

Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board

Board Meeting
October 8, 2025

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of March Meeting Minutes
3. OCA Updates
4. Dually Involved Youth Project Updates & Discussion
5. Subcommittee Updates
6. Board Member Updates

OCA Announcements



Legislative Updates



CRA Report: A 2025 Update and Path Forward for Change



Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program



Center for Child Wellbeing & Trauma's Training & Learning Collaborative

Legislative Updates



Favorable Reports:

- *An Act updating the juvenile justice policy and data board* (H.4417/SB116)

Adds the following members:

1. Commission on LGBTQ Youth
 2. One adult who was involved in the JJ system as a child
- *An Act promoting diversion of juveniles to community supervision and services* (H.1695)

Hearings Held in June/July 2025:

- *An Act regarding families and children in need of assistance* (H.265/S.141)
- *An Act to enhance fairness and increase positive outcomes for children* (H.1658/S.1050)

CRA Report: A 2025 Update and Path Forward for Change



In July, the OCA released [*Improving Massachusetts' Child Requiring Assistance System*](#).

Key Findings:

- Total CRA petitions continue to rise since 2022 (FY23 and FY24), and this increase is driven by school-based filings
- Overall racial and ethnic disparities in filings have worsened
- There has been an increase in the number of filings for children under the age of 12
- Geographic differences in filings remain

Recommendation:

- Pass [*An Act regarding families and children in need of assistance*](#), which implements many recommendations to address structural issues with the CRA petition process from the [*JJPAD Board's 2022 Report*](#).

Georgetown Youth Diversion Certificate Program

Participants on MA Team:

- DYS
- DCF
- Clerk Magistrate (Worcester)
- Police Department (Worcester)
- District Attorney (Essex)
- CPCS (Hampden)
- Probation
- OCA
- PPAL

Emerging Trends in Other States:

- More use of pre-arrest/pre-court diversion
- Youth given multiple diversion opportunities
- Increasing use of restorative justice practices
- Programs that accept higher level charges (Intrafamilial DV, Firearm possession)

Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program: OCA Year 3 Impact Report forthcoming

The Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program

Year 1: 2022

Essex County
(Family Services of the Merrimack Valley)

Middlesex County **Worcester County**
(NFI Massachusetts) (Advocates)

Year 2: 2023

Hampden County
(Gándara Center)

Plymouth County
(Old Colony YMCA)

Year 3: 2024

Bristol County
(Child & Family Services)

Cape and Islands
(Advocates)

Year 4: 2025

Suffolk County
(RFK Community Alliance)

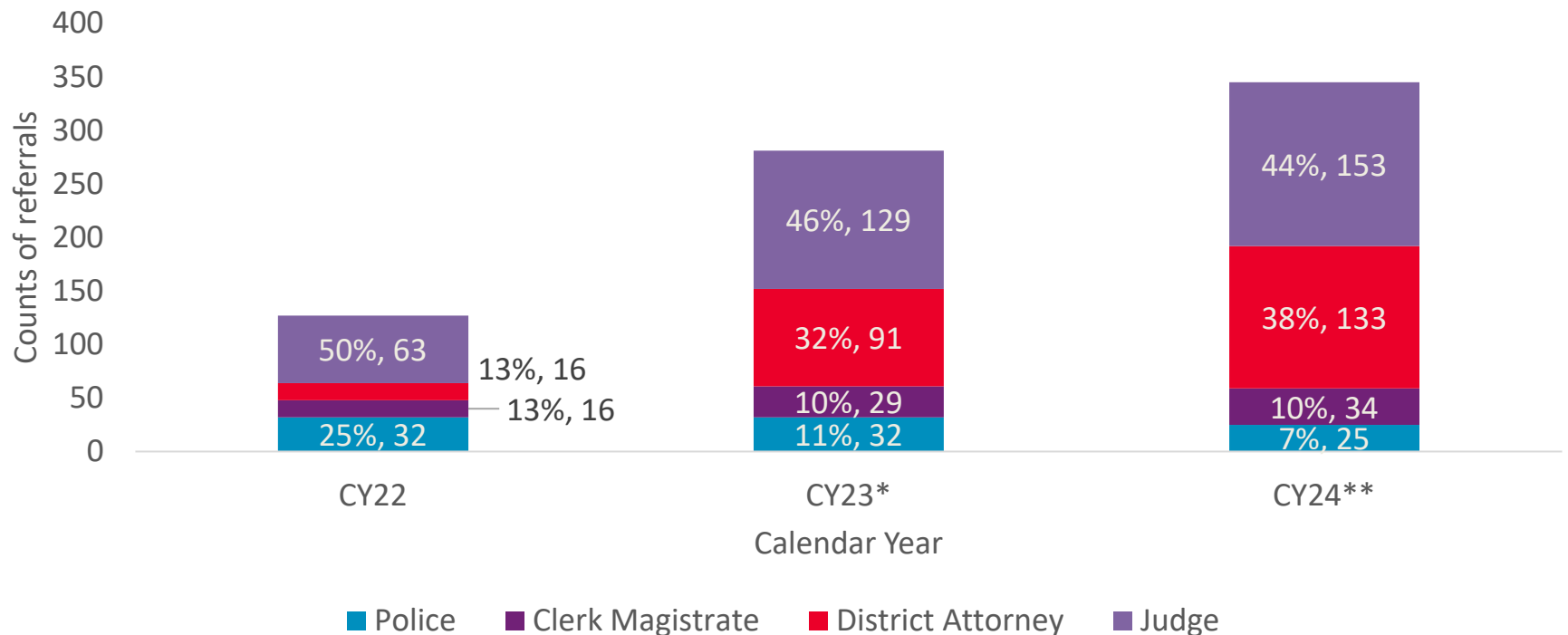
Norfolk County
(Bay State Community Services)

