

## **MA State Office of Restorative Justice Program Design**

**DRAFT** confirmed at Restorative Justice Advisory Committee Meeting on 8/8/23.

### **Goal**

The goal of the Massachusetts state office of restorative justice, established by G. L. Ch. \_\_, Section \_\_, is to serve as a survivor and victim-centered knowledge based resource that fosters community healing and accountability for harm in the commonwealth by building restorative justice infrastructure and promoting effective restorative justice policy, education, research, practices, and programming within communities, schools, and public institutions (courts, correctional facilities and agencies), in collaboration with practitioners, government agencies, and other stakeholders.

### **Objectives**

- A. Secure diverse funding sources to enable leveraged and sustainable public investment in restorative justice.
- B. Implement public grant programs for agency/court-based and community-based restorative justice initiatives.
- C. Ensure quality of restorative justice facilitation and training through standards/guidelines for best practices developed in collaboration with practitioners and stakeholders.
- D. Ensure public accountability through establishing restorative justice program evaluation systems and reporting to stakeholders and policymakers.
- E. Promote public education through conferences and educational events and a centralized repository of restorative justice resources.
- F. Create and share knowledge through peer-reviewed research and program evaluation of restorative justice practices and programming working with local higher education institutions.
- G. Build restorative justice capacity within correctional facilities and agencies working with adult and youth populations.
- H. Convene dialogue forums to address systemic barriers to transformative justice.
- I. Integrate diversity, equity and inclusion values and framework into MA restorative justice systems.

### **Activities**

#### **Planning – Year 1**

1. Develop state office statute, program design, implementation plan and timeline.
2. Develop state office budget for operational, administrative and program expenses and funding request.
3. Integrate Roxbury Community College survey results on restorative justice programs in Massachusetts.
4. Secure adoption of state office enabling statute and funding through FY25 state budget process.

#### **Implementation – Year 1**

5. Create job descriptions for state office benefited FTE staff positions.
6. Hire state office director and other staff positions (recruitment based on DEI values).
7. Locate physical space for the state office in Boston and in Central or Western Massachusetts.
8. Furnish, equip and supply two state office locations.

#### **Advisory Committee:**

9. Work with state leaders to appoint advisory committee members (consider re-appointing RJAC members as to capture historical knowledge and interest in staying involved); recruit members based on DEI values.
10. Develop state office advisory committee policies and procedures (director convenes and develops with committee).
11. Prepare periodic progress reports and presentations to advisory committee.
12. Convene periodic advisory committee meetings to engage the input of members in the office's work.

#### **Grant-Making:**

13. Collaborate with communities and public agencies with existing restorative justice initiatives to establish new initiatives, support existing initiatives, and identify effective initiatives. Restorative justice initiatives include restorative practices, victim-offender conferences, family group conferences, circles, community conferences, and other similar victim-centered practices.
14. Design grant programs to fund agency, court, and community-based restorative justice initiatives.
15. Develop grant-making policies and procedures with relevant state fiscal/procurement department(s).

16. Develop funding eligibility criteria and grant requirements in consultation with sponsors and practitioners (Minnesota, Colorado, Nebraska).
17. Appoint grant application review committees and administer grant application processes.
18. Work with networks of restorative justice practitioners to promote grant opportunities.
19. Collect and review grant applications for restorative justice programs and make grant awards.
20. Enter into contracts with grantees and distribute grant awards to grantees (tied to data reports).

#### Program Evaluation and Research:

21. Engage restorative justice practitioners in discerning ways to measure the effectiveness of restorative efforts throughout the state.
22. Design evaluation plans to assess implementation and impact of restorative justice programs.
23. Design data collection instruments and protocols (surveys, focus groups, community gatherings) (Vermont).
24. Develop and launch activity tracking database for restorative justice programs and provide training and technical.
25. Prepare periodic program evaluation reports to Governor, Legislature and Court and stakeholders.
26. Obtain relevant approvals to conduct research.
27. Convene and engage in research projects in partnership with higher education institutions (community, state and private colleges/universities) (Vermont, Maine).
28. Publish research.

#### Fundraising/Development:

29. Secure annual state budget appropriation for operation of state office and grant programs (Minnesota).
30. Secure federal government and private grant awards to leverage the state's investment (Maine, Vermont).
31. Partnerships with public agencies, restorative justice organizations and higher education institutions.

