

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

Work Group on Returning Non-Delinquent Youth Meeting Minutes

October 30, 2025

2:00 pm EDT

Via Zoom



Preliminary Business

Call to Order

Chair R. Curtis (ME) called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm EDT.

Roll Call

Director Underwood called the roll and a quorum was established.

Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. A. Roy Curtis (ME), Commissioner, Chair
2. Francis "Mike" Casey (DE), Commissioner
3. Sherry Jones (MD), Commissioner
4. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), Commissioner
5. Stephen Horton (NC), Commissioner
6. Jessica Wald (ND), Designee

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

1. Sarah Abramczyk (AK)
2. Christine Norris (DE), PT Designee
3. Jessica Stefenack (VA)
4. Linda Nieves (TN), ICJ Legal Advisor
5. Chris Newlin, Ex Officio Member, National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC)
6. Juan "John" Sepulveda, Ex Officio Member, National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS)
7. Amanda Whitlock, Ex Officio Member, National Runaway Safeline (NRS)
8. Sheriff Travis Patten, Ex Officio Member, National Sheriffs Association (NSA)
9. Melissa Snow, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

Commissioners/Designees Not in Attendance:

1. Jean Hall (FL), Commissioner
2. Lisa Bjergaard (ND), Commissioner
3. Corrie Copeland (TN), Commissioner
4. Trissie Casanova (VT), Designee

Guests in Attendance:

1. Glenn Tapia, Alliance for Community and Justice Innovation (ACJI)
2. Julie Hawkins (MO), Commissioner, Rules Committee Chair
3. Natalie Dalton (VA), Commissioner, Rules Committee Vice Chair

National Office Staff in Attendance:

1. MaryLee Underwood, Executive Director
2. Joseph Johnson, Systems Project Manager
3. Kirsten Wade, Logistics and Administrative Specialist
4. Jenny Adkins, Operations and Policies Specialist
5. Amanee Cabbagestalk, Training and Administrative Specialist

Agenda

- C. Bickford (NH) made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed.
- C. Bickford (NH) made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on August 25, 2025, as presented. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Welcome to Work Group and Introduction of Members

- Director Underwood provided background on the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ), highlighting the involvement of state representatives and national stakeholder groups. She encouraged participants to engage in discussions and bring forward their perspectives to address long-standing concerns with new thinking and approaches.
- Chair R. Curtis (ME) introduced the year's theme of collaboration and welcomed members to the work group.
- Work group members shared their goals and experiences. Many emphasized the importance of learning from each other's expertise to strengthen effective communication and coordination among stakeholders. Another common goal was to apply the knowledge gained to disseminate best practices for addressing challenges related to the return of non-delinquent youths.

Unfinished Business

- No unfinished business was discussed.

New Business

Appreciative Inquiry 5D Process for Issues 1 & 3 – *Glenn Tapia*

- Glenn Tapia (ACJI) stated that the work group will follow a five-stage process to begin building collaboration and solving adaptive problems with adaptive solutions. The first stage in the process is to “define.”
- Breakout groups were organized to discuss the meaning of thriving collaboration and to identify areas for improvement, with participants encouraged to share diverse perspectives.
- Chair R. Curtis (ME) reported out for Group 1. The group emphasized trust, follow-up, knowing stakeholders, and youth voice.
- C. Bickford (NH) reported out for Group 2. The group highlighted the importance of continuous communication, clear roles, transparency, and understanding of processes and restrictions.
- Both Group 1 and 2 agreed on the importance of balancing public safety and youth safety.
- J. Wald (ND) reported out for Group 3. The group stated that thriving collaboration meant identifying strengths and limitations while ensuring equal roles for group success.
- Group 3 emphasized the need for better communication, a more precise understanding of roles and responsibilities, and education for stakeholders about the Interstate Compact.
- N. Dalton (VA) added that thriving collaboration means that everyone in the group is equally engaged in the goals and ambitions, with a willingness to explore obstacles and challenges.

- G. Tapia (ACJI) compiled each groups response to what a thriving collaboration meant to them:

Thriving Collaboration really means....

- Trust among all parties. Trust that we can communicate candidly, openly, honestly, where real talk is valued.
- Really knowing each other as people and agencies.
- Communication flows openly and nothing is being missed.
- We have a aligned goal and purpose – what is in the best interest of the child without a compromise to public and the child's personal safety
- We seek to understand everyone else's needs, challenges, boundaries, and objectives.
- The work benefits everyone, the work of everyone benefits the group (co-helping)
- Respecting each other limitations
- Everyone has an equal voice and role
- See the value of getting the word out to others and educating our home stakeholders and constituents.
- Educate our stakeholders about their role in the process where this group is an ambassador for the compact itself and its goals
- Everyone in the group is equally engaged into the goals and ambitions and a willingness to explore obstacles and challenges

- G. Tapia (ACJI) compiled a list of areas for improvement that the groups identified:

We need more..

- We need a kind of trust that also means people will REALLY follow up
- We need to be intentional about WHO we are thriving for.
- YOUTH VOICE – those who have lived the experience we care about. Why aren't we getting YOUR voice into the process and outcome?
- EDUCATION – within our states and among our states and stakeholders.
- CONTINGENCY PLAN – If Plan A falls through we need a Plan B
- INFORMATION EXCHANGE – We need the PURPOSE of the information needed.
- TRANSPARENCY - More transparency in request about information needed.
- Everyone has an ID'd role and responsibility.
- We need detail and context on each individual case we are dealing with to make an informed decision about returns/not.
- HUMAN CENTERED communication about the PERSON and their needs, challenges, and objectives.
- URGENCY over HASTE – We need people to really respect the importance of doing this in a safe and human way. So we need more timely communication that comes from a person or agency who CARES about the situation.
- More investment of time and resources in addressing the individual needs of each young person

- G. Tapia (ACJI) questioned the meaning of "more communication."
- J. Wald (ND) stated that there needs to be better communication with the youth, rather than going through the motions to finish the task.
- M. Casey (DE) highlighted the importance of urgency in addressing cases while maintaining a focus on the human aspect.
- Director Underwood echoed the importance of investing more time and resources to address the individual needs of each young person.
- G. Tapia (ACJI) suggested that the focus should be on building an ethos of collaboration and understanding, rather than on technical processes. The next meeting will involve sharing success stories and building on past collaborations to improve current efforts.

Next Steps

- Chair R. Curtis (ME) stated that representatives from Maine Law School will be attending future meetings and will assist in research on due process and other legal topics.
- The next Work Group meeting was scheduled for November 13, 2025, at 2:00 PM EDT.

Adjourn

Chair R. Curtis (ME) adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 3:30 pm EDT.