Berkshire County
(Brien Center)

Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program

Calendar Year 2024: 348 Youth Referred to the Program – a 23% Increase from CY 2023

MYDP Referrals by Referrer (CY22-CY24)



*One referral was missing referral source information. **Three referrals were missing referral source information. Source: Data provided to the OCA by DYS' Department of Research

+9 youth referred from AGOs Youth Diversion Program for youth charged with “sexting” related offenses



Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program

Key Demographics (CY2024)

- 45% Latino, 34% White, 10% Black, 5% Other or Multi-racial
- 65% boys, 31% girls
- 8% LGBTQ+
- 16% involved with DCF



Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program

80% of cases closed successfully!

“Diversion is another chance to think about your mistakes and make them right. It was helpful because I never thought about the things I did the way I did before I reflected on them with [my diversion coordinator]. She helped me see it through a different perspective. I feel [my diversion coordinator] guided me throughout this process and helped me to learn how to make healthier decisions.” – Youth participant

“This program gives you someone to talk to, reflect on your experience and figure out how to do better in the future and not repeat mistakes.” – Youth participant



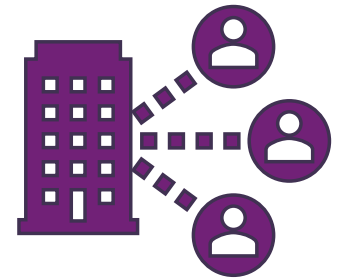
Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program

Areas for improvement:

1. Address the decline in referrals for certain referrers/counties
2. Address racial/ethnic disparities in referrals, particularly for Black youth
3. Increase program accessibility for “higher risk” youth
4. Review case practices in developing diversion requirements

Center for Child Wellbeing & Trauma's Training & Learning Collaborative

This fall, the Center for Child Wellbeing & Trauma is convening a new cross-secretariat **Training & Learning Collaborative (TLC)**, a multi-year initiative aimed at aligning state efforts to improve training quality for child-serving professionals.



Project Update & Discussion: Dually Involved Youth

1. Project Status update
2. Emerging themes from the research so far
3. Discussion

Research Questions & Project Goals

Research Questions

1. Who is crossing over and why?
2. Are there policies & practices specific to MA that are contributing to crossover?
3. Can any of these youth be diverted?

Goals

1. Make recommendations to improve supports/service models for youth to prevent crossover or reduce harm
2. Identify cohorts of youth that may benefit from being served in the community vs. detention
3. Make recommendations to improve community-based supports/service models for youth at risk of crossover

Where We've Been...

