

# Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board

Community Based Interventions  
Subcommittee Meeting

February 23, 2026

# Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of October Meeting Minutes
3. Dual Status Youth Project Update
4. Guest presentations: Hampden County Dual Status Youth program & Youth Villages Intercept Model
5. 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

# CBI: Dual Status Youth Where We've Been



**Interviews with stakeholders**



**Presentation on  
DYS/DCF/Provider/CPCS/Probation  
practices**



**National literature review**

# 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

# CBI: Dual Status Youth Where We're Going

Winter/Spring  
2026



Continued review of state policies & current community-based options



Review of best practices from other jurisdictions

Spring/Summer  
2026



Data analysis



Case file review

Summer/Fall  
2026



Discuss draft findings and brainstorm potential recommendations

# Hampden County DIY Case Management

*Bridget Nichols, LICSW, CJCC I*

*DMH Manager of Juvenile Forensic Services*

*Julie Wickman, LICSW, CJCC I, QSW*

*Court Clinician, BHN, Western MA Area*

# Agenda

1. History of Dually Involved Youth Case Conferencing in Hampden County
2. Core Elements of DIY Case Management
  - Eligibility, Case Practices
3. Challenges & Bright Spots
  - Implementation, Lessons Learned

# History of Dually Involved Youth Case Conferencing in Hampden County

- DYS and the Juvenile Court partnered in gathering data on DIY youth being held at DYS facilities in WM
- DYS and Juvenile Court partnered in applying for technical assistance with RFK for the development of a DIY program model
- Key partners included:
  - Juvenile Court, DYS, DCF, Defense, ADA, Probation
  - An MOU was developed for information sharing; agreements were made during the program development between agencies

# Core Elements of DIY Case Management

- Target Population: Youth who are before the court on delinquency charges who also are involved with the DCF in any capacity (supported 51a, CRA, C&P, voluntary status)
- Referral process
- Program model:
  - Case manager schedules meeting and invites attendees
  - Representatives from ADA, defense, DCF and DYS attend all meetings
  - Family/DCF provide listing of other participants including current providers, school personnel, etc.
  - Meeting facilitated by court clinician
- Case Manager role

# Data/Outcomes

- Data submitted by the clinic to DMH via a secure web application monthly
- Outcomes/measure of success
- Services youth are referred to and active connection with community provider

# Challenges/Lessons Learned

- Challenges in managing cases
- Changes to the program

# Bright Spots

- Multidisciplinary meeting (MDM) available to any case type
- Advise and need for other programs providing case management for court involved youth

# Youth Villages New England

February 23, 2026

**Matt Stone- Executive Director New England**

**Lori Sustek- New England Managing Director**

**Maria Torres Londono- Regional Supervisor**



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# About Youth Villages

## Our Mission: To help children and families live successfully

- Our long-term vision for impact is that young people and their families have access to the services and support they need and that foster care is used only as a last resort.
- We work to find solutions using proven treatment models that strengthen the child's family and support systems, and dramatically improve their long-term success.
- By partnering with public agencies and private providers, Youth Villages creates effective, research-based interventions for young people and their families.

## Our Core Programs

**Intercept:** an evidence based alternative treatment for children and youth who otherwise would be placed in foster care, residential treatment, detention centers, hospitals or other juvenile facilities. Diverting youth from these out of home placements.

**LifeSet:** an individualized, evidence-based community-based program that is highly intensive. LifeSet specialists meet with participants face to face at least once each week. LifeSet is one of the nation's first and now one of the largest evidence-based programs helping young people who age out of foster care. More than 20,000 young people have been helped through LifeSet across the country since the program began in 1999.

