

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

Work Group on Returning Non-Delinquent Youth Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2026

2:00 p.m. EDT

Via Zoom



Preliminary Business

Call to Order

Vice Chair C. Bickford (NH) called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. EDT.

Roll Call

Director Underwood called the roll and quorum was established.

Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), Commissioner, Vice Chair
2. Sarah Abramczyk (AK), Commissioner
3. Christine Norris (DE), Designee
4. Stephen Horton (NC), Commissioner
5. Corrie Copeland (TN), Commissioner
6. Jessica Wald (ND), Designee

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

1. Liz Wilson (KS)
2. Jessica Stefenack (VA)
3. Megan Riker-Rheinschild, Ex Officio Member, ICJ Victims Representative
4. Linda Nieves (TN), ICJ Legal Advisor
5. Judge Kathleen Quigley, Ex Officio Member, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)
6. Juan "John" Sepulveda, Ex Officio Member, National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS)
7. Amanda Whitlock, Ex Officio Member, National Runaway Safeline (NRS)
8. Melissa Snow, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
9. Jill Ward, Maine Law, Youth Justice Clinic
10. Jenna Cox, Maine Law, Youth Justice Fellow

Commissioners/Designees Not in Attendance:

1. Francis "Mike" Casey (DE), Commissioner
2. Jean Hall (FL), Commissioner
3. Sherry Jones (MD), Commissioner
4. A. Roy Curtis (ME), Commissioner, Chair
5. Lisa Bjergaard (ND), Commissioner
6. Trissie Casanova (VT), Designee

Guests in Attendance:

1. Julie Hawkins (MO), Commissioner, Rules Committee 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. Norris (DE) made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Minutes

J. Wald (ND) made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on March 12, 2026, as presented. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Unfinished Business

Develop Shared Understandings of Non-Negotiables and Immediate Priorities

- Vice Chair C. Bickford (NH) 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 “Structured Decision Tools for Field Staff” means to them, which partnerships are necessary to implement the priority, and the next steps to implement it.
- Members shared the following ideas about what the priority means:
 - Goals:
 - Nationwide consistency
 - Intra-state consistency (especially in states with many ICJO staff)
 - Keeping safety of youth at forefront and improving outcomes for youth and families
 - Removing subjectivity and bias
 - Ensuring response aligns with law and policy
 - Holistic approach
 - Purposes:
 - Determining immediate (holding state) and long-term services (home state)
 - Creating tool(s) to determine risk and safety level (scoring matrix)
 - Focusing on process, rather than needs assessment
 - Connecting case workers for children who are missing from care
 - Shifting presumption from detention to not hold youth in secure facilities
 - Preventing repeat screenings by ensuring tools can be shared
 - Members shared that the following partnerships would be necessary to implement:
 - Field staff should be asked what is needed
 - Juvenile court counselors/ case managers
 - Detention center staff
 - Law enforcement officials
 - Medical, mental health, and human services providers, including sexual assault nurse examiners

- Families
 - Human trafficking units/centers
 - State and agency for partners to champion buy-in and cooperation to use tool
- For priority 4, “Structured Decision Tools for Field Staff,” members shared the following next steps would be needed to implement this priority:
 - Review existing ICJ returns resources, including flow charts, how they are used, and determine best ways to promote
 - Improve communications between states and intra-state to ensure existing resources are being utilized
 - Define “field staff,” perhaps as anyone authorized/credentialed to work with youth
 - Determine who needs tools and what tools would be useful
 - Focus on partnerships with law enforcement to provide resources and training
 - Engage robust state councils with varied regional and agency representation as vital tools to connect stakeholders who serve youth
 - Consider templates for states to customize
 - Each state determines how new assessment tools are approved for multi-agency use
 - Determine how to identify repeat runaways in UNITY to target services
 - Develop protocol for determine when sexual assault medical forensic examination (SAFE) exams are needed
 - Reinforcing that the holding states responsible for assessing the case and communicating needs to the home/demanding state
 - Getting youth’s perspective
 - Ensuring that “credible messengers” are available to communicate with young people, especially those with lived experience and training regarding human trafficking
 - Regarding what tools are currently used, members indicated the Commission’s flow charts and matrices are often used. States also use various assessment and screening tools
- The next meeting will continue discussion of priority 5, “Alternatives to Detention.”

Next Steps

- The next Work Group meeting was scheduled for May 14, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. EDT.

Adjourn

Vice Chair C. Bickford (NH) adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 3:35 p.m. EDT.