2023:

JJPAD Board launched
DIY project

2025:

CBI Subcommittee:

- ✓ heard presentations from DCF, DYS, NFI, CPCS, MPS
- ✓ reviewed interview themes
- ✓ reviewed themes from the national literature review

2024:

OCA interviewed
stakeholders and
submitted DIY data
requests

Where We're Going...

Late Fall 2025 - Winter 2026:

JJPAD Board and Subcommittees:

- ✓ discuss data analysis
- ✓ review key takeaways from the case file review
- ✓ learn best practice from other jurisdictions

Summer/Fall 2026:

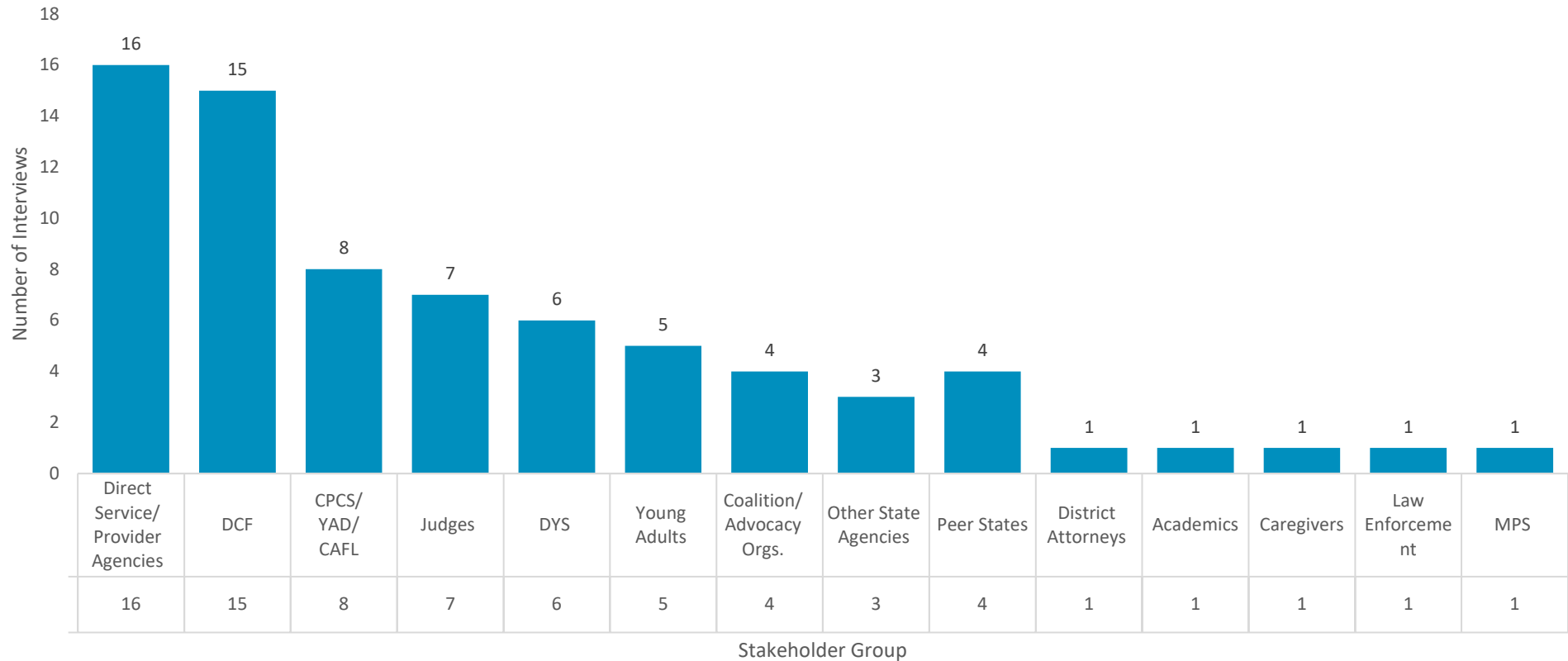
JJPAD Board finalizes recommendations and publishes the report

Spring 2026:

JJPAD Board and Subcommittees discuss draft findings and brainstorm recommendations

Interviews Conducted

Informational Interviews by Stakeholder Group



Between August 2023 - October 2025 the OCA conducted 73 interviews, representing 102 stakeholders.



