forum where representatives from systems partners, community agencies, and justice involved youth work together to reduce and/or eliminate ethnic and racial disparities at all decision points within the Hennepin County Juvenile Justice System.

### Underserved Youth Sub-Committee

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 improve 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.

### Youth Advisory Board

Charter is currently being developed by the youth.



# Youth Justice Council

Hennepin County Juvenile Justice System



## Grounding Statement

We commit to treating youth and their families as **experts** of the juvenile justice system by doing the following:

- Create space for open and respectful dialogue in an effort to collaborate and work towards systematic changes.
- Engage and empower youth to ensure they have what they need to feel safe, valued, and heard.
- Find value in disagreements, conflict, and the time needed for reconciliation and healing.
- Commit to challenge our own assumptions and be open to others' ideas.
- Work collaboratively with community to develop the evolving YJC priorities, be transparent and provide clear information.