#### Outreach and Education:

32. Develop state office website, social media networks (YouTube channel), digital content/platforms (tablets) and outreach materials.
33. Conduct restorative justice public awareness campaigns.
34. Convene restorative justice learning communities and dialogues to address structural harm (Kansas).
35. Create a centralized repository of restorative justice resources and best practices developmentally tailored to youth, trauma-informed and healing-centered practice; provide technical support (Minnesota, Colorado).
36. Create a statewide directory of restorative justice programs/practitioners (Minnesota, Colorado).

#### Quality Assurance and Training:

37. Encourage collaboration by creating a statewide network, led by restorative practitioners, to share effective methods and practices to acknowledge and repair harm (Colorado, Nebraska, Minnesota).
38. Design/implement restorative justice facilitator and trainer standards to guide best practices (Colorado).
39. Design and conduct training for restorative justice facilitators and programs.
40. Provide educational conferences and training to practitioners and stakeholders on restorative practices, victim-centered restorative practices, and trauma-informed care (Minnesota, Maine, Kansas).

#### Inputs

- Restorative justice advisory committee of state leaders and practitioners with EOPSS leadership/support.
- RJAC recommendation for creating statutory state RJ office.
- Legislative champions in House and Senate for securing budget appropriation and outside section.
- \$380,000 in state funding for restorative justice grants through EOPSS for 14 RJ programs awarded in FY23.
- Research and contacts with other state RJ systems and in MA collected by RJAC subcommittee.
- Roxbury Community College research and inventory contacts with MA community-based RJ programs.

#### Outputs: Years 1-2

- Framework for public investment and statewide public education on restorative justice.
- Statutory authority establishing the state office of restorative justice (G. L. Ch. \_\_, s. \_\_)
- State office of restorative justice funding through annual state budget appropriation of \$3,000,000.
- Restorative justice government and philanthropic grants, fees-for-services, gifts, and contributions.
- Relationships with restorative justice sponsors, funders, practitioners, and stakeholders.
- Knowledge-based administrative funding agency located in two regions of the state.

- Intergovernmental advisory committee of public leaders and stakeholder representatives.
- Approx. \$1.5 million public grant-funding supporting agency/court-based and community-based programs.
- Approx. 30 RJ programs in schools, communities, and government institutions across the state.
- Approx. 300 trained program staff, trainers and facilitators providing high-quality RJ services.
- Model restorative justice program administration, facilitator and training standards.
- State-wide RJ website, social media networks, outreach campaigns, digital/technology and materials.
- Restorative justice activity tracking database system and data on restorative justice programs.
- Monitoring and evaluation of grant-funded restorative justice programs.
- Reports, presentations, research and scholarly publications on restorative justice in Massachusetts.
- Strategic fundraising to serve public needs and leverage the state's investment.
- Annual statewide restorative justice conferences/events.

### **Outcomes**

- Centralization and integrated statewide network of restorative justice policymaking, programming, education, funding, and research to support public institutions and local communities.
- Sustainability and broader utilization of restorative justice resources and programs in the state.
- Formal restorative justice program partnerships among public agencies, communities, and stakeholders.
- Forum for engaging those who have experienced harm and cause harm in RJ policymaking.
- Increased public safety and public accountability for impacts of crime and community healing.
- Increasing connection to community, restoring relationships, and increasing empathy; considering all perspectives involved; and taking responsibility for impact of actions by all parties involved.
- Providing solutions and approaches that affirm and are tailored to specific cultures.
- Implementing policies and procedures that are informed by the science of the social, emotional, and cognitive development of children.

### **Means of Verification**

- Program design documents with implementation plan/timeline.
- Job descriptions of state office staff members.
- Administrative and programmatic policies, procedures, and forms.
- Outreach materials and state office website.
- Grant guidelines and grant application processes.
- Grant applications, supporting documents and award notifications.
- Grant contracts with and payments to restorative justice program grantees.
- Restorative justice facilitator and training standards.
- Program evaluation plans, instruments, and reports.
- Summaries of meetings and dialogue forums.
- Restorative justice activity tracking database system.
- Data entered into restorative justice activity tracking database system.
- Reports and presentations to the advisory committee.
- Program evaluation reports and annual state office report to Legislature, Governor and Court.
- Research reports and publications on restorative justice in Massachusetts.

### **Additional Information for Planning Purposes:**

#### **Director qualifications (from Minnesota statute SF 2909):**

1. experience in the many facets of restorative justice and practices such as peacemaking circles, sentencing circles, community conferencing, community panels, and family group decision making.
2. experience in victim-centered and trauma-informed practices.
3. knowledge of the range of social problems that bring children and families to points of crisis such as poverty, racism, unemployment, and unequal opportunity.
4. knowledge of the many ways youth become involved in other systems such as truancy, juvenile delinquency, child protection; and
5. understanding of educational barriers.