Emerging Themes

- 1 Dual system youth are different than single system youth in key ways
- 2 Detained Girls and LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately DCF involved
- 3 There are gaps in services/early supports to prevent crossover or initial system involvement
- 4 There are child welfare system policies & practices that actively contribute to crossover
- 5 There are juvenile justice system policies & practices that actively contribute to crossover
- 6 There are short- and long-term negative impacts to dual involvement

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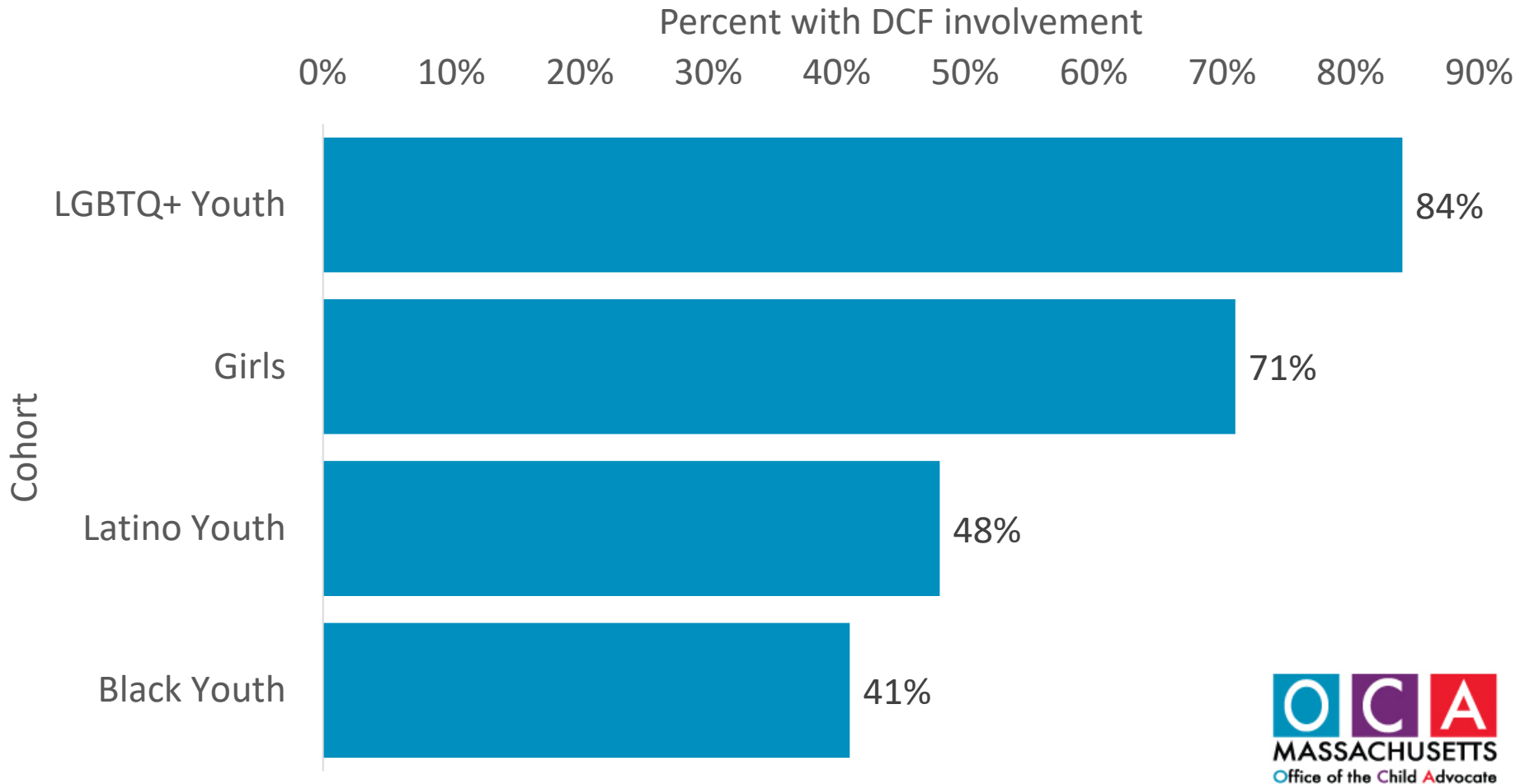
Dual system youth are different than single system youth in key ways

Nationally,

- **Higher rates of ACEs and lower rates of protective factors** when compared to single system youth
- **Older at their first CW investigation** (compared to CW-only youth) and **younger at their first entry into the JJ system** (compared to JJ-only youth)
- Frequently alleged of committing misdemeanor offenses, often arising from **conflict at home or in placement.**
- More likely to **run away/go missing** from care and may engage in **survival tactics** (e.g., gang involvement) to cope with unmet needs, trauma, and a perceived lack of autonomy.
- More likely **have prior court involvement** histories (i.e., CRA-like offenses or arrests)
- More likely than single system youth to have **school challenges** including truancy and poor academic performance

Detained Girls and LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately DCF involved

MA DCF Involvement for Cohorts of Detained Youth (FY24)



Detained Girls and LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately DCF involved

Why?

Leading theories include....

- A lack of **specialized or gender-responsive services**
- **Criminalization of victim behaviors** (e.g., running from care, substance use, CSEC, etc.)
- **Systemic, community, and social factors** (e.g., poverty, community violence, implicit and explicit bias, etc.).

3

There are gaps in services/early supports to prevent crossover or initial system involvement

- ✓ Substance use services (youth & caregivers)
- ✓ Mental health treatment (youth & caregivers)
- ✓ Community delinquency and violence prevention programming
- ✓ Educational supports
- ✓ Specialized programs and placement options with targeted services (e.g., CSEC, youth missing from care, girls)
- ✓ Short-term respite options, specifically for youth from congregate care programs
- ✓ Kin or non-kin foster placements

4

There are child welfare system policies & practices that actively contribute to crossover

Nationally, dual system youth have higher rates of **placement instability** & **higher rates of out-of-home placement** than their child welfare peers

Ways that *placement related* policies and practices in MA can increase likelihood of crossover to DYS:

- Placements that lack the **appropriate program models** and **specialized expertise** to meet the needs of youth with significant behavioral health challenges
- Practices that require **staff to report behavior** that kin may tolerate
- Provider's ability to **refuse referral for placement** of DCF youth
- **Co-location practices and policies** which restrict placing youth with justice system involvement with other foster youth
- DCF practice to **not post bail** for youth

5

There are juvenile justice system policies & practices that actively contribute to crossover

Youth involved in the child welfare system are *treated differently* by the juvenile justice system. National data suggests:

- More frequent use of pretrial detention
- Less likely to receive probation and more likely to be committed

Why?

Leading theories include....

- Belief that DYS placement needed to protect child (e.g. CSEC concerns)
- Inability to find appropriate DCF placement
- Prior challenges following CRA conditions lead prosecutors /judges to believe youth can't be successful on probation

6

There are short- and long-term negative impacts to dual involvement

Nationally, compared to single system youth:

- Reduced mental, emotional & relational stability
- Worse permanency & recidivism outcomes
- High levels of unemployment & low cumulative earnings

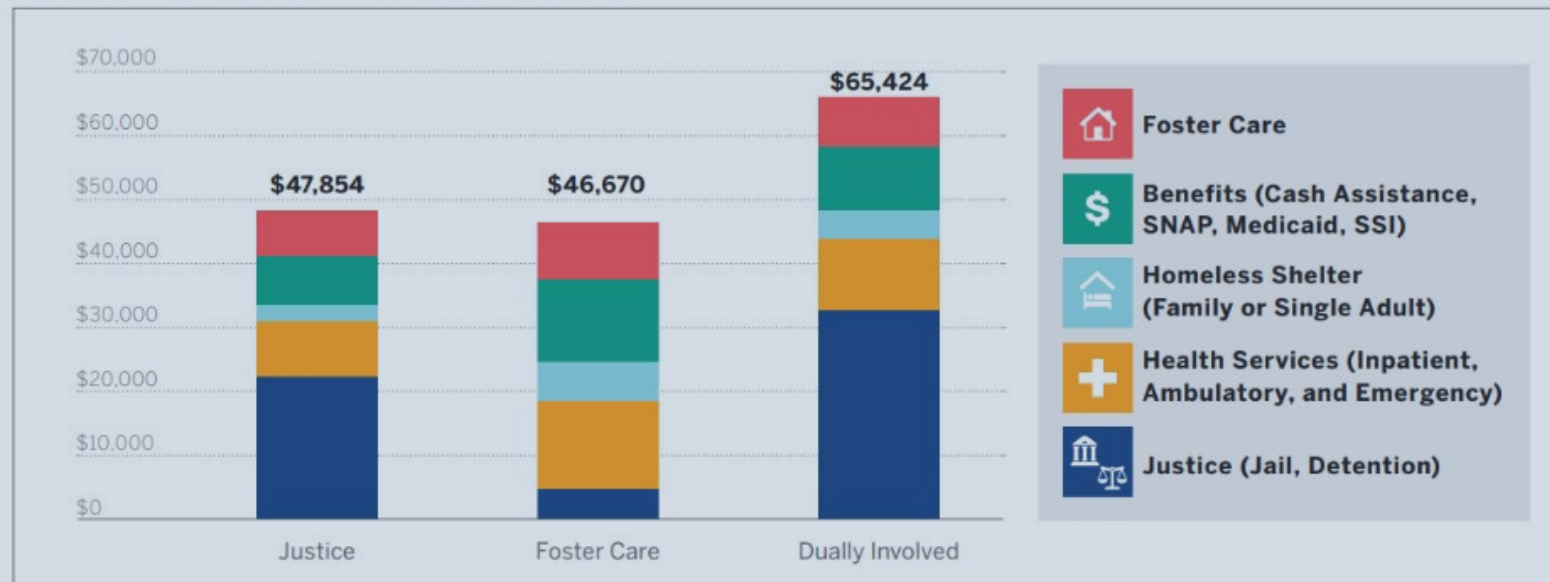
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There are short- and long-term negative impacts to dual involvement

Nationally, dual involvement can impact utilization of public systems:

- Resource intensive to process a multi-system case
- Long-term reliance & cost burden on public programs

Average Cumulative Cost of Services Used in Years 1-6



Discussion questions

- Do you disagree with any of the emerging themes?
- Are there any gaps in services/challenges in policy in Massachusetts that were not reflected?
- What questions do you need answers to before:
 - ✓ Making recommendations to improve supports/service models for youth to prevent crossover or reduce harm?
 - ✓ Identifying cohorts of youth that may benefit from being served in the community vs. detention?
 - ✓ Making recommendations to improve community-based supports/service models for youth at risk of crossover?



Subcommittee Work Plans

CBI Subcommittee

Fall/Winter

- MYDP Update
- DIY Data Presentation

Winter/Spring

- Review and discuss DIY case file review and draft findings
- Review and discuss DIY best practice research

Spring/early Summer

- Review and discuss DIY recommendations
- Finalize report for Board

Data Subcommittee

Fall/Winter

- DIY Data Presentation
- Review data section of FY25 JJPAD Annual Report

Spring/Summer

- Review and discuss Data section of the dually involved youth report

Childhood Trauma Task Force

Fall/Winter

- Review and discuss findings and recommendations for the State Agencies' Trauma & Resilience Training *Requirements and Opportunities* project
- Develop 2026 Work Plan

Full Board

Early Winter

- Review and discuss 2025 Annual Report

Winter/Spring

- DIY Data Presentation and case file review

Spring/Summer

- Review and discuss DIY report findings and recommendations
- 1:1s and work planning with Board members

Board Member Updates

- Are there any new initiatives the group should be aware of?
- Does your agency/org have any new policies or standard practices the group should know about?
- Are you hosting/attending any upcoming events relevant to this group?
- Anything else you wish to share with the group?

Subcommittee Upcoming Meeting Dates

Subcommittee	2025-2026 meeting schedule
Data	Quarterly, next meeting TBD
CBI	~Monthly, upcoming meetings 11/24 & 12/22
CTTF	Quarterly, next meeting in-person 10/21



Next Meeting

TBD–December 2025



(All meetings are virtual; Zoom information is in each calendar invitation)

Contact

Melissa Threadgill

Senior Director of Policy and Implementation

melissa.threadgill@mass.gov

Kristi Polizzano

Senior Policy and Implementation Manager

kristine.polizzano@mass.gov

Appendix A: Reference Materials from the National Literature Review

JJPAD CBI Subcommittee July 2025:

- ✓ [Pre-Meeting Materials](#)
- ✓ [Meeting Presentation](#)