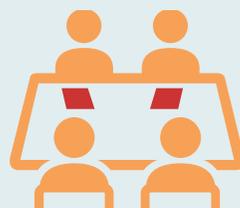
# Intercept® Model Core Elements

- Ecological model, **serving infants to age 18**
- Successfully diverts youth from placement or helps transition them home after out-of-home placements
- Teams include **4-5 specialists** with caseloads of **4-5 families** per specialist.
  - Specialists are Bachelors & Masters Degree trained in social services
- Service is intensive—average **three in person sessions per week**, per family
- Program length **average 4-6 months**; reunification takes 6-9 months average
- Crisis support by Youth Villages staff available **24/7**
- Intensive individual and group supervision and clinical oversight
- Referrals come from DCF, DMH, Hospital Emergency Departments, DYS
- **Outcome data collection** at program completion, 6- and 12-months post

# Rigorous Evaluations



**Placement Study No. 1:** Intercept reduced the odds of out-of-home placement by **53%** following the first maltreatment investigation.



**Placement Study No. 2:** Examining a more recent sample of youth in a shorter evaluation window, **Intercept reduced the odds of out-of-home placement by 37%** following a maltreatment investigation.



**Permanency Study:** Compared to a matched comparison group, **the odds of achieving permanency were 24% higher with Intercept.**

# Intercept for Placement Prevention December 2021- June 2025



In November 2021, Hampden County Juvenile Court and DCF in Western MA approached Youth Villages in exploring Intercept for CRA youth, since then:

- **Total Youth Served: 337**
- Referral Issues: **Truancy, Substance Abuse, Physical Aggression in the home, Family conflict, Runaway, Defiance**
- Successfully Discharged: **81%**
- Gender: 48% Male, 51% Female, 1% Transgender
- Average Length of Service: **5.5 Months**
- Regions Served: **12 courts throughout the Commonwealth**, throughout all 5 DCF regions

## Intercept for Placement Prevention Implementation

- Referral process
- Intake process
- Assessments
- Services/supports offered

## Exclusion Criteria

It is possible that a combination of **risk factors, without the protective factors** necessary for safety, may lead to a **denial of admission** to Intercept services. This assessment is done on a **case-by-case basis** and is provided to the funder/referral source upon denial. Those risk factors typically are:

- IQs below 70
- Active homicidal and/or suicidal ideation
- Evidence of problem sexual behavior

# Intercept Massachusetts- Who We Serve

## Current Data (2023.01.01 - 2025.12.31)

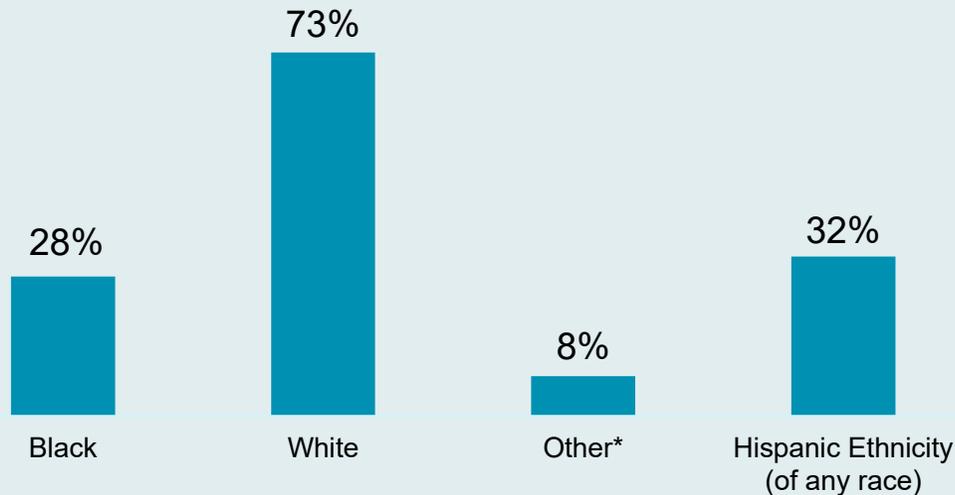
### Youth Served

4,275 youth were served during this time period

### Age at enrollment

Average: 12.9 years  
Age Range: 0 – 19 years

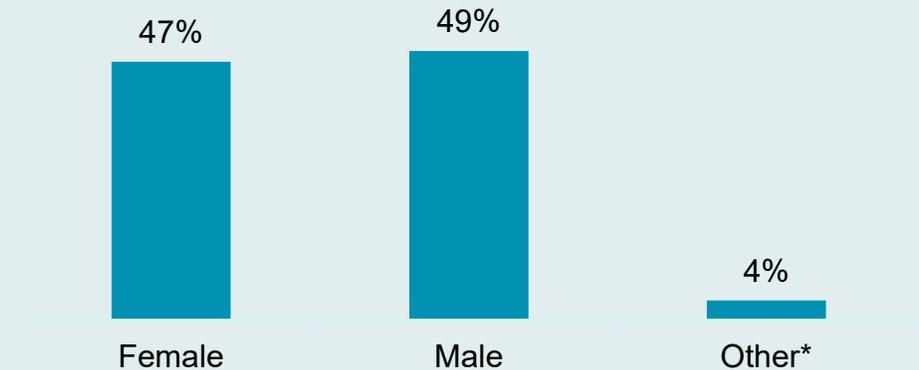
### Race and Ethnicity



Note: Youth may report more than one race. Therefore, percentages may add to more than 100%. Percentages are among youth with reported race and ethnicity data; 7.6% of youth are missing this information.

\*Other race includes Native American, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

### Gender



\*Other gender includes: Transgender; gender fluid; and does not identify as male, female, or transgender.

# Intercept Massachusetts- Outcomes at Discharge\*

## Current Data (2023.01.01 - 2025.12.31)

### Living Situations at Discharge



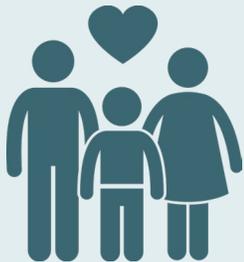
Living at Home or Independently

88%



Group Home

4%



Foster Care

2%



Residential Treatment

3%



Overall satisfaction with services\*: 95%

**Average LOS:**  
162 days

*Approximately 3% were in other living situations, such as emergency shelters, correctional facilities, drug/ alcohol rehab centers, or psychiatric hospitals; or were homeless/couch surfing, on runaway status, lost contact with family or in unknown placement in state custody.*

\*Only includes youth who received at least 60 days of service; 9.2% of enrollments (359 out of 3,921) ended before receiving at least 60 days of service.

# Challenges and Lessons Learned

## Caregiver & Youth Challenges

- Caregiver Burnout/Fatigue
- Mental health challenges
- Access to basic needs
- Access to community supports
- Building skills to end dependence of outside systems parenting their child (i.e : Law enforcement, state agencies, repeat hospitalizations or ED visits)

## Systemic Challenges

- Funding /contract silos
- Systems allowing us enough time to work with the family through all the drivers to build **durable and sustainable change**

# Bright Spots

## Gus Rego- Area Clinical Manager

“The Metro Area Office has had incredible success with the Court Placement Prevention Pilot, set up with Youth Villages and the Intercept Program. Our initial goal and intent was to **keep children, who present in crisis, and avoid an out-of-home placement.** The program has been very successful. The court, DCF and families have bought into this idea, and **children have stayed within their family.** In addition, **the simple and clear referral process, increased communication,** and monitoring of cases within the program has maintained this **goal-oriented practice to keep kids home”**

# Bright Spots

## Jennifer Ly- DCF Supervisor

“Since the implementation of the diversion program, we have seen a **drastic reduction in out of home orders from the court**, especially with brand new filings of CRAs. The Judges now know that Youth Villages is easily accessible, and it can happen almost immediately, so they have allowed for the process to slow down which in turn **allows DCF to truly assess the needs of the youth/family** and which makes for the **best clinical outcomes**. We have also seen that probation officers are much more likely to refer to Youth Villages or the diversion program instead of jumping right to an out of home order. All of these outcomes have **allowed for the case practice to flow more smoothly**, and the workers feel like they are able to truly do the work that needs to be done.”

# Next Meeting:

**March 23, 2026**

**11am-12:30pm**

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



# Contact

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