



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2022 YSB/JRB LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Youth Service Bureau (YSBs) and Juvenile Review Boards (JRBs) are a network of local prevention and intervention agencies that work to support the positive growth and development of youth in their communities. Numerous state mandates currently exist that guide the work of these organizations. However, as a network of mostly small, independent, community-focused organizations it has been as yet unclear how aligned the state as a whole is with regard to the existing state mandates.

A clear picture of the current capacity and functioning will provide a critical framework for developing system-level change. A better understanding of common barriers and opportunities that exist across the state will enable more directed and effective support to be provided to organizations. Together, this information will help strengthen the network of YSBs and JRBs within the state and will ultimately benefit the youth of Connecticut. This project had three goals (1) uncover the current landscape of YSBs and JRBs, (2) determine how their work aligns with current state mandates, and (3) identify factors that may support their work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- By and large, YSBs and JRBs are fulfilling state mandates.
- YSBs and JRBs would benefit from support regarding data collection and use, access to services, staff training, and expansion of standards and guidelines.
- A number of common traits of YSBs and JRBs were found to correlate with more alignment to state mandates including a community-focus, strong relationships with community partners/ families, and a strong knowledge/experience base.

SUMMATIVE STATS

YSBS

Youth needs are expanding and becoming more complex.

On average, YSBs have **14** community partners

58% have expanded their direct service offerings

59% have seen no growth in their yearly budget

51% say their community partners have not expanded programming

76% say that there is unmet need of youth in their communities

JRBS

Having a well training board with clear roles and responsibilities is critical.

69% report consistently utilizing at least some restorative practices

56% provide onboarding training to members but only **17%** provide training around preventing bias and preconceived ideas

Gender diversity is found on **94%** of JRBS, racial and ethnic diversity is found on **66%** of boards while sexuality diversity is only found on **27%** of boards

19% have guidelines on what is considered unfair and inequitable practices

16% have a member probationary period, **16%** require background checks, **29%** have term limits for serving



HARNESSING DATA, IMPROVING OUTCOMES

YSB RESULTS

YSBs across the state are typically aligned with current state mandates, with the most alignment in completing ACU Functions, working as their town(s) “community hub”, and promoting equity and inclusion in their organization and community.

Organizations would benefit from more support in training of staff, data collection/use, establishing additional standard practices, and working to identify, match, and access services that address youth needs.

Numerous factors were found to correlate with better alignment with current state mandates, including having more community partners, more core staff, and more experience directors. Organizations with larger total budgets and budgets less dependent on funds provided from DCF also tended to have more alignment with mandates. YSBs, serving larger towns and urban districts with larger total populations, larger population under 20, higher population mobility, and higher enrollment tended to have more alignment with current state mandates.

JRB RESULTS

JRBs across the state are typically aligned with current state best practices, with most alignment in engaging with youth and families, incorporating restorative practices, utilizing standards and guidelines, and utilizing data to drive the process.

Organizations would benefit from more support in training of staff/volunteers, development of customized service plans for youth, and ensuring equity and diversity are a focus throughout the process.

Numerous factors correlated with better alignment with current best practices, including having more community services available, frequent use of CYSA Protocols and Procedures Manual, and the availability of restorative training for board members. Organization, serving districts from larger towns, and those with larger total populations, larger population under 20, and higher population mobility tended to correlate with more alignment.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Increasing access to service and partnerships

A focus on filling in the gaps and expanding the options will be needed to ensure solutions work regardless of location in the state, size of the organization, or structure of the organization. Recommendations included addressing waitlists for services throughout the state, exploring existing statewide options to close current service gaps, investing in transportation options to help connect youth with services, and working to increase capacity of organizations to network.

Expanding training, guidelines, and protocols

Finding ways to deliver content across the state and broadening the methods for accessing information will help build a knowledge base and ensure consistent and thorough delivery of services and support. Recommendations included developing agreed upon processes and standards for YSBs and explicit guidance on CYSA Protocols and Procedures for JRBs, developing a repository of reading material and virtual on-demand trainings regards both youth-facing and non-youth-facing skills, and clarifying accountability standards and DCF's authority to address those standards.

Aligning data collection and use

An overhaul of data management is required across the state and will require change over multiple years, but first there must be alignment on what data will be collected, how it will be collected, and how it will be used. Recommendations include aligning on outcome metrics to be utilized in conjunction with a standardized set of screening tools, determining how success will be measured across the state and what data will be collected to track progress, and investing in improving system wide data collection and analysis.

Enhancing organizational dynamics

Flexibility in some organizational dynamics is required so each organization can adjust to meet the needs of their community. Recommendations include more flexibility around budgetary spending, the creation of focus/affinity groups across the state, expanding options for youth needs screening, and exploring methods to reduce staff burn-out and increase staff retention.