

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

Work Group on Returning Non-Delinquent Youth Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2026

10:30 a.m. EST

Via Zoom



Preliminary Business

Call to Order

Chair R. Curtis (ME) called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. EST.

Roll Call

Director Underwood called the roll and a quorum was established.

Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. A. Roy Curtis (ME), Commissioner, Chair
2. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), Commissioner, Vice Chair
3. Francis "Mike" Casey (DE), Commissioner
4. Sherry Jones (MD), Commissioner
5. Stephen Horton (NC), Commissioner
6. Corrie Copeland (TN), Commissioner
7. Trissie Casanova (VT), Designee

Additional State ICJ Personnel, Ex Officio Members, and Partners in Attendance:

1. Christine Norris (DE)
2. Jessica Stefenack (VA)
3. Megan Riker-Rheinschild, ICJ Victims Representative
4. Linda Nieves (TN), ICJ Legal Advisor
5. Chris Newlin, Ex Officio Member, National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC)
6. Amanda Whitlock, Ex Officio Member, National Runaway Safeline (NRS)
7. Jill Ward, Maine Law, Youth Justice Clinic
8. Jenna Cox, Maine Law, Youth Justice Fellow

Commissioners/Designees Not in Attendance:

1. Jean Hall (FL), Commissioner
2. Lisa Bjergaard (ND), Commissioner
3. Jessica Wald (ND), Designee

Guests in Attendance:

1. Julie Hawkins (MO), Commissioner, Rules Committee Chair
2. Natalie Dalton (VA), Commissioner, Rules Committee Vice Chair

National Office Staff in Attendance:

1. MaryLee Underwood, Executive Director
2. Jenny Adkins, Director of Operations, Rules, and Compliance

3. Kirsten Wade, Logistics and Administrative Specialist

Agenda

C. Copeland (TN) made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed.

Minutes

C. Bickford (NH) made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on January 8, 2026, as presented. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Unfinished Business

Develop Shared Understandings of Non-Negotiables and Immediate Priorities

- Chair R. Curtis (ME) introduced the list of the top five non-negotiables and immediate priorities developed by the Work Group at previous meetings.
 - Complete Critical Information: Strengthen mandatory information fields in UNITY to support Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) or Incident Response Team (IRT) planning.
 - Cross-State Team Response: Use Cross-state MDTs or IRTs to address complex or stalled cases.
 - 24-Hour Point of Contact: Ensure access to a singular point of contact within 24 hours.
 - Structured Decision Tools for Field Staff: Develop a structured decision-making matrix for field staff.
 - Alternatives to Detention: Redefine “secure” as something other than detention and prioritize safe, human alternatives for youth.
- Chair R. Curtis (ME) stated that the Work Group members would be divided into four breakout groups to discuss Complete Critical Information and answer the following questions:
 - What does this priority mean from your perspective.
 - What partnerships are necessary to implement this priority.
 - What are the next steps to implement this priority.
- For priority 1, Complete Critical Information, members shared the following ideas about what the priority means:
 - Circumstances in which youth was located
 - Learning and understanding the reasons why youth ran (voluntary, coercion, abuse, etc.)
 - Any interventions or assessments
 - Length of time youth was missing
 - Willingness of youth to provide information
 - Identify which fields need to be mandatory in UNITY
 - Police report information or similar information from other first responders and intake staff
- For priority 1, Complete Critical Information, members shared that the following partnerships would be necessary to implement:
 - MDT Composition: local law enforcement, child welfare, state attorneys, juvenile services, non-profit for victim advocate or trafficking, detention centers, and judiciary
 - MDTs can be a bridge to child welfare information and uncover “why,” when information is otherwise not available or sharing prohibited by confidentiality laws

- Child Advocacy Centers
- Identify first responders (intake staff and detention case managers)
- Determine if police reports are prepared in these cases
- Local anti-human trafficking task forces with existing agreements
- CPS agencies can communicate across state lines
- ICJ Training and Information Technology Committee
- Consider presenting at International Symposium on Child Abuse
- For priority 1, Complete Critical Information, members shared the following next steps would be needed to implement this priority:
 - Determine critical information needed for and from both states
 - Determine barriers to interstate communication
 - Determine if state legislation exists which specifically requires cooperation with ICJ offices
 - Enhancement request to require identified UNITY fields (i.e. human trafficking)
 - Enhancement request to allow “pertinent information” field on [Form III, Consent for Voluntary Return of Out-of-State Juvenile](#), to be edited after task is completed or youth crossed state lines
 - Training to support implementation
- For priority 2, Cross-State Team Response, members shared the following ideas on what the priority means to them:
 - Identifying complex cases early and determining whether the case is subject to the ICJ or should be handled by another agency
 - Determining screening tools needed/used to determine complexity (and who has these tools)
 - Get MDTs involved during the initial assessment process
- For priority 2, Cross-State Team Response, members shared that the following partnerships would be necessary to implement:
 - Child Welfare
 - Detention Center Staff
 - Law Enforcement
 - Child Advocacy Centers (CAC)
 - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
 - Fusion and Intelligence Centers
 - State Councils (consider adding CAC representative, shelter directors, and law enforcement officials)
 - Involve family and youth voices
- For priority 2, Cross-State Team Response, members shared the following next steps would be needed to implement this priority:
 - State ICJ offices identify intra-state partners
 - Review legislation allowing cooperation
 - Identify barriers to MDTs (intrastate and interstate)
 - State ICJ offices offer training to state chapters of CACs
 - Consider MDT best practices

- Chair R. Curtis (ME) and Director Underwood thanked members for their contributions to the conversations. The next meeting will continue with discussing priority 3.

Next Steps

- Chair R. Curtis (ME) shared that the Commission's Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (RDEI) Committee would present the upcoming *Wednesday Workshop: ICJ and Human Trafficking* on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. EST.
- The next Work Group meeting was scheduled for March 12, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. EST.

Adjourn

Chair R. Curtis (ME) adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 11:57 a.m. EST.