

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

Work Group on Returning Non-Delinquent Youth Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2026

2:00 p.m. EDT

Via Zoom



Preliminary Business

Call to Order

Chair R. Curtis (ME) called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. EDT.

Roll Call

Director Underwood called the roll and quorum was established.

Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. A. Roy Curtis (ME), Commissioner, Chair
2. Sarah Abramczyk (AK), Commissioner
3. Francis "Mike" Casey (DE), Commissioner
4. Jean Hall (FL), Commissioner
5. Sherry Jones (MD), Commissioner
6. Jessica Wald (ND), Designee

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

1. Jessica Stefenack (VA)
2. Megan Riker-Rheinschild, ICJ Victims Representative
3. Chris Newlin, Ex Officio Member, National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC)
4. Judge Kathleen Quigley, Ex Officio Member, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)
5. Juan "John" Sepulveda, Ex Officio Member, National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS)
6. Amanda Whitlock, Ex Officio Member, National Runaway Safeline (NRS)
7. Melissa Snow, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
8. Jenna Cox, Maine Law, Youth Justice Fellow

Commissioners/Designees Not in Attendance:

1. Christine Norris (DE), Designee
2. Stephen Horton (NC), Commissioner
3. Lisa Bjergaard (ND), Commissioner
4. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), Commissioner, Vice Chair
5. Corrie Copeland (TN), Commissioner
6. Trissie Casanova (VT), Designee

Guests in Attendance:

1. Julie Hawkins (MO), Commissioner, Rules Committee Chair
2. Natalie Dalton (VA), Commissioner, Rules Committee Vice Chair
3. Eric Smith, Kentucky Department for Community Based Services

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

J. Hall (FL) made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Minutes

M. Riker-Rheinschild (Victims Representative) made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on February 18, 2026, as presented. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Unfinished Business

Develop Shared Understandings of Non-Negotiables and Immediate Priorities

- Chair R. Curtis (ME) stated that members would continue discussing the top five non-negotiables and immediate priorities, which were identified at an earlier meeting.
- Members joined breakout groups to discuss what a “24-Hour Point of Contact” means to them, which partnerships are necessary to implement the priority, and the next steps to implement it.
- For priority 3, “24-Hour Point of Contact,” members shared the following ideas about what the priority means:
 - Contact is within state where youth is found
 - Use of ICJ website after-hours list
 - Availability and knowledge of ICJ office staff
 - Making contact as soon as possible
 - How to obtain information to move forward and expedite services
 - Clarify who needs to be contacted within 24 hours
- For priority 3, “24-Hour Point of Contact,” members shared that the following partnerships would be necessary to implement:
 - Child welfare/protection agency to identify youth’s custodial status
 - Partnerships between juvenile justice and child and family service agencies
 - Adequate training for child welfare, law enforcement, ICJ offices, and others to maintain safety of youth and public
 - Include family/legal guardian
 - Identify primary contact for each agency, including medical support
 - Coordination plan for return
 - Coordination between agencies for youth who are in care
 - Explore court services as first point of contact (Virginia model)
 - Explore options for partnering with ex officio member and allied organizations (NRS and NCMEC, which oversees system for youth missing from care) who have 24-hour contact/operations, especially within the time before the ICJ is applied

- For priority 3, “24-Hour Point of Contact,” members shared the following next steps would be needed to implement this priority:
 - Protective service alerts- shared inbox in child welfare agency
 - Checklist to obtain necessary information to include “the circumstances regarding the return” and to determine if youth is candidate for release to legal guardian within 24-hours
 - Use Commission’s [Fact Sheet on ICJ Returns & Non-Delinquent Runaways](#) with law enforcement
 - Meetings to discuss logistics and point-person for decision making
 - Talk through the plan before implementation
 - Continue communicating until return is complete
 - Identify contacts, especially for human trafficking, abuse/neglect allegations
 - Clarify and educate the ICJ personnel and first responders about appropriate responses within the first 24-hours, i.e., in absence of suspected abuse or neglect, youth should be released to legal guardian and not held unnecessarily.
 - Identify issues related to out-of-state reports to child welfare in home state
- Members discussed exploring further partnerships with organizations such as the NCMEC and NRS to coordinate efforts and better bridge gaps in systems. M. Snow (NCMEC) offered to help facilitate connections and improve information sharing.
- M. Snow (NCMEC) explained the organization's work with children missing from care, noting that a 2014 law requires state child welfare agencies to report missing children to NCMEC after notifying law enforcement. She described how NCMEC handles over 20,000 reports annually, with the largest group being runaway teens, and explained their role in supporting law enforcement through analytical tools and information sharing. The discussion also covered how NCMEC tracks recoveries through NCIC access and receives notifications when children are found or removed from the system.
- The next meeting will continue with discussing priority 4, “Structured Decision Tools for Field Staff.”

Next Steps

- Chair R. Curtis (ME) requested a volunteer to serve as the South Region Ambassador and asked volunteers to contact him by email.
- The next Work Group meeting was scheduled for April 9, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. EDT.

Adjourn

Chair R. Curtis (ME) adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 3:26 p.m